

THE NAZI QUEST FOR AN ARYAN JESUS

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ABSTRACT

This paper introduces perhaps the most neglected era in the history of the Quest for the historical Jesus. The era is National Socialist Germany and the particular Quest involves the attempt to prove Jesus was not Jewish but rather Aryan. Despite several recent attempts to associate the contemporary Jesus Seminar with such approaches, the whole period is largely ignored in the standard works on the history of New Testament scholarship. This paper introduces and describes the most important of the attempts to prove that Jesus was Aryan, that of Walter Grundmann. Important aspects of the general ideological background, as well as the influence of his teacher, Gerhard Kittel are discussed, with a more detailed treatment of the arguments in his *Jesus der Galiläer und das Judentum* (1940).

Key Words: Quest for historical Jesus, history of New Testament scholarship, Walter Grundmann; Gerhard Kittel, National Socialism and Jesus, Jesus Seminar

1. *Introduction*

Most work on the history of New Testament scholarship in general, and on the history of research into the historical Jesus in particular, tends to focus on the highlights and the positively influential writers and thinkers. In this paper I would like to introduce one of the low-lights, New Testament scholarship at its lowest (moral) ebb. Even so it was not uninfluential, and some measure of its pernicious influence is revealed over dinner one night, towards the end of the Second World War, when Adolf Hitler said '*Jesus war sicher kein Jude*'.

Jesus was most certainly not a Jew. The Jews would never have handed one of their own people to the Roman courts; they would have condemned Him themselves. It is quite probable that a large number of the descendants of the Roman legionaries, mostly Gauls, were living in Galilee, and Jesus was probably one of them. His mother

may well have been a Jewess. Jesus fought against the materialism of His age, and, therefore, against the Jews.¹

This snippet of table talk reveals the success of a startling programme of supposedly scientific theological research carried out by prominent New Testament scholars in the service of their Führer. A shorthand title for this research programme is given as the title of this paper: 'The Nazi Quest for an Aryan Jesus'. The misguided success of this research programme emerges here, during dinner on the night of 29 November 1944, in the East Prussian headquarters of the German military command, *Wolfsschanze* or 'Fort Wolf', as the Russian campaign withered and died in the closing months of the war.² Some decade or so earlier, in a similar meal-time monologue, Hitler had taken a fundamentally different view (to which we shall return):

Whether it's the Old Testament or the New, or simply the sayings of Jesus according to Houston Stewart Chamberlain—it's all the same old Jewish swindle. It will not make us free... You cannot make an Aryan of Jesus, that's nonsense.³

Given the nature of the surviving material, it seems impossible to determine with any certainty that Hitler's change of mind is directly attributable to National Socialist historical Jesus scholarship, although given what follows, the connection does seem plausible.⁴ As probably the most morally bankrupt episode in the whole (not always very edifying) history of New Testament scholarship, this particular corner of the Quest for the Historical Jesus has not been widely known, reported, or examined. Nevertheless there are several good reasons for tracing the development, outlook and arguments of this particular research programme, reasons which reach beyond the general aim of avoiding any repetition of it.⁵

1. H.R. Trevor-Roper [Introduction], *Hitler's Table Talk 1941–44: His Private Conversations* (trans. N. Cameron and R. H. Stevens; London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1953, 2nd edn 1973), p. 721. This discussion took place on the evening of 29–30 Nov. 1944 and contains the last recorded table talk of Hitler. The notes were typed up on 30 Nov. 1944 and a facsimile of this typed paragraph is given in the frontispiece of the book.

2. In fact this wasn't a new opinion, Hitler had expressed an essentially similar view on 21 Oct. 1941: 'Galilee was a colony where the Romans had probably installed Gallic legionaries, and it's certain that Jesus was not a Jew' (*Hitler's Table Talk*, p. 76).

3. H. Rauschning, *Hitler Speaks: A Series of Political Conversations with Adolf Hitler on his Real Aims* (London: T. Butterworth Ltd, 1939), pp. 57–58 (from 1933). A lengthier quotation is given below (see note 50).

4. So also M.D. Johnson, 'Power Politics and New Testament Scholarship in the National Socialist Period', *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 23 (1986), pp. 1–24 (11 n. 31); dependent upon M. Paldiel, *Dualism and Genocide: The 'Religious' Nature of Hitler's Antisemitism* (PhD dissertation, Temple University, 1982; Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1983), pp. 219–20.

5. Cf. George Santayana's commonly cited aphorism: 'Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it' (*Life of Reason, Reason in Common Sense* [New York: Scrib-

The following points sketch out three contemporary factors which make it important to understand the aims, development and results of the Nazi Quest for an Aryan Jesus.

First, it is clear that the standard histories of New Testament research have not adequately dealt with this aspect of the Quest for various reasons. We customarily divide the Quest for the Historical Jesus into eras: the *Old Quest* (which Schweitzer is supposed to have finished off), the *No Quest* (during the supremacy of Bultmann and Barth), the *New Quest* (arising out of Käsemann's protest and associated with the post-Bultmannians), and now the *Third Quest* (a newly confident movement which situates Jesus in his Jewish milieu).⁶ The label 'No Quest' immediately suggests that nothing very important happened during the period between Schweitzer and Käsemann. In his influential survey of the history of the Quest in the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, N.T. Wright argued that one of the features of this period (1906–53), under the dominating influence of Barth and Bultmann, was the conviction that reconstructing the life of Jesus was not theologically relevant. Unlike the nineteenth-century quests which knew Jesus was relevant and therefore saw him as not particularly Jewish, 'scholarship after Schweitzer saw him as Jewish, and therefore not particularly relevant'.⁷ Wright even refers explicitly to 'the convulsions through which the world passed during this period, to which the task of reconstructing the biography of Jesus seemed of comparatively little relevance'.⁸ This comment turns out, in the light of our following description, to be quite wrong—for one particular movement the reconstruction of the biography of Jesus was of decisive importance in supporting the German war effort. This stands behind Clive Marsh's comment

ner's, 1905], p. 284) which became an epigraph for W.L. Shirer's influential *Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1960).

6. For a recent protest at the effects of such labelling, but which thereby reveals the extent to which such labels have become common parlance, see S.E. Porter, *The Criteria for Authenticity in Historical-Jesus Research: Previous Discussion and New Proposals* (JSNTSup, 191; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000).

7. See G. Theissen and D. Winter, *The Quest for the Plausible Jesus: The Question of Criteria* (ET; Louisville, KY and London: Westminster John Knox, 2002), pp. 95–112, for a helpful discussion of the key elements of this period (the view of history in the dialectical theology, the scepticism of the form critics, and the approach of Bultmann), which also fails to mention the material to be discussed here.

8. N.T. Wright, 'Jesus, Quest for the Historical', *ABD*, III (1992), pp. 796–802; here from p. 798. Cf. also N.T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (London: SPCK, 1996), pp. 3–124 (the 'No Quest' period is dealt with very briefly on pp. 21–23). Wright nevertheless argues that E. Käsemann's 'New Quest' was advocated against the backdrop of the discredited approaches of the Nazi period: 'Käsemann had in mind, undoubtedly, the various Nazi theologies which had been able, in the absence of serious Jesus-study in pre-war Germany, to construct a largely unJewish Jesus', p. 23.

that 'labelling this period that of "No Quest" is at best misleading, and at worse a sinister abdication of moral responsibility'.⁹

In his survey of *The Historical Jesus in the Twentieth Century, 1900–1950* (the first of three volumes claiming to do for the twentieth century what Schweitzer did to the nineteenth), Walter P. Weaver, in a work explicitly designed to challenge the dominant perspective of the 'No Quest' as a period of scholarly inactivity in relation to the historical Jesus, also signally fails to deal with the presentations of Nazi research into Jesus.¹⁰ Although attentive throughout to 'the cultural drifts and sociological phenomena that relate to the varying pictures of Jesus that scholarship has produced',¹¹ Weaver simply dismisses 'the entirely frivolous contentions of a few, such as Houston Stewart Chamberlain or Walter Grundmann, that Jesus was Aryan'.¹² Granted that they might not offer a particularly plausible (or pleasant?) reconstruction of the historical Jesus; it is unclear how such a position, maintained at such a point in history, can be presented as 'entirely frivolous'! Indeed, on the same page (which concludes his chapter on Jewish approaches to Jesus), Weaver himself raises the question whether 'the bitter anti-Semitism of the Nazi period was in some degree a consequence of the previous, massive de-Judaizing of Jesus on the part of (generally Christian) scholars?' While not inclined to think that any decisive link could be demonstrated 'between historical Jesus portrayals and the subsequent Holocaust', his own suspicion or intuition 'is that the treatment of Jesus in scholarship, and thereby in churches as well, had an indirect influence in preparing people to think of Jesus as disconnected from Judaism and therefore to separate the two in making moral evaluations'.¹³ From my perspective these questions and intuitions may be fair and reasonable; but this actually invites and even requires that some attention be given to description and reflective evaluations of those works whose intention at least, if not their actual influence, were entirely nefarious and far from frivolous. It is also somewhat ironic that in a work designed to do for the twentieth century what Schweitzer did for the nineteenth, we miss the Schweitzerian perspective that the historical critical endeavour was 'a secret struggle to reconcile the Germanic religious spirit with the spirit of Jesus of Nazareth':

9. C. Marsh, 'Quests of the Historical Jesus in New Historicist Perspective', *BibInt* 5 (1997), pp. 403–37 (414).

10. W.P. Weaver, *The Historical Jesus in the Twentieth Century, 1900–1950* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999). Weaver argues that 'our usual views of the "Quests" of the historical Jesus do not do justice to the actual history' and that the common typology (i.e. Old Quest, No Quest, New Quest etc.) reflects 'a distinctively German perspective' (pp. xi and xii).

11. Weaver, *Historical Jesus*, back cover.

12. Weaver, *Historical Jesus*, p. 256.

13. Weaver, *Historical Jesus*, p. 256.

As of old Jacob wrestled with the angel, so German theology wrestles with Jesus of Nazareth and will not let him go until he blesses it—that is, until he consents to serve it and suffers himself to be drawn by the Germanic spirit into the midst of our time and our civilization. But when the day breaks, the wrestler must let him go. He will not cross the ford with us. Jesus of Nazareth will not let himself be modernized.... [T]he historical Jesus and the Germanic spirit cannot be brought together except by an act of historic violence which in the end injures both religion and history.¹⁴

Beyond the almost complete neglect of this period in all the standard works on the subject, there is a second reason for investigating this material. During a discussion of Wright's *Jesus and the Victory of God* at the 1997 British New Testament Conference's very own (and rather different) Jesus Seminar, Maurice Casey took Wright to task on the effect of his labelling of the different Quests. Over against Wright's dismissal of 'the absence of serious Jesus study in pre-war Germany', Casey said:

I prefer to regard this phase of the quest as the most crucial because it is the most illuminating. Here there was an overt attempt to demonstrate that Jesus was not Jewish, a verifiably quite false position. This was done because it was what German Christians needed. Accordingly, we can see here with the utmost clarity a hermeneutical circle controlling the work of scholars who were genuinely expert in the New Testament field. Equally clearly, we can see that the quest of the historical Jesus is a quest to avoid him. Avoiding him entails avoiding his Jewishness and replacing him with a Christ of faith who is to a significant degree a reification of the needs of a particular Christian community.¹⁵

Although I have a number of reservations about the way Casey has stated this, the fact remains that his claim that the Nazi Quest is somehow paradigmatic for the quest as a whole can hardly even be discussed unless that Quest is examined.¹⁶

14. A. Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus. First Complete Edition* (ET; ed. J. Bowden; London: SCM Press, 2000), p. 277 (here with reference to Chamberlain's *Worte Christi*, see below); a little earlier Schweitzer had remarked that 'at the present day the Germanic spirit is making a Jesus after its own likeness' (p. 275). Both of these passages are quoted in A.T. Davies, 'The Aryan Christ: A Motif in Christian Anti-Semitism', *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 12 (1975), pp. 569-79.

15. M. Casey, 'Where Wright is Wrong: A Critical Review of N.T. Wright's *Jesus and the Victory of God*', *JSNT* 69 (1998), pp. 95-105, quotation from p. 96; cf. Wright's 'Theology, History and Jesus: A Response to Maurice Casey and Clive Marsh', *JSNT* 69 (1998), pp. 105-12, esp. pp. 105-106 on Casey's idiosyncratic use of 'hermeneutical circle'.

