Attitudes in West German Protetantism towards the State of Israel 1948-1967

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In this study the author presents Protestant individuals, groups, committees, and print media who, between 1948 and 1972, dealt with the significance of the State of Israel in theological (do Jews have a biblical right to the land?), moral (as a result of the Shoah, how much solidarity with Israel is required?), and political perspective (what consequences do these implications have for an evaluation of the Middle East conflict?).*

1. Introduction[1]

The opinion is widespread that Christians in the Federal Republic of Germany only began to deal with the existence of the State of Israel from the 1960's onward. This opinion may well be the case *biographically*, as, for example, Rolf Rendtorff (born 1925) remembers: "*The State of Israel only entered the consciousness of my generation at a late stage. When it was founded, we were fully concerned with other issues*."[2] This opinion is also correct *quantitatively*, as the number of people who were interested in events in the Middle East and published on the subject progressively grew in the course of time. In particular, the discovery of Israel as a travel destination at the end of the 1950's led to a heightened perception of the events in the Middle East.

Nevertheless, the State of Israel, even in the first years of its existence, was never ignored by German Protestantism. Already in 1948, one can read in the *Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirchenzeitung* that the "events since May 14 of this year in Palestine ... have, in a special way, drawn the attention of Christendom" and have raised theological questions. [3] We can say, then, that the State of Israel was an enduring topic in Protestantism since 1948, not so much from a quantitative as a *qualitative* perspective—i.e. as regards content, not frequency. In the following essay I therefore present Protestant individuals, groups and committees who, between 1948 and 1967, dealt with the significance of a Jewish state in *theological* (do Jews have a biblical right to the land?), *moral* (as a result of the Shoah, how much solidarity with Israel is required?), and *political* perspective (what consequences do these implications have for an evaluation of the Middle East conflict?).

In this study we are primarily concerned with the State of Israel. The Arab side will be incorporated to the degree that it interacts with the Jewish state. A glance through the most important church periodicals shows that independent of the actual emergence of the Palestinian national movement, the now common category *Palestinian* was not generally used in Germany until the *Six Day War*. [4] As a result, I use contemporary categories, which spoke not of Palestinians but rather of the Arab population of Palestine.

The word *Israel* refers within Christian theology to the Jewish people according to their status as a chosen people. This is manifested in the fact that the phrase *mission to the Jews* had been synonymously interchanged with *Dienst an Israel* (ministry to Israel) or *Mission unter Israel* (mission amongst Israel). In my essay, however, I use the term *Israel* only in connection with the state of the same name. By the term *West Germany* I mean the territory of the Federal Republic of Germany and of West Berlin. Even though the Protestant regional churches of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) separated themselves from the *Evangelische Kirche in*

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Deutschland (Protestant Church in Germany/EKD)[5] not until 1969, it is nevertheless appropriate to focus exclusively on West Germany, as the Protestant perception of Israel developed in interaction with the politics of the Federal Government and the possibility of travelling abroad. The German term *Protestantismus*[6] (Protestantism) is more comprehensive than the expression *Evangelische Kirche* (Protestant Church), as the latter rather seems to be limited to the church leadership (after all, the German word *evangelisch* does not have the same meaning as 'evangelical').

The nineteen years between May 14, 1948 (the establishment of the State of Israel) and June 5, 1967 (the beginning of the Six Day War) can be divided into two time periods, according to how Israeli statehood was perceived. It is relevant to ask at what point the break between the two periods occurs. According to many accounts of Jewish-Christian dialogue, the most important break occurred in the year 1961, in which the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft 'Christen und Juden' auf dem Deutschen Evangelischen Kirchentag* (Working Group 'Christians and Jews' at the German Protestant Church Convention) was founded.[7] Even though the activities of this *Working Group* contributed to a popularizing of dialogue issues, as far as my topic is concerned this date does not function as an unambiguous threshold-year. This is due to the fact that Judaism and the State of Israel had already been dealt with at a Church Convention before, namely in Munich in 1959.

Neither the *Suez Crisis* of 1956,[8] nor the *German-Israeli exchange of ambassadors* in 1965[9], nor any political event in the meantime in the Middle East, led to a new phase in the evaluation of Israeli statehood by West German Protestantism. Far more decisive were the social and political developments that took place in West Germany during the transformations between the 1950's and 1960's. Historians place the beginning of the modernization tendencies of the 1960's already at the end of the 1950's. [10] The cultural upheavals of this period also had an effect on the German perception of the Jewish state: Tourism expanded. Prosperity and leisure time led to interests beyond that of mere survival. The spread of the media (more radio and more newspapers subscriptions) brought about a growth in political knowledge. There was also a strong desire for political reform. Failures in the post-war period to come to terms with the Nazi past were increasingly criticized.[11] For my topic the first caesura can be placed between 1957 and 1958, for the decennial Israeli State jubilee gave cause for reflection on the existence of the Jewish polity. Furthermore, the first wave of trips to Israel began in 1958.

The *Six Day War*[12] of June 1967 presents us with a further caesura and ends period II. From 1967, with the capture of new territories, Israel lost the image it had had amongst segments of West German society as the weak 'David,' who was pitted against an overpowering Arab 'Goliath.' The pro-Israel left, who had been visiting the Jewish state since 1958, were irritated that the younger generation from the environment of the *Evangelische Studentengemeinden* (Student Christian Movement) had diverged from their theological mentors and took a decidedly more distanced stance towards Israeli government policy.

2. 1948-1957: The State of Israel as Irritation for Missionary Work

Whereas one can follow the sociologist Gerhard Schulze in characterizing the 1960's as an 'experience-oriented' or even 'thrill seeking society' *(Erlebnisgesellschaft*), West Germany in the period before is to be identified as a 'society of survival' (*Überlebensgesellschaft*).[13] After the Second World War, Germans were primarily occupied with their own existential and economic problems as well as coming to terms with the 1949 partition of their country. Nevertheless, Protestants took note of the creation of the State of Israel in May 1948, but due to these problems only a few.

According to Martin Greschat, in the post-war period the Protestant Church found itself in a

situation between "*Aufbruch und Beharrung*," between innovation and traditionalism resp. between awakening and continuation. [14] On the one hand, the Church got involved in the new Western democratic political situation. On the other hand, many Protestants sought to find a foothold in the new beginnings of this period by holding on to traditional, preferably confessional, theology and church life. This fluctuation between innovation and traditionalism, between new beginnings and restoration, also characterized the relationship of Protestantism to Judaism and the new State of Israel.

