



Antisemitism, Christianity, and the Churches in Europe

01.03.2021 | Wolfgang Treitler

1 The Church Father's Struggle against Jews and Judaism

One of the most powerful Church Fathers of the second century was Justin Martyr. As a gentile Christian, he had contact with Jews, which in turn made him familiar with considerable parts of Jewish tradition and thinking.^[1] Within the last fifteen years of his life (d. 166 C.E.), Justin wrote his main works, two so-called *Apologies* and the *Dialogue with Trypho*. Both documents had a decisive effect on the fact that Christianity turned pagan and, therefore, shared the pagan aversion against Jews, who were considered barbaric.^[2] While Justin argued in the *Dialogue* that Jews had lost God's promise because they did not believe in Christ, it was especially the *First Apology*, dedicated to the Emperor Hadrian, that pushed the pagan-Christian reluctance against Jews in general. In this way, Justin offensively accomplished the tendencies of the gospel tradition to exculpate the Romans from the killing of Christ and instead imposed his death on the Jews as collective guilt. The main point is that Justin even came to justify the extinction of Jerusalem during the Bar Kokhba revolt and the Emperor's measures against Jews, forbidding them under penalty of death to return to Jerusalem. The theological background was striking insofar as Justin turned Christ into a pagan figure and argued that all the stories about Christ should be read and understood in a pagan way: When Christians say that Christ has

been fathered without any intercourse, and that the logos is Jesus Christ, our teacher who was crucified, died, resurrected, and ascended to heaven, we do not refer to something strange in comparison with the sons of Zeus. You know very well how many sons of Zeus are listed by the poets you admire... And what about the Emperors among you who have been dying off, while you always believed them to be among the immortals, and in fact you had someone at your hand who swore that he saw the Emperor burned on a stake ascending up to heaven? (1 Apol. 21)^[3]

Justin turned even the cross of Christ—a very Greek and Roman way to execute dangerous criminals—into a religious and political symbol of Hadrian's world and connected it to the idea of divinization: “Even the images representing your rulers who have died are built in this form [i. e., of a cross; W.T.], and you call them gods in the inscriptions” (1 Apol. 55).^[4]

At that level of paganizing Christ, Justin argued in favor of the Emperor's measures against Jews and backed these measures by referring to the prophets as witnesses of the extinction of Jews—a method as audacious as usual since then:

Now listen to what has been proclaimed by the prophets about the devastation of the Jewish land. These words are put in the mouth of the other peoples in a way that they are astonished about the event [i. e., the devastation; W.T.] as if it had already happened... You know quite well that Jerusalem has been devastated, as it has been announced as if it had already happened... And you know quite well, too, that you take care about that; no Jew is permitted to reside there, and if any Jew is to live there and he is caught up, he would be subject to death penalty. (1 Apol. 47)^[5]

Justin's paganization of Christ prepared the upcoming strong connection between Christianity and the Empire; the basis of the connection was a strong anti-Jewish aversion in both entities and the

de-Judaization of Christ as the immediate effect of his paganization. Justin turned his Christ into a Roman hero demanding more and more radical steps against Jews.

2 The Nicaean Creed: Christ Stripped of his Jewishness

Justin's paganization of Christ was an important step in cleansing Christ from any Jewish stain. About one and a half centuries later, no one really missed anything when the First Council of Nicaea in the year 325 defined a binding Creed that did not mention anything Jewish when dealing with Christ. Christ had become "the Son of God, begotten of the Father, the only-begotten; that is, of the essence of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father."^[6] One may argue that the topics of the Creed referred to severe conflicts within *Christian* communities that did not deal any longer with Christ's Jewish ancestry but with philosophical ideas about his relation to God. That may be so. But it still proves that this kind of pagan Christianity became indifferent and, as a result, unaware of the relevance of Christ's Jewish background. Christ's Jewishness did not count any longer; it was simply abandoned.

The Jews have turned into the "others" with whom pagan Christians did not share any common ground. The Council of Nicaea enforced Christ being stripped of his Jewishness and turned him into a deity fulfilling pagan traditions and safeguarding the Roman Empire. Therefore, Christianity was fixed as a religion that created the Jewish community as its opposite that had to be combatted and eventually erased.