16. An early and rather sketchier version of this paper (hardly more than a survey of the literature) was presented to the Jesus Seminar of the British New Testament Conference in 1998; more recently a fuller version was presented at the Senior New Testament Seminar in Cambridge. Questions and comments on both occasions served to stimulate further exploration and reflection. I would also like to acknowledge the warm personal encouragement of two scholars who have done the fundamental research in this area, Susannah Heschel and Robert Ericksen.

There is yet a third compelling reason for the investigation of this material. It has become almost a standard trope in critical discussions of the Jesus Seminar (and scholars associated with it), that by taking a stance against the authenticity of the gospel traditions that most closely link Jesus with Israel's Scriptures, history, leaders and hopes; they have in effect de-Judaized Jesus and are, in some measure, guilty by association with those approaches to Jesus in Nazi Germany which denied that Jesus was Jewish.¹⁷ This polemical appeal to Nazi approaches to Jesus characterizes several recent responses to the Jesus Seminar and the writings of J.D. Crossan (one of the leading lights of the seminar). Take, for example, the following, from Birger A. Pearson:

The Jesus of the Jesus Seminar is a non-Jewish Jesus. To put it metaphorically, the Seminar has performed a forcible epispasm on the historical Jesus, a surgical procedure removing the marks of his circumcision. The result might arouse some disquiet in the minds of people who know the history of the 30's and 40's of our century. But the Jesus of the Jesus Seminar is much too banal to cause us to think that the ideology producing him is like that which produced the 'Aryan Jesus' of the 1930's [Footnote: 'Probably the most notorious example is Walter Grundmann...'].¹⁸

Pearson attempts both to make an unanswerable rhetorical point by associating the Jesus Seminar with Nazi Jesus scholarship, and yet to avoid causing offence by discriminating between them on the basis of ideological background. The association has a rhetorical force, but no substance, as Pearson offers nothing more than a footnote reference to Grundmann; but it is a metaphorical association which serves to rule the Jesus Seminar out of consideration.

Somewhat more seriously, Sean Freyne closes his response to J.D. Crossan's *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant*, with a personal comment that his own substantial work on the Galilee is oriented by a concern 'to maintain and affirm the Jewishness of Jesus'. He wrote further:

17. The reflections of the Jesus Seminar are focused in R.W. Funk, R. Hoover and the Jesus Seminar, *The Five Gospels: The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus* (New York: Macmillan, 1993; San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1997); but also important are the preliminary papers and reports voting included in *Forum* (Old Series, 1985–94); subsequently also Robert W. Funk and the Jesus Seminar, *The Acts of Jesus: The Search for the Authentic Deeds of Jesus* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1998); also a focal point in this debate has been J.D. Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (San Francisco: HarperSan Francisco, 1992). Responses have been many and varied and are not our concern here, see B. Witherington, *The Jesus Quest: The Third Search for the Jew of Nazareth* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995); N.T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (London: SPCK, 1996); L.T. Johnson, *The Real Jesus: The Misguided Quest for the Historical Jesus and the Truth of the Traditional Gospels* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1996).

18. B.A. Pearson, 'The Gospel According to the Jesus Seminar', *Religion* 25 (1995), pp. 317–38 (cited from the updated version available at www.ucsb.edu/fscf/library/pearson/seminar/js7.html; accessed 17 May 2000). Cf. further 'An Expose of the Jesus Seminar', *Dialog* 37 (1998), pp. 28–35 (esp. p. 33 for the same sentiments in practically the same words).

To water down the Jewishness of Galilee and thereby to deny the Jewishness of Jesus not only has the potential for anti-Semitism, as Walter Grundmann's 1941 book on Jesus the Galilean shows, it also involves a refusal to acknowledge that the Christian understanding of God is grounded in the Jewish religious experience.¹⁹

Freyne does not necessarily seek to bypass the necessary historical debate about the nature of Jewish life in the Galilee—indeed he has been a major contributor to this debate—but his comment shows that alongside or underlying the contemporary debate, are a series of convictions and issues that reach back into this rather unexamined period of New Testament scholarship.²⁰ Richard Horsley, another contributor to the debate about Galilee, also wrote about approaches to Jesus reflected in Crossan's work and other Jesus Seminar personnel:

The tendency (perhaps the agenda in some cases) of much of the recent analysis of Jesus' teachings rooted in form criticism has been to de-contextualize, departicularize, de-israelitize, or de-judaize Jesus...the agenda of finding a universalistic (and apolitical, spiritual) Jesus over against a particularistic (and political) Judaism is rooted in nineteenth century German theology and biblical scholarship.²¹

Without here entering into the debate about the nature of the population and religious life of the Galilee and Jesus' place within it, these three citations show that studies of the historical Jesus from more than sixty years ago, during the period when nothing is supposed to have been happening in the Quest, specifically historical Jesus studies conducted under the auspices and in the interests of

19. He goes on a bit later on the same page: 'In our post-Auschwitz humility, when Christians want to continue to claim the ultimacy of Jesus, it is the ultimacy of the God of Galilee that they are affirming, not another God who supersedes the God of Israel'. S. Freyne, 'Galilean Questions to Crossan's Mediterranean Jesus', in W.E. Arnal and M. Desjardins (eds.), *Whose Historical Jesus?* (Studies in Christianity and Judaism, 7; Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1997), pp. 63-91 (all from p. 91).

20. Cf. Freyne's other contributions on this subject: *Galilee from Alexander the Great to Hadrian: A Study of Second Temple Judaism* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier and Notre Dame University Press, 1980; repr. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998); *Galilee, Jesus and the Gospels: Literary Approaches and Historical Investigations* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan; and Minneapolis: Augsburg-Fortress, 1988); 'The Geography, Politics and Economics of Galilee and the Quest for the Historical Jesus', in B. Chilton and C. Evans (eds.), *Studying the Historical Jesus: Evaluations of the Current State of the Research* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), pp. 75-124; 'Jesus and the Urban Culture of Galilee', in T. Fornberg and D. Hellholm (eds.), *Texts and Contexts. Biblical Texts in their Textual and Situational Contexts. Essays in Honor of Lars Hartman* (Oslo: Scandinavia University Press, 1995), pp. 597-622; *Galilee and Gospel* (WUNT, 125; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 2000).

21. R.A. Horsley, 'Jesus and Galilee: The Contingencies of a Renewal Movement', in E.M. Meyers (ed.), *Galilee Through the Centuries: Confluence of Cultures* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1999), pp. 57-74 (here from p. 58). Cf. more fully his earlier works: *Galilee: History, Politics* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity, 1995); *Archaeology, History, and Society in Galilee: The Social Context of Jesus and the Rabbis* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity, 1996).

a committed National Socialist framework, cast their shadow over the complex contemporary historical and literary debates about the authenticity of the Jesus tradition as a whole.²²

In view of all these issues, I hope in this article to examine these Nazi studies of Jesus, the non-Jewish, Aryan Jesus who attracted the attention and perhaps even the admiration of Hitler. The process will be primarily descriptive; to outline some of the key issues and ideas and so begin to fill in some of the blanks that historians of the Quest have left unfilled.²³ I hope to equip readers to understand the allusions to this material that are by no means uncommon in contemporary scholarship and at least to begin the process of discerning the shadow that this work has cast over more recent scholarship.

2. Background

The quest for a non-Jewish or particularly Aryan Jesus pre-dates the years when Germany was a totalitarian police state under Adolf Hitler (1933–45), and even the establishment in 1919 of the *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (NSDAP) or ‘Nazi Party’ as it came to be known.

While we might note the presence of anti-Jewish ideas, expressions and ideologies from Rome, through early Christianity to the Fathers and Reformers and beyond; any attempt to make a sensible start to the story of Nazi attitudes to Jesus, and Nazi-influenced theologians under the Third Reich, must begin with the new biological and racial approaches that originated in the nineteenth century and grew in influence in Germany in the last three decades of that century. It is here, as far as I can determine it, that the racial quest for a non-Jewish Jesus begins; it is here, for example, that a special word is coined and ‘anti-Semitism’ begins to be used for racial animosity against Jews.²⁴

In 1871, after victory in the Franco-German war, the united German state became an Empire, with an emperor—Wilhelm I; an elected *Reichstag*, and an imperial chancellor—Bismarck. Opposition to France, which had, under the influence of humanists and liberals such as Voltaire, Montesquieu, Rousseau and

22. For the most recent treatment see M.A. Chancey, *The Myth of a Gentile Galilee* (SNTSMS, 118; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). This attempts a critique of the view that Galilee was predominantly or substantially Gentile from the historical and archaeological evidence. It makes no attempt at any broader ideological critique, and Grundmann and the non-Jewish Jesus school are mentioned only briefly on p. 15.

23. As will be obvious, the description depends on and draws attention to the foundational research of a range of other scholars, as indicated in the notes.

24. A. Bein, ‘Modern Anti-Semitism and Its Place in the History of the Jewish Question’, in A. Altmann (ed.), *Between East and West: Essays Dedicated to the Memory of Bela Horowitz* (London: East and West Library, 1958), pp. 164–93 (esp. 164–67).

Mirabeau, initiated the emancipation of Jews in 1791 and imposed Jewish equality on those lands conquered during their Napoleonic successes; combined with rising German nationalism, provided a potent seed bed for anti-Semitic ideas. In 1880–81 anti-Semitic leagues and politicians attempted, in the context of numerous violent episodes, to introduce anti-Jewish legislation, albeit without success.²⁵ Prominent Protestant preachers such as Adolf Stoecker (1835–1909, later regarded as a forerunner of Hitler and a prophet of the Third Reich) and the nationalist historian Heinrich von Treitschke (1834–96) were active.²⁶

During this period some attention was given to the problem (from the anti-Semitic perspective) that Christianity was an offspring of Judaism. In 1881 Eugen Dühring (1833–1921), the philosopher and economist, argued that ‘the Jewish Question’ should not be conceived of in terms of religion, but as a question of race, morals and culture.²⁷ He argued that since Christianity was a manifestation of the Semitic spirit it was simply not an appropriate option for the German people. Christianity was ‘itself Semitism’, ‘offspring of the Jewish oriental racial soul’, and the gospel records about Jesus were ‘drenched in draughts of Jewish tradition’.²⁸ Paul de Lagarde (1827–91), the famous orientalist and biblical scholar, promoted the idea of a new Germanic Christianity which could be cleansed or purged of its Jewish dross and therefore made appropriate for the German *Volk*. Jesus would find a place as the discoverer of eternal truth, as a pure human genius, and as proclaimer of the Kingdom of God; but not as Jesus the Jew or the Jewish Messiah—these misconceptions arose from misunderstandings on the part of Jesus’ disciples, exacerbated by Paul’s Jewish-Pharisaic corruption of Jesus’ original message. Jesus was himself not Jewish but Man

25. R.S. Levy, *The Downfall of the Anti-Semitic Political Parties in Imperial Germany* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1975).

26. For Stoecker see esp. R. Gutteridge, *Open Thy Mouth for the Dumb! The German Evangelical Church and the Jews 1879–1950* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1976), pp. 4–12; U. Puschner, ‘Adolf Stoecker’, *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexicon* 10 (1995), pp. 1507–511 (online at www.bautz.de/bbkl). For Treitschke see Gutteridge, *Open thy Mouth*, pp. 12–17; L. Poliakov, *The History of Anti-Semitism. IV. Suicidal Europe, 1870–1933* (5 vols.; trans. G. Klin; Littman Library; Oxford: OUP, 1985), pp. 21–22; A. Frenken, ‘Heinrich von Treitschke’, *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexicon* 11 (1997), pp. 442–44. See also I. Schorsch, *Jewish Reactions to German Anti-Semitism, 1870–1914* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1972).

27. E. Dühring, *Die Judenfrage als Rassen-, Sitten- und Culturfrage. Mit einer weltgeschichtlichen Antwort* (Karlsruhe and Leipzig: H. Reuther, 1881). Later editions focused on the threat posed to German national culture (e.g. the posthumous 6th enlarged edition: *Die Judenfrage also Frage des Rassencharakters und seiner Schädlichkeit für Existenz und Kultur der Völker*, 1930) [see Bein, ‘Modern Anti-Semitism’, p. 174 n. 19].

28. Citations from Gutteridge, *Open Thy Mouth*, pp. 336–38; cf. also Bein, ‘Modern Anti-Semitism’, pp. 173–78; Poliakov, *History of Anti-Semitism*, IV, p. 23.