2.1. The Traditional Mission to Jews

Mission to Jews or *Jewish mission* ('Judenmission') are historical terms here. They describe missionary activity toward the Jews and include those church groups which, since the 19th century, intended to win Jews for Christ and to integrate them into the church. [15] In 1948, several Jewish missionary societies including the *Evangelisch-Lutherische Zentralverein für Mission unter Israel* (Evangelical-Lutheran Central Association for Mission to Israel), the German branch of the Basel based *Verein der Freunde Israels* (Association of the Friends of Israel), and the Prussian *Gesellschaft zur Beförderung des Evangeliums unter den Juden* (Society for Promoting the Gospel among the Jews) – some more Lutheran, some more Reformed – , founded an umbrella organization called *Deutscher Evangelischer Ausschuss für Dienst an Israel* (German Protestant Committee for Ministry to Israel). I am focusing on the *Zentralverein,* which was the most important Jewish missionary society in Germany since its founding in 1871 and by itself a parent organization of smaller associations.

Within the spectrum of the various ecclesiastical groupings, it must be conceded that the exponents of Jewish mission had a more philo-Semitic, pro-Jewish direction. [16] Despite their missionary aims, they cultivated a love for Jews which was orientated towards the role-models of the 19th century revivals. Although this love was not free of pejorative judgements, it was different to the traditional anti-Semitism, including that found in the church. After 1945, these groups were not only interested in simply re-establishing their pre-war activities. It was because of the Nazi crimes and their racist attempt to exclude Jewish Christians from the church that they legitimated their witness to Jews. [17] For this reason, the founding of the State of Israel was followed by a debate concerning the significance that this event had for Jewish mission.

The representatives of these missionary groups – for instance Karl Heinrich Rengstorf, becoming chairman of both the *Deutscher Evangelischer Ausschuss für Dienst an Israel* and the *Evangelisch-Lutherische Zentralverein für Mission unter Israel* – did not only orientate themselves to the German context. Rather, they saw themselves as part of an international community which had recorded its agenda in a declaration announced at the inaugural meeting of the *World Council of Churches* (WCC) in August 1948. This declaration sought to place Jewish mission on a new foundation. The establishment of the Israeli state was not greeted with overwhelming joy; rather it gave grounds for a new worry: "*The establishment of the state 'Israel' adds a political dimension to the Christian approach to the Jews and threatens to complicate anti-semitism with political fears and enmities."*[18] The State of Israel, therefore, presented an irritation to Jewish mission because it posed a political question to theology which was unwillingly faced: Would God create a Jewish statehood, since the Old Testament promise of a future territory possessed by Jews is fulfilled in the saving work of Jesus Christ? Mission expert Karl Hartenstein, member of the council of the EKD, summarized this attitude in words which could have been shared by missionaries working among Jews and Arabs likewise: "*God will bring this* [Jewish] *nation home, not to the earthly Palestine but to the heavenly Jerusalem*."[19]

This and similar positions regarding the Jews dominated several church periodicals of the time.[20] Authors with Jewish missionary background intended to encounter Judaism principally positive, perceived the Jews as the biblical people of God (who only were expected to accept Jesus Christ as their savior), and learned to appreciate the State of Israel as a hiding place for the persecuted.

Different from the harsh verdict of Hartenstein, exponents of Jewish missionary societies could also toy cautiously with the theological concepts of promise and prophecy, though apocalyptic and nationalistic interpretations were always rejected. For example, one leading member of the Bavarian branch of the *Evangelisch-Lutherische Zentralverein für Mission unter Israel*, Martin Wittenberg, warned Israelis against overestimating their statehood religiously. It could lead to a development "like in Germany before and after 1933," and thus lead to a new National Socialism, this time in a Jewish form.[21] Gerhard Jasper, another leading member of the *Zentralverein*, caught a glimpse of the commonality between NS ideology and contemporary Zionism in a religious "blood-and-soil ideology," according to which God has bound a particular people to a particular land.[22] Jewish authors, for whom Zionism was an ambivalent phenomenon, were held up as chief witnesses. Margarete Susman, for example, despite her hopes for the imminent creation of an Zionist state in 1946, warned against the "danger," "which exists for the Jewish people, today as always, in the creation of a nation."[23] Yet despite here criticism of an exaggerated nationalism, it would not have occurred to an author such as Susman to associate Zionist enthusiasm with NS ideology. The Christians' attack on the political life of the young State of Israel exceeded the criticism of their Jewish witnesses. Behind this attack was not only a concern about the moral failure of the Zionist project, but also the question of how Jews would relate to Christ in a modern Jewish state. Thus, the missiological newsletter of the Bavarian church, *Blick in die Welt*, regretted in July 1949 that a "nationalistic wave" would strengthen the Israelis in their Jewishness: "*A turn to Christ will thereby seem to be more than ever pushed into the distance*."[24]

With the same verve exponents of Jewish mission societies felt themselves called to campaign against pietistic-apocalyptic options. During this period, an outstanding apocalypticism manifested itself in the person of the Jewish Christian Abram Poljak, who from 1951 on proclaimed the imminently pending Millennium. Poljak saw in the State of Israel the seed of the millennial Kingdom of Christ, in which converted Jews would rule the world.[25] This assumption was based on the salvation-historical theory of *Dispensationalism*,[26] popularized since the 19th century. *Dispensationalism* disconnects the promises to the Jewish people from the Church. It was held that after Christendom had been raptured, the Jewish Christians would constitute the religious and political congregation of the messianic Prince of Peace, who would rule for 1000 years.

Otto von Harling, official in the EKD church office and leading member of the *Zentralverein*, warned the territorial churches as well as various church institutions of Poljak's apocalyptic message prior to the latter's first lecture tour through South Germany. Von Harling also mentioned that even the Jewish mission societies belonging to the *International Missionary Council* were critical about Poljak's path.[27] Von Harling's effort was flanked by an array of apologetic publications which attempted to refute Poljak's teachings more comprehensively.[28] In doing so, the critics were less interested in the political implications of Poljak's eschatology (the State of Israel as the fulfillment of biblical prophecy and as precursor of the new kingdom in the Millennium), although this resulted in a religious overemphasis of the contemporary Israeli state as well as a violation of the 17th article of the *Confessio Augustana*. Poljak's critics were far more vehement in their complaint that his apocalyptic interest in Israel led to a neglect of mission to *individual* Jews. Poljak was fixated with a *collective* conversion of the Jews during Christ's *Parousia*. An additional problem was Poljak's demand that Jewish Christians gather in their own congregations, detached from those of the Church. This stood in contrast to traditional universal ecclesiology.