3 Self-description of European Christianity Based on anti-Jewish Hatred

Nevertheless, the Jewish communities remained alive. This was not only due to Augustine's acquiescence of Jews that he did not want them to be killed. Augustine did not reflect on Jews in this way because he was in favor of them; it was because they were part of Christian consolidation, as the Church Father made clear:

[N]ot by bodily death shall the ungodly race of carnal Jews perish... So to the end of the seven days of time [i. e., of the creation] the continued preservation of the Jews will be a proof to believing Christians of the subjection by those who ... put the Lord to death.^[7]

The survival of Jews was also due to antique societies as such. Hardly ever was it possible to enforce decisions and decrees Empire-wide; too many different interests interfered and fueled corruption. For this reason, the church renewed the attempts to get hold of Jews and in doing so, getting rid of them before the seventh day of time.

In the High Middle Ages and at the beginning of modern era, the Christian hatred of Jews aggravated; it was especially the official teachers and synods of the European Christian communities who maintained hatred against Jews as a vehicle to enforce Christian topics.

This was the case when Pope Innocent III called the Fathers to the Lateran in 1215. He wanted to set up a kind of Christian cosmos of Christian world order. To implement this intention, it was necessary to draw strict boundaries or "border lines" between "us" and "them."^[8] The Council discussed and voted on texts written by the Pope before it started in November 1215. Most striking was the fact that the Council agreed on singling out those who were not considered to be part of the Christian world, in other words, those who belonged to "them." Them—they were more than anyone else Jews. For the first time in European history, Jews were forced to wear special signs on their clothes to prevent faithful Christians from intermingling with Jews, as Canon 67 has it:

In order to prevent all the excesses of mixing (between Jews and Christians) that we do have to

condemn ... we determine: Jews and Saracens of both genders must differ in every province and at any time from other peoples by the kind of their clothing in public, because even Moses imposed this rule on them, as it can be read. On the days of Lament and of the Passion of the Lord they are not allowed to appear in public anyway.[\[9\]](#)

Again as in ancient days, the Council refers to the Old Testament in an attempt to prove that Jews were simply outdated and, therefore, illegitimate. If they were living according to their own Scripture, they would not be Jews any longer but Christians. The Council did exactly what had been the hermeneutical method of Christian exegesis since the days of the Greek Church Fathers: they “hijacked not only the Old Testament but the New Testament as well,”[\[10\]](#) and they turned it into a pagan text serving the Christian hatred and measures against Jews. In this way, long before the Nazis developed the practice of forcing Jews to wear signs on their clothes, Pope Innocent III had visibly turned the Jews to total outcasts that were to be persecuted because they did not believe in the mysteries of Christianity, especially in the mystery of bread and wine transmuted to body and blood of the redeemer.

The fire of antisemitism was refueled by the great and notorious Martin Luther who founded the Lutheran Church in Germany. Especially at the end of his life, Luther thought that he was living in apocalyptic times. And one thing he had in mind—ever since his struggle with the Roman Church—was what Paul had been sure of: at the end of times, Jews would repent and become Christians. Therefore, in his work *Dass Christus geborener Jude sei* [*Christ was born as a Jew*][\[11\]](#) published in the year 1523, Luther wanted to offer good reasons for Jews converting to Christianity; he wanted to invite them to become Christians.[\[12\]](#) But his intention failed to wipe out Judaism through conversion. Twenty years later, he poured out his hatred against the stubborn Jews in a writing called *Von den Juden und ihren Lügen* [*On the Jews and their Lies*]; in the final parts of this work, he listed ten measures against the Jews, a kind of Christian Decalogue, demanding expropriation and expulsion of Jews and the destruction of Jewish synagogues and property. Jews had become the target of hatred of Christians ready to take action against them. Luther’s measures were quite clear:

Set on fire their synagogues and schools and cover with earth what does not burn so that no man ever will see any stone or slag from it forever... Destruct their houses and destroy them. For in their houses, they do the same things as they do in their synagogues... Do away with all their prayer books and Talmudic teachers. All of that kind teaches them idolization, lies, curses, and blasphemy... Ban each and every teaching of the Rabbis, and ban it with all means... Suspend safe conduct of Jews and their right to walk on streets... Forbid them their usury and take away all their money and their bijoux of Silver and Gold... because everything they own they have stolen and robbed with their usury that is their only way of making a living... Give to the young, strong Jews threshing flails, axes, hoes, spades, distaffs, and mandrels and force them to work.[\[13\]](#)