(when Jesus proclaimed himself the son of man he was really saying 'I am not a Jew').²⁹

Probably the most important of the nineteenth-century anti-Semitic works was Houston Stewart Chamberlain's *Die Grundlagen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts* which was published in 1899.³⁰ Chamberlain was born in Southsea, England, in 1855 into a military family. He was educated in Cheltenham, Paris, Geneva and Vienna, becoming especially fond of Richard Wagner's music. So fond indeed that in addition to writing three books on Wagner, he married Wagner's daughter, Eva, and was eventually naturalized as a German citizen.³¹ Chamberlain drew upon the work of the ethnologists and biological racialists such as de Gobineau and Wagner.³² He construed the whole of Western history since the Greeks in terms of race struggle. Put briefly, only Aryans were regarded as being capable of creative culture and the intermingling of Aryans with other races lead inevitably to decline. The Germans were the best representatives of the western Aryan peoples and those best placed to establish a new European order.³³

The German edition of Chamberlain's book, described by Poliakov as 'this lofty bible of anti-Semitism', sold 60,000 copies in eight editions over ten years.³⁴ It was widely read, as evidenced by Chamberlain's correspondence with Kaiser

29. On Lagarde see Gutteridge, *Open Thy Mouth*, pp. 19-21; cf. Bein, 'Modern Anti-Semitism', pp. 190-93; L. Poliakov, *The Aryan Myth: A History of Racist and Nationalist Ideas in Europe* (ET E. Howard; London: Chatto & Windus Heinemann for Sussex University Press, 1974), pp. 307-309; R.W. Lougee, *Paul de Lagarde, 1827-1891: A Study of Radical Conservatism in Germany* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), esp. pp. 144-49, 151-54. Poliakov writes: 'he revered Jesus only as a man, born among the stiff-necked race of Semites through some mysterious decree of the Deity, and whose genius was expressed in his "not-wanting-to-be-a-Jew"', *The Aryan Myth*, p. 308. Esp. P. de Lagarde, 'Die Religion der Zukunft', pp. 22-23; included in his *Schriften für das deutsche Volk Bd. 1: Deutsche Schriften* (ed. K.A. Fischer [articles first published together in 1878]; Munich: J.F. Lehmann, 1924; and reprints), pp. 262-63.

30. (Munich, 1899). ET: *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* (2 vols; trans. John Lees; London: John Lane, The Bodley Head and New York: John Lane Co., 1910, cited from second impression 1912; cf. New York: Howard Fertig, 1968). Bein wrote, 'perhaps no book has contributed so much to the spreading of the anti-Jewish theory of race as this book, with its innocent-sounding title drawn from the philosophy of culture' ('Modern Anti-Semitism', p. 181).

31. From the 'Introduction' to the ET by Lord Redesdale.

32. On de Gobineau see Poliakov, *The Aryan Myth*, pp. 233-38; Bein, 'Modern Anti-Semitism', pp. 167-70. For the broader picture see P.L. Rose, *Revolutionary Antisemitism in Germany from Kant to Wagner* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

33. For all these themes in Wagner see M. Brearley, 'Hitler and Wagner: The Leader, the Master and the Jews', *Patterns of Prejudice* 22.2 (1988), 1-20.

34. From the 'Introduction' to the ET by Lord Redesdale, p. v. Poliakov, *History of Anti-Semitism*, IV, p. 23; cf. also Poliakov, *The Aryan Myth*, pp. 313-20; Davies, 'The Aryan Christ', pp. 575-77 for discussion of Chamberlain.

Wilhelm II. Chamberlain's book was known (possibly from a collection of extracts made by Rosenberg) to Adolf Hitler.³⁵ Chamberlain spends around eighty pages in an attempt to prove the 'Aryanism' of Jesus.

The point is summarized: 'The answer to the question, Was Christ a Jew? is by no means a simple one. In religion and education He was so undoubtedly; in race—in the narrower and real sense of the word "Jew"—most probably not.'³⁶ Galilee was not only politically separate from Judea, but more 'heathen', colonized after the Assyrian deportation, by Assyrians, Phoenecians and Greeks, which presumably included some 'purely Aryan blood'.³⁷ Some of these peoples, in merging with whatever Israelites remained in the area, became Jews by faith (e.g. 2 Kings 17.24-41), but not by blood. Simon Maccabeus fought against the Gentiles of the Galilee (and brought the Jews of Galilee back to Judea, 1 Macc. 5.23). For Chamberlain there is 'not the slightest foundation for the supposition that Christ's parents were of Jewish descent'.³⁸ Chamberlain could appeal to the work of Jewish historians (e.g. Graetz) as well as Ewald and Renan in support of his argument. The different character of Galileans is revealed in their propensity to rebellion (e.g. Judas the Galilean, the Sicarii, Menahem, the sons of Judas, John of Gischala, Eleazar); they spoke Greek rather than Hebrew due to the physical difference in the formation of the larynx. The key argument is based on the history of the racial settlement of the Galilee area, allied to a racial definition of Judaism.³⁹ 'The probability that Christ was no Jew, that He had not a drop of genuinely Jewish blood in his veins, is so great that it is almost equivalent to a certainty.'⁴⁰ Of course Christ lived in a Jewish context, but 'His advent is not the perfecting of the Jewish religion but its negation.'⁴¹ Judaism is pictured very negatively, characterized by 'formalism and hard-hearted rationalism', in contrast to the religion of Christ, which focuses on love.⁴²

35. According to Shirer, Chamberlain was the first intellectual in Germany to see a great future for Hitler (*Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, pp. 104-109). On 8 November 1924 Chamberlain sent birthday greetings to Hitler, the 'great simplifier': 'May God, who gave him to us, preserve him for many more years for the glory of the German Fatherland'. K.D. Bracher, *The German Dictatorship: The Origins, Structure and Consequences of National Socialism* (Middlesex: Penguin/Peregrine, 1978), p. 165, cited from W. Goerlitz and H.A. Quint, *Adolf Hitler: Eine Biographie* (Stuttgart: Grueben, 1952), p. 234. Hitler in his turn attended Chamberlain's funeral in 1927 (Shirer, *Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, p. 109).

36. Chamberlain, *Foundations*, p. 202.

37. Chamberlain, *Foundations*, p. 205.

38. Chamberlain, *Foundations*, p. 206.

39. 'The term Jew is applicable to a definite, remarkably pure race, and only in a secondary and very inexact sense to the members of a religious community' (Chamberlain, *Foundations*, p. 207).

40. Chamberlain, *Foundations*, pp. 211-12.

41. Chamberlain, *Foundations*, p. 221.

42. Chamberlain persuaded some readers that Jesus wasn't Jewish, perhaps most notably

Among other works, Chamberlain also compiled a collection called *Worte Christi*, which went through ten editions (from 1901 to 1941). This consists of 160 sayings under six headings presented with a page to each saying, but without references, contexts or separate introductions. The selection highlights a purely general and internal sort of piety (1. Habt Glauben an Gott!; 2. Fürchte dich nicht, glaube nur!; 3. Wenn du glaubst, kann dir alles werden...⁴³); although a whole section is given over to the denunciation of Christ's Jewish opponents (esp. Mt. 23).⁴⁴

Arguments in support of an Aryan Jesus were also mounted in the early years of the twentieth century by well-known writers such as Theodor Fritsch (1852–1933)⁴⁵ and Friedrich Delitzsch (1850–1952),⁴⁶ as well as lesser-known writers such as Paul Haupt-Baltimore and Friedrich Döllinger.⁴⁷ These writers are referred to in the Foreword to Strack-Billerbeck's *Kommentar*, who announce their own position in their opening sentence: 'The Lord belonged, according to

Leo Tolstoy, see his Letter to Tshertkov, 18 November 1906, cited in Poliakov, *History of Anti-Semitism*, IV, p. 82 (citing Leo Tolstoy, *Works*, vol. 89 [ed. V.G. Chertkov; Moscow, n.p.], pp. 50–52). The topic is also addressed in Chamberlain's *Mensch und Gott. Betrachtungen über Religion und Christentum* (Munich: F. Bruckman, 1921), in the section 'Betrachtung über Jesu Verhältnis zu dem Juden' (p. 110).

43. 1. Have faith in God. 2. Do not be afraid, only believe. 3. If you believe, you can be anything.

44. H.S. Chamberlain, *Worte Christi* (München: F. Bruckman, 1901, 1903, 1908, 1911, 1915 [2×], 1919, 1924, 1935, 10th edn, 1941).

45. Fritsch was a fanatical anti-Semite (see generally Gutteridge, *Open Thy Mouth*, pp. 341–43), with a particular vision for an Aryan Christianity. He was involved in the publication of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*; his own *Antisemiten-Catechismus* first published in 1887 went through many reprints, and a change of title: *Handbuch der Judenfrage: Eine Zusammenstellung des wichtigsten Materials zur Beurteilung des jüdischen Volke* (Leipzig: Hammer, 1907, 34th edn 1933; further editions were also produced after Fritsch's death); this collected anti-semitic statements from famous people; *Beweismaterial gegen Jahwe* (Leipzig: Hammer, 3rd edn, 1913) includes discussion of the Aryan Jesus.

46. Friedrich Delitzsch (son of Franz Delitzsch), was a respected academic Assyriologist (Professor in Leipzig, Breslau then Berlin, from 1899). F.W. Bautz, 'Friedrich Delitzsch', *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexicon* 1 (1990), pp. 1251–52. In 1920 he wrote an anti-Semitic work, 'The Great Deception' (*Die grosse Täuschung: Kritische Betrachtungen zu den alttestamentlichen Berichten über Israels Eindringen in Kanaan, die Gottesoffenbarung vom Sinai und die Wirksamkeit der Propheten* [Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1920; Berlin: n.p., 1921]) which not only supported a non-Jewish Jesus, but also denied any contemporary religious significance for any Old Testament books, describing Judaism as 'a pagan religion'.

47. Haupt-Baltimore published on the subject of the Aryan Jesus in *Orientalische Literaturzeitung*, May 1908; F. Döllinger, *Baldur und Bibel* (Nürnberg: n.p., 1920): this book includes a letter (!) from the procurator of Judea, Publius Lentulius to the emperor Tiberius in which Jesus is described as having the features of a blond (Aryan) hero (Poliakov, *The Aryan Myth*, p. 379 n. 249).

his physical origin, to the Jewish people and was indeed a descendant of David'.⁴⁸ In a footnote they add, 'ihre Behauptungen sind aber völlig haltlos' ('their claims are, however, completely without support').

3. *Nazi Approaches: Hitler and Rosenberg*

The popular anti-Semitism of this period did not, according to his presentation in *Mein Kampf*, impress the young Hitler in Vienna: 'the tone, particularly that of the Viennese anti-Semitic press, seemed to me unworthy of the cultural tradition of a great nation'.⁴⁹ He describes there a conversion to anti-Semitism despite commenting that 'the tone [of the anti-Semitic works which he read] for the most part was such that doubts again arose in me, due in part to the dull and amazingly unscientific arguments favouring the thesis'.⁵⁰ The unscientific nature of the material did not prevent anti-Semitism completely dominating Hitler's political horizon. He wrote:

The art of truly great popular leaders in all ages has consisted chiefly in not distracting the attention of the people but concentrating always on a single adversary. The more unified the object of the people's will to fight, the greater will be the magnetic attraction of the movement and the more tremendous its impact. It is part of a great leader's genius to make even widely separated adversaries appear as if they belonged to but one category, because among weakly and undecided characters the recognition of various enemies all too easily marks the beginning of doubt of one's own rightness.⁵¹

Hitler identified Judaism and the 'Jew' as the common denominator opponent (in league with Communism, Liberalism, the USA, Britain, and so on).⁵² Judaism was the *Gegenreich* which the third *Reich* must defeat and destroy, if the German race was to be the agent for the salvation (and domination) of the world. Christianity's association with Judaism could not be overcome. Despite

48. Hermann L. Strack and Paul Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament as Talmud und Midrasch*, V (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1922) (see also Gutteridge, *Open Thy Mouth*, pp. 328-29).

49. A. Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (1925-27; ET J. Murphy; London: Hurst & Blackett, 1939), p. 49.

50. *Mein Kampf*, p. 52.

51. *Mein Kampf* cited here from H. Kohn, 'National Socialism', *Encyclopedia Britannica*, XVI (1962), pp. 159-62; from p. 160.

