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# Christianity and National Identity in Twentieth-Century Europe

Conflict, Community, and the Social Order

Edited by  
John Carter Wood

Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht

Cover picture: The Corpus Christi Procession Leaving the Church of  
Santa Maria del Mar (detail) by Ramon Casas (1907).

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In memory of  
Marvin Rosen (1934–2001) and  
James S. Cockburn (1938–2010):  
mentors and friends



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## Preface

The idea of putting together this collection began with a panel I organised on the issue of Christianity and national identity for the European Social Science History Conference in Vienna in April 2014. The papers (three of which – in much altered form – appear in this volume) focused on diverse contexts, but in the session’s discussion and in post-conference exchanges I had with colleagues certain common issues centring on community, conflict, and the social order nonetheless recurred. The realisation emerged that, although much research has been done on religion and nationalism, there seemed to be room for a collection that could capture the specificities of particular historical moments while evoking broader European commonalities. With this aim in mind, I was inspired to assemble the essays that follow.

In this process, it seemed particularly important to account for the motivations and strategies of specific kinds of historical protagonists, whether clergy, government officials, union leaders, or religiously motivated “intellectuals” of one kind or another. Moreover, although focused on the twentieth century, this volume also points to its permeable borders. It was apparent that, especially for some nations, twentieth-century patterns originated a century before; at the same time, twentieth-century experiences of war and totalitarianism – and of the efforts to resist and overcome them – linger on in twenty-first-century intermixtures of national and religious identity.

While this collection does not aim to offer a comprehensive overview of the multifarious Christian engagement with national identity in twentieth-century Europe (which would require a vastly larger scope), it brings together specific studies – spanning denominational boundaries and European regions – that highlight common issues. I hope that it will be useful to other scholars in thinking about the different levels and scales on which the cultural and intellectual history of twentieth-century European religion must be developed. Some absences in the volume’s coverage proved unavoidable, whether with regard to particular countries or regions (such as Italy or Scandinavia), historical processes (such as, above all, migration), and interactions with non-Christian faiths (particularly Judaism and Islam); nonetheless, the collection makes an important contribution to the historical and sociological study of Christianity’s place in modern European culture.

I am grateful to the authors of the chapters that follow for contributing their work and for their helpful and collegial discussions over the past couple

of years. Colleagues at the Leibniz Institute of European History have offered valuable advice and assistance along the way. In particular, I thank Professor Johannes Paulmann for his enthusiasm for this collection and support in publishing it.

John Carter Wood

Mainz, March 2016

John Carter Wood

“Blessed is the nation”?

Christianity and National Identity in  
Twentieth-Century Europe<sup>1</sup>

Christians, like adherents of other faiths, have always had to consider the balance between their relationship to the deity they worship and the polity in which they live. The Bible offers a range of guidance. On the one hand, the Old Testament notion of a “chosen people” – closely linking religious and political allegiance – has been historically influential, often mediated through a myth of collective divine “election”.<sup>2</sup> Alternatively, Jesus’ injunction to “render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” has given a reference point for strictly distinguishing between two realms: one earthly, temporal, and finite, the other heavenly, eternal, and infinite.<sup>3</sup> At various points, the Bible accepts “nations” as legitimate forms of community<sup>4</sup> – though it is important to keep in mind that the use of the term “nation” in many translations does not necessarily have the same political resonances that it would later acquire in the modern period<sup>5</sup> – and conditional support for a *particular* kind of nationality is found in the psalmist’s assertion that “blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord”.<sup>6</sup> Alternatively, universalist conclusions have been drawn from Paul’s claim that “there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free:

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1 I thank Paul Lawrence, Hugh McLeod, and Anja Müller-Wood for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this introduction.

2 W.R. Hutchison/H. Lehmann (ed.), *Many Are Chosen: Divine Election and Western Nationalism* (Minneapolis 1994); Philip S. Gorski, “The Mosaic Moment: An Early Modernist Critique of Modernist Theories of Nationalism”, in *American Journal of Sociology* 105 (2000), 1428–1468; Anthony D. Smith, *Chosen Peoples: Sacred Sources of National Identity* (Oxford 2003).

3 Mark 12:17 (King James Bible). Also Matthew 22:21 and Luke 20:25.

4 E.g., Proverbs 14:34: “Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people”; Matthew 28:19: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

5 English translations, notably the King James Bible, have been especially prone to rendering diverse original terms as “nation”, arguably reflecting early-modern “nationalist” sentiments on the part of the translators: Liah Greenfield, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, MA 1992), 52–53.

6 Psalms 33:12: “Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance”.

but Christ is all, and in all”.<sup>7</sup> Beyond biblical texts, various, and sometimes opposed, denominational traditions have developed on the relation between the “Kingdom of Heaven” and the temporal social order. The “City of God” and the “City of Man” might be seen as two “imagined communities”, and working out how they fit together is as old as Christianity itself.

Relating faith to any political collective involves addressing not only the responsibilities of the individual believer toward a given polity (e.g., in terms of taxation, political participation, or military service) but also “identity”, in the sense of defining oneself and one’s relations to a larger group, an effort that has taken place under changing constellations of political rule. In the Roman Empire, the Christian was part of his or her province, tribe, or city but also under imperial jurisdiction. The medieval notion of a supra-national “Christendom” coexisted with feudal territories (kingdom, dukedom, shire, principality, etc.), and it has lived on as an ideal or myth of European unity.<sup>8</sup> Europe has seen countless wars and treaties that have shifted borders, with consequences for political and (especially since the Reformation) religious identities. Religion may have supplied national identity’s precursor phenomena or even been the most important long-term ingredient of national feeling.<sup>9</sup> The victorious march of the “nation” in the modern sense set off from the French Revolution, gaining momentum across the nineteenth century.<sup>10</sup> With the collapse of European empires after 1918, the nation-state finally became the norm of political organisation throughout Europe.<sup>11</sup> While much attention has long been given to nationalism in the period between the French Revolution and the Treaty of Versailles, there has more recently

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7 Colossians 3:11. See also Galatians 3:28 and Romans 3:22.

8 Hugh McLeod/Werner Ustorf (ed.), *The Decline of Christendom in Western Europe, 1750–2000* (Cambridge 2003); Mary Ann Perkins, *Christendom and European Identity: The Legacy of a Grand Narrative since 1789* (Berlin 2004); Philip M. Coupland, *Britannia, Europa and Christendom: British Christians and European Integration* (Basingstoke 2006); Patrick Pasture, *Imagining European Unity since 1000 AD* (Basingstoke 2015).

9 Christopher Hill, *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution* (London 1993); Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge 1997); Gorski, “Mosaic Moment”; David A. Bell, *The Cult of the Nation in France: Inventing Nationalism, 1680–1800* (Cambridge, MA 2001); Anthony D. Smith, *The Cultural Foundation of Nations: Hierarchy, Covenant and Republic* (Oxford 2008); Samantha May et al., “The Religious as Political and the Political as Religious: Globalisation, Post-Secularism and the Shifting Boundaries of the Sacred”, in *Politics, Religion and Ideology* 15 (2014), 331–346.

10 Peter Burke, “Nationalisms and Vernaculars, 1500–1800”, in John Breuilly (ed.), *Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism* (Oxford 2013), 21–35, emphasises a “great divide” regarding the nation: “It is only after 1800 that we find what has been called ‘the normative isomorphism of language, nation and state.’” *Ibid.*, 22.

11 The nation-state has become the “ethnonational master scheme of modern society”: A. Wimmer, “The Making and Unmaking of Ethnic Boundaries: A Multilevel Process Theory”, in *American Journal of Sociology* 113 (2008): 970–1022, on p. 992.

been a growing interest in the relationship between religion and nation in the *twentieth* century.<sup>12</sup>

Given the contrary potentials of different biblical passages, various denominational traditions, and diverse relationships between church and state in specific countries, there is no single “Christian” view, first, of the proper relationship between the believer and his or her nation or, second, of the kind of social order that should properly express the nature of that political collective. There have been many “Christian” national identities with specific denominational colourings, and they have typically been in tension (or even open conflict) with *other* “Christian” perspectives, especially in “multi-confessional” societies.<sup>13</sup> Intercultural and cross-denominational transfers have also been important, particularly though the circulation of ideas in transnationally organised churches (notably the Roman Catholic Church), Christian organisations (such as the “ecumenical movement”), and intellectual circles.<sup>14</sup> Such factors were influential throughout the twentieth century, contributing to a diversity in Christian understandings of both “the nation” *as such* and of individual nations *in particular*.

Historians have emphasised the nineteenth-century competition between nationalist movements (which created and sought to define modern nations) and the churches.<sup>15</sup> Nationalism and Christianity were each too powerful as sources of collective identity for the other to ignore, bringing conflict,

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12 Hartmut Lehmann, “Die Säkularisierung der Religion und die Sakralisierung der Nation im 20. Jahrhundert: Varianten einer komplementären Relation”, in Hans Christian Maner/Martin Schulze Wessel (ed.), *Religion im Nationalstaat zwischen den Weltkriegen 1918–1939. Polen – Tschechoslowakei – Ungarn – Rumänien* (Stuttgart 2002), 13–27; Philip W. Barker, *Religious Nationalism in Modern Europe: If God Be for Us* (London 2009); Willfried Spohn et al. (ed.), *Religion and National Identities in an Enlarged Europe* (Basingstoke 2015). For a recent contribution that addresses relevant issues from a primarily American perspective, see Michael G. Thompson, *For God and Globe: Christian Internationalism in the United States between the Great War and the Cold War* (Ithaca 2015).