For Luther, Jews were total strangers in a Christian world he dreamt of. He did not accept at all that Jews were still living among Christians, wondering

which devil has brought them [i. e., the Jews; W.T.] into our land; we did not call them from Jerusalem. Furthermore, nobody holds them back; land and roads are open to them. May they go down to their land, if they like to, and we will gladly give them gifts to get rid of them, because they are a burden weighing heavily on us; it is as if a plague, a pestilence, and a vain disaster is in our land.[\[14\]](#)

This kind of antisemitic rhetoric was a prefiguration and a model of the eventual antisemitic rhetoric of the National Socialist Party in the twentieth century.

4 Collaboration of National Socialism and Lutheran and Catholic Leaders

Joachim Hossenfelder was one of the most prominent leaders of a Lutheran movement that eventually was named “Deutsche Christen” (German Christians). In 1933, he published a book, and its title referred directly to Hitler’s book *Mein Kampf*: it was called *Unser Kampf*. Hossenfelder propagated a fundamental interest of both the German Christians and the Hitler movement to keep the German people clear from any external influence, because

a nation... is a community of those sharing the same blood and the same history. It was one of the most meaningful events that God created a people... And this creation has God operated by Adolf Hitler who can be confidently called the greatest man after Martin Luther. Now we have a German people, and based on faith, we can say that this German people is according to God’s will and order.[\[15\]](#)

The German Christians warmly appreciated Hitler’s action against the Jews and were sure that the measures against Jews, which harmed them more and more, were according to Christian tradition and to God’s will.

The same type of thinking could be found in Catholic scholars such as Michael Schmaus, who was a highly valued theologian during the time of Hitler and afterwards. In 1933, he was appointed professor of dogmatic theology at the University of Muenster. There he held his inaugural lecture in front of the clergy, the administration of the university, and many students. The title of his lecture was programmatic: *Begegnungen zwischen katholischem Christentum und nationalsozialistischer Weltanschauung (Encounters Between Catholic Faith and National Socialist Worldview)*. It was published in a series called *Reich und Kirche (Reich and Church)* that aimed to be “totally German and totally Catholic.”[\[16\]](#) When Schmaus reflected on his motivation to print his lecture, he wrote an unambiguous statement: it was out of the “consideration that is not only a self-evident demand of the time to align oneself wholeheartedly with the new state, but also to praise the intellectual foundation of the National Socialist worldview.”[\[17\]](#) He did exactly that without any reservation, and he did it on the basis of a dogmatic view of God’s history that defined the Jewish community as dead.

The gifts of God do not find any barrier in human particularity, and they are not bound to any people. Once, there was a people that believed that God’s revelation was bound to its nation. It had to atone for its delusion by being rejected by God. It is the Jewish people.[\[18\]](#)

It was Pope Pius XII who renewed the blame against Jews for having killed God in his preaching before an assembly of cardinals on December 24, 1942, when the mass extermination had already been underway for one year.[\[19\]](#) He must have known that. By referring to this kind of Christian ideology that had always been fueling Christian hatred against Jews, the pope gave way to Christian consent in what was called “Endlösung der Judenfrage” [“the Final Solution”], which did not erupt like a volcano but was enforced gradually by a process that was ongoing since 1941.[\[20\]](#)

5 *Nostra Aetate* 4 as a Compromise Document

In 1965, almost at the end of the Second Vatican Council, a short text was enacted dealing with the Catholic Church’s relation to Judaism, chapter 4 of *Nostra Aetate*. It was a turnaround with respect to the relation of the Catholic Church to Judaism. It stated that Mary, Jesus, and his followers were Jews and that God never revoked the covenant with Israel. At the end of chapter 4, although not explicitly condemning antisemitism, it was at least decried:

Furthermore, in her rejection of every persecution against any man, the Church, mindful of the patrimony she shares with the Jews and moved not by political reasons but by the Gospel’s spiritual love, decries hatred, persecutions, displays of anti-Semitism, directed against Jews at any time and by anyone.[\[21\]](#)

The Popes John Paul II and Francis continued this path. And it was Francis who made clear during his visit in Yad Vashem in May 2014 that when confronted with the mass extermination of Jews, Christian traditions could not offer anything helpful. In his reflection that was something like a prayer—maybe it was a prayer—he did not quote anything stemming from Christian tradition.[\[22\]](#)