The debate about Poljak's apocalyptic teachings demonstrated that the Jewish mission societies were hardly prepared for the *theological* implications of *political* Zionism and the creation of the State of Israel. They couldn't convince their contemporaries in opposing both the apocalyptic expectations concerning Israel and the soon-to-appear 'progressive' enthusiasm for Israel (see below).

2.2 The Traditional Palestine Mission

Church groups orientated towards Jewish mission were not alone in their interest in events in the Middle East. This interest was shared above all by the institutions and societies which had been in charge for the local Arab mission or which had represented Palestinian Germans since the 19th century. These were above all the organizations that were united in the *Palästinawerk* (Palestine institution):[29] *Kaiserswerther Diakonissenanstalt* (Kaiserswerth Deaconess Institution)[30], *Syrisches Waisenhaus* (Syrian Orphanage)[31], *Jerusalemsverein* (Jerusalem Society)[32], and *Evangelische Jerusalems-Stiftung* (Protestant Jerusalem Foundation). Besides, also Jerusalem's German Church of the Redeemer[33] and the Office for Foreign Relations of the EKD were occupied with proceedings concerning the Holy Land. Whereas all non-Jewish Germans had to leave the future territory of the State of Israel even before the state was founded and having their private and church property confiscated, the Protestant organizations in what became the trans-Jordanian part of the Holy Land were able to resume their work.

First of all, the Protestant institutions saw the new Jewish State from the perspective of those who were materially harmed. Edwin Moll was sent by the US *National Lutheran Council* to Israel in order to take care of the 'orphaned' German mission property (this work was later incorporated in the *Lutheran World Federation*). His reports were sent to church institutions in Germany, along with the comments of the East Jerusalem provost Johannes Döring. On the day of the creation of the State of Israel, Döring praised the American with the following words: "*In the past few months Dr. Moll has battled with great energy and personal courage against all attempts of Jewish authorities to take possession of our buildings*."[34] In this way, the newly formed state acquired the reputation of a predatory enemy power.

In addition to this, the Protestant institutions looked at the young Jewish state from the perspective of social aid agencies, which took care of Arab refugees. This perspective can be seen in the report of the long-time chairman of the *Jerusalemsverein* and executive director of the *Evangelische Jerusalems-Stiftung*, Bernhard Karnatz, who travelled the Jordanian part of Palestine in 1952. Both he and other representatives of the *Palästinawerk* looked from the tower of the Church of the Redeemer into the now inaccessible western part of Jerusalem, saw with nostalgia and sorrow the former house of the German Protestant provost as well as the buildings of the Syrian Orphanage, and were inevitably reminded of divided Berlin. The comparison with German reality also imposed itself in relation to another issue, namely the fate of the displaced Arabs:

"Already on the journey we repeatedly passed by extended refugee camps, where thousands of Arab families were dwelling miserably in tents. These Arabs had fled from the territories assigned to Israel out of fear of Jewish terror. We Germans experienced this misery with deep sympathy, fully aware of the hardship in our own country."[35]

If one consistently followed this train of thought, the comparison Germany-Palestine led to a parallel between the State of Israel and Stalin's Soviet Union. The latter had displaced innumerable Germans and occupied one part of the capital city. Karnatz's remarks also contributed to Israel's hostile image.

The reservation of the *Palästinawerk* representatives concerning Israel brought them into opposition with those groups orientated to Jewish mission and thus tending more towards philo-Semitism. Martin Wittenberg, for example, warned in 1957 against the "philo-Arab pastorate," according to whom "Israeli Palestine has lost all connection with history" (by which is meant biblical salvation history).[36] In this way Wittenberg alludes to the fact that those individuals from the context of the German institutions in Palestine were less ready to make a positive connection—however one understands that connection—between Jewish life in the Holy Land and biblical promises than many of the exponents of Jewish missionary societies. The perception of Israel as the cause of the incurred material damage influenced the negotiations of the

Palästinawerk resp. the *Lutheran World Federation* with the Israeli government concerning payment of compensation to the Palestine-oriented church institutions. That does not mean, however, that one can infer from the objectively written negotiation documents anti-Jewish prejudices against Israel. Overall, the creation of a Jewish state in the Middle East meant the end of German missionary work on Israeli territory and presented at the least an obvious disruption for the activities in the Jordanian part of Palestine.

2.3 'Progressive' voices

In the years following 1948 there were also evaluations of the founding of the Israeli state which deviated from those attitudes outlined above and which anticipated those positions which would become more popular from 1958 on. For this reason these voices can be designated as 'progressive,' even though their representatives did not all belong to the left wing of the political spectrum.

Provost Kurt Scharf, at the time leader of the Brandenburg department in the consistory of the *Evangelische Kirche in Berlin-Brandenburg* (Protestant Church in Berlin-Brandenburg), declared his position on the creation of the Israeli state as one of the few to later occupy a leading function within the EKD. As a result of the struggle between church and state in the Nazi era (the so-called *Kirchenkampf*) Scharf's theology had acquired an apocalyptic and biblicistic note, even though he did not deny the legitimacy of historical-critical exegesis.[37] This biblicistic-eschatological exegesis of Scripture not only generated his theological interpretation of the State of Israel. It was also the source of his involvement in left-wing politics, so that in the 1970's he was called the "red bishop."[38] He admitted that the salvation-historical role of "modern Israel" had already interested him as a school pupil.[39] In Scharf's personal estate are a number of pietistic brochures and booklets from the period of the 1950's, which show that he was familiar with the notion of the State of Israel as a sign of the end times.[40]

In summer of 1948 Scharf attempted to interpret the "rebirth of the nation of God"—in line with the title of the journal *Zeichen der Zeit* —as "the most obvious 'sign of the times'." He came to the following conclusion: "*There remains only one interpretation: the apocalyptic-prophetic one of Holy Scripture itself*."[41] Scharf's comments show that he considered the Israeli statehood to be "evidence" against the classic interpretation, according to which the promises of land and return had been annulled. By speaking in this context of the return of Christ, Scharf joined the ranks of those for whom the foundation of the state was a sign of the end times. In addition to this, the essay of the Berlin provost contained a theological-historical attempt to come to terms with the Third Reich: God had brought about the renewed ingathering of his people by means of the "minions of the hostile power"—a reference to the National Socialists as a part of God's salvation plan.[42] During the Israeli-Arab conflict of 1967—from the Israeli perspective the so-called *Six Day War*—Scharf remained faithful to his views and thus became the most decisive supporter of Israel of all the leading churchmen.