13 Heinz-Gerhard Haupt/Dieter Langewiesche (ed.), *Nation und Religion in Europa. Mehrkonfessionelle Gesellschaften im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt a.M. 2004). “Der Nationalismus geht oft mit anderen Loyalitätsbeständen eine feste oder vorübergehende Fusion ein, z.B. mit den Konfessionen oder historischen Regionen, den städtischen Traditionen oder Ideensystemen wie dem Neuhumanismus.” Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Nationalismus: Geschichte, Formen, Folgen* (Munich 2001), 11.

14 Jurjen Zeilstra, *European Unity in Ecumenical Thinking, 1937–1948* (Zoetermeer 1995). On Roman Catholicism, see the chapter in this volume by Pasture. See also Alexandru Zub “Die rumänische Orthodoxie im ideen- und kulturgeschichtlichen Kontext der Zwischenkriegszeit” and Éva Mártonffy-Petrás “Eine Alternative zum politischen Katholizismus: Die Rezeption der Soziallehre im Kreise der katholischen Intelligenz Ungarns in den dreißiger Jahren”, in Maner/Schulze Wessel, *Religion im Nationalstaat*, 179–188 and 199–219.

15 Elie Kedourie saw religion and nationalism to be, as John Hutchinson has put it, “incompatible”: *Modern Nationalism* (London 1994), 68, citing Kedourie, *Nationalism* (1966). See also Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, “Religion and Nation in Europe in the 19th Century: Some Comparative Notes”, in *Estudos Avançados* 22 (2008), 77–94. “Nationalism was supported by a system of symbols parallel to and in competition with religious symbols”: Burke, “Nationalisms and

extended negotiation, and mutual adjustment – “nation-building” matched by “church-building” – as organised Christianity came to terms with (and sought to influence) new political realities.<sup>16</sup> Hartmut Lehmann sees in this process a parallel “secularisation of religious thought” and “sacralisation of national values and politics”.<sup>17</sup> Others have suggested tendencies towards, alternatively, “confessionalisation” (orienting national identity around a single denomination) or “laicisation” (a more neutral model); both brought Christian nationalisms into competition with each other, particularly in multi-denominational societies, and with more secular identities, especially in states where a dominant church (typically Catholic) faced states that were attempting – whether successfully or not – to secularise at least certain areas of public life (e.g., France, Belgium, and Italy).<sup>18</sup> (In both cases, conflict also occurred *within* denominations.) In the twentieth century, nations and churches were often partners rather than rivals; moreover, specific national identities continued to be shaped by confessional conflicts, whether anti-Catholicism in some Scandinavian nations or anti-Protestantism in strongly Catholic ones.<sup>19</sup> However, the conditions shaping the relationship between faith and nation changed across the century.

### Patterns and Turning Points in the Long Twentieth Century

Nineteenth-century debates about faith and nation did not end at the century’s close: movements, struggles, and ideas flowed on into the era that followed (see the chapters by Luengo, Grigore, and Pasture). But direct competition between Christian and national identities waned: indeed, Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox church hierarchies – and majorities of their adherents – came to see national and religious belonging as mutually reinforcing. Churches encouraged identification with the nation while using “universal” (or, in practice, transnational) aspects of faith to draw limits around national identities

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Vernaculars”, 28. See also Christopher Clark, *Culture Wars: Secular-Catholic Conflicts in Nineteenth-century Europe* (Cambridge 2003).

16 Hans-Jürgen Bömelburg, “‘Church-building’ im östlichen Europa. Ein komplementärer Ansatz zur Beschreibung von Vergemeinschaftung im östlichen Europa: Die ‘Volkskirchen’ in Polen und den baltischen Ländern”, in Markus Krzoska (ed.), *Zwischen Glaube und Nation? Beiträge zur Religionsgeschichte Ostmitteleuropas im langen 19. Jahrhundert* (Munich 2011), 11–34.

E.J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge 1990), 68, and, generally, 67–73 and 123–124.

Matthias Koenig/Wolfgang Knöbl, “Religion, Nationalism, and European Integration: Introduction”, in Spohn et al., *Religion and National Identities*, 1–16.

17 Lehmann, “Säkularisierung der Religion”, 22.

18 Haupt/Langewiesche, *Nation und Religion in Europa*; Haupt, “Religion and Nation”.

19 See the essays in Yvonne Maria Werner/Jonas Harvard, *European Anti-Catholicism in a Comparative and Transnational Perspective* (Amsterdam 2013).

and supplement them with senses of belonging based in transcendental belief and global community.<sup>20</sup> Even churches that had been in intense conflict with the state in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – e.g., those in France and Germany – developed patriotic stances toward their respective *nations* (if not necessarily toward their *states*). Nations and churches reached an accommodation, and from a Christian standpoint identification with “the nation” was normalised; the *kind* of nation with which the Christian should identify, however, remained a live issue. The faith was a rich and varied resource for the construction of a broad spectrum of social politics, from a “cult of authority” to the “articulation of social protest”.<sup>21</sup> Christians have often sought to promote their perspective on the social order as a “moral regeneration of the community”, a “moral critique of the anomie of secular modernity”, and “an alternative vision of ‘modernity’ to that of secular liberals, socialists, and nationalists”.<sup>22</sup> The acuteness of the encounter among Christianity, nation, and society has varied according to the religious homogeneity (or heterogeneity) of a given population, the intensity of its faith, the presence of sudden social or political changes (e.g., war, migration, or regime change), and the activities of political movements. But if Christianity’s greatest nineteenth-century competitor was the nation-state *as such*, in the twentieth century it faced two other challenges: growing state power (most notably in the form of totalitarianism) and what has been labelled “secularisation”. Also, national identity and sovereignty after 1945 had increasingly to be imagined and exercised vis-à-vis the supra-national category of “Europe”; here, too, Christians sought institutional and intellectual responses.

Each of the following chapters considers specific contexts; however, there were some turning points relevant to Europe as a whole (albeit with national and regional variations). While twentieth-century relations between Christianity and national identity are rooted in the nineteenth century, the Great War of 1914–1918 marked a significant transition, bringing new factors and accelerating pre-existing trends. The demands of modern war compelled states to mobilise their populations through patriotic imagery, and the war’s enormous human cost was valorised as a “national” sacrifice. Christianity

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20 Religious difference has encouraged the formation of distinct cultural “milieux” when religious and ethnic identities overlapped: Hans-Christian Maner/Martin Schulze Wessel, “Einführung”, in Maner/Schulze Wessel, *Religion im Nationalstaat*, 7–12. Protestant churches’ failure in inter-war Hungary to develop a “trans-ethnic confessional consciousness” (*überethnisches konfessionelles Bewußtsein*) saw them “instrumentalised” by competing nationalisms: Juliane Brandt, “Konfessionelle und nationale Identität in Ungarn im 19. Jahrhundert: die protestantischen Kirchen“, in Maner/Schulze Wessel, *Religion im Nationalstaat*, 31–71, on p. 63.

21 Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, “Euro-Gott im starken Plural? Einige Fragestellungen für eine europäische Religionsgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts”, in *Journal of Modern European History* 3 (2005), 231–256, on pp. 241–242.

22 Hutchinson, *Modern Nationalism*, 41, 65, 66.

responded to both needs: the patriotism of the Churches (and of countless individual Christians) and the religious (or at least religious-tinged) memorialisation of the war-dead helped cement the connection between church and nation (though not without disagreements, as Wolffe's chapter shows).<sup>23</sup> Tensions continued between nation and faith but in a qualitatively new situation. In central and eastern Europe, the war was transformative in a different way. Political and cultural movements in the new states created after the war rapidly engaged in defining their respective national communities as homogenous "peoples" sharing distinct "racial", ethnic, linguistic, and cultural characteristics (including religion). The war set off an intense period of nation-building accompanied by strongly religious inflections of national belonging; however, imagined homogeneity confronted factual diversity, and tensions over "minority" populations led to conflict and violence.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, the inter-war period also saw the emergence of supra-national ideals and institutions, from the League of Nations to plans for a "United States of Europe".<sup>25</sup> Christians found themselves on both sides of the confrontation between democracy and totalitarianism in the 1930s and 1940s (as the essays by Hockenos and Wood discuss). In the Second World War, all combatant nations again claimed to have God on their side, and significant parts of their Church hierarchies helped propagate this message; however, the Fascist and National Socialist totalitarianism of the Axis powers – and the Communist totalitarianism on the Allied side after 1941 – also caused particular tensions and efforts at resistance on the part of Christian churches, organisations, and individuals.<sup>26</sup>

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23 Gerhard Besier, "The Great War and Religion in Comparative Perspective. Why the Christian Culture of War Prevailed over Religiously-Motivated Pacifism in 1914", in *Kirchliche Zeitgeschichte* 28 (2015), 21–62.

24 Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (New York 1998), 40–76. The war and the dissolving of Europe's multi-ethnic empires "signalled the triumph not only of democracy but also – and far more enduringly – of nationalism": *ibid.*, 40. See also Jan-Werner Müller, *Contesting Democracy: Political Ideas in Twentieth-Century Europe* (New Haven 2011), 21–23. On central and eastern Europe, see the essays in Maner/Schulze Wessel, *Religion im Nationalstaat*. Summarising this collection, John Connolly has written that the "soundest general lesson" it provides "is about the churches' chronic inability to resist the demands of the respective national state, especially in issues of nationalist legitimation. At best, one seems to detect differences in degree, by country and by period, with the 1930s witnessing extremes of subservience." John Connolly, review of Maner/Schulze Wessel (ed.), *Religion im Nationalstaat zwischen den Weltkriegen 1918–1939*, in *sehpunkte* 3, no. 9, 15 September 2003, <http://www.sehepunkte.de/2003/09/3758.html>.