6 The Commanding Voice of Auschwitz within Christianity: Friedrich-Wilhelm Marquardt of the Reformed Church

What Pope Francis said in Yad Vashem sounded like an administration of the will of a Protestant theologian (Francis surely was not aware of this) who passed away in 2002, Friedrich-Wilhelm Marquardt. Marquardt made a clear statement:

Whatever Auschwitz may be for Jews today or any day, for Christians it is the end of every theological rationalization. This is: If we really want to face Auschwitz it can only mean to do away with every apologia of Christianity and Christian theology. Face to face with Auschwitz there is no justifying faith, no defense of our actions or omissions, of our confidence or our mistrust. No defense of the Christian dogma, even not of the New Testament. Since our commitment to the New Testament and to the dogma did not force ourselves to resist to Auschwitz, our referring to them could never defend ourselves today. Face to face with Auschwitz, they lost their legitimation. Rather, all our grief is upon them, since both the New Testament and the teaching of the church turned into sources of legitimizing the desire to murder. Instead of defending them, we are compelled—if Auschwitz ever touches us—to fight for a new land of the Bible and of the dogma that perished in Auschwitz.[\[23\]](#)

This is a commanding voice of a Christian, referring not least to Emil Fackenheim's book *To Mend the World* and the section "The Commanding Voice of Auschwitz," and I regret that hardly any Christian or theologian has ever really been touched by Marquardt's clear, honest, and essential words. Moreover, Marquardt has been criticized for them once in a while.

7 Four Suggestions

Finally, at the end of this article, I suggest following Marquardt's points that are helpful and demanding in order to at least begin to overcome the Christian hatred of Jews that is implicitly still present in systematic Christian theology:

1. Christians must learn to read not only the Old Testament (which is in fact the First Testament[\[24\]](#)) but also the New Testament as a collection of Jewish texts (except for Luke). Reading them as Jewish texts requires at least a methodical suspension of dogmatic hermeneutics of the Bible, as Christian tradition has it, and learn from different Jewish approaches to the Holy Scripture. Therefore, theological studies should be complemented by some Judaic studies.
2. Moreover, Christians studying theology must go beyond both Bible and dogma and turn to Jewish-Christian sources that had been suppressed and partly destroyed by Gentile-Christian movements. These sources provide a glimpse of Jesus' Jewish faith and practice as well as Jewish claims within the Jesus movement, and furthermore, they help to overcome Jesus' paganization that has always been one of the main sources of Christian anti-Jewish and antisemitic hatred.
3. In this way, Christians should become courageous enough to turn their backs to claims that have turned out to produce hatred against Jews or indifference to their fate. This goes for dogmatic claims, too.
4. Becoming courageous and educated is not a matter of a short term but a lifelong road. It is no problem to take action and get started, even though it might be late, very late. Will we succeed? I hope so. At least, Christians must do their share to keep the "commanding

voice of Auschwitz” alive and to help “to mend the world.”^[25]