52. Tracing the origin and motivation for Hitler's opposition to Jews and Judaism has been a major interest among historians. There does not seem to be a consensus; some argue that the destruction of the Jews was basic to Hitler's whole political and military policies: the war was designed to enable the extermination of Judaism; others describe a more functional development (see M.M. Marrus, *The Holocaust in History* [Toronto: Lester & Orpen Denny, 1987]).

the perceived usefulness of the churches, especially if they could be encouraged in anti-Jewish thinking, Hitler's own position followed Rosenberg:

The religions are all alike, no matter what they call themselves. They have no future—certainly none for the Germans...for our people it is decisive whether they acknowledge the Jewish Christ-creed with its pity-ethics, or a strong, heroic belief in God in Nature, God in our own people, in our destiny, in our blood. Leave the hair-splitting to others. Whether it is the Old Testament or the New, or simply the sayings of Jesus according to Houston Stewart Chamberlain—It's all the same old Jewish swindle. It will not make us free. A German Church, a German Christianity, is distortion. One is either a German or a Christian. You cannot be both. You can throw the epileptic Paul out of Christianity—others have done so before us. You can make Christ into a noble human being, and deny his divinity and his role as a saviour... It's no use, you cannot get rid of the mentality behind it... You cannot make an Aryan of Jesus, that's nonsense. What Chamberlain wrote in his *Principles* is, to say the least, stupid.⁵³

A somewhat similar view, albeit with more sympathy to Chamberlain's theory of the Aryan Jesus, is found in Alfred Rosenberg's *Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts: eine Wertung der seelisch-geistigen Gestaltenkämpfe unserer Zeit* (1930).⁵⁴ By 1942 over a million copies of this book had been published, and as the ideological manifesto of National Socialism exercised an influence second only to *Mein Kampf*. All the key elements of Nazi ideology are found: explicit racism, the need for *Lebensraum* for the Germanic *Volks*, the elimination of Christian influence, the persecution of the Jews and their expulsion from the Greater German space. For Rosenberg, the racial theory enunciated by Chamberlain was

53. H. Rauschning, *Hitler Speaks*, pp. 57–58 (see note 3) (also cited by L. Thornton, 'The New Light: German Christians and Biblical Distortion during the Third Reich [antisemitism in gospel translations]', *Fides et Historia* 18 [1986], pp. 32–43, at p. 42). The quotation continues: 'What's to be done you say? I will tell you: we must prevent the churches from doing anything but what they are doing now, that is, losing ground day by day. Do you really believe the masses will ever be Christian again? Nonsense! Never again. That tale is finished. No one will listen to it again. But we can hasten matters. The parsons will be made to dig their own graves. They will betray anything for the sake of their miserable little jobs and incomes.'

Johnson ('Power Politics', p. 11 n. 31; dependent upon Paldiel, *Dualism and Genocide*, pp. 219–20) states that Hitler changed his view from Jesus being a Jew to a non-Jew and speculates that he may have been influenced by Grundmann's views.

54. Rosenberg (1893–1946) was a member of the Nazi party before Hitler and was the official ideologue of the party (from 1934–41 he was responsible for the spiritual and philosophical education of the NSDAP). In July 1941 he was appointed Reichsminister for the Occupied Eastern Territories. He was found guilty of Crimes Against Humanity at Nuremberg and was executed on 1 October 1946 (the report from Nuremberg is available at various places on the web, e.g. www.ess.uwe.ac.uk/genocide/Rosenberg.htm). A.R. Chandler, *Rosenberg's Nazi Myth* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1945); R. Cecil, *The Myth of the Master Race: Alfred Rosenberg and Nazi Ideology* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1972); F. Nova, *Alfred Rosenberg: Nazi Theorist of the Holocaust* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1986).

completely foundational; indeed in place of traditional, 'negative' Christianity, a new Germanic faith, a religion of the blood is announced:

Today, a new belief is arising: the *Mythus* of the blood, the belief that the godly essence of man itself is to be defended through the blood; that belief which embodies the clearest knowledge that the Nordic race represents that *Mysterium* which has overthrown and replaced the old sacraments.⁵⁵

For Rosenberg the eternal Aryan values were contrasted to Judaeo-Christian depravity; the God of the Old Testament who creates and rules is dismissed as 'Syrian-African superstition' and contrasted with 'the Nordic spiritual inheritance [which] comprised consciousness not only of the divinity of the human soul, but of its *equality* with God'.⁵⁶ The Old Testament must go!

The Old Testament as a book of religious instruction must be abolished once and for all. With it will end the unsuccessful attempt of the last one-and-a-half millennia to make us all spiritual Jews.⁵⁷

As regards Jesus, Rosenberg broadly follows Chamberlain (without giving any sustained attention to the subject). Jesus himself was a great personality; his teaching on the kingdom of heaven within is fundamental, but 'the great personality of Jesus Christ has been burdened with all the sterility of Near-Eastern, Jewish and African life'. Paul in particular takes up the idea of Jesus, infuses it with Jewish teaching, and becomes the agent 'for the still further spread of racial chaos in the ancient world'. St John, with his 'aristocratic spirit', and Marcion, with his opposition to the Semitic conception of God's absolute power, attained some measure of insight into a positive Christianity which emphasizes Jesus' *life*, but were swamped by the Christian focus on Jesus' redemptive death.⁵⁸ But there is no real focus on Jesus himself, whose racial identity is discussed in a footnote:

As far as Jesus' ancestry is concerned, there is not the slightest reason to believe, as Chamberlain and Delitzsch have already explained, that Jesus was of Jewish ancestry, even if it be admitted that He had grown up in Jewish intellectual circles... We will probably never be able to ascertain scientifically the ancestry of Jesus. We must content ourselves with recognizing the probability of His non-jewish ancestry. The thoroughly un-jewish teachings of the 'kingdom of heaven with us' strengthen this realization.⁵⁹

55. Cited from R. Pois (ed), *Alfred Rosenberg: Selected Writings* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1970), p. 82; cf. also Cecil, *Myth of the Master Race*, p. 93 (attributing *Mythus* [Munich: Hoheneichen, 1930], p. 114).

56. Pois, *Rosenberg: Selected Writings*, pp. 114-15.

57. Quoted from Nova, *Rosenberg*, p. 128 (attributing *Mythus*, p. 603).

58. Pois, *Rosenberg: Selected Writings*, pp. 68-72. On Gal. 3.28 Rosenberg wrote: 'On the basis of this nihilism he [Paul] called for a belief in Christ which belies everything organic. This represented a complete reversal of the culture-creative values of Greece and Rome' (p. 71).

59. Pois, *Rosenberg: Selected Writings*, p. 70; cf. Cecil, *Myth of the Master Race*, p. 84 (attributing *Mythus*, p. 74).

Hitler's desire for some scientific approaches to anti-Semitism resulted in the organization of five anti-Jewish research institutes in the years between 1933 and the beginning of the war. In this, New Testament scholars, with their specialist knowledge of Judaism, played a special part. Gerhard Kittel, in particular, was drawn into the official circles of the *Reichsinstitut für Geschichte des neuen Deutschlands* (founded by Walter Frank by the direct order of Hitler and under the guidance of Rosenberg).

It is difficult to summarize briefly the situation for Christians in Germany under the Nazis (and some would suggest 95 per cent of the population continued to claim adherence to Christianity throughout the war). Hitler was personally hostile to Christianity and yet publicly willing to use Christian vocabulary and church leaders to bolster his position, especially in the early days after 1933. Even those who signed the Barmen Declaration of 1934, although resisting state interference in church affairs, and theologically opposed to Nazi ideology,⁶⁰ did not entirely resist the pervasive anti-Semitism of the era.⁶¹ On the other side of the *Kirchenkampf*, the *Deutsche Christen* were generally intent on making some common ground between Christianity and Nazi ideology.⁶²

4. Walter Grundmann

The Quest for the Aryan Jesus found probably its foremost advocate in the person and work of Walter Grundmann.⁶³ Born in Chemnitz (10 October 1906), the son of a railway official, Grundmann studied theology in Leipzig, Tübingen and Rostock.⁶⁴ He served as Gerhard Kittel's assistant on *TWNT* at Tübingen

60. See, e.g., Gutteridge, *Open Thy Mouth*; H. Iber, *Christlicher Glaube oder rassischer Mythos: die Auseinandersetzung der Bekennenden Kirche mit Alfred Rosenberg's 'Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts'* (Frankfurt: P. Lang, 1987).

61. V. Büttner, 'The Jewish Problem Becomes a Christian Problem', in D. Bankier (ed.), *Probing the Depths of German Antisemitism: German Society and the Persecution of the Jews, 1933–1941* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2000), pp. 431–59.

62. Johnson offers a good survey of different reactions in his 'Power Politics and New Testament Scholarship in the National Socialist Period'; cf. also I. Kershaw, 'The Persecution of the Jews and German Popular Opinion in the Third Reich', *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* (1981), pp. 264–74; O.D. Kulka, 'The Churches in the Third Reich and the "Jewish Question" in Light of Secret Nazi Reports on German "Public Opinion"', *Miscellanea historiae ecclesiasticae* 6.4 (ed. R. Lill, 1984), pp. 490–505.

63. Two others were A. Dinter (a Nazi agitator), *War Jesus Jude? Ein Nachweis auf Grund der Geschichte Galiläas, der Zeugnisse der Evangelien und Jesu eigener Lehre* (Leipzig: Verlag Deutsche Volkskirche, 1934); and more seriously, E. Hirsch, *Das Wesen des Christentums* (Weimar: Deutsche Christen, 1939), pp. 158–65 (to which Grundmann, as we shall see, makes repeated reference).

64. See especially S. Heschel, 'Nazifying Christian Theology: Walter Grundmann and the

from the autumn of 1930 through to the summer of 1932; during this period he both joined the Nazi party (1 December 1930) and completed his doctorate on *Der Begriff der Kraft in der neutestamentlichen Gedankenwelt* ('The Notion of Power in the Intellectual World of the New Testament'). This doctorate, completed under the supervision of Gerhard Kittel, was published in the series *Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament*, a series founded by Kittel's father and edited in 1932 by Albrecht Alt and Gerhard Kittel.⁶⁵ This dissertation served as the basis for his article on *dunamis* in *TWNT* (vol. II [1935], pp. 286-318), one of twenty-two articles (many connected with the idea of 'power') written by Grundmann for the first four *TWNT* volumes which were edited by Kittel (vols. I-IV, 1933-45).⁶⁶ Grundmann prepared the list of abbreviations for the first volume (with Gerhard Dellling), and helped in the correction of proofs. When he was married, Kittel offered accommodation during their honeymoon.

It is difficult not to note, with the obvious benefit of hindsight, that in Grundmann's articles for *TWNT* more space is given to Greek and Roman backgrounds than to Old Testament and Jewish ones; that the New Testament use of a word or concept is generally distinguished from its Jewish one—often in typical *TWNT* style—because of the impact of Christ.⁶⁷ On other occasions Grundmann more clearly anticipates his later work, for example in his insistence that Jesus 'does not aim to be a mere Jewish Messiah but the Lord of the world'; or that Jesus' teaching on love and the law 'carries with it the radical overthrow of Jewish nomism, and in some sense of Judaism itself as a religion. The cross is a natural outcome'.⁶⁸ Most striking of all is Grundmann's insertion of some comments from Georg Bertram into his own discussion of the use of *kakos* in the LXX of Proverbs:

While the term itself [i.e. *kakos*] is weak and non-committal, it is significant as an expression of the moral attitude of later Judaism with its hasty, general and infallible

Institute for the Study and Eradication of Jewish Influence on German Church Life', *Church History* 63 (1994), pp. 587-605 (Heschel is working on a monograph on Grundmann); very recently also P. von der Osten-Sacken, 'Walter Grundmann—Nationalsozialist, Kirchenmann und Theologe; mit einem Ausblick auf die Zeit nach 1945', in Peter von der Osten-Sacken (ed.), *Das missbrauchte Evangelium; Studien zu Theologie und Praxis der Thüringer Deutschen Christen* (Berlin: Institut Kirche und Judentum, 2002), pp. 280-312.

65. BWANT, 60; Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1932.

66. Volume I: *agathos, aggelos, amartanw, anagkazo, anegklhtos, dei, dexios*. Volume II: *decomai, dhmos, dokimos, dunamai, egkrateia, etoimos, eushmos*. Volume III: *tharreo, iscuo, kakos, kalos, kartereo, krazo*. Volume IV: *megas, memfomai*.

67. See, e.g., Grundmann's concluding reflections on sin in the New Testament (*TDNT*, I, p. 316), and his comments on power: 'like other New Testament concepts, the concept of power is given its decisive impress by the fact of Christ' (*dunamai*, *TDNT*, II, p. 299).