25 Luisa Passerini, *Europe in Love, Love in Europe: Imagination and Politics in Britain between the Wars* (London 1999).

26 John Pollard, *Catholicism in Modern Italy: Religion, Society and Politics since 1861* (London 2008), 104–106; Richard J. Evans, *The Third Reich at War* (London 2008), 546–553; Richard Overly, *Why the Allies Won* (London 2006), 347–385; Steven Merritt Miner, *Stalin's Holy War: Religion, Nationalism, and Alliance Politics, 1941–1945* (Chapel Hill 2003).



The immediate post-war period saw further shifts. Europe remained a continent of nation-states – each made more culturally homogenous than ever through the forced movement of populations<sup>27</sup> – but there were also new factors shaping national identity. In the west, the defeat of Fascism and Nazism brought a more democratic and broadly pluralist political context in which the churches (and “Christian democratic” parties) could act;<sup>28</sup> there were also reconsiderations of national identity (and of Christianity’s place in it) after the war’s end, which played out differently in countries that had been defeated (especially Germany and Italy), in those that had been occupied (such as France), and in those (such as Britain) that had been neither. Such processes involved not only remembering but also forgetting, helping ease efforts toward European unification.<sup>29</sup> Post-war dictatorships in Spain, Portugal, and Greece – each of which claimed religious legitimation – added to this complex mixture. In the east, the imposition of Communist states that were officially atheist provided a very different context for melding national feeling and religion. There was accommodation by churches with the new regimes; however, Christians – and, at times, entire churches – also found in their faith a resource for a sustained critique of (and resistance to) state socialism, in part through assertions of an alternative vision of national identity (as is made clear in Feindt’s chapter).

From the late 1940s, the Cold War framed four decades of European history, including that of Christianity and national identity. In the midst of this global conflict came other relevant factors: a turn toward more “secular” cultures, the development of materially prosperous (and highly individualist) consumer societies, and the re-thinking of traditional (often religiously legitimated) ideals of family life and related gender roles. For Catholics, the Second Vatican Council marked a liberalisation of faith and an opening to contact with other churches, influencing national identities in some predominantly Catholic states.<sup>30</sup> The post-war period also witnessed growing immigration to several European countries, especially those implementing policies of decolonisation, such as Britain and France. This process introduced a further arena in which debates about national identity intersected with religious elements, particularly regarding the relationship between Christianity and Islam or that

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27 Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (London 2007 [2005]), 24–28.

28 Müller, *Contesting Democracy*, 132–143; Michael Burleigh, *Sacred Causes: The Clash of Religion and Politics, from the Great War to the War on Terror* (New York 2007), 290–313; Emiel Lamberts (ed.), *Christian Democracy in the European Union (1945–1995)* (Leuven 1997).

29 Judt, *Postwar*, 60–62.

30 Madalena Meyer Resende, *Catholicism and Nationalism: Changing Nature of Party Politics* (London 2015).

of a putatively “secular” public sphere to either (or both) of them. The growth of culturally, ethnically, and religiously distinct minorities also increased the relevance of “hybrid” identities.

The complex events taking place since (and often summarised under the label of) 1989 brought changes – the extension of democratic pluralism and economic capitalism to formerly Communist countries as well as an acceleration of the supra-national institutional structure of the European Union (EU) – whose consequences continue to be worked out up to the present day.<sup>31</sup> Religious elements in western European national identities appeared to have become more diffuse or indirect; at the same time, there seemed to be a flowering of Christian-inflected nationalisms in eastern Europe, which, however, given the new post-Communist pluralism were confronted by secular alternatives.<sup>32</sup> More recently, the east may be turning, belatedly, toward western secularising patterns.<sup>33</sup> Finally, there is no necessary contradiction between national and “European” identities (whether Christian or non-Christian), as the chapters by Pasture and Miliopoulos emphasise.

### Common Themes and Interests

Against this background, the following chapters address episodes in the interaction between Christianity and national identity, touching on issues raised in decades of research into religion, nationalism, and secularisation. Despite glances toward other faiths (e.g., in the chapter by Wolffe), the focus in this volume is firmly on Christianity. Other religions (especially Judaism and Islam) have certainly been crucial points of identification for minority or immigrant populations in twentieth-century Europe, and have often formed

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31 Willfried Spohn, “Europeanization, Multiple Modernities and Religion: The Reconstruction of Collective Identities in Postcommunist Central and Eastern Europe”, in Gert Pickel/Kornelia Sammet (ed.), *Transformations of Religiosity: Religion and Religiosity in Eastern Europe 1989–2010* (Wiesbaden 2012), 29–50.

32 See Geneviève Zubrzycki, “‘We, the Polish Nation’: Ethnic and Civic Visions of Nationhood in Post-Communist Constitutional Debates”, in *Theory and Society* 30 (2001): 629–668; Mikołaj Lewicki/Sławomir Mandes, “Changing Frameworks of National Identity in Post-communist Poland”, in Spohn et al., *Religion and National Identities*, 39–67. Comparative data is provided in Sabine Trittler/Sławomir Mandes/Matthias Koenig, “Religious Dimensions of National and European Identities: Evidence from Cross-national Survey Research”, in Spohn et al., *Religion and National Identities*, 124–145. They find confessional variation but also an east-west divergence: “for substantial parts of the population in Eastern Europe the [EU] integration process has strengthened national identification and their religious content”: *ibid.*, 144.

33 Lehmann suggests the possibility in eastern Europe of a mix of “retarded nation-building” and “retarded secularisation”: “Säkularisierung der Religion”, 27. For re-emphasis on secularisation in east and west: Detlef Pollack/Gergely Rosta, *Religion in der Moderne: Ein internationaler Vergleich* (Frankfurt a.M. 2015).

an internal or external counterpoint against which dominant (mostly Christian) cultures have – sometimes violently – defined themselves.<sup>34</sup> Without wishing to downplay the role of inter-religious interaction, I have sought greater analytical clarity by focusing only on Christianity. The chapters also concentrate on larger, mainstream denominations: small churches, “sects”, and organisations whose status as a “religion” is contested are not considered.

It has been easier for scholars to assert the importance of religious and national “identity” than to agree on what that term means. Frederick Cooper and Rogers Brubaker have summarised such efforts and persuasively argued that “identity” has been defined in so many (often contradictory) ways as to make it appear to be both “everywhere” and “nowhere”. Without discarding the term “identity”, I agree that the focus should be on its component *processes* and *aims*: “identification”, “categorisation”, “self-understanding”, “social location”, “commonality”, “connectedness”, and “groupness”.<sup>35</sup> Sensitivity to such issues recurs in the chapters that follow and “national identity” is seen to result from discourses of citizenship, attributions of cultural or linguistic belonging, narratives of historical community development, evocations of traditions, and/or claims of a distinct national “character”.

“Nationalism” has been one way to assert national identity, but despite a scholarly consensus that nationalist movements – working with pre-existing elements of group identity – create nations (rather than vice-versa), that term has also been, to put it mildly, variously defined.<sup>36</sup> It has been used broadly, akin to “national identity”, as just described. Anthony Giddens, for example, calls nationalism “the affiliation of individuals to a set of symbols and beliefs emphasising communality among the members of a political order”.<sup>37</sup> Roger Friedland sees it more narrowly as “a program for the co-constitution

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34 “Because democracy was about the creation of *national* communities”, Mazower argues, “it was generally anti-Semitic, or at least more ready to allow anti-Semitism to shape policy... than old-fashioned royalists had been.” Mazower, *Dark Continent*, 59. Centuries of anti-Semitism feature as the “structuring force” of German history in Helmut Walser Smith, *The Continuities of German History: Nation, Religion, and Race across the Long Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge 2008). An important comparative study of Jewish identity around the Great War is Sarah Panter, *Jüdische Erfahrungen und Loyalitätskonflikte im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Göttingen 2014). On Islam, see, Barbara Thériault/Frank Peter, “Introduction: Islam and the Dynamics of European National Identities”, in *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 13 (2005), 261–266.

35 Frederick Cooper/Rogers Brubaker, “Identity”, in Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley 2003), 59–90, on pp. 70–77.

36 Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford 1983), 54–55; Wehler, *Nationalismus*, 9. “Nationalism has been variously categorized in the titles of works devoted to it as both ‘primordial’ and ‘banal’, as a ‘myth’ and as a ‘reality’, as ‘imagined’ and as ‘invented’, at once ‘the tragedy of a people’ and the ‘god of modernity’.” Paul Lawrence, *Nationalism: History and Theory* (Harlow 2005), 7–8.

37 Quoted in Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism* (London 1998), 71.

of the state and territorially bounded population in whose name it speaks".<sup>38</sup> Nationalism is perhaps best understood as a *kind* (or *degree*) of national identity, urged by individuals or pursued by groups, aiming for a stringent "congruence between culture and polity" and demanding "cultural homogeneity within political units and cultural heterogeneity between them".<sup>39</sup> This provides a way of distinguishing more fervent forms of nationalism from national imaginations of a looser or more pluralist kind, a distinction important to many twentieth-century European Christians.