In addition to Scharf's advance, it is worth mentioning the activities of the Heidelberg district dean Hermann Maas, who labeled himself a Zionist.[43] Just as Martin Niemöller[44] had become a symbolic figure of resistance during the *Kirchenkampf*, so Maas together with Berlin provost Heinrich Grüber[45] personified moral integrity in their relation to Jews during the NS regime. In a similar manner to Grüber, Maas took care both of Jews and of Christians with a Jewish background during the NS period and attempted to stir the hesitant Confessing Church to a more unambiguous, positive attitude towards Jews.[46] As a result, in 1950 Maas became the first German to be invited by the Israeli government to visit the country. The account of this journey along with a book written during the next visit to Israel in 1953 became typical of a large portion of Christian literature about Israel well into the 1960's.[47] It is important to realize that Maas' visit to Israel was not a private tourist trip but rather a guided tour by governmental delegates. They

assumed that Maas would present the construction of the Israeli community positively at home and thus contribute to a positive pro-Jewish atmosphere in the West German society.

In his travelogue Maas describes the Israeli as an industrious worker and farmer, who drains marshes and brings deserts back to life. In the same way the *Kibbutzim* were presented as having developed the ideal social and economic structure. This was an attempt to counteract the traditional anti-Semitic clichés, according to which the Jew is a parasitic huckster incapable of gainful employment. Sure enough, for Maas there is also the salvation-historical interpretation. Maas recognized at least an anticipation of the fulfillment of messianic promises in the founding of the Israeli state as well as in the booming cities and productive fields. The return of the Jews to Palestine "*precedes the far greater return. This is something which we cannot grasp today ..., yet which is to be grasped with the words 'redemption' and 'fulfillment,' behind which stands the Messiah, great and living*."[48] It is clear that Kurt Scharf and Hermann Maas are far more ready to interpret the events in the Middle East with regard to salvation history or even eschatology than those from the context of Jewish mission societies or Palestine aid agencies.

2.4 The German-Israeli Reparations Agreement of 1952

The German-Israeli Reparations Agreement of September 10, 1952 (also called *Luxembourg Agreement*), which ended the Israeli-German reparation negotiations, was the most outstanding event after 1948 concerning the German-Israeli relationship.[49] The text of the agreement established that the Federal Republic of Germany would pay the State of Israel 3.45 billion DM (823 million US Dollars), of which 450 million DM would be for the *Claims Conference* (Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany). For self-evident reasons the prevalent term "reparation" has been often criticized along with the German word *Wiedergutmachung* (literally meaning "making damages well again"). So both terms are often replaced by the Hebrew expression *shilumim*, which can be neutrally translated as "payment."[50] The background for this agreement was the idea that the Federal Republic, as legal successor of the German Reich, should pay compensation for Jewish property which had been expropriated during the NS period. Because the Shoah had made it impossible for much Jewish property to be claimed by an heir, this 'ownerless' capital was designated to benefit the State of Israel as an aid for construction.

The Finance Minister Fritz Schäffer (Christian Social Union/CSU) and the banker Hermann Josef Abs, who had led the German delegation in the debt conference in London in May 1952, were critics of the German payments to Israel.[51] Before that conference began, Schäffer had held that the Jewish target compensation sum had been wrongly calculated and was too high. Abs wanted to make the compensation benefits dependent on the amount of the German reparation payments to the Western powers, in order to not unduly burden the Federal Republic's economy. Nevertheless, Chancellor Konrad Adenauer (Christian Democratic Union/CDU), who as a practical politician was concerned about the impact on foreign policy, with the moral support of Franz Böhm, the German group leader at the negotiations, enforced the *Shilumim* both in the Cabinet as well as in *Bundesrat* and *Bundestag* (upper and lower houses of the German parliament respectively). In the *Bundestag* vote the SPD (Social Democratic Party) voted decisively for the Luxembourg Agreement, whereas from Adenauer's own coalition parties CDU/CSU, FDP (Free Democratic Party), and DP (German Party), not even one half approved the reparation agreement.[52]

What also spoke for the ratification of the Luxembourg Agreement was the political pressure—albeit very moderate—which had been built up by journalists, writers, artists and church people beforehand, amongst them Hermann Maas and Heinrich Grüber as well as the *Deutscher Evangelischer Ausschuss für Dienst an Israel.* These church people and groups thought first of all of an individual and not of a collective compensation for those suffered from the *Nuremberg Laws*. As soon as the Israeli agenda was on the table, however, they also advocated the *Shilumim*. They believed, what was stated in an article from the journal *Evangelische Welt*: "*It is not only about a Western responsibility, but about an eminently Christian obligation."*[53] Exponents of Jewish

mission from the *Deutscher Evangelischer Ausschuss für Dienst an Israel* and the people associated with Maas and Grüber pulled together for once during the *Shilumim* Negotiations. In the public domain, however, the activities of the *Gesellschaften für christlich-jüdische Zusammenarbeit* (Organizations for Christian-Jewish Cooperation), in which mainly liberal Protestants were active, were better known. One member was the Hamburg senate director Erich Lüth, who in the late summer of 1951 launched a series of highly noticed newspaper announcements in which he called for German-Israeli reconciliation.[54] Protestantism in general, rather than executive church bodies, contributed to a political climate which made the Agreement of 1952 possible. The EKD officially held back from public discussions about the *Shilumim*. Otto von Harling justified this behavior by claiming that the Church “had to consider the spiritual and economic situation of the people to whom she spoke.”[55] The church boards did not perceive themselves to be progressive trend-setters; rather they wanted the church to be a counselor for the population. Therefore the church leader avoided to promote an issue that was not approved by the majority of the people. According to a questionnaire 44% of the population still rejected the reparation payments and another 24% felt that the total compensation sum was too high.[56] At the beginning of the 1950's, political positions did not belong to the self-understanding of the executive EKD institutions to the degree that they would from the 1960's onward.