Bibliography

- Boyarin, Daniel.** *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007.
- Boyarin, Daniel.** *The Jewish Gospels: The Story of the Jewish Christ*. New York: The New Press, 2012.
- Fackenheim, Emil L.** *To Mend the World: Foundations of Post-Holocaust Jewish Thought*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.
- Friedlander, Saul.** *Pius XII. und das Dritte Reich: Eine Dokumentation*. Munich: Beck, 2001.
- Gailus, Manfred.** “Nationalsozialistische Christen’ und ‘christliche Nationalsozialisten’: Anmerkungen zur Vielfalt synkretistischer Gläubigkeiten im ‘Dritten Reich’.” In: *Nationalprotestantische Mentalitäten in Deutschland (1870–1970): Konturen, Entwicklungslinien und Umbrüche eines Weltbildes*, edited by Manfred Gailus and Hartmut Lehmann, 223–62. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005.
- Hartmut Lehmann,** 223–62. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005.
- Herder, Johann Gottfried.** *Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache*. Edited by Hans Dietrich Irmischer. Stuttgart: Reclam, 1989.
- Kaufmann, Thomas.** *Luthers Juden*. Stuttgart: Reclam, 2015.
- Kershaw, Ian.** *Hitler, the Germans, and the Final Solution*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008.
- Kirn, Hans-Martin.** “Luther und die Juden.” In *Luther Handbuch*, edited by Albrecht Beutel, 217–24. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010.
- Luther, Martin.** *Von den Juden und ihren Lügen: Neu bearbeitet und kommentiert von Matthias Morgenstern*. Wiesbaden: Berlin University Press, 2016.
- Marquardt, Friedrich-Wilhelm.** *Von Elend und Heimsuchung der Theologie: Prolegomena zur Dogmatik*. Munich: Kaiser, 1992.
- Nirenberg, David.** *Anti-Judaism: The History of a Way of Thinking*. London: Head of Zeus, 2015.
- Pope Francis.** “Address of Pope Francis at Yad Vashem.” Issued May 26, 2014. Accessed August 7, 2019. <http://www.yadvashem.org/pope-visits/francis/speech.html>.
- Pope Paul VI.** *Nostra Aetate: Declaration On The Relation Of The Church To Non-Christian Religions*. Issued October 28, 1965. Accessed July 17, 2018. http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html.
- Rauschen, Gerhard.** “Des heiligen Justins des Philosophen und Märtyrers zwei Apologien. Aus dem Griechischen übersetzt von Dr. Gerhard Rauschen.” In *Frühchristliche Apologeten und Märtyrerakten. Aus dem Griechischen und Lateinischen übersetzt. 1. Band*. Kempten-München: Kosel, 1913.
- Schalit, Abraham.** *König Herodes: Der Mann und sein Werk*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2001.
- Schmaus, Michael.** *Begegnungen zwischen katholischem Christentum und nationalsozialistischer Weltanschauung*. Münster: Aschendorff, 1933.
- Skarsaune, Oskar.** “Evidence for Jewish Believers in Greek and Latin Patristic Literature.” In *Jewish Believers in Jesus: The Early Centuries*, edited by Oskar Skarsaune and Reidar Hvalvik, 505–67. Peabody: Hendrickson, 2007.
- Wohlmuth, Josef,** ed. *Dekrete der ökumenischen Konzilien. Band 2: Konzilien des Mittelalters. Vom ersten Laterankonzil (1123) bis zum fünften Laterankonzil (1512–1517)*. Paderborn et al.: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2000.
- Zenger, Erich.** *Das Erste Testament: Die jüdische Bibel und die Christen*. Stuttgart: Patmos, 1994.
-

[1] O. Skarsaune, “Evidence for Jewish Believers in Greek and Latin Patristic Literature,” in *Jewish Believers in Jesus: The Early Centuries*, ed. O. Skarsaune and R. Hvalvik (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2007), 505–67, esp. 510–14.

[2] A. Schalit, *König Herodes: Der Mann und sein Werk* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2001), 747f.; J. G. Herder, *Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache*, ed. H. D. Irmischer (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1989), 109f.

[3] G. Rauschen, "Des heiligen Justins des Philosophen und Märtyrers zwei Apologien. Aus dem Griechischen übersetzt von Dr. Gerhard Rauschen," in *Frühchristliche Apologeten und Märtyrerakten. Aus dem Griechischen und Lateinischen übersetzt. 1. Band* (Kempten-München: Kösel, 1913), 11–84 (First Apology) and 85–101 (Second Apology), 87 f.: "Wenn wir aber weiterhin behaupten, der Logos, welcher Gottes erste Hervorbringung ist, sei ohne Beiwohnung gezeugt worden, nämlich Jesus Christus, unser Lehrer, und er sei gekreuzigt worden, gestorben, wieder auferstanden und in den Himmel aufgestiegen, so bringen wir im Vergleich mit euren Zeussöhnen nichts Befremdliches von. Denn wie viele Zeussöhne die bei euch hochgeschätzten Schriftsteller aufführen, wißt ihr wohl . . . Und was von den unter euch dahinsterbenden Herrschern, die ihr immer für wert haltet, unter die Unsterblichen versetzt zu werden, so daß ihr einen vorführt, der schwört, er habe den verbrannten Kaiser vom Scheiterhaufen zum Himmel auffahren sehen?"

[4] *Ibid.*, 124: "Auch die Bildnisse der bei euch verstorbenen Herrscher stellt ihr in dieser Form dar und benennt sie noch in Inschriften als Götter."