There have been various claims about religion's role in national identity or "nationalism". Ernest Gellner has pointed to Durkheim's view that while "in religious worship society adores its own camouflaged image", in a "nationalist age, societies worship themselves brazenly and openly, spurning the camouflage".<sup>40</sup> Philip S. Gorski, focusing on North America, distinguishes among "religious nationalists" (who want to make religious and political communities "as coterminous as possible"), "liberal secularists" (who want to keep them "as separate as possible"), and "civil religionists" (who "imagine the two spheres as independent but interconnected").<sup>41</sup> The Old Testament and "ethno-nationalism" have been important sources for religious nationalism, with emphases on blood, sacrifice, purity, sacred homelands, and "the apocalyptic nature of geopolitical struggles".<sup>42</sup> Such overlapping ethno-cultural/religious nationalisms can be found in the chapters on Spain (Luengo), Ireland (Ganiel), Germany (Hockenos), Poland (Feindt), and Romania (Grigore). Friedland stresses seeing religious nationalism in terms of its own "cultural premises" and not only as a proxy for other issues: religion offers "the symbols, signs, and practices" through which a "collectivity" (e.g. a nation) "knows itself to be".<sup>43</sup> Mixed forms of these categories are possible:

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38 Roger Friedland, "Money, Sex, and God: The Erotic Logic of Religious Nationalism", in *Sociological Theory* 20 (2002), 381–425, on p. 386.

39 Rogers Brubaker, "Religion and Nationalism: Four Approaches", in *Nations and Nationalism* 18 (2012), 2–20, on pp. 7–8. "Nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent": Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 1. Nationalism is a "program" for "the joining of state, territoriality and culture": Friedland, "Money, Sex, and God", 386–387. Wehler calls it "das Ideensystem, die Doktrin, das Weltbild, das der Schaffung, Mobilisierung und Integration eines größeren Solidarverbandes (Nation genannt), vor allem aber der Legitimation neuzeitlicher politischer Herrschaft dient. Daher wird der Nationalstaat mit einer möglichst homogenen Nation zum Kardinalproblem des Nationalismus." *Nationalismus*, 13.

40 Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 55.

41 Philip S. Gorski, "Civil Religion Today" (ARDA Guiding Paper Series), State College, PA: Association of Religion Data Archives at The Pennsylvania State University, 2010, <http://www.thearda.com/rrh/papers/guidingpapers.asp> (accessed 9 February 2015), 7. "In a word, religious nationalists advocate total fusion, liberal secularists advocate total separation and civil religionists imagine them as overlapping": *ibid.*

42 Gorski, "Civil Religion Today", 7.

43 Friedland, "Money, Sex, and God", 381 and 387.

Christians have at times combined faith and national identity while opposing extreme ethno-nationalism (see my own essay in this volume), while ecumenical Christians have often sought to *downplay* territorial sacredness or apocalyptic political understandings.

Rogers Brubaker has evaluated four analytical claims about religion and “nationalism”, the latter term being used in a sense similar to “national identity” as defined above.<sup>44</sup> First, nationalism has been seen as “analogous” to religion (e.g. as an ersatz religion following secularisation);<sup>45</sup> second, religion has been called a “cause or explanation of nationalism” (e.g. by creating a sense of “chosen-ness”); third, it has been analysed as “imbricated or intertwined with nationalism”;<sup>46</sup> fourth, “religious nationalism” has been seen as a “distinctive kind of nationalism”.<sup>47</sup> This collection tends to reflect Brubaker’s third category in which religion and national identity are “imbricated or intertwined” through assertions of “the coincidence of religious and national boundaries” or “myths, metaphors and symbols that are central to the discursive or iconic representation of the nation”.<sup>48</sup> Christians in each case adopted *some* version of national identity, confirming a mutual “accommodation”:

Nationalist politics can accommodate the claims of religion, and nationalist rhetoric often deploys religious language, imagery and symbolism. Similarly, religion can accommodate the claims of the nation-state, and religious movements can deploy nationalist language.<sup>49</sup>

Such an accommodation is eased by similarities in the kinds of markers of religious and national belonging: the hymn and the anthem, the cross and the flag, the cathedral and parliament, and the procession and parade. But

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44 Brubaker, “Religion and Nationalism”.

45 Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism*; Wehler, *Nationalismus*, 27–35; Stephen Backhouse, “Nationalism and Patriotism”, in Nicholas Adams et al. (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Theology and Modern European Thought* (Oxford 2013), 41–60. “A common engine drives the original creation of the nation, and that engine is faith”; “the logic of nationalism follows contours recognizable to Christian theology”: *ibid.*, 49–50.

46 Hutchinson also stresses the intertwining of religion and nationalism: *Modern Nationalism*, 70–77.

47 Brubaker, “Religion and Nationalism”, 12. “Religion, with its universal claims, is not inherently inconsistent with nationalism; religious nationalism is not an oxymoron”: Friedland, “Money, Sex and God”, 387.

48 Brubaker, “Religion and Nationalism”, 9.

49 *Ibid.*, 16. See also: “Die ‘Erfinder’ der Nation sind auf religiöse Symbolsprache angewiesen, um eine emotional bindende starke Vergemeinschaftung erzeugen zu können. Sie rekurrieren auf überkommene religionssemantische Bestände, religiöse Riten und kirchliche Liturgien, um die hohen emotionalen Energien, die fromme Menschen in ihren Glauben investieren, auf die Nation hinlenken zu können.” Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, *Wiederkehr der Götter: Religion in der modernen Kultur* (Munich 2004), 119.

“intertwining is not identity”, and the two remain distinct.<sup>50</sup> In the nineteenth century, the “secular religion of nationalism”, Peter Burke has argued, “did not so much replace traditional religion – rather it coexisted and interacted with it”.<sup>51</sup> This remained true for the twentieth century (and continues in the twenty-first).

As the foregoing suggests, “religion” and “national identity” should be seen as *arguments* rather than *things*: neither has an unchanging cross-cultural or trans-historical “essence”, and both emerge from patterns of dispute. An assertion about the meaning of a nation is “a contingent and contested claim”, and such claims should be seen as “perspectives on the world rather than things in the world”.<sup>52</sup> This view applies equally to “religion”, definitions of which remain debated even specialist contexts, especially when the goal is an integrated analysis of Western and non-Western beliefs and practices.<sup>53</sup> What it “means” to be a Christian or belong to a particular nation has, potentially, as many answers as there are believers or citizens,<sup>54</sup> and one difficulty with analysing this topic is that nearly every positive statement (e.g., that Christians supported nationalism, subordinated faith to nation, or refrained from interfering in the secular social order), while sometimes true, can be met by counterexamples (e.g., at least some Christians opposed nationalism, placed their religious identity above their national identity, or sought to influence social policy in line with their interpretation of their faith). In practice, of course, some views become more “orthodox” or “hegemonic” than others, but alternative definitions continue to be asserted. Far from seeking to answer the question of what Christianity’s stance toward the nation “is” or “should be”, this collection considers the answers of specific historical

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50 Brubaker, “Religion and Nationalism”, 16.

51 “Polish nationalism had a Catholic colouring, Russian nationalism had an Orthodox one, while English xenophobia was fuelled by a Protestant hatred of ‘Popery’.” Burke, “Nationalisms and Vernaculars”, 28.

52 Friedland, “Money, Sex and God”, 386; Brubaker, “Religion and Nationalism”, 4. For a broad statement of the variability and constructed nature of religious beliefs, see Graf, “Euro-Gott”.

53 Michael Bergunder, “What is Religion? The Unexplained Subject Matter of Religious Studies”, in *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 26 (2014), 246–286; Peter Beyer, “Defining Religion in Cross-National Perspective: Identity and Difference in Official Conceptions”, in Arthur L. Greil/David G. Bromley (ed.), *Defining Religion: Investigating the Boundaries between the Sacred and the Secular* (Oxford 2003), 163–188. Graham Harvey, “Defining Religion”, in John Wolffe/Gavin Moorhead (ed.), *Religion, Security and Global Uncertainties*, report from a “Global Uncertainties Leadership Fellowship”, 2014, <http://www.open.ac.uk/arts/research/religion-martyrdom-global-uncertainties/reports>, 7; Richard Madsen, “What is Religion? Categorical Reconfigurations in a Global Horizon”, in Philip Gorski et al. (ed.), *The Post-Secular in Question: Religion in Contemporary Society* (New York 2012), 23–42.

54 See, e.g., Timothy Fitzgerald, *Discourse on Civility and Barbarity: A Critical History of Religion and Related Categories* (Oxford 2007). “Despite the appearance of common sense, a term such as ‘religion’ does not tell us what is in the world, but what we collectively think ought to be in the world”, *ibid.*, 24.

protagonists and the contexts in which they reached them, mindful that not all religious arguments are, strictly speaking, “religious”, as religion can provide an interpretive framework “through which to interpret and respond to *immanent* contexts, events and experiences”.<sup>55</sup> “Religion”, McCutcheon argues, describes not a separate realm but rather a set of social practices through which categories of “secular” and “sacred” are used to assert and defend particular constellations of group identity.<sup>56</sup>

That comment raises the need to understand not only “religion” but also “the secular” (an ontological or epistemological category), “secularisation” (a sociological process), and “secularism” (a “worldview or ideology”).<sup>57</sup> In recent decades the concept of a “secularisation process” has faced vehement attack,<sup>58</sup> vigorous reassertion,<sup>59</sup> and efforts at revision.<sup>60</sup> Some historians have revised the timeline of change (with the 1960s claimed as an important turning point in many countries<sup>61</sup>) or offered different concepts to understand it. Patrick Pasture, for example, emphasises individualisation and the growing diversity of the “religious landscape” as alternative processes, and in her essay in this volume, Gladys Ganiel suggests that “individualisation, de-institutionalisation and liberalisation” describe trends in Ireland better than “secularisation”.<sup>62</sup> Brubaker, on the other hand, asserts that the “distinctive form of politics” of nationalism occurred within a “process of secularisation” characterised by the “differentiation of various autonomous realms

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55 May et al., “Religious as Political”, 339. Emphasis added.