68. On *dexios*, *TDNT*, I, p. 39; on *megas*, *TDNT*, IV, p. 536.

judgments. The difference between Hellenistic Judaism and the Mas[oretes] as this is reflected in the translator of Pr[overbs] is true of readers of the whole LXX. The moral judgment of the Judaism of the period is just as superficial and schematic as appears in this translation. The dualism of world outlook invades the moral and religious realm and leads to contempt for all that is not proper to the 'righteous'. To say that a thing is 'bad' is to exclude it from the sphere of the righteous, who must not have anything to do with evil in either of its forms. There thus develops the rigidity of moral attitude which tends to characterize the legalistic piety of Judaism.⁶⁹

Grundmann's association with Kittel makes a brief excursion into Kittel's own approach to the *Judenfrage*, appropriate not least because of his ongoing reputation as the editor of the *TWNT*. It is notable that 'Kittel's tenure as editor of the *TWNT* coincided with his active participation as a member of the Nazi party'.⁷⁰ Kittel was an establishment figure, son of a prominent Old Testament scholar and himself New Testament professor at Tübingen. He was theologically less radical and therefore somewhat more ambiguous than Grundmann. Kittel's early research addressed the relationship between Jesus' teaching and that of the Rabbis, concluding (against a prevailing emphasis on early Christianity's Graeco-Roman milieu) that most of Jesus' teaching (and the vast bulk of the ethical material in the New Testament) was shared with Judaism.⁷¹ Despite a generosity towards Judaism unusual for his day,⁷² his membership of the NSDAP,⁷³ his address of July 1933 on *Die Judenfrage*,⁷⁴ his participation in the research group

69. On *kakos*, *TDNT*, III, p. 479.

70. A. Rosen, "'Familiarly Known as Kittel': The Moral Politics of the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament', in N.A. Harrowitz (ed.), *Tainted Greatness: Antisemitism and Cultural Heroes* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), pp. 37-50 (37).

71. R.P. Ericksen, *Theologians under Hitler: Gerhard Kittel, Paul Althaus, and Emanuel Hirsch* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985). G. Kittel, *Jesus und die Rabbinen* (Biblische Zeit und Streitfragen, IX/7; Berlin: Edwin Runge, 1914).

72. See L. Siegele-Wenschkewitz, 'The Relationship between Protestant Theology and Jewish Studies During the Weimar Republic', in O.D. Kulka and P.R. Mendes-Flohr (eds.), *Judaism and Christianity Under the Impact of National Socialism* (Jerusalem: Historical Society of Israel and the Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History, 1987), pp. 133-50.

73. NSDAP No. 3,243,036; joined 1 May 1933, according to R.P. Ericksen, 'Christians and the Holocaust: The Wartime Writings of Gerhard Kittel', in Y. Bauer (ed.), *Remembering for the Future. III. The Impact of the Holocaust and Genocide on Jews and Christians* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1989), pp. 2400-414; at p. 2413 n. 18. Kittel wore his Nazi membership badge for two lectures in Cambridge, entitled *Lexicographa Sacra*, dealing with the *Wörterbuch* (20-21 Oct. 1937), C.K. Barrett, 'Hoskyns and Davey', in *Jesus and the Word and Other Essays* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1995), pp. 55-62, at p. 59; cf. G.S. Wakefield, 'Biographical Introduction' to E.C. Hoskyns and F.N. Davey, *Crucifixion—Resurrection: The Pattern of the Theology and Ethics of the New Testament* (London: SPCK, 1981), pp. 1-81, at p. 65.

74. See Johnson, 'Power Politics', pp. 16-18, for a summary. Kittel discussed the option of annihilation but argued against it on practical grounds: '*Ausrottung* of Jewry by violence is not worthy of a serious discussion: if the systems of the Spanish inquisition and the Russian

considering the Jewish Question for the *Reichsinstitut für Geschichte des Neuen Deutschlands*,⁷⁵ his wartime writings on Judaism,⁷⁶ alongside his arrest by French police at the close of the war and subsequent conviction and 17-month imprisonment for ideological support for National Socialism, have all contributed to the view that Kittel, alongside other German theologians like Emanuel Hirsch, did play an important role in legitimizing anti-Semitism and thus 'making extermination of the Jews theologically respectable'.⁷⁷

While Kittel's own contributions to *TWNT* do not seem to reflect any problematic perspective, Vos argued that a number of articles by more radical scholars, including Grundmann and Bertram, contain significant examples of bias and anti-Semitic misrepresentation.⁷⁸ Kittel later claimed that his work reflected Christian and scholarly values, but as Ericksen's analysis of his wartime writings

pogroms did not manage it, it will certainly be impossible to achieve in the twentieth century' (cited from M. Weinrich, *Hitler's Professors* [New Haven: Yale University Press, new edn, 1999], p. 42). Kittel recommended a status of non-citizenship for Jews. Notably the published form was dedicated to 'My Confederates on the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Union of German Students (*Verein deutscher Studenten*) at Tübingen'—a patriotic group founded under the influence of Stoecker and Treitschke (*Open Thy Mouth*, pp. 17-18, p. 33 n. 62).

75. The aim of this institute was 'to create through public lectures a National Socialist scholarship, that is, a scholarship in line with our attitude and point of view, which can be placed at our disposal as a weapon in the fight against Jewry' (*Völkischer Beobachter* [Berlin, 2 Feb. 1939]—the official organ of the Nazi party edited by Rosenberg; cited in Ericksen, 'Wartime Writings', p. 2408). A summary of Kittel's lecture 'The Rise of Judaism and the Rise of the Jewish Question' at the opening of this research group on 19 Nov. 1936 is provided by L. Siegele-Wenschkewitz, 'Christian Responsibility and Guilt in the Holocaust [G. Kittel, W. Grundmann, German theological faculties]', in Y. Bauer (ed.), *Remembering for the Future. III. The Impact of the Holocaust and Genocide on Jews and Christians* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1989), pp. 2717-27, esp. 2720-22.

76. Kittel contributed many articles to the *Forschungen zur Judenfrage*, the journal edited by Walter Frank which published the work of the research group referred to above. See Ericksen, 'Wartime Writings'.

77. W.F. Albright, 'Gerhard Kittel and the Jewish Question in Antiquity', *History, Archaeology, and Christian Humanism* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1964), p. 229 (essay originally published in 1951); cf. also 'The War in Europe and the Future of Biblical Studies', in H.R. Willoughby (ed.), *The Study of the Bible Today and Tomorrow* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947), esp. p. 165. This perspective was promoted by M. Weinreich, *Hitler's Professors: The Part of Scholarship in Germany's Crimes against the Jewish People* (New York: YIVO, 1946), ch. 7; and is shared by Ericksen, Rosen, 'Moral Politics' and many others; cf. also M. Rese, 'Antisemitismus und neutestamentliche Forschung: Anmerkungen zu dem Thema "Gerhard Kittel und die Judenfrage"', *Evangelische Theologie* 39 (1979), pp. 557-70. For a more positive assessment see J.R. Porter, 'The Case of Gerhard Kittel', *Theology* L/329 (Nov. 1947), pp. 401-406.

78. J.S. Vos, 'Antijudaismus-Antisemitismus im Theologischen Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament', *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* 38 (1984), pp. 89-110.

shows, the emphases placed on (a) Judaism's universal eschatology expressed as 'the Jewish goal to take over the whole world', (b) the degeneracy of Judaism after the Old Testament period and the consequent separation of Judaism from the Old Testament (which could therefore be preserved for use in the Christian church precisely because it was not Jewish), and (c) the supposed brutality of Jewish attitudes to non-Jews, all clearly served to support Nazi rhetoric, and even practice, in relation to contemporary Judaism.⁷⁹ Ericksen's introduction incorporates his conclusion:

This paper will not argue that Christianity was directly responsible for the Holocaust. The main architects and perpetrators of that crime, beginning with Adolf Hitler, operated on the basis of a racial or biological antisemitism about one hundred years old. Their motives and attitudes were not Christian. Christian anti-semitism, with its two-thousand-year history, is recognizably different from the racial version. However, two thousand years of prejudice against and mistreatment of Jews by the Christian community certainly predisposed large numbers of Christians in Germany to accept hostility toward Jews as manifested by Hitler. Gerhard Kittel, a reputable Christian theologian, actively tried to identify and establish the community of interest between National Socialist and Christian views. His career and influence illustrate an indirect relationship between Christianity and the Holocaust, and this helps explain how some Christians could actively participate in the crime while others quietly acquiesced in its commission.⁸⁰

Despite his involvement with *TWNT* Grundmann does not appear to have kept in any close personal contact with Kittel—their church life, theology and piety were quite different. Grundmann moved from Tübingen to a parish in Saxony, where he became a leader among the *Deutsche Christen*, and was given the title *Oberkirchenrat* by Landesbishop Friedrich Coch (an enthusiast for the *Deutsche Christen*). He edited the monthly journal for the National Socialist Ministers League of Saxony, *Christenkreuz und Hakenkreuz* (Cross and Swastika). Grundmann was responsible for drawing up 'Twenty-Eight Theses of the Saxon People's Church for the Internal Development of the German Protestant Church', which was adopted by the Saxon Landessynode on 10 December 1933 and was to become one of the controlling expressions of the whole *Deutsche Christen* movement.⁸¹ Under Grundmann's leadership the Saxon *Deutsche Christen* united

79. Ericksen, 'Wartime Writings'. L. Siegele-Wenschkewitz is stronger than this, arguing that Kittel carried out a fundamental about-face between 1933 and 1936 which amounted to 'an approach to, indeed a real accommodation to National-Socialism' ('Christian Responsibility and Guilt in the Holocaust', p. 2720).

80. Ericksen, 'Wartime Writings', p. 2401.

81. K.-P. Adam, 'Der theologische Werdegang Walter Grundmanns bis zum Erscheinen der "28 Thesen der sächsischen Volkskirche zum inneren Aufbau der Deutschen Evangelischen Kirche" Ende 1933', in L. Siegele-Wenschkewitz (ed.), *Christlicher Antijudaismus und Antisemitismus: theologische und kirchliche Programme Deutscher Christen* (Frankfurt: Haag & Herchen, 1994), pp. 171-99. Siegele-Wenschkewitz also notes that the theological

with the radical Thüringer *Deutsche Christen* movement in 1936. The general aim was to give unqualified support to Nazi government policies and to create a niche for Christianity in the new world order. By this time Grundmann had become a supporting member of the SS (in 1934).

In 1936 Grundmann was recruited to the theological faculty at Jena (in Thuringia) by the Rector, Wolf Meyer-Erlach, so that the faculty could become a stronghold of National Socialism.⁸² He was appointed Professor of New Testament and *Völkische* Theology at Jena on 1 November 1936 (ahead of Gunther Bornkamm, who had confessing church sympathies), and Adolf Hitler signed his appointment document.⁸³ In 1937 Meyer-Erlach prophesied that Grundmann's scholarship 'will be path-breaking for a National Socialist perspective in the realm of theology'.⁸⁴ Grundmann's appointment reflects a wider movement in Protestant theological faculties during the first three years of the Third Reich, that is, a rapid turnover of academic staff with the result that by 1937 *Deutsche Christen* members occupied all the deanships, over one-third of professorships and half the lectureships.⁸⁵ In 1938 Grundmann was invited to join the fledgling *Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas*, one of the initial group of 25 European members (G. Kittel was the only German scholar on the committee).

5. Grundmann and the Institute at Eisenach

There are some indications of the impact of Nazi ideology on the faculty at Jena, for example the study of Hebrew was made optional after Grundmann urged its abolition and a number of doctoral dissertations reflected Nazi interests. Nevertheless, the primary realm for Grundmann's activity was in a separate church-based research institute. In 1939 the *Reichskirchenminister*, in order to secure

faculty at Leipzig drew up an exhaustive response to the 28 Theses which concluded that they 'contradict in important points not only the letter but also the spirit of the confessional books' ('Christian Responsibility and Guilt in the Holocaust', p. 2723).

82. W. Schenk, 'Der Jenaer Jesus; zu Werk und Wirken des völkischen Theologen Walter Grundmann und seiner Kollegen', in Peter von der Osten-Sacken (ed.), *Das missbrauchte Evangelium; Studien zu Theologie und Praxis der Thüringer Deutschen Christen* (Berlin: Institut Kirche und Judentum, 2002), pp. 167-279.