[5] *Ibid.*, 114: "Vernehmet nun, was vom prophetischen Geiste auch über die Verwüstung des Judenlandes vorhergesagt worden ist. Die Worte sind andern Völkern in den Mund gelegt derart, daß diese sich über das schon eingetretene Ereignis wundern . . . Daß nun Jerusalem, wie es hier als schon geschehen vorherverkündet worden ist, verwüstet worden ist, das wißt ihr wohl . . . Daß aber von euch gewacht wird, damit kein Jude dort sich aufhalte, und daß für jeden Juden, der es betritt und ertappt wird, die Todesstrafe bestimmt ist, das ist euch wohlbekannt."

[6] "The Nicene Creed of 325 and the 1975 ecumenical version, widely in use today," accessed May 30, 2018, <http://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/~rfrey/166NiceneCreed.htm>.

[7] Augustine, quoted by D. Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism: The History of a Way of Thinking* (London: Head of Zeus, 2015), 130.

[8] D. Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 1–33.

[9] J. Wohlmuth, ed., *Dekrete der ökumenischen Konzilien. Band 2: Konzilien des Mittelalters. Vom ersten Laterankonzil (1123) bis zum fünften Laterankonzil (1512–1517)* (Paderborn et al.: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2000), 266: "Damit die Auswüchse dieser Vermischung, die man nur verurteilen kann, unter dem Deckmantel eines solchen Versehens kein Schlupfloch der Entschuldigung mehr finden können, bestimmen wir: Die Juden und Sarazenen beiderlei Geschlechts müssen sich in jeder christlichen Provinz und zu allen Zeiten durch die Art ihrer Kleidung in der Öffentlichkeit von den anderen Völkern unterscheiden; denn schon durch Mose ist ihnen dies, wie zu lesen ist, auferlegt worden. An den Tagen der Klagen und der Passion des Herrn dürfen sie überhaupt nicht in der Öffentlichkeit erscheinen."

[10] D. Boyarin, *The Jewish Gospels: The Story of the Jewish Christ* (New York: The New Press, 2012), 157.

[11] As far as I know, there is no English translation of this book available.

[12] Th. Kaufmann, *Luthers Juden* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2015), 64–74; H.-M. Kirn, "Luther und die Juden," in *Luther Handbuch*, ed. A. Beutel (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 217–24.

[13] M. Luther, *Von den Juden und ihren Lügen: Neu bearbeitet und kommentiert von Matthias Morgenstern* (Wiesbaden: Berlin University Press, 2016), 195–201: "Erstens, dass man ihre Synagogen oder Schulen mit Feuer anstecke und, was nicht brennen will, mit Erde überhäufe und zuschütte, damit kein Mensch mehr davon in Ewigkeit einen Stein oder einen Schlacke sehen kann . . . Zweitens, dass man auch ihre Häuser zerbreche und zerstöre. Denn in ihnen treiben sie eben dasselbe, wie sie es in ihren Schulen treiben . . . Drittens, dass man ihnen alle ihre Betbüchlein und Talmudisten wegnehme, in denen diese Abgöttereien, die Lügen, der Fluch und die Lästerung gelehrt werden . . . Viertens, dass man ihren Rabbinen [unter Androhung der Strafe des Verlusts] von Leib und Leben verbiete, weiterhin zu lehren . . . Fünftens, dass man den Juden das [freie] Geleit und [das Recht zur Benutzung der] Straße ganz und gar aufhebe . . . Sechstens, dass man ihnen den Wucher verbiete und ihnen alle Barschaft und Kleinodien an Silber und Gold wegnehme und es beseitige, um es zu verwahren. Und dies ist die Begründung dafür: Alles, was sie haben (wie oben gesagt), haben sie uns gestohlen und durch ihren Wucher geraubt weil sie sonst keinen anderen Lebensunterhalt haben . . . Siebentens, dass man den jungen, starken Juden und Jüdinnen Dreschflegel, Axt, Hacke, Spaten, Spinnrocken, Spindel in die Hand gebe und lasse sie im Schweiß ihres Angesichts ihr Brot verdienen, wie Adams Kindern auferlegt (Genesis 3,19)."