56 Russell T. McCutcheon, “‘They Licked the Platter Clean’: On the Co-Dependency of the Religious and the Secular”, in *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 19 (2007), 173–199, 195.

57 José Casanova, “The Secular, Secularizations, Secularisms”, in Craig Calhoun/Mark Juergensmeyer/Jonathan VanAntwerpen (ed.), *Rethinking Secularism* (Oxford 2011), 54–74, on p. 54.

58 Rodney Stark, “Secularisation R.I.P.”, in *Sociology of Religion*, 60 (1999), 249–273; David Nash, “Reconnecting Religion with Social and Cultural History: Secularization’s Failure as a Master Narrative”, in *Cultural and Social History* 1 (2004), 302–325.

59 Roy Wallis/Steve Bruce, “Secularization: The Orthodox Model”, in Steve Bruce (ed.), *Religion and Modernization: Sociologists and Historians Debate the Secularization Thesis* (Oxford 1992), 8–30; Steve Bruce, “Secularisation in the UK and the USA”, in Callum G. Brown/Michael Snape (ed.), *Secularisation in the Christian World* (Farnham 2010), 205–218; Pollack/Rosta, *Religion in der Moderne*.

60 See José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago 1994).

61 Callum Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain* (London 2000); Hugh McLeod, “Introduction”, in Hugh McLeod/Werner Ustorf, *The Decline of Christendom in Western Europe, 1750–2000* (Cambridge 2003), 1–26.

62 Patrick Pasture, “Religion in Contemporary Europe: Contrasting Perceptions and Dynamics”, in *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 49 (2009), 319–350; id., “Dechristianization and the Changing Religious Landscape in Europe and North America since 1950: Comparative, Transatlantic, and Global Perspectives”, in Nancy Christie/Michael Gauvreau (ed.), *The Sixties and Beyond: Dechristianization in North America and Western Europe, 1945–2000* (Toronto 2013), 367–402. On individualisation, see also Thomas Grossbölting, “Religionsgeschichte als Problemgeschichte der Gegenwart: Ein Vorschlag zu künftigen Perspektiven der Katholizismusforschung”, in Wilhelm Damberg/Karl-Joseph Hummel (ed.), *Katholizismus in Deutschland: Zeitgeschichte und Gegenwart* (Paderborn 2015), 169–185, on pp. 180–184.

of human activity from religious institutions and norms” central to “Western modernity”, an argument not unlike José Casanova’s.<sup>63</sup> Relatedly, Charles Taylor has described the emergence of modern “secularity” as “a move from a society where belief in God is unchallenged and indeed, unproblematic, to one in which it is understood to be one option among others, and frequently not the easiest to embrace”.<sup>64</sup> This kind of secularity has framed interactions between religion and national identity in twentieth-century Europe. Claims that religion has simply “declined” (or soon will disappear) may be simplistic, but the argument for secularisation as a “diminution of the social significance of religion”<sup>65</sup> in most European countries across the twentieth century (with the 1960s marking an important shift) seems convincing, even though many regional variations and deviations have to be accounted for. Consequences for secularisation’s applicability to non-European contexts or longer time-spans is beyond this volume’s scope.

While an objective, sociological account of secularisation is (in the present author’s view) likely possible, most chapters in this collection are concerned more with what might be called *subjective secularisation*: the perception by religiously motivated protagonists of living in societies where Christianity was being marginalised by secular movements or simply by religious indifference. “Secularisation”, thus, refers to a *changing argumentative and motivational context* for social, political, or cultural claims: it was relevant – as Peter Itzen has put it – because large numbers of people *believed* it was and acted accordingly.<sup>66</sup> Some Christians saw secularisation as a threat to the nation – or to the social order they thought should define it – and tried to counteract it; others preferred acceptance and accommodation. Still others mixed these responses. “Secular” and “religious” have, as a result,

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63 Brubaker, “Religion and Nationalism”, 16. A “progressive, though highly uneven, secularization of Europe is an undeniable social fact”: José Casanova, “Secularization Revisited: A Reply to Talal Asad”, in David Scott/Charles Hirschkind (ed.), *Powers of the Secular Modern: Talal Asad and His Interlocutors* (Stanford 2006), 12–30, on p. 17. “Auch empirisch schützt das Zurückweisen der Säkularisierungsthese in ihrer verballhornten Form nicht vor der Einsicht, dass zumindest in Teilen der Welt die Bedeutung des Lebens mit einer Transzendenz vor allem in seiner kirchengebundenen Form, aber auch darüber hinaus abnimmt.” Grossbölting, “Religionsgeschichte”, 177.

64 He calls this condition “secularity 3”: Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA 2007), 3.

65 The definition of “secularisation” provided in Wallis/Bruce, “Orthodox Model”, 11.

66 “Säkularisierung war existent, weil sie von den Akteuren erfahren und reflektiert wurde und sie ihr Handeln danach ausrichteten.” Peter Itzen, *Streitbare Kirche: Die Church of England vor den Herausforderungen des Wandels 1945–1990* (Baden-Baden 2012), 13. Casanova argues similarly: “We need to entertain seriously the proposition that secularization became a self-fulfilling prophecy in Europe once large sectors of the population of Western European societies, including the Christian churches, accepted the basic premise of the theory of secularization. . . .”: Casanova, “Secularization Revisited”, 17.



been mutually defining concepts<sup>67</sup> and subject to various cultural pressures, including nationalism: even in some “secular” societies, models of “civil religion” see faith as a “societal resource” with “symbols and practices” to be “used politically to foster national integration”.<sup>68</sup>

### The Chapters: An Overview

This collection offers case studies of the relationship between Christianity and national identity in what might be called the “long” twentieth-century, with some chapters considering nineteenth-century origins of later developments and others looking beyond 1989 (and the millennium) to consider relevant events and patterns into the twenty-first century. The context of conflict, an emphasis on the formation and maintenance of community, and a concern for the structure of the social order recur, to differing degrees, throughout the essays. Attention is given to Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox perspectives, with examples from eastern, northern, western, southern and central Europe. While most of the protagonists considered take for granted the legitimacy of the nation as a category of identity (a result of the “accommodation” noted above), they were engaged in an open, public struggle to define its meaning, whether against contrary Christian perspectives or against secular viewpoints. There is a concentration on the period between the 1910s and the 1940s, the experience of the two world wars, and Christianity’s engagement with the totalitarianisms of the left or right. The influence of factors such as political allegiance or institutional or cultural milieu (e.g., membership in a given church, linguistic community, or intellectual circle) and the expression of identity in texts, symbols, rituals, or material objects are highlighted. The issue of “secularisation” recurs. The chapters are organised into three thematic sections: “Christianity, Conflict, and Community”, “Religion, Nation, and the Social Order”, and “Faith, Nation, and ‘Europe’”. These issues cannot be firmly separated – understandings of community have, for example, been intertwined with attitudes toward the social order, and both have had to be considered vis-à-vis “Europe” – but such divisions help bring out common emphases.

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67 McCutcheon, “Co-Dependency”; Fitzgerald, *Discourse*, 24; Markus Dressler/Arvind-Pal S. Mandair, *Secularism and Religion-Making* (Oxford 2011), 21; Philip S. Gorski et al., “The Post-Secular in Question”, in id. (ed.), *The Post-Secular in Question: Religion in Contemporary Society* (New York 2012), 1–22, on p. 7; Marion Eggert/Lucian Hölscher, *Religion and Secularity: Transformations and Transfers of Religious Discourses in Europe and Asia* (Leiden 2013).

68 David Westerlund, *Questioning the Secular State: The Worldwide Resurgence of Religion in Politics* (London 2002), 3.

## Section I: Christianity, Conflict, and Community

Wars *between* nation-states and conflict among rival groups *within* them have strongly influenced religion and national identity: “us-and-them” thinking abounds in periods of international war or civil conflict, with a defined opponent (or even “enemy”) strengthening in-group identities. Christianity has been important in both cases, sometimes by allying itself firmly with national struggles in times of war, thereby reinforcing group attachment and amplifying the awareness of boundaries between groups.<sup>69</sup> In the twentieth century – especially in its first half – nation tended to trump faith in determining the contours of belonging and conflict: Catholics and Protestants repeatedly faced their co-religionists on battlefields both literal and figurative, and each group has tended to find some way of melding their faith with national allegiance in the context of war or its commemoration. Sometimes, however, Christians have sought to bridge conflicts rooted (at least partly) in national identities, and the general absence of large-scale *active* war between European states after 1945 brought a new dynamic to the fore, one of course influenced by four decades of “cold” war. Christianity became a crucial element in the self-understanding of large parts of “the West” (with the Vatican, for example, siding clearly with the Western bloc), and Catholics in particular took an active role in movements advocating European unity (out of a desire for reconciliation after two world wars and with the aim of strengthening Europe against the threat of Soviet domination); in the east, religious ties among the populations in the Soviet bloc provided an alternative to an imposed socialist “internationalism”.<sup>70</sup>

Jorge Luengo explores religious aspects of conflicts between Catalan separatists and Spanish nationalists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, focusing on debates about Catalan independence in the decades around 1900. In a crisis of Spanish national identity brought about by the loss of key Spanish colonies in 1898, the Catalan independence movement began to define itself (and to be seen by others) as “nationalist”. While many of its aims focused on language (Catalan versus Spanish) and claims of a distinct artistic and literary culture, religion was an important arena of conflict, particularly with regard to religious education and services and to the use of “national” symbols in religious events. This was a dispute *among* Catholics, and both sides claimed a religious authority for their aims and efforts, leaving the church hierarchy (and the Vatican) to play an ambiguous role.