83. Heschel, 'Nazifying Christian Theology', pp. 591-93 for details.

84. Cited in Heschel, 'Nazifying Christian Theology', p. 593.

85. Heschel, 'Nazifying Christian Theology', p. 589, dependent on D. Bergen, *One Reich, One People, One Church: The German Christian Movement and the People's Church, 1932-1945* (PhD dissertation, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1991), pp. 119-20. Cf. also L. Siegele-Wenschkewitz and C. Nicolaisen (eds.), *Theologische Fakultäten im Nationalsozialismus* (Arbeiten zur kirchlichen Zeitgeschichte, 18; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993).

unity among the *Deutsche Christen* churches, had commissioned 'a position-paper, describing the ideological and theological basis for agreement and future cooperation'.⁸⁶ This Godesburg Declaration, issued by a consortium of DC church representatives (the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft deutsch-christlicher Kirchenregierungen*) on 4 April 1939, particularly addresses the relationship between Christianity and Judaism (para. 3b):

Did Christianity arise out of Judaism being thus its continuation and completion, or does it stand in opposition to Judaism? To this question we respond: Christian faith is the unbridgeable religious contradiction to Judaism.⁸⁷

The Declaration was printed in the statute book of the German Protestant Church along with an addendum announcing the intention to establish an Institute for implementing the Declaration.⁸⁸ This institute was to be known as the *Institut zur Erforschung und Beseitigung des jüdischen Einflusses auf das deutsche kirchliche Leben* (The Institute for the Study and Eradication of Jewish Influence from German Church Life).⁸⁹

The Institute was founded in Eisenach on 6 May 1939 under the leadership of Grundmann and Siegfried Leffler (one of the founders of the DC movement in Thüringen). Grundmann gave an address at the opening ceremony on *Die*

86. Siegele-Wenschkewitz, 'Christian Responsibility and Guilt in the Holocaust', p. 2722, drawing on L. Wenschkewitz, 'Politische Versuche einer Ornung der Deutschen Evangelischen Kirche durch den den Reichskirchenminister 1937 bis 1939', in H. Brunotte (ed.), *Zur Geschichte des Kirchenkampfes Gesammelte Aufsätze*, II (Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Kirchenkampfes, 26; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971), pp. 121-38.

87. Cited from Siegele-Wenschkewitz, 'Christian Responsibility and Guilt in the Holocaust', p. 2723; full text in J. Beckmann (ed.), *Kirchliches Jahrbuch für die evangelische Kirche in Deutschland 1933-1944* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verl.-Haus, 1948), p. 293.

88. *Gesetzblatt der deutschen evangelischen Kirche* 5 (6 April 1939), p. 1 (Herschel, 'Nazifying Christian Theology', p. 591). For contemporary responses to the Declaration and the founding of the Institute see S. Herschel, 'Making Nazism a Christian Movement: The Development of a Christian Theology of Antisemitism during the Third Reich', in B.R. Rubenstein and M. Berenbaum (eds.), *What Kind of God? Essays in Honor of Richard L. Rubenstein* (Studies in the Shoah, 11; Lanham, NY and London: University Press of America, 1995), pp. 159-74, esp. 162-63.

89. The place of *Beseitigung* ('disposal', or 'removal', sometimes 'Eradication') in the title of the institute is somewhat disputed (e.g. Marshall), see S. Herschel, 'Nazifying Christian Theology', p. 594, for brief discussion and defence of Eradication as part of official title and aims of the institute. See further: P. von der Osten-Sacken, '"Die grosse Lästörung"; Beobachtungen zur Gründung des Eisenacher Instituts und zeitgenössische Dokumente zur kritischen Wertung seiner Arbeit sowie zur Beurteilung Walter Grundmanns', in Peter von der Osten-Sacken (ed.), *Das missbrauchte Evangelium; Studien zu Theologie und Praxis der Thüringer Deutschen Christen* (Berlin: Institut Kirche und Judentum, 2002), pp. 313-47; A. Henze, 'Walter Grundmann and the Institut zur Erforschung und Beseitigung des jüdischen Einflusses auf des deutsche kirchliche Leben', in R.P. Ericksen (ed.), *German Professional Groups and the Holocaust* (forthcoming).

Entjudung des religiösen Leben als Aufgabe deutscher Theologie und Kirche ('The Dejudaisation of the Religious Life as the Task of German Theology and Church').⁹⁰ In this lecture Grundmann compared the present time of upheaval to the Protestant Reformation: the recovery of eternal truths leads to the dissolution of previously self-evident structures. The new truth of the moment is the *völkische* truth that every one must understand themselves as a member of a *Volk*, 'an organic whole originating in race, bound to the land, and formed and impressed by its destiny'. The discovery of this truth took place within the context of opposition to the humanism of the French Revolution, behind which stands the Jews. 'For this reason the opposition to Judaism is the very foundation of the recognition and realization of the *völkische* idea and thus of the start of the new epoch in the history of the world. For this reason, the battle against the Jews is the irrevocable obligation of the German People.' Grundmann attempted to repudiate the salvation-historical monopoly of the Old Testament: the Old Testament is racially alien and in any case German pre-history is also a locus for the *heilsgeschichtliche* workings of God.⁹¹

The following extract from a promotional paper, which summarized the conclusions of Grundmann's lecture, is quoted (in some form) by several writers.⁹²

Its foundation rests on the conviction that Jewish influence in all areas of German life, the religious and ecclesiastical included, must be uncovered and broken.

Christianity has nothing in common with Judaism. It has developed, from the message of Christ, in *opposition to Judaism* with which it has continually had to do battle... Because in the course of the historical development, degenerate Jewish influences have also been at work in Christianity, the *De-Judaizing of the Church and Christianity* becomes an unavoidable and central obligation for contemporary ecclesiastical life: it is *the presupposition for the future of Christianity*. With this goal, the Institute has the task of identifying, by thorough scientific research, the forms and extent of Jewish influence in church life in all its particulars. Leading men of scholarship and practical ecclesiastical life are joined together here in close cooperation, by the firm will to fulfill this task. On the basis of the results of this scholarly research, it will then become possible, to overcome everything based on Jewish influence in the ecclesiastical life of the German People, and to open the way for a faith, defined by the unfalsified message of Christ, to perform its service to the German People in the formation of its religious community.

90. 6,000 copies were published through the Deutsche Christen publishing house in Weimar (Herschel, 'Nazifying Christian Theology', p. 591).

91. Summary adapted from Siegele-Wenschkewitz, 'Christian Responsibility and Guilt in the Holocaust', p. 2724; Gutteridge, *Open Thy Mouth*, p. 197.

92. Here from Siegele-Wenschkewitz, 'Christian Responsibility and Guilt in the Holocaust', p. 2723 (text in J. Beckmann [ed.], *Kirchliches Jahrbuch für die evangelische Kirche in Deutschland 1933–1944*, pp. 296–97); cf. Johnson, 'Power Politics', pp. 7–8 for a briefer extract.

It is clear that the aims of this Institute coincided with Nazi policy in general.⁹³ That this was the clear intention is expressed in Grundmann's report on the activities of the Institute for 1940: 'our work has all in all one sole purpose, that of service in the renewal of German piety within the victorious Führer's Greater German Reich'.⁹⁴ In a letter to the Ministry of Propaganda (31 May 1941) Grundmann wrote:

The activities of the Institut tend to develop the scientific conclusions from the race and folk conceptions of the National Socialist Weltanschauung for the religious sector of German life. The men united in the Institut, as National Socialists, from the very outset took this stand as opposed to the previous theology and science of religion, which do not accept these conceptions and therefore are barren for the religious future of the German people.⁹⁵

This adulation was not always reciprocated by the Nazi hierarchy. In September 1942 Martin Bormann insisted that the Institute did not have official sponsorship, and the Institute was warned not to refer to the Nazi party in its literature. On more than one occasion Grundmann applied for official recognition, but this was refused and the institute remained church-based and church-resourced. Weinrich cites an internal note from the Propaganda Ministry:

The endeavors of this organization and its leading men such as Prof. Grundmann are well meant. But there is no interest either in assimilating (angleichen) Christian teaching in national socialism or in proving that a re-shaped (umgestaltetes) Christianity is not fundamentally Jewish (keine jüdische Grundhaltung aufweist).⁹⁶

This disdain and even suspicion from the Nazi hierarchy motivated the work of Grundmann. In March 1941 he noted, 'Our Volk, which stands above all else in a struggle against the satanic powers of world Judaism for the order and life of this world, dismisses Jesus, because it cannot struggle against the Jews and open its heart to the king of the Jews.'⁹⁷

93. The ethos is chillingly similar to the ethos of the Wannsee Protocol, the proceedings of the secret meeting in January 1942 which prepared for 'the final solution of the Jewish question' and which called for both the forced expulsion of Jews from the individual sectors of life of the German people (*Lebensgebiete*); and the forced expulsion of Jews from the living space of the German people (*Lebensraum*). See, e.g., R. Hilberg, *Documents of Destruction: Germany and Jewry 1933–1945* (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1971), p. 90.

94. *Verbandsmitteilungen des Institutes zur Erforschung des jüdischen Einflusses auf das deutsche kirchliche Leben*, Eisenach, Nr 2/3 (1940), p. 37; cited in Gutteridge, *Open Thy Mouth*, p. 199.

95. Weinrich, *Hitler's Professors*, p. 63 (facsimile of original on p. 246).

96. Weinrich, *Hitler's Professors*, p. 67.

97. From Heschel, 'Nazifying Christian Theology', p. 597: the opening of his paper at an Institute Conference. Even in 1942 Grundmann wrote: 'A healthy Volk must and will reject the Jews in every form... If someone is upset about Germany's treatment of the Jews, Germany has the historical justification and historical authorization for the fight against the Jews

The work of this institute consisted of an academic side—annual conferences and published proceedings alongside special monographs; and a practical side—the production of material for use in churches. The academic conferences attracted scholars from a range of universities. Siegele-Wenschkewitz lists 23 university professors from 11 different faculties (including New Testament scholars: Herbert Preisker from Breslau, Georg Bertram from Giessen, Carl Schneider from Königsberg, Gerhard Dellling and Johannes Leipolt from Leipzig, Adolf Hofmann from Vienna).⁹⁸ Heschel notes in addition that bishops, pastors, students and laity were drawn from Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Scandinavia (Hugo Odeberg coordinated a group of 30 academics from Sweden, Norway and Denmark who participated in two conferences).⁹⁹ The proceedings of the conferences were edited by Grundmann as *Germanentum, Christentum und Judentum: Studien zur Erforschung ihres gegenseitigen Verhältnisses*.¹⁰⁰

The practical work of the Institute provided liturgical material in large quantities for *Deutsche Christen* churches.¹⁰¹ Three things are particularly worth noting:

1. The Institute's hymnbook (*Grosser Gott Wir Loben Dich*, 1940) lacked Jewish references (e.g. to Jerusalem or Zion) and Hebrew words (e.g. Hallelujah, Amen, Hosanna etc.). 100,000 copies were produced (and distributed) for the first edition.

2. A de-Judaized version of the New Testament (*Das Volkstestament*), of which only the first part, *Die Botschaft Gottes*, based on the synoptic gospels, appeared (prepared by Grundmann and others, 1940).¹⁰² A description of this in the back of Grundmann's *Jesus der Galiläer*, describes it as 'A translation and Germanisation of the oldest Jesus tradition, that was used by the three earliest

on its side.' W. Grundmann and K.F. Euler, Foreword to *Das religiöse Gesicht des Judentums: Entstehung und Art* (Leipzig: G. Wigand, 1942); cited from S. Heschel, 'When Jesus was an Aryan: The Protestant Church and Antisemitic Propaganda', in R.P. Ericksen and S. Heschel (eds.), *Betrayal: German Churches and the Holocaust* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), pp. 68-89 (here from p. 69).

98. Siegele-Wenschkewitz, 'Christian Responsibility and Guilt in the Holocaust', pp. 2723-24.

99. Heschel, 'Nazifying Christian Theology', pp. 595, 598.

100. (Leipzig: G. Wigand, 1940, 1942, 1943); see Siegele-Wenschkewitz, 'Christian Responsibility and Guilt in the Holocaust', p. 2727 n. 22, for complete list including monographs published under the aegis of the Institute. See also Heschel, 'Making Nazism a Christian Movement', p. 164, for titles of some lectures.

101. On these see especially D.L. Bergen, *Twisted Cross: The German Christian Movement in the Third Reich* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

102. Published as *Die Botschaft Gottes, Hrsg. vom Inst. S. Erforschung d. Jüdischen Einflusses auf d. Deutsche Kirchliche Leben, T. 1* (Leipzig: Wigand in Komm, 1940).

Gospels as well as John's Gospel'.¹⁰³ This advertisement also links the production to Grundmann's own research, claiming that it represents the climax of a century of scientific study which can now restore the Jesus tradition from the Judaizing damage inflicted on it by the early Palestinian Christian community. Based most strongly on Mark, this work offers not a narrative, but a series of sayings of Jesus. There is no historical setting; no reference to Jesus' Jewishness or his Davidic descent, to Jerusalem, the Temple, the Old Testament; no resurrection appearance in Jerusalem (only Galilee). An afterword describes the procedure: the gospels have been freed from Jewish-Christian accretions and from 'words that stem from the Palestinian congregation but were wrongly attributed to Jesus, because they are contradicted through the behaviour of Jesus'.¹⁰⁴ The first edition was again 100,000 copies, and within six months a further 100,000 copies were also sold.