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3. 1958-1966: The State of Israel as ‘Motor’ of Christian-Jewish Dialogue

Around the 1960's the Protestant perceptions of Israel went through a generation change of a theological-political rather than an age-related nature. A glance at the church periodicals[57] shows that around 1960 the most important authors who had explained Judaism and Israel to their readers until now gradually disappeared from the scene, even though they continued living for decades. This is especially true for the theologians associated to the *Evangelisch-Lutherischer Zentralverein für Mission unter Israel*, such as Gerhard Jasper, Karl-Heinrich Rengstorf, and Martin Wittenberg. The latter even lived until 2001. In their place authors appeared with a different orientation.

3.1 Israel Tours as Theological “Experience”

The sociological category of an ‘experience-orientated society’ (*Erlebnisgesellschaft*) is relevant to our topic in the sense that the State of Israel was increasingly perceived according to its own outlook. Between 1958 and 1961 influential church people travelled to Israel, parallel to the general rise in West German tourism: Heinrich Grüber (see above), Pastor Adolf Freudenberg (central-European representative of the *Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews* within the *International Missionary Council*), his son-in-law Helmut Gollwitzer (who was at first professor in Bonn, then in West-Berlin), the West Berlin student pastor Friedrich-Wilhelm Marquardt (ultimately Gollwitzer's assistant and later a theology professor himself), as well as Rudolf Weckerling (also a student pastor in West Berlin and later overseas pastor in Beirut). From 1958 on, these individuals travelled to Israel, sometimes alone, sometimes with church or student tour groups. The theology professors Rolf Rendtorff and Günther Harder (both from West Berlin), while taking part in a scientific course in 1959 at the *Deutsche Palästinainstitut* (German Palestine Institute) situated in East Jerusalem, were allowed to glance out of the old city of Jerusalem into Israel, which had been designated by the institute's adminstration “as virtually taboo” and thus a “foreign world.”[58]

The descriptions of the Israel tours[59] around the 1960's display parallels to the publications of Hermann Maas: The developments in the country are brought into connection with biblical promises. The Israeli buildup is described as incredibly fascinating. The experiences in the *kibbutzim* demonstrated that socialism was the better way to structure society. For many pilgrims into the Jewish part of the Holy Land, a left-wing political orientation and a love for Israel were seen to be two sides of a coin. It is no surprise, then, that Rolf Rendtorff, who had visited the State of Israel for the first time in 1963 and who would become one of the leading advocates of Jewish-Christian rapprochement, felt more at home in the SPD than in CDU or FDP.[60] In addition to this, a characteristic of all travelogues was the awareness that a German was confronting the survivors of the greatest of German crimes. Thus, in 1959 the West Berlin student pastor Rudolf Weckerling impressed the following words upon the minds of his co-travelers: “*The heaviest baggage which you are carrying with you is our guilt to the Jews*.”[61] An increase in trips to Israel led to an increased awareness of German guilt – and vice versa.

1958 was also the year in which Lother Kreyssig, president of the synod of the *Evangelische Kirche der Union* (Protestant Church of the Union), made an appeal for the creation of *Aktion Sühnezeichen* (Sign of Reconciliation) at the EKD synod in Berlin-Spandau.[62] Young Germans were to be given the opportunity to go on voluntary assignments in order to ask the victims of the Second World War for forgiveness and to make a contribution towards reconciliation. In his initial appeal Kreyssig envisioned Poland, Russia and Israel to be the intended locations for such work.

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The first voluntary group, however, did not reach Israel until 1961 due to anti-German resentment (as had been feared), not least because of the Israeli trial of the war criminal Adolf Eichmann.

In this way, the existence of the State of Israel, along with the Shoah, became a starting point for a kind of 'experience theology' (*Erfahrungstheologie*), a specific 'contextualized' theology. This orientation towards the living Israel was the positive flip-side of a 'theology after Auschwitz', oriented as it was towards a negative event in history. This 'experience theology' was expressed most clearly by the West Berlin theology professor and former student pastor Friedrich-Wilhelm Marquardt: "Ever since my dissertation, the motive for my entire theological activity is due to a trip to Israel," namely the trip of 1959, which became "my second baptism."[63] This talk of 'second baptism' attributes a quasi sacramental character to the first encounter with the Israeli community, making it constitutive for one's own Christian existence and theology. The awe over *Eretz Israel* as an abstract entity and the impression left through concrete Israelis, with whom friendly relations were to develop, interacted with each other. Practically everyone who was or is active in Christian-Jewish dialogue portrays in his or her life one (or more) trips to Israel as being a special experience.

The 10th *Kirchentag*—the large Protestant meeting in Berlin, July 1961—made it possible for those who had no yet visited Israel to have insights into the kinds of experiences they would encounter there. This was done by means of the events of the *Arbeitsgruppe* VI (Working Group VI), out of which the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft 'Juden und Christen' auf dem Deutschen Evangelischen Kirchentag* developed (see above). The events organized by the Working Group were led especially by those who had visited Israel since 1958, e.g. Helmut Gollwitzer and Friedrich-Wilhelm Marquardt. This Church Convention also demonstrates how the experiences made on the soil of the Israeli state functioned as a 'motor' which accelerated rapprochement between Jews and Christians and contributed to a modification of Protestant theology, including the relationship to the notion of Jewish mission. From a theological perspective, in the eyes of the organizers of the *Arbeitsgruppe* at the Berlin Church Convention a "breakthrough" occurred in which there was a renunciation of a Christian "consciousness of superiority" in relation to Judaism:[64] *"The time of Jewish mission in the pietistic sense of the word is now over."*[65] The exponents of the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft* certainly held on to their Christian 'witness' (*Zeugnis*) to the Jews, but they distanced themselves from a concept of mission which had as its goal the conversion of Jews to Christianity. What was intended by groups such as the *Evangelisch-Lutherische Zentralverein für Mission unter Israel* was rejected as "pietistic", although the *Zentralverein*, for instance, regarded itself as confessional, not as pietistic.

3.2 The 'official trip' of the EKD 1962

It was only a matter of time until the impetus created by the first Israel tours would have an effect on representatives of the church boards. Heinrich Grüber (see above), member of the Berlin-Brandenburg church governing body and representative of the EKD council to the government of the GDR until 1959, managed to persuade members of the EKD council along with others to travel to Israel from November 1 to 12, 1962. The climate for such a venture was particularly favorable as the pro-Israeli Kurt Scharf (see above) was at the time not only bishop of the Berlin-Brandenburg Church, but chairman of the EKD council as well and therefore highest representative of German Protestantism. This was to be his first visit in Israel. Other members of the EKD council who went on this trip were Ernst Wilm, president of the Westphalian Church, as well as Wilhelm Niesel, the *Moderator* (chairman) of the *Reformierte Bund* (Alliance of Reformed Churches in Germany).