As John Wolfe shows, the issue of memorialising those who had fought and died for Britain in the Great War was infused with religious meaning;

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69 For an emphasis on conflict in twentieth-century religious history see Graf, “Euro-Gott”, 245.

70 See, generally, Diane Kirby (ed.), *Religion and the Cold War* (Basingstoke 2003).

however, reaching a consensus about how to remember the fallen and the extent to which religion should be directly emphasised in this process proved challenging. Considering both public debates and the behind-the-scenes discussions of the commission charged with designing cemeteries for the war dead of Britain and its empire, Wolffe traces the efforts not only to balance Christian elements with more secular evocations of national sacrifice but also to appropriately honour Jewish, Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh soldiers. Tensions between personal and communal understandings of faith (pitting respect for soldiers’ individuality versus acknowledgement of their membership in a community of shared sacrifice) were difficult to navigate, causing sometimes emotional discussions in press and Parliament.

In her essay on the island of Ireland, Gladys Ganiel explores Christian and national identities in the context of the Northern Irish “Troubles”, ecumenical efforts to bridge those conflicts, and the question of “secularisation”. The island – split between the largely Catholic Irish Republic and the majority-Protestant polity of Northern Ireland – offers a valuable context for understanding the interrelationships among religion, national identity, and putative processes of “secularisation”: Ireland’s political division has caused inter-communal tension and violence, with the respective parties’ identities combining nationalism and religion. Drawing on research on Protestants and Catholics on both sides of the border, Ganiel elucidates significant differences in the roles and trajectories of belief in the respective territories. Offering grounds for scepticism about ecumenical activists’ effectiveness as peacemakers in the conflict, she highlights processes of “individualisation, de-institutionalisation and liberalisation” (rather than “secularisation” as such) as decisive factors in changing the religio-political landscape.

Mihai-D. Grigore takes us to the opposite corner of Europe and from Protestant-Catholic conflict to a dispute *within* Eastern Orthodoxy, exploring the entangled history of religious, cultural, national, and imperial identity in the struggle between the Romanian and Russian Orthodox churches over ecclesiastical jurisdiction in Moldavia. This issue has unfolded since the Romanian “revolution” in 1989, but Grigore traces the new dispute’s roots in centuries of religious and political wrangling. As in Luengo’s chapter, we find both sides sharing a “common” faith; an intermixture of ethnic, religious, and linguistic elements; and a leading public role being played by clergy. However, Orthodoxy’s organisational structure and history of internal rivalry has created a distinct situation. In Moldavia, the Russian and Romanian churches have aligned their policies with (and even subordinated them to) their nations’ interests, leaving an unclear border between religious and national belonging.

## Section II: Religion, Nation, and the Social Order

Without leaving the topics of conflict and community behind, this section focuses on conceptions of the social order, particularly in intellectual circles and activist groups and on the part of individuals. Christianity not only tended to encourage a sense of national “identification” and “groupness” (to use terms from Cooper and Brubaker) but was also concerned with the *content* of how the nation-state was organised.<sup>71</sup> Religious language could be used for political purposes, but Christian convictions about the “social question” have also shaped nationalism.<sup>72</sup> Twentieth-century Europe has witnessed many ideological extremes, particularly the totalitarian “political religions”, which gave aspects of group identity (class, nation, or *Volk*) a sacred status defining all aspects of social, political, and cultural life; but it has also seen efforts by political moderates to contain or resist them. Christian ideas, thinkers, and movements were on both sides of such struggles. Some – notably the pro-Nazi *Deutsche Christen* or pro-Fascist clerics in many countries – combined faith with totalitarian thought and practice.<sup>73</sup> Others advocated forms of Christian (generally Catholic) corporatist authoritarianism, ideas that became a reality in Austria, Spain, and Portugal, and were influential in Ireland.<sup>74</sup> Still other Christians argued that faith provided a moral basis for a pluralist, tolerant, and democratic social order. The essays in this section emphasise the centrality of – and the diversity within – the engagement with totalitarianism for Christian thinking about the nation and the social order.

Matthew Hockenos considers a leading figure in the 1930s “church struggle” between pro-Nazi “German Christians” and the “Confessing Church” that sought to maintain its independence from the regime: Lutheran pastor Martin Niemöller. As Hockenos shows via Niemöller’s example, members of the Confessing Church shared some views on nationalism with the *Deutsche Christen*; long a patriot, Niemöller even welcomed the Nazi seizure of power, hoping it would bring renewal of German society through an amalgam of national Christian principles, traditions, and identities. But while he shared some views with ultra-nationalists, Niemöller increasingly became convinced that Hitler’s regime placed the nation *above* Christianity and threatened the church’s independence. Hockenos’s depiction of Niemöller’s life – he became

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71 Cooper/Brubaker, “Identity”, 70–77. Wehler emphasises that it has always been a priority for nationalists to legitimate a particular national order: *Nationalismus*, 11.

72 Mártonffy-Petrás, “Alternative”, for example, finds a conservative episcopate in Hungary struggling with younger Catholic intellectuals who interpreted papal pronouncements (particularly 1931’s *Quadragesimo anno*) progressively, the “social question” becoming intertwined with understandings of Hungarian nationalism.

73 Matthew Feldman et al. (ed.), *Clerical Fascism in Interwar Europe* (London 2008).

74 Burleigh, *Sacred Causes*, 123–152.

an opponent of Nazism, a pacifist, and an anti-nationalist – shows in particularly concentrated form the contradictory potential in Christian views of national identity.

Christians in Britain, as I note in my own essay, followed the German church struggle closely, fearing a growing totalitarian threat to a more tolerant, pluralist, and democratic European order. I focus on the efforts in the 1930s and 1940s by the leading ecumenical figure J.H. Oldham to bring together Christian activists and thinkers – and a few non-Christian continental intellectuals – to diagnose the European crisis and explore Christian resources for “spiritual” renewal. They distinguished between a healthy love of one’s national community and a destructive “nationalism” that elevated the nation to quasi-religious status. They also saw totalitarian tendencies as a general feature of secularised modernity, undermining easy distinctions between democracy and totalitarianism. The fall of France and the start of the Battle of Britain in summer 1940 saw Oldham’s circle positively revalue purportedly distinctive “national” characteristics. However, if, like Niemöller, the group sought a “national” renewal through faith, its participants’ patriotism was infused with what they saw as “Christian” elements of humility, self-criticism, and service to others as well as a clearly democratic spirit.

The ambiguities of Christian patriotism in confrontation with totalitarian politics are also apparent in Gregor Feindt’s examination of nationalist discourse in the Polish opposition in the late 1970s and 1980s. A traditional understanding of Poland as a Catholic nation was questioned, but not overcome, by the imposition of Communist rule after the Second World War. In the period known as “late socialism”, conservative intellectuals, such as the influential Jesuit Bronisław Sroka, perceived a moral crisis of the Polish nation: they introduced theological personalism into the ethno-religious understanding of Polish national identity. Many socialist and liberal oppositionists objected to such views, seeking a more pluralist concept of Polishness that *included* Catholicism but was not based on it. With the rise of the *Solidarność* movement, this debate carried over into the more performative, vernacular discourse of the trade-unions and general populace. The dispute about the relation of Catholicism to national identity remained unsolved, but the opposition reached what Feindt calls the “dilatory compromise” of accepting the coexistence of contradictory opinions.

### Section III: Faith, Nation, and “Europe”

Twentieth-century interactions between religion and national identity have often taken place in the broader category of “Europe”, which has meant very different things. “Europe” has, for example, been employed as a shorthand

term for a set of distinctive “values”. The period between the two world wars (and the Second World War itself) saw a plethora of plans for cooperation in, or even the unification of, Europe. After 1945, “Europe” increasingly meant the gradual process leading to the EU. Despite claims that European institutionalisation and other factors might encourage the “end of nationalism”,<sup>75</sup> the recent resurgence of populist nationalism in several European countries – often combining hostility to Islam, rejection of secular-liberal “decadence”, disparagement of “Brussels”, reassertions of national sovereignty, and, at times Christian ideas and/or imagery – suggests that a mixture of religion and nationalism will be a vocal presence on the European political stage for the foreseeable future.<sup>76</sup> At the same time, churches and religious voluntary organisations have sought to resist such movements and promote more positive interfaith relations, especially among Christians, Jews, and Muslims. As a rhetorical device or institutional reality, “Europe” has ambivalently impacted the relationship between national identity and Christianity. At times, the idea of “Europe” as a Christian entity has helped strengthen the nation-faith connection; it has, however, also helped relativise national belonging. Christian churches, church-related organisations, political parties, and individual thinkers have played important roles in the complex, contradictory development of “European” ideals and supra-national structures.