Several earlier attempts to provide Nazi-friendly translations of portions of the Bible had been made.¹⁰⁵ Ludwig Mueller, a leading DC who became Hitler's main advisor on Church matters, and Reich Bishop, published a 'translation' of the Sermon on the Mount in 1936 which was an 'experiment of a new and up-to-date Germanization' so that the sayings of the Sermon on the Mount could be translated 'into our present form of thinking and speaking in such a way that it can be "understood" in a new way, i.e., grasped with a German heart'. Characteristic of the approach is Müller's comment: 'Mercy is an un-German conception. The word "mercy" is one of the numerous terms of the Bible with which we can have nothing to do'.¹⁰⁶

Sometime later Heinz Weidemann, the Bishop of Bremen, produced *Das Evangelium Johannes Deutsch*. This involved a radical rewriting of the Fourth Gospel, removing references to Moses, the prophets, Jewish history and geography. The character of this 'translation' can be observed in two passages.¹⁰⁷ In the first, the theory of a non-Jewish Galilee was introduced into Jn 1.45-46:

103. 'Eine Übersetzung und Verdeutschung der in den drei ersten Evangelien verwendeten alten Jesustradition sowie des Johannesevangeliums' (W. Grundmann, *Jesus der Galiläer und das Judentum* [Leipzig: G. Wigand, 1940], inside back cover).

104. Bergen, *Twisted Cross*, p. 163; cf. also Gutteridge, *Open Thy Mouth*, p. 198.

105. For this see L. Thornton, 'The New Light: German Christians and Biblical Distortion during the Third Reich [antisemitism in gospel translations]', *Fides et Historia* 18 (1986), pp. 32-43 (himself dependent upon an unattributed article: 'The Germanisation of the New Testament by Bishop Ludwig Müller and Bishop Weidemann', *Friends of Europe* 64 (1938), pp. 25-30).

106. From the Preface: L. Müller, *Deutsche Gottesworte* (Weimar: Deutsche Christen, 1936), cited here from Thornton, 'New Light', p. 34.

107. H. Weidemann, *Das Evangelium Johannes Deutsch* (Bremen: H.M. Hauschild, 1936), cited from Thornton, 'New Light', pp. 37-38; cf. also Bergen, *Twisted Cross*.

The Galilean Philip meets the Jew Nathanael and calls to him: 'We have found the Lord of whose coming your prophets have spoken of old: Jesus, the son of Joseph, from Nazareth'. The other answered: 'From Nazareth? Since when comes salvation from the heathen?' Philip answers: 'convince yourself with your own eyes!'

In the second, Jn 6.32 is rendered as a general critique of the Old Testament:

Jesus answered: 'I tell you the truth, these old stories which ye are always invoking, help you not at all. My father alone gives you the true bread of God.'

3. The Institute's catechism (*Deutsche mit Gott: Ein deutsches Glaubensbuch*, 1941). This proclaimed:

Jesus of Nazareth in the Galilee demonstrates in his message and behavior a spirit which is opposed in every way to that of Judaism. The fight between him and the Jews became so bitter that it led to his crucifixion. So Jesus cannot have been a Jew. Until today the Jews persecute Jesus and all who follow him with unreconcilable [*sic*] hatred. By contrast, Aryans in particular can find answers in him to their ultimate questions. So he became the savior of the Germans.¹⁰⁸

It is difficult at this distance, and with the resources available, to estimate the impact of such materials. Nevertheless it is clear that Grundmann regarded his work as academic director of the institute as contributing to the Nazi war effort. The foreword to the second volume of conference proceedings concludes with the motto: 'Now and always for the Reich and its Führer'.¹⁰⁹ In 1943 he wrote:

In the fateful battle of the Greater Germany, which is a fateful battle against World Jewry and against all destructive and nihilistic forces, the work of the Institute gives the tools for the overthrow of all religious foreignness...and serves the belief of the Reich.¹¹⁰

6. Grundmann and Jesus the Galilean

This is no less true of Grundmann's monograph, *Jesus der Galiläer und das Judentum* (1940),¹¹¹ which, although presented as a serious scientific work

108. *Deutsche mit Gott: Ein deutsches Glaubensbuch* (Weimar: Deutsche Christen, 1941), p. 46 (cited from Heschel, 'When Jesus was an Aryan', p. 73).

109. Johnson, 'Power Politics', p. 7; cf. Heschel, 'Nazifying Christian Theology', p. 594

110. Vos, 'Antijudaismus-Antisemitismus im TWNT', p. 95; cited from Rosen, 'Familiarly Known as Kittel', p. 46.

111. Summarized in Johnson, 'Power Politics', pp. 8-11; cf. also Heschel, 'Making Nazism a Christian Movement', pp. 166-67. I know of only one review of the book, by Hans von Soden (University of Marburg) in *Deutsches Pfarrerblatt* 46 13/14 (5 April 1942), pp. 49-51; reprinted as 'Jesus der Galiläer und das Judentum', in H. von Campenhausen (ed.), *Urchristentum und Geschichte: Gesammelte Aufsätze und Vorträge. Band 1: Grundsätzliches und Neuesamentliches* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1951), pp. 150-58. This same volume also reprints a critical review of *Die Botschaft Gottes*, the Institute's Germanization of the authentic Jesus tradition.

(‘ernster wissenschaftlicher Arbeit’, from the Foreword) is no less explicitly rooted in the contemporary struggle of the German *Volk*, in their fundamental opposition to Judaism.¹¹² This struggle is complicated by the association between the German religious life and Christianity on the one hand, and the problem of Christianity’s origin in Palestine on the other. The question of the relationship between Christianity and Judaism, and between the founder of Christianity and Judaism, is then a fundamental one. The thing that stands between the Christian who believes in Jesus of Nazareth and the Jew is the cross—the cross in which Jewish opposition to Jesus came to a climax, was itself the outcome of Jesus’ own sharp opposition to and rejection of Judaism.

The introduction clarifies the question of Jesus’ relation to Judaism into two subsidiary questions: ‘How does Jesus in his preaching and as a historical phenomenon stand in relation to Judaism? Was Jesus himself a Jew?’ (p. 3). The book seeks to answer these questions in five sections.

In the first major section, *I. Jesus and the Jewish Religion*, Grundmann begins by emphasizing Jesus’ appearance as a Galilean teacher, his calling of a group of Galilean disciples within the broader context that saw Galilean Judaism as less pure than Judean Judaism. Importance is also attached to Jesus’ opposition to his family, who stood within a strongly Jewish ‘confession’. Grundmann then discusses Jesus’ view of the three pillars of Judaism (from *m. Aboth* 1.2): the Law, the Temple, works of mercy; arguing (as he does in his article on *megas* in the *TWNT*) that Jesus’ teaching on love expresses an opposition to the Law. Grundmann argues that Jesus stood opposed to the Torah and Cultus-centred Judaism of his own day. Early Jewish Christianity had created the Torah-observant picture of Jesus that one finds in Matthew, but Jesus himself stood in opposition to Torah. Grundmann accepted that Jesus’ preaching centred on the Kingdom of God (*Das Reich Gottes*), but argued that Jesus did not accept the earthly-political conception of God’s reign as a realm ruled by a Jewish king which characterized much of contemporary Judaism; he was somewhat closer to the apocalyptic vision of God’s rule as transcendent reality (ultimately derived from Zoroastrianism, a non-Semitic religion), but focused on the internal rule of God in the human heart (something foreign to Judaism). Jesus also differed from and opposed contemporary Jewish expectations of a nationalistic Messiah (developing an issue raised in his article on *dexios* for *TWNT*¹¹³).

Jesus’ independence from and even opposition to Jewish ideas raises the question posed in the major section of the book, *II. The Historical Setting for the Appearance of Jesus* (‘Der geschichtliche Ort des Auftretens Jesu’). Here

112. ‘Der deutsche völkische Aufbruch ist aus dem Gegensatz gegen das Judentum’ (*Jesus der Galiläer*, p. 1).

113. This issue is also addressed in Grundmann’s article, ‘Das Messiasproblem’, in *Germanentum, Christentum und Judentum*, II (1942), pp. 381–412.

Grundmann introduces the various groups within Judaism. In particular Jesus stands in stark opposition to Pharisaic loyalty to the Torah, both written and oral, and ritual purity. Galilee in particular was home both to ultra-nationalist Zealots and to substantial numbers of 'the people of the land', *Am ha-Aretz*, whose apocalyptic piety stood outside the Pharisaic mainstream. Reflected in the piety of the Magnificat (Lk. 1.46-56), the *Am ha-Aretz* trusted in God the Lord independently of Torah, and had an apocalyptic hope for a future redemption. This was the circle from which Jesus undoubtedly came, as did the sinners he called to follow him.

The third major section is entitled, *III. The Uniqueness of Jesus* ('Die Eigenart Jesu'). Jesus' distinctiveness consists in three related concepts. Essentially this consisted in his own self-awareness as the unique Son of the Father as expressed in his thanksgiving to God in Mt. 11.25-30 (to which Grundmann devoted a 15-page appendix defending its authenticity as a saying of Jesus), and his use of 'Abba'. This unique and intimate filial consciousness is drawn not from Jewish messianism but from Jesus' own experience in his baptism. So fundamental is this to Grundmann that two separate studies complemented his argument at this point—the first arguing that Jesus' divine sonship is direct and unmediated and not paralleled in or derived from Judaism; the second arguing that the New Testament writers had misunderstood this and re-introduced Jewish concepts to describe and proclaim Jesus as Son of God.¹¹⁴ This unique filial consciousness gave rise to Jesus' preaching of the Rule of God as a present reality in his ministry and as an internal reality for those who would respond to his call. To some extent Jesus is a type of 'charismatic' leader.

The fourth section focuses on *IV. Jesus' Controversy with Judaism* ('Die Auseinandersetzung Jesu mit dem Judentum'). Here Grundmann discusses Jesus' relationship to the Old Testament, acknowledging that he did in fact cite from the prophets and the psalms but denying that it was fundamental to Jesus. He draws attention to the numerous controversy stories which show Jesus in opposition to the Pharisees and others. Jesus' call, 'Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden' (Mt. 11.28) is to be understood as a call to come out from Judaism, to depart from Torah observance, and to join in filial relationship to God. The negative reaction of the Jews to Jesus, perceiving his rejection of Torah, his mission to the people of the land, led ultimately to Jesus' death, to the cross which stands as the sign of mutual rejection.

114. W. Grundmann, *Die Gotteskindschaft in der Geschichte Jesu und ihre religionsgeschichtlichen Voraussetzungen* (Studien zu Deutscher Theologie und Frömmigkeit, Band 1; Weimar: Verlag Deutsche Christen, 1938); *Aufnahme und Deutung der Botschaft Jesu im Urchristentum* (Studien zu Deutscher Theologie und Frömmigkeit, Band 3; Weimar: Verlag Deutsche Christen, 1941).

Grundmann finally turns to the specific question of the ancestry of Jesus, in *V. The Problem of Jesus' Ethnic Identity* ('Das Problem der völkischen Zugehörigkeit Jesu'). The fundamental question is posed: 'Is Jesus of Nazareth, whose opposition to Judaism in his preaching and in the outcome of his whole life and history is pure and clear, actually, by ethnic identity, a Jew?' Three problems are crucial here: the nature of the Galilee, some problems in the infancy narratives, and problems associated with Jesus' genealogy. On the first subject Grundmann focused on the racial nature of the Galilee. Aryan tribes had been present since 1400 BCE and were never expelled by Israelite settlement. After the Assyrian conquest Galilee was an Assyrian province basically free of Jews (following here work by A. Alt). Later evidence suggests Hellenistic rather than Jewish dominance. Herod the Great settled cavalry veterans around Carmel (Josephus, *Ant.* XV.294); some of whom were Germans (see XVII.198: this reference proves that some of Herod's army were Germans). The parables of Jesus illustrate the kind of absentee kingship which characterized the changing fortunes of the Galilee, under either Egyptian or Syrian control (in both cases the influence is hellenistic). Jews referred to it as 'Galilee of the aliens' (1 Macc. 5.15) or 'Galilee of the Gentiles' (Isa. 8.23; Mt. 4.15). Galilee had experienced the rule of so many different nations (Assyrians, Babylonians, Medes and Persians, Alexander the Great, the Hellenistic rulers of Egypt and Syria) that the racial ancestry of any particular Galilean remains an open question.