As far as Grüber was concerned, the purpose of the tour was to awaken an appreciation for the Israeli state in the churchmen and to convince them of the importance of opening up diplomatic relations between Israel and the Federal Republic.[66] It should be admitted, however, that the 31-member travel group consisted only of those who had decisively stood on the side of the Confessing Church during the Nazi period and thus had already begun to move theologically

towards Judaism before this trip took place. It was therefore not difficult to convince the participants of the importance of taking up such a diplomatic relationship.

An irritation for the tour group was the fact that the press spoke of “a delegation from the Protestant Church in Germany,” which had the ring of something official.[67] For this reason the bishop of the Württemberg Church, Martin Haug, complained after the event that not all the members of the council of the EKD had been either made aware of the trip or invited to take part. It was therefore wrong for the venture to be presented in the press as an official visit.[68] Kurt Scharf made it plain that the trip was a purely “private affair,” made at the instigation of Grüber. This qualification, however, contradicted the self-understanding of the tour group, who had presented themselves to the German and Israeli public as if they were representatives of German Protestantism. Perhaps Grüber and Scharf did not want to be thwarted in their moral and political concerns by confessional Lutherans, who tended towards skepticism and reservation concerning the issue of Israel. In any case, the question ultimately remained open as to whether certain council members were consciously excluded from the trip.

On November 9 the tour group took part in a memorial ceremony on the occasion of the 24th anniversary of the Nazi Pogrom Night in *Yad Vashem* and laid a wreath. At the reception held by Leon Kubovi, director of the memorial, Niesel stated that the Confessing Church, out of which the contemporary EKD has developed, had had a good relationship to Jews, as manifested in its struggle against the Arian Paragraphs, the offer of personal help and the public condemnation of the mass murder of the Jews.[69] Certainly this self-estimation is somewhat too positive.[70] By appealing to the contemporary EKD the group gave the impression that it was an official delegation. Scharf concluded his address, which directly followed Niesel's, with a reference to the salvation-historical role of the Jewish people:

“The nation of Israel is unique in its suffering. It is unique in its achievements, in its return and reconstruction of its land [...] It will be unique in its future, and this future—and this is a specific feature of Christian belief—will be closely bound to the future of the Church.”[71]

Scharf's words stood in continuity with his previous interpretation of Israeli statehood in that he extended the present “uniqueness” of the “nation of Israel”—he did not distinguish between Jews and Israeli citizens—into the eschatological.

3.3 Cooperation between ‘Progressives’ and Pietists

Whereas representatives of Jewish missionary societies attempted to rebut the teaching popular amongst Pietists, that the events in the Middle East were signs of the end times, [72] ‘progressive’ friends of Israel worked together with certain Pietists for a while. The term ‘progressive’ refers to those Christians who pushed for Jewish-Christian reconciliation and who, at least in the 1960's, tended to belong to the left of the political spectrum. The term ‘Pietists’ refers to those Protestants who, on the basis of an inward faith, live in a self-chosen distance to the established churches, despite the fact that they were often members of these churches (such as, for example, the members of the *Gnadauer Gemeinschaftsverband* [Gnadau Fellowship Association]; there are, however, also Pietists who are organized as Free Churches). In contrast to confessional Lutherans, who ground the certainty of their faith in the sacraments of baptism and communion, understood objectively, Pietists ground their faith in the subjective appropriation of the salvific events through conversion and ‘new birth’. Towards the end of the 1960's the term ‘Pietists’ was increasingly supplemented with the term ‘Evangelicals’ (*Evangelikale*). Both terms more or less characterize the same spectrum within German Protestantism.[73]

Even before the Berlin Church Convention of 1961, the *Kirchentag* in Munich in 1959 had dealt with the existence of the Jewish state. Students who had participated in the trip to Israel led by Marquardt and Weckerling reported, along with Gollwitzer, their experiences. Even the

Darmstädter Marienschwesterschaft (Darmstadt Sisterhood of Mary), which was considered to be evangelical, took part in several Church Conventions since 1959 and impressed supporters of Jewish-Christian dialogue with the so-called *Israel-Ruferspiel*, a drama thematizing German guilt to the Jews. In addition to this, Gollwitzer recounted with moving words in Munich, how he had met a year previously Mother Basilea alias Klara Schlink, sister of theology professor Edmund Schlink and leader of the *Darmstädter Marienschwesterschaft*, on Mount of the Beatitudes and was deeply moved by her dedicated commitment.[74]

In addition to Gollwitzer the Reformed Johan Hendrik Grolle, who was associated with the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft 'Juden und Christen' auf dem Deutschen Evangelischen Kirchentag*, cultivated relationships with Pietistic Israel fans, notably the Norwegian Per Faye-Hansen, director of the Haifa based *Karmel-Institut* (Carmel Institute) and reference person of a German supporter group, which was led by Friedrich Brode. Faye-Hansen's moral integrity was already attested by Hermann Maas in the 1950's, who had met the Norwegian several times and who especially appreciated the fact that, out of a sense of solidarity with the persecuted Jews, he had travelled with them out of German-occupied Norway to Palestine.[75] In August 1963 German friends of the *Karmel-Institut* took part in a 'Carmel Conference' in Nyborg/Denmark and passed a declaration, written by Faye-Hansen, in which "Israel's re-establishment as an independent state" was characterized as a special event in salvation history towards the second coming of Jesus Christ.[76]

In the optimistic spirit of the 1960's 'progressives' and Pietists managed to co-operate on the basis of common convictions concerning salvation history. The differences between these two Protestant movements were at first of little significance. In the course of time, however, these differences became ever more apparent. On the one hand, this was due to the fact that the 'progressives' were not able to accept the Pietists' religious enthusiasm of the Israeli victory in the *Six Day War* 1967. On the other hand, the representatives of Jewish-Christian dialogue gradually distanced themselves, not only practically but also theoretically, from the idea that Jews—even in an eschatological perspective—need Christ for their salvation. This development leads to a split with the Pietists, who justified their abandonment of mission to individual Jews only on the basis of their belief in a collective Jewish conversion at the imminent return of Christ. In sum, it was the debate concerning Jewish mission as well as the new evaluation of the Middle East conflict post-1967 that undid the possibility of cooperation between evangelicals and those of the 'left.'