Patrick Pasture takes a broad view, focusing on how the Vatican and Catholic thinkers related to nationalism and to ideals of European unity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Their response was complex, bringing a reconsideration of the church’s relationship with the nation-state: in particular, ways were found to join faith and national identity, often accompanied by contentious struggles over power and authority. However, building upon Christianity’s universalist elements and the trans-national nature of their church, Catholic intellectuals developed ideas of European unification. In the inter-war period, a range of Catholic views on European and national identity were promulgated; these came from different political perspectives, but there was a trend toward political conservatism and even sympathy (and sometimes support) for Fascism. More democratic Catholic political ideas

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75 Wehler, *Nationalismus*, 104–115.

76 Hutchinson emphasises the resilience of nationalism and of religion: *Modern Nationalism*, 66. Christian elements have, for example, been apparent – while not necessarily universal or dominant – in right-wing populism in France (whether in the Front National or in the large demonstrations against the 2013 extension of marriage rights to homosexual couples), Germany (in the “Pegida” movement, in whose rhetoric references to a Christian-inflected *Abendland* have been frequent and at whose demonstrations Christian crosses in Germany’s national colours have been a commonly deployed symbol), and Poland (where patriotism, Catholicism, the reassertion of national sovereignty, and critique of a purportedly decadent, secular European Union have been combined in the rhetoric of the electorally successful “Law and Justice” party).

were carried into the post-war world by “personalist” intellectuals and Christian-democratic parties that contributed to a new balance between national allegiance and European community.

Focusing on EU-level lobbying by the Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Orthodox churches, Lazaros Miliopoulos shows how religion and national identity have come together in the political structures of European unification. Just as nationalism had placed churches under pressure, the supra-national governance structures of the EU – with significant influence on law-making and jurisprudence – posed a new challenge for the churches. The result has been a mix of faith-based influence-seeking and new forms of trans-national organisation. There has been, Miliopoulos argues, significant Europeanisation and professionalisation of Church lobbying efforts; at the same time, churches have not ceased to see themselves as guardians of *national* interests, differences, and cultural-religious traditions, especially in states where religion retains a privileged role anchored in law, tradition, and/or high-rates of public religiosity. However, there have also been changes on the level of identity, as the churches have worked to conceptualise a “Christian” perspective on Europe: a variety of strongly “integralist” or “pluralist” stances on the relationship between faith and society have resulted.





SECTION I:  
CHRISTIANITY, CONFLICT, AND COMMUNITY



Jorge Luengo

## Preaching in Catalan

Religion, Language, and Nationalism in  
Early Twentieth-Century Spain<sup>1</sup>

In the closing decades of the nineteenth century, the development of Catalanism as a political movement provoked a conflict with Spanish authorities and intellectuals. In this period, regionalism and sub-state nationalism emerged across Europe.<sup>2</sup> Regionalism came to play an important role in national identity,<sup>3</sup> and it sometimes challenged the existing understanding of the nation; unlike the civic nationalism of the early nineteenth century, it was often deeply influenced by primary elements, such as ethnicity, language, or religion, which defined the nation as a cultural entity.<sup>4</sup> Regionalism might either overlap with or compete against national identity, but it tended to resist emerging state administrative structures based on a new territorial model of the nation-state.

Spain is a prime example of the turn-of-the-century conflicts around identity between the national and the regional levels. Regionalism in Spain offered a model for undermining existing networks of patronage and tendencies toward centralism, and its advocates claimed it had the potential to regenerate a political system shaken by the loss of the last overseas colonies of the Spanish Empire in 1898. The cultural crisis provoked by defeat in the Spanish-American War was the context in which regionalism – at least in its political dimension – emerged in Spain.<sup>5</sup> Some of these regional move-

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1 I thank Eveline Bouwers and John C. Wood for their illuminating suggestions and comments on an early draft of this essay.

2 Joost Augusteijn/Eric Storm, “Introduction. Region and State”, in Joost Augusteijn/Eric Storm (ed.), *Region and State in Nineteenth-Century Europe: Nation-Building, Regional Identities, and Separatism* (Basingstoke 2012), 1–9.

3 Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley, CA 1990); Alon Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871–1918* (Chapel Hill, NC 1997).

4 Hans Ulrich Wehler, *Nationalismus: Geschichte–Formen–Folgen* (Munich 2001), 36–44. Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge 1992), chapter 4.

5 There is a large literature on the so-called 1898 crisis. See, for instance, Juan Pan-Monjo (ed.), *Más se perdió en Cuba: España, 1898 y la crisis de fin de siglo* (Madrid 2006) and Ángel Smith/Emma Dávila-Cox (ed.), *The Crisis of 1898: Colonial Redistribution and Nationalist Mobilization* (Basingstoke 1999). A broader context is given in Joseph Harrison/Alan

ments offered an alternative identity to Spanish nationalism, especially in the Basque Country and in Catalonia. In response, other regionalist movements throughout Spain, such as the Castilian, established a dual loyalty that linked regional to national identity.

The Catalan case is especially significant. In the 1890s and 1900s, Catalanism turned from a regionalist to a “nationalist” movement, at least in its own self-definition. Indeed, Enric Prat de la Riba, a leading Catalanist, titled his most important work *The Catalan Nationality*.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, from 1907 onwards, the Catalan movement also started to be defined as *nationalism* from the Spanish side. These shifts in self-definition and public perception make it difficult to define this movement and its main protagonists, since neither “regionalism” nor “nationalism” fully does justice to its complexities. I prefer to label this movement *Catalanism*, and I will refer to those who promoted it as *Catalanists*, bringing together the regional and national levels of the movement itself.

The aim of this paper is to analyse the role of language and religion in the conflict between Spanish nationalism and Catalanism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. I will discuss the intertwining of religion and politics as well as the role of language in such debates.<sup>7</sup> From 1900 onwards, language became central to the process of nation-building, making it a key battleground in the struggle between Spanish nationalism and Catalanism.<sup>8</sup> Catalanists emphasised cultural (and especially linguistic) distinctions, while Spanish nationalists saw the Spanish language as a basis for national unity and glory. This conflict was particularly intense in the field of education, where debates over the language of instruction in primary and secondary education in Catalonia lasted throughout the twentieth century and continue today.<sup>9</sup>

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Hoyle (ed.), *Spain's 1898 Crisis: Regenerationism, Modernism, Post-colonialism* (Manchester 2000).

6 Enric Prat de la Riba, *La nacionalitat catalana* (Barcelona 1906).

7 Rogers Brubaker, “Religion and Nationalism: Four Approaches”, in *Nations and Nationalism*, 18:1 (2012), 2–20, on pp. 8–12; Samantha May/Erin K. Wilson/Claudia Baumgart-Ochse/Faiz Sheikh, “The Religious as Political and the Political as Religious: Globalisation, Post-Secularism and the Shifting Boundaries of the Sacred”, in *Religion and Ideology* 15:3 (2014), 331–346, on pp. 340–342.

8 Xosé M. Núñez Seixas, “La(s) lengua(s) de la nación”, in Javier Moreno Luzón/Xosé M. Núñez Seixas (ed.), *Ser españoles. Imaginarios nacionalistas en el siglo XX* (Barcelona 2013), 246–286.

9 For a general framework, see Carolyn P. Boyd, *Historia Patria: Politics, History, and National Identity in Spain, 1875–1975* (Princeton, NJ 1997).

Yet the language debates also affected a common foundational feature of both nationalisms: religion. Indeed, Catholicism was at the core of both Spanish nationalism and Catalanism. On both sides, religious places and monuments became national sites of memory, thereby linking faith and nationalism. Catholic sites such as Covadonga and Montserrat, for instance, functioned as national myths for both Spanish nationalists and Catalanists. Significantly, compared to some other European states, Spain lacked religious diversity; however, their shared faith did not spare Spaniards and Catalans from religious conflict. Beyond disagreements over the place of religion in the public sphere, religious and civil authorities were also confronted around 1900 by the issue of the language for conducting religious services in Catalonia. By analysing the debates around this issue, I will argue that language became a central element in promoting homogeneous understandings of Spain and Catalonia as cultural and national realities. The debates around the languages of religious services in Catalonia show how many elements – some of which were shared between Spaniards and Catalans – came into play in conflicts around national identities. In this case, the underlying element was not religion *per se* but rather language; however, since debates about language took place in religious contexts, the universalist nature of Catholicism was addressed by both sides, if in contrasting ways.

This conflict began with the emergence of Catalanism as a political movement. In 1886, for the first celebration of the so-called *Diada* – a festival commemorating the defeat of Catalonia during the War of Spanish Succession in 1714 – Catalan authorities planned to perform a funeral oration in Catalan in the gothic church of Santa Maria del Mar. The ceremony was banned with the argument that religious ceremonies should not be politicised. This conflict recurred, and at the turn of the century Catalan bishops, especially from Barcelona and Vic, claimed the right to teach the catechism in Catalan, contributing to ongoing public debates about national identity.

In this paper, I will concentrate on the debates around the use of language in religious services in Catalonia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. I will focus on clergymen who actively promoted Catalanism as well as some politicians and intellectuals who importantly contributed to these debates. The role of the press, especially newspapers such as *El Imparcial* and *El Norte de Castilla*, will also be considered. Some initial discussion of nineteenth-century issues will be necessary for understanding the debates that linked language, religion, and nationalism in the first decades of the twentieth century. First, I will discuss the relation between nationalism, religion, and language. Second, I will analyse the arguments made by Catalanists for preaching in Catalan before concentrating, lastly, on the reactions of Spanish nationalists.