Around 150 BCE Simon the Maccabean took the Jews of Galilee to Judea (1 Macc. 5.23; cf. 5.17) so that by the middle of the second century BCE Galilee was free of Jews.¹¹⁵ Then, under John Hyrcanus I and his followers, around the turn of the century, Galilee was subjugated by the Jews and forcibly converted to Judaism; as Josephus said of Aristobulus I, 'he conferred many benefits on his country, for he made war on the Itureans and acquired a good part of their territory for Judaea and compelled the inhabitants, if they wished to remain in their country, to be circumcised and to live in accordance with the laws of the Jews' (Josephus, *Ant.* XIII.318). The Galileans were incorporated into the Jewish religious community, they became Jews by 'confession', but not in terms of their racial identity.¹¹⁶ Many Galileans (among whom Jesus and his followers should be counted) would have spoken Greek along with a distinctive Aramaic (cf. Mt. 26.73), and Hellenistic culture would have been widely known. The conclusion offered by Grundmann is that Jesus was most probably not a Jew at all, but belonged, in a *völkisch* sense to one of the distinctively Galilean streams, even though his family held to the Jewish 'confession'.¹¹⁷

115. 'Um 150 v. Chr. ist also Galiläa von Juden im eigentlichen Sinne frei' (p. 169).

116. 'Sie wurden wohl ihrer konfessionellen, aber nicht ihrer völkischen Zugehörigkeit nach Juden' (p. 170).

117. The conclusion is emphasized: 'Wenn also die galiläische Herkunft Jesu unbezweifelbar ist, so folgt auf Grund der eben angestellten Erörterung daraus, dass er mit grösster

Some further arguments concerning the birth narratives can be stated more briefly. Jesus was actually born not in Bethlehem in Judea (a Davidic association which corresponds to the *Tendenz* of the evangelists); but in another Bethlehem near Nazareth in the Galilee. Matthew's genealogy, with its four Gentile women (Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba; 1.1-17), suggests that this must also (in Matthew's view) have been true of Mary as well (a non-Jewish Galilean).¹¹⁸ if David could have non-Jewish female ancestors then it was no objection to Jesus' Messianic status that he had a non-Jewish mother. Furthermore, confusion about the identity of Jesus' grandfather (Mt. 1.16: Jacob; Lk. 3.23: Heli) coincides with Jewish traditions that Jesus was the son of Panthera, and the early Christian tradition preserved in Epiphanius (attributed by him to Origen) that Joseph's father was known as Panther (a completely non-Jewish name). This suggests to Grundmann that the forced conversion of Jesus' ancestors took place during the generation of his grandfather: Panther/Jacob.¹¹⁹ Jesus was therefore the son of Galilean parents, neither of whom came from Jewish stock, and the conclusion follows that 'Jesus was not a Jew'.

It is hardly worth entering into any thorough engagement with the arguments of Grundmann after all these years. Contemporary response is rather difficult to gauge. Von Soden's review is highly critical, pointing out the peculiar juxtaposition of the claim to be conducting straightforward scientific criticism and the dependence on groundless arguments (that Mary was a Gentile, and that Panther was the name of Jesus' grandfather). Perhaps, as we've already suggested, some found it persuasive.

Grundmann was conscripted in 1943 and saw military service in the East. The institute continued its work, under the leadership of Georg Bertram of the University of Giessen, until the end of the war. Despite attempts by Grundmann and others it was closed down. Bertram attempted to argue that the work of the Institute was 'neither politically determined, nor expressed politically'; Grundmann argued simply that the research of the Institute had concluded that Jesus

Wahrscheinlichkeit kein Jude gewesen ist, vielmehr völkisch einer der in Galiläa vorhandenen Strömungen angehört hat. Dass er wie die meisten Galiläer von seiner Familie her jüdischer Konfession gewesen ist, die er selber aber restlos durchstossen hat, hatten wir bereits festgestellt' (p. 175).

118. 'Maria war eine galiläische Nichtjüdin, war dem Judentum gegenüber in der gleichen Lage wie die vier im Stammbaum erwähnten Frauen' (p. 196).

119. The discussion of Jesus' parentage is (as von Soden noted, 'Jesus der Galiläer', pp. 151-52) heavily indebted to Emanuel Hirsch, a noted Nazi theologian, whose book *Das Wesen des Christentums* (1939) is footnoted on each of the five pages in this section. On Hirsch see R.P. Erickson, *Theologians under Hitler: Gerhard Kittel, Paul Althaus, and Emanuel Hirsch* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); J. Forstman, *Christian Faith in Dark Times: Theological Conflicts in the Shadow of Hitler* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992).

was independent of the Old Testament and stood in opposition to the Judaism of his day. Since non-German scholars had come to similar conclusions meant that it should not be taken as merely reflecting *Zeittendenzen*, but was rather serious scholarship.¹²⁰

It is worth noting that, although dismissed from his professorship after the war, Grundmann continued to write and to teach in theological seminaries in Eisenach and Leipzig. He became the academic advisor to the *Evangelische Verlagsanstalt*, the only Protestant publisher in East Germany. He contributed commentaries on Mark (1959), Luke (1964), Matthew (1968) and Jude and 2 Peter (1974) to the *Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament* series: the main source available to East German pastors and students. Together with Johannes Leipoldt he published a three-volume collection of texts and pictures as *Umwelt des Urchristentums*.¹²¹ In the year before he died he wrote another book on *Jesus von Nazareth*.¹²²

It is interesting that no trace of any reference to his war-time writings can be found in his post-war publications, even in the commentaries. He discusses the issue of Matthew's genealogy, and even the nationality of the women involved, without reference to his own previous scholarly work (even by way of negation); there is no mention of another Bethlehem in his comments on Matthew 2. He does return to the nature of the Galilee in his later book on Jesus, but without any mention of his previous arguments. Grundmann also wrote an unpublished autobiography entitled *Bekenntnis und Wahrheit*. According to Heschel, who has had access to the typescript, 'Grundmann presents his work with the Institute as an effort to defend the church against Nazi hostility towards Christianity. Moreover, he wrote, the work of the Institute, especially its New Testament, catechism, and hymnal, helped many people to gain faith in Jesus.' He wrote: 'we attempted to pose the questions posed by the period and not to avoid them. I admit that we in so doing made [big (this word is crossed out in the manuscript)] mistakes.'¹²³

7. Concluding Reflections

At the outset we suggested that there were three reasons which justified looking at this material. We've certainly covered a lot of ground, which is not often found in discussions of the history of New Testament scholarship, and hopefully

120. Heschel, 'Nazifying Christian Theology', p. 600; cf. 'When Jesus was an Aryan', pp. 81-82.

121. Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1965-67.

122. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975.

123. Heschel, 'Making Nazism a Christian Movement', p. 169; cf. also 'When Jesus was an Aryan', pp. 81-84.

helped increase our understanding of the period and the contemporary allusions to this type of 'scholarship'. Since these allusions arose in the context of reactions to the Jesus Seminar and J.D. Crossan, it is worth noting that there is very little in common between them and Grundmann. Although Grundmann does believe in a sayings source it is not foundational to his method; nor does he follow any really clear criteria for determining authenticity. Foundational for Grundmann is Jesus' self-understanding as unique Son of the Father, a classic Christian position which finds no place in the Jesus Seminar's general suspicion of such things. Perhaps there is a similarity in the general sense that Grundmann's conception of Jesus' racial identity is something that is brought to the evidence, and that a predetermined picture of Jesus, which is claimed to derive from the scientifically sifted evidence, is actually used as the primary criterion by which that evidence is actually sifted and authenticity and inauthenticity determined. Here we find a complex but thoroughgoing circularity which one suspects may also have been at work in Jesus Seminar discussions of Jesus' eschatology and Cynic similarities.

There is also, of course, a specific similarity in the emphasis on Galilee as a melting-point of many different nationalities, cultures and influences. In that sense the question of the social and religious location of Jesus and the early Jesus movement in the Galilee remains an important one even today; it hardly seems to make sense to attempt to foreclose the necessary historical debate by drawing the somewhat arbitrary parallel between the Jesus Seminar and Grundmann. Of course, once Grundmann's evidence is disconnected from its Nazi racial ideological setting—in which the relation by blood means everything and the status of one's confession relatively little (Nazism as applied biology)—there is not really a whole lot to it.

As for Casey's opinion that this phase of the Quest is paradigmatic of the whole Quest because in it we see with real clarity what elsewhere we can only discern more murkily—that is, Christian scholars attempting to evade or minimize the Jewishness of Jesus—it is not at all clear that this has been substantiated. It is of course true that Grundmann's emphasis on Jesus' unique filial consciousness as foundational to his ministry and mission is reflected in a range of more mainstream Christian approaches to Jesus. It is also true that Christian thought about Jesus has not always credited his full Jewish humanity. But it remains difficult to see the whole Quest operating under this paradigm when so many other representatives of the Quest are clearly seeking only alternatives to any traditional Christian beliefs about Jesus and never confirmation of it. Grundmann's view that material in the Jesus tradition which expresses controversy with or opposition to Judaism is all basically authentic, while material which affirms Judaism or limits Jesus' ministry to Jews is under suspicion, lacks general and specific plausibility and is guilty of arbitrary selectivity. But the reverse procedure—to consider any criticism of any feature of Judaism within the Jesus tradition as inauthentic—is neither necessarily more plausible nor less arbitrary.

One way in which Grundmann *is* paradigmatic for the whole Quest would be that he exhibits in an outstanding manner the way in which assumptions and biases arising from the scholar's own social and religious setting do shape and *can* determine the outcome of any investigation into the historical Jesus.¹²⁴ To recognize this problem is not to enable any simple escape from it. Johnson closed his account of the New Testament scholarship of this period in pessimism: 'the activity of New Testament scholars during the Third Reich reveals with great clarity the fact that objectivity in the exegetical enterprise is scarcely possible'.¹²⁵ We might note that the quest for objectivity is not necessarily helped by creating an institution (here perhaps is a parallel with the Jesus Seminar) in which one is surrounded only by like-minded scholars to whom one refers in abundance while paying little or no attention to what those on the outside have to offer.

It is an interesting irony, as Johnson and others have pointed out, that while the Nazis may have been guilty of creating a Jesus in their own image, it is no less the case that they also created a Judaism in their own image. At one level, the view of Judaism throughout this literature is extremely negative and is almost always expressed in terms of contrast with Christianity. But at another level, the features with which Judaism was very often described, and which were most often perceived as problematic—emphasis on the purity of the race, earthly-political Messianism, xenophobia and aggressiveness to other people, ambition of universal world rule through political revolution, this-worldly salvation—are ironically, precisely those features which also characterize Nazi ideology.¹²⁶ In this respect we might say that Hitler's influence on these New Testament scholars counted for more than their influence on him.

It is a further irony that one of the important facets of Grundmann's argument for Jesus' non-Jewish racial identity—the rabbinic traditions about Jesus ben Panthera—is drawn directly from Jewish anti-Christian polemic. In this respect Grundmann finds common ground with early Jewish attitudes towards Jesus which would also want to depict him as alien rather than native to Judaism.

We recall also Weaver's suggestion, 'that the treatment of Jesus in scholarship, and thereby in churches as well, had an indirect influence in preparing people to think of Jesus as disconnected from Judaism and therefore to separate the two in making moral evaluations'.¹²⁷ Although it is fair to say that we've not encountered solid evidence in support of this idea, it is in my view very plausible as one factor in a very complex situation. Probably the presentation of

124. Cf. the interesting paper by D. Georgi, 'The Interest in Life of Jesus Theology as a Paradigm for the Social History of Biblical Criticism', *HTR* 85 (1992), pp. 51-83.

125. Johnson, 'Power Politics', p. 24.

126. Cf. Johnson's comment: 'we may note the curious fact that he [Grundmann] wanted to deny to first-century Judaism the validity of that which he wanted to affirm and preserve for German culture' ('Power Politics', p. 12 n. 35 and p. 24).

127. Weaver, *Historical Jesus*, p. 256.

Judaism itself within the Nazi regime, directly and indirectly related to the general approach to Judaism that characterized all types of New Testament scholarship in the period, was far more significant; this is certainly the area which Nazi propaganda exploited most. But when the view of Jesus as himself non-Jewish and as fundamentally in opposition to Judaism made exact connections with some of the worst Nazi propaganda, as for example Grundmann does when he depicts the cross as the sign of Judaism's rejection of Jesus, it is impossible not to imagine that it might have served to support a programme of opposition to Judaism. It certainly seems to have been the point of the voluminous output of Grundmann and his Institute.

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