[14] *Ibid.*, 190

[15] Hossenfelder, quoted in: M. Gailus, "'Nationalsozialistische Christen' und 'christliche Nationalsozialisten': Anmerkungen zur Vielfalt synkretistischer Gläubigkeiten im 'Dritten Reich'," in *Nationalprotestantische Mentalitäten in Deutschland (1870–1970): Konturen, Entwicklungslinien und Umbrüche eines Weltbildes*, ed. M. Gailus and H. Lehmann (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005), 223–62, esp. 228.

[16] Text printed on the backside of the cover of the book: M. Schmaus, *Begegnungen zwischen katholischem Christentum und nationalsozialistischer Weltanschauung* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1933).

[17] *Ibid.*, 3: "Erwägung, daß es nicht nur eine selbstverständliche Forderung der Zeit ist, sich rückhaltlos in den neuen Staat einzuordnen, sondern auch die geistigen Grundlagen der nationalsozialistischen Weltanschauung zu würdigen."

[18] *Ibid.*, 33 f: "Dieses Geben Gottes kennt keine Schranke menschlicher Eigenart, ist also auch nicht gebunden an irgendein Volk. Es gab einmal ein Volk, das glaubte, die Offenbarung sei an seine Nationalität gebunden. Es musste diesen Wahn mit der Verwerfung büßen. Es ist das jüdische Volk."

[19] S. Friedlander, *Pius XII. und das Dritte Reich: Eine Dokumentation* (Munich: Beck, 2001), 225.

[20] I. Kershaw, *Hitler, the Germans, and the Final Solution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 254–57.

[21] Pope Paul VI, *Nostra Aetate: Declaration On The Relation Of The Church To Non-Christian Religions*, issued October 28, 1965, accessed May 30, 2018, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html, 4.

[22] Pope Francis, "Address of Pope Francis at Yad Vashem," issued May 26, 2014, accessed May 30, 2018, <http://www.yadvashem.org/pope-visits/francis/speech.html>.

[23] F.-W. Marquardt, *Von Elend und Heimsuchung der Theologie: Prolegomena zur Dogmatik* (Munich: Kaiser, 1992), 139: "Auschwitz ist, was immer es heute oder eines Tages für Juden bedeuten mag, für Christen das Ende aller theologischen Rationalisierungen. Das heißt: Wollen wir Auschwitz entsprechen, kann das nur bedeuten: Weg mit aller Apologie, Verteidigung des Christentums und seiner Theologie. Angesichts von Auschwitz gibt es keinen rechtfertigenden Glauben, keine Verteidigung unseres Handelns oder Unterlassens, unseres Vertrauens oder unseres Mißtrauens. Keine Verteidigung des christlichen Dogmas, nicht einmal des Neuen Testaments. Denn wie wenig unsere Bindung an Neues Testament und Dogma in uns zu Lebenssachen wurden, die uns in Widerstand gegen Auschwitz getrieben haben, so wenig könnte eine Berufung auf sie uns heute verteidigen. Vor Auschwitz haben auch sie nichts mehr zu sagen. Eher schlägt unser ganzer Kummer auf sie zurück, weil sie Quellen für den Legitimationsdurst von Mördern sein konnten. Und statt sie verteidigen zu können, sind wir, wenn uns denn Auschwitz berührt, hineingerissen in einen Kampf um Neugewinnung

von Land aus Bibel und Dogma, das uns in Auschwitz versunken ist. Wer weiß, wo wir einst stehen werden?"

[24] E. Zenger, *Das Erste Testament: Die jüdische Bibel und die Christen* (Stuttgart: Patmos, 1994).

[25] E. L. Fackenheim, *To Mend the World: Foundations of Post-Holocaust Jewish Thought* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 299.

Wolfgang Treitler is Professor for Theological Basic Research and Study Program Director of the Catholic Faculty of the University of Vienna. His research fields are Jewish Holocaust literature, anti-Semitic developments in early Christianity and modern times, the question of Jesus as Messiah and sexual abuse of minors in the Catholic Church. He is author of a dozen monographs and numerous scientific articles and essays.

First published in: *Confronting Antisemitism from the Perspectives of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism*, ed. by Armin Lange, Kerstin Mayerhofer, Dina Porat, and Lawrence H. Schiffman. Walter de Gruyter GmbH, Berlin/Boston 2020. For the above written essay: © 2020 Wolfgang Treitler, licensed under the [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/) License.