3.4 Inner-Protestant Debates

Pietists had also been initially involved in another initiative instigated by 'progressives,' the founding of the German branch of the *Nes Ammim* project. Waldemar Brenner, for example, editor of the *Der Gärtner* (The Gardener), the journal of the Free Evangelical Church, was one of the founders of the German *Nes Ammim* Association when it was brought into being in Velbert/Rhineland in 1963. Pastor Paul Deitenbeck, the longtime chairman of the German Evangelical Alliance, even belonged to the board of trustees of *Nes Ammim* Association at the beginning of the 1970's.[77]

The goal of the project was the establishment of a Christian settlement in Israel by the name of *Nes Ammim* as a place of reconciliation between Jews and Christians, Israelis and Germans. In 1964 the first inhabitants settled on the plain between Nahariya and Akko. Due to Israeli restrictions, Germans were only accepted from 1970 on. For the supporters of the settlement the category of experience played a significant role, just as with the other travelers in Israel. It was important to have seen with one's own eyes that a large number of Jews had once again made themselves at home in their biblical land. The theologian Heinz Kremers, originally of Pietistic roots,[78] was influenced by this experience. Kremer's "Memorandum", as much as the eschatological-messianic context of Isaiah 11 from which the name *Nes Ammim* was taken

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(translated as “A Sign for the Nations”), demonstrates that this work in Israel was based on a decidedly salvation-historical theology. With this “Memorandum” the *Nes Ammim* project was presented to representatives of the Israeli government. Kremer openly spoke of the fact that in 1948 God had fulfilled his promise of return from exile for the second time after the return from Babylon. The second Jewish homecoming was described as a “sign of the faithfulness of God,” anticipating the formulation of the 1980 Rhineland Synodal Declaration, where the “homecoming in the land of promise as well as the establishment of the State of Israel” are characterized as a “sign of God's faithfulness towards his people.”[79]

In light of this theology Lutherans, who were bound to the notion of Jewish mission, feared that the eschatological teachings of an Abram Poljak or a Per Faye-Hansen had also influenced the initiators of *Nes Ammim*. Otto von Harling, EKD church official and at the same time second chairman of the *Zentralverein*, commented on the founding of *Nes Ammim* in the following way: *“One can already recognize in the composition of the planned 'board of trustees' [...] a certain theological and ecclesiastical-political orientation (no members of Lutheran churches!). I therefore recommend caution and reserve.”*[80] Those representatives of the EKD who distanced themselves from *Nes Ammim* felt confirmed in their position after even the pro-Israeli Heinrich Grüber rejected getting involved in *Nes Ammim* and spoke of a flawed financial investment which would develop into a scandal: “*I can only strongly warn against the so-called Christian settlement Nes Ammim*.”[81] Grüber criticized similar to Karl Heinrich Rengstorf[82] the categorical renunciation of mission to the Jews, as it was concretely expressed in the fact that Jewish Christians were not permitted to become inhabitants of *Nes Ammim* Settlement. This exclusion of Jewish Christian members was an attempt to counteract the Israeli concern that the Christian settlement was nothing more than a concealed missionary outpost. In the light of such criticism it was no surprise that the settlement was not able to receive support from *Brot für die Welt* (Bread for the World), an aid agency linked with the EKD. As justification it was claimed that *Nes Ammim* did not fit into *Brot für die Welt*'s development aid profile. Heinz Kremers surmised that hostility to Israel was the real reason for the decision, what was consistently denied by official sources, however.

Another dispute developed over an alleged statement made by Provost Carl Malsch, who represented the German Protestant congregation in East Jerusalem (Church of the Redeemer) and presided over the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Jordan.[83] ‘Progressive’ Christians and Jews observed closely what was happening in the Jerusalem Redeemer Church, because they were aware of its Arab context and the resulting distance towards the State of Israel.

An important Jewish contributor at the events of the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft ‘Juden und Christen‘ auf dem Deutschen Evangelischen Kirchentag* was West Jerusalem Journalist Shalom Ben-Chorin. On September 21, 1962, Ben-Chorin reported in the newspaper *Yedioth Chadashoth* that certain Israel-hostile comments were made by the provost. Public interest in such a matter was naturally due to the political explosiveness implied when an anti-Israeli or even anti-Jewish statement was made by a German representative of a church in Jerusalem. Ben-Chorin referred to an unnamed pastor who asked the provost for support in trying to cross the border from Jordan to Israel at the Mandelbaum Gate. In response the provost, full of rage, snarled: “*What have you lost in Israel after all? The entire land has been stolen and 90% of the population are atheists*.”[84]

This article created a furor in the pro-Jewish part of Protestantism, notably in the *Deutscher Evangelischer Ausschuss für Dienst an Israel* and in the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft*. The Office for Foreign Relations of the EKD and Bernhard Karnatz, chairman of the *Jerusalemsverein*, received letters of complaint, some measured and some fierce. Karnatz demanded that Malsch make a statement, and included in his letter the following words:

“Given the active relationship between Germany and Israel it is to be feared that this phrase will be widely discussed, not only damaging your personal reputation but also bringing our work in the

Holy Land into disrepute."[85] Malsch responded: "I never used the sentence, 'What do you want in Israel?' in such an isolated manner. It was used in closest connection with the request to spend more time in Jordan instead, in order to be able to relate to the problems here more objectively."[86]

In the face of supposedly one-sided pro-Israeli articles in German journals, Malsch saw it as his responsibility to explain the Arab position to German tourists. After the request that Malsch should be more careful in public statements for the future, the affair was closed down in January 1963.

The debate concerning the *German-Israeli ambassador exchange*,[87] which was realized in 1965, became more well-known. 'Progressive' church groups considered the fact that the Federal Government had hesitated for so long in recognizing Israel as a scandal. They regarded this as an expression of a fatal anti-communism. Protestant theologians such as Freudenberg, Gollwitzer, Marquardt, Rendtorff and representatives of the *Evangelische Studentengemeinden* (Student Christian Movement/ESG)[88], along with the participants of the EKD 'delegation' of 1962 (see above), belonged to a ecclesiastical-political network, which had called for the recognition of Israel since about 1960.

The question of mutual recognition between the Federal Republic and Israel was discussed within the EKD council from July 1964 onwards, since several petitions had been addressed to the council in this matter. Kurt Scharf had received a pro-Israeli statement from the *Kirchliche Bruderschaft in Württemberg* (Württemberg Church Brotherhood), which consisted of pastors. Also Grüber and Freudenberg had turned to Niesel and the president of the EKD synod, Hans Puttfarcken, in the name of the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft*.

During the council meeting of July 2-3, 1964, Wilhelm Niesel, *Moderator* of the *Reformierte Bund* and member of the council of the EKD, emphatically lobbied for the EKD to write an official letter to the Federal Government, calling for the establishment of official diplomatic relations with the State of Israel.[89] Niesel was in full agreement with the chairman of the council, Kurt Scharf. Niesel was an example of a tendency in which those of Reformed tradition were far more able to integrate Judaism and the State of Israel into their own Christian belief in a positive way as strict Lutherans were (Pietistic eschatological scenarios can also often be traced back to the Reformed tradition—often via the Anglo-Saxon world—rather than to the Lutheran).

In spite of the pro-Israeli petitions, Hermann Kunst, council representative to the Federal Government, raised objections which he had developed out of a conversation with the foreign secretary Gerhard Schröder (CDU).[90] The main objection was that one should hinder the Arabs from recognizing the GDR, because this would consolidate the German partition. This goal suited Kunst, who was interested in the (at the time still existing) all-German EKD. Kunst hoped that he could influence the imminent vote in this direction and therefore turned to the councilors of the Lutheran churches, who tended towards political neutrality in relation to the Israeli state.[91] In the end, Kunst did not have the influence he had hoped for, as Niesel's concerns were also shared by Lutherans.

The letter written by Niesel emphasized that the normalization of German-Israeli relations should have the highest priority, "after everything that we Germans have brought upon ourselves in relation to the Jews." Furthermore, Bonn should do everything to ensure that German scientists no longer take part in the production of Egyptian offensive weapons. Only when the German nation takes care of these "moral requirements of the first order" it may "hope that its own future would also be healed."[92] The argumentation of the letter hereby gave priority to ethics over *realpolitik*. The letter was signed by Scharf on October 26, 1964 and was personally handed to Federal President Heinrich Lübke (CDU) by Kunst on November 6.

At the turn of the year 1964/65, West German church synods, among them Hanover and the

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Rhineland, voted explicitly for an exchange of ambassadors, too. Regarding the so-called *Ostdenkschrift* (Memorandum on Relations with Eastern European Countries)[93] of 1965 which argued for the recognition of the Oder-Neiße-Line as Germany's eastern border, and regarding the German-Israeli ambassador exchange, the EKD acted in a manner which at the time was considered to be politically progressive. Therefore German Protestantism increased the public pressure that was to force Chancellor Ludwig Erhard (CDU), against the will of his Foreign Secretary, to bring about an official recognition of Israel.

4. Conclusion

In this essay I have traced the perception of the State of Israel in West German Protestantism from 1948 to 1967. Various Protestant notions of the State of Israel were not developed at the level of church boards, but rather at a lower level: theologians and journalists, groups and individuals introduced the issues by means of books, bulletins, and journal articles. Ultimately, members of the church leadership either adopted these issues or were forced by them to take action. Also in relation to the general public, Protestantism helped create an atmosphere in which the Federal Government could open itself to Israel. One thinks, for example, of the *Shilumim* Agreement or the exchange of ambassadors.

Nevertheless, it wasn't until the 1960's that the EKD council took a public stance on the issue and demanded, for example, German-Israeli recognition. The background for such a hesitant approach was the concern to preserve the church against being one-sided politicized. Neither the EKD council nor any other church body was a monolithic block: their members were to some extent determined by conflicting interests. It is a basic fact that the Protestant church was characterized by a plurality of opinions in which protagonists of both a pro-Israeli and a Israel-critical attitude struggled to gain influence.

Despite this fact, there are still distinctions that can be made concerning the reception of the State of Israel in the 1950's and 60's. Initially there were primarily theological assumptions which determined the opinions concerning the Jewish state (salvation-historical agendas or commitment to certain confessions). Eventually secular categories gained in significance (awareness of German guilt, the question of moral obligation). In period I (1948-1957), pro-Israeli voices were a definite minority. The majority view was supported by a theology which could not imagine a fulfillment of biblical promises concerning the Jews as long as they rejected Christ as their Messiah. In period II (1958-1967) far more Protestants were willing to support the State of Israel as a consequence of the Shoah. This era can therefore be called the ‘golden period’ of pro-Israeli engagement within the church. Political opinions were accompanied by a theological change of mind: actual encounters with Israelis promoted a form of Jewish-Christian dialogue in which the question of Christ, while never disappearing, was either pushed into the background or relocated into mere eschatology. Protestants could increasingly affirm the bond between Jews and *Eretz Israel*, even in theological perspective.

Summery

In this study the author presents Protestant individuals, groups, committees, and print media who, between 1948 and 1972, dealt with the significance of the State of Israel in theological (do Jews have a biblical right to the land?), moral (as a result of the Shoah, how much solidarity with Israel is required?), and political perspective (what consequences do these implications have for an evaluation of the Middle East conflict?).

The opinion is widespread that Christians in the Federal Republic of Germany only began to deal

with the existence of the State of Israel from the 1960's onward. This opinion may well be the case quantitatively, as the number of people who were interested in events in the Middle East and published on the subject progressively grew in the course of time.

Nevertheless, the State of Israel, even in the first years of its existence, was never ignored by West German Protestantism, but an enduring topic since 1948.

Various Protestant notions of the State of Israel were not developed at the level of church boards, but rather at a lower level: theologians and journalists, groups and individuals introduced the issues by means of books, bulletins, and journal articles. Ultimately, members of the church leadership either adopted these issues or were forced by them to take action. Also in relation to the general public, Protestantism helped create an atmosphere in which the Federal Government could open itself to Israel. In doing so, Protestantism and even church board members were characterized by a plurality of opinions in which protagonists of both a pro-Israeli and a Israel-critical attitude struggled to gain influence.

Despite this fact, there are still distinctions that can be made concerning the reception of the State of Israel in the 1950's and 70's. Initially there were primarily theological assumptions which determined the opinions concerning the Jewish state (salvation-historical agendas or commitment to certain confessions). Eventually secular categories gained in significance (awareness of German guilt, the question of moral obligation).

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Wahrnehmungen in Kirche und Publizistik von 1948 bis 1972.

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Dr. Gerhard Gronauer lectures Church History of the 19th and 20th Century at *the International YMCA University of Applied Sciences* in Kassel. He is also pastor of the *Evangelical Lutheran Church* in Bavaria and lives in Dinkelsbühl/Central Franconia.

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