## Language, Religion, and the Clash of Nationalisms: The Spanish Case around 1900

Understanding the relationship between religion and national identity starts with a consideration of language. National movements are built in terms of primordial elements. Those who participated in such movements understood the nation according to a set of characteristics that they considered to be inherent in the very being of a particular group of people. Elements such as history, language, religion, or traditions converged in what was considered to be a common destiny.<sup>10</sup> According to this view, nations were not products of negotiations or of contingent historical processes: on the contrary, nations were understood as natural entities whose existence was legitimised by characteristics rooted extraordinarily deeply in history becoming seen in some sense as timeless and eternal.

Language plays an important role here, and some scholars have seen a clear, mutual interdependence between language and nationalism, particularly in Europe.<sup>11</sup> Constructivist theories have interpreted “national” language as both a semi-artificial construct and one of the seminal elements enabling nationalism to exist.<sup>12</sup> The centralisation of the state went hand-in-hand with liberalism and nationalism, encouraging the linkage of a single nation to a single language. In contrast to imperial entities, nation-states worked in many cases as homogenising forces, reducing tolerance for many forms of sub-national particularity. State bureaucracies pushed for establishing one language within national borders. Schools, universities, tribunals, official decrees, and so on used the official language established at the political capital. As Benedict Anderson put it, a particular vernacular was spread with the instruments of administrative centralisation.<sup>13</sup> This process of imposing a single language upon a defined “national” territory created tensions with speakers of other languages or dialects, which automatically lost (or never managed to gain) official status. Non-official languages within a state, therefore, were (at least in theory) confined to private, familial contexts or had only a limited place in the public sphere. Pierre Bourdieu has interpreted

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10 See John Hutchinson, *Modern Nationalism* (London 1994); Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism: A Critical Survey of Recent Theories of Nations and Nationalism* (London 2005).

11 Stephen Barbour, “Nationalism, Language, Europe”, in Stephen Barbour/Cathie Carmichael (ed.), *Language and Nationalism in Europe* (Oxford 2000), 1–17, on p. 14; Michael Keating, “Nationalism, Nation-Building and Language Policy in Quebec and Catalonia”, in Heinz-Gerhard Haupt et al. (ed.), *Regional and National Identities in Europe in the XIXth and XXth Centuries* (The Hague 1998), 465–494.

12 Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*, 54.

13 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London 1983), 40, 78.

language as a symbolic power bound up with the state in its genesis and social uses.<sup>14</sup> The imposition of an official language appears not only as a mechanism for constructing identity but also as a mechanism of increasingly institutionalised state power.

How effective this imposition of a common language was *in practice* is another issue. The Spanish case shows that a language that had been normalised and institutionalised since the sixteenth century had, even by the late nineteenth century, not completely penetrated into significant parts of the country. In 1896, the MP Manuel Polo argued that children in the Catalan and Basque schools could not learn because they ignored the Spanish language.<sup>15</sup> Three years later, another MP complained that “some Spaniards do not know the official language” and described this situation as “truly pitiful”.<sup>16</sup> Critiques of the limited spread of the Spanish language in certain territories were intermingled with arguments for recognising non-official languages in spheres such as education, legal proceedings, and public administration. Manuel Polo, who was in fact one of the first advocates of promoting multilingualism in Parliament, argued that teachers needed to know regional dialects in order to enable them to teach Spanish to pupils under twelve years of age.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, MPs from peripheral territories urged that regional languages be accepted in official contexts in those regions where Spanish was not widely spoken. For instance, Leoncio Soler suggested that, in such cases, regional languages should be employed for the most important administrative purposes in village life. He argued that:

it is anomalous that in Catalonia and Galicia, for example, where the inhabitants do not speak Spanish, contracts are concluded in a language they do not understand, that they need to write their last will in a language that is not familiar to them, and that they are compelled to answer the questions of a judge regarding issues related to their interests, honour, and life in a language that is not their mother tongue.<sup>18</sup>

From the 1890s onward, language was central to debates about regionalism.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, both Catalanists and Spanish nationalists considered language to be at the heart of their respective identities. Spanish nationalists even saw a

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14 Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Oxford 1991), 45.

15 *Diario de las Sesiones de Cortes*, 19 August 1896, 2459.

16 *Diario de las Sesiones de Cortes*, 15 July 1899, 964–966.

17 *Diario de las Sesiones de Cortes*, 19 August 1896, 2459.

18 *Diario de las Sesiones de Cortes*, 15 July 1899, 964–966.

19 Miroslav Hroch, “The Social Interpretations of Linguistic Demands in European National Movements”, in Haupt et al., *Regional and National Identities*, 67–96; Xosé M. Núñez Seixas, “La(s) lengua(s) de la nación”.

threat to the unity of Spain as a nation – as well as to Spanish culture – in the promotion of Catalan.

Across the first third of the twentieth century the debate focused especially on the language of school instruction and university lectures in Catalonia. Spanish nationalists increasingly saw the Spanish language as a unifying element that articulated the existence of the nation.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, nineteenth- and early twentieth-century scholars adopted the sixteenth-century scholar Antonio de Nebrija's idea of language as "the companion of empire".<sup>21</sup> This teleological interpretation of Spanish history focused on particular historical moments, especially those in which Spain played an important role in world and European history. Spanish nationalists took their language as the key element of Spain's historical pride and glory, remembering in particular the conquest of America and the Golden Age literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Religion plays an important role here, and many scholars have considered it as a key element in the making of nationalism. On the one hand, they have seen in nationalism a kind of political religion, which has similar features as and performs comparable functions to traditional religions.<sup>22</sup> On the other hand, religion has in some cases been identified with the national character of a given people. Beyond the conflict between the church and state during the nineteenth century, changing frameworks of reference allowed new channels for expressing religiosity.<sup>23</sup> From the last third of the nineteenth century, state politics in Spain reached out to the Catholic Church and incorporated it as one of the main institutions in the nation-building process. The clash between religion and politics that had characterised the nineteenth century turned, in the Spanish case, into close collaboration.<sup>24</sup> Just as the monarchy accepted some of the liberal and revolutionary principles of nationalism in the course of the century, religion in Spain – in contrast to France, Germany, or Italy – joined forces with liberal politics from about 1870 onwards.

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20 Sebastian Balfour, "Continuidades y discontinuidades en los discursos nacionalistas conservadores desde la Transición", in Javier Moreno Luzón (ed.), *Construir España. Nacionalismo español y procesos de nacionalización* (Madrid 2007), 303–316.

21 See Alda Blanco, *Cultura y conciencia imperial en la España del siglo XIX* (València 2012), 127–140.

22 Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism*; Wehler, *Nationalismus*.

23 Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, "Religión y nación en la Europa del siglo XIX: algunas consideraciones en perspectiva comparada", in *Alcores. Revista de Historia Contemporánea* 2 (2006), 159–175.

24 José Álvarez Junco, *Mater Dolorosa, la idea de España en el siglo XIX* (Madrid 2001), part III. Cf. Helmut Walser Smith, *German Nationalism and Religious Conflict: Culture, Ideology, Politics, 1870–1914* (Princeton, NJ 1995); for a general overview, Michael Burleigh, *Earthly Powers: The Clash of Religion and Politics in Europe from the French Revolution to the Great War* (London 2005).



One of the highlights of what became promoted as national history in the nineteenth century was 1492, the year not only of the discovery of America by Columbus but also the conquest of the Nasrid Kingdom of Granada and the expulsion of Jews from Castile and Aragon. The subsequent expulsion of the *Moriscos* and the opposition to the Reformation also helped to identify Catholicism with the Spanish monarchy. This identification was extended into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>25</sup> One of the most important foundations of Spanish nationalism, therefore, was religion. The church's role was certainly not unproblematic in the construction of liberalism, as the state's confiscation of church property in the second third of the nineteenth century shows; nonetheless, over the second half of the century, conservative representations of Spanish nationalism became ever more prominent and assumed Catholicism as an essential part of the Spanish nation. Republicans and socialists resisted such claims, but the two major political parties, despite their differences, promoted the link between church and state. In this context, and especially after 1875, the church's role in the state increased.<sup>26</sup>

Language and religion were both important aspects of Spanish nationalism. However, it was not until the last decades of the nineteenth century when scholars and intellectuals brought such issues into the core of nationalising discourses and practices. Nationalism's conservative turn in the late nineteenth century helped to make those elements central to national identity. At the same time, as we have seen, Catalanism (in ways similar to the Basque movement) set out an alternative to national identity in Spain at the turn of the twentieth century. Spanish nationalists and Catalanists engaged in a competitive appropriation of national symbols, history, and language at the turn of the century, a conflict in which religion played an important role.

### Preaching in Catalan: Bishops, Language, and Nationalism

On 11 September 1886, the first commemoration of the Catalan defeat of 1714 in the War of Spanish Succession took place. This was the origin of an event that, during the twentieth century, became one of the most important sites of memory of Catalanism. That year, an association that had been founded in 1882 to promote regionalism, the *Centre Català*, organised festivities

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25 Gregorio Alonso, *La nación en capilla. Ciudadanía católica y cuestión religiosa en España, 1793–1874* (Granada 2014).

26 Manuel Suárez Cortina, *Entre cirios y garrotes: política y religión en la España contemporánea, 1808–1936* (Cuenca and Santander 2014); Alonso Botti, *Dinero y cielo: el nacional-catolicismo en España, 1881–1975* (Madrid 2008); William J. Callahan, *The Catholic Church in Spain, 1875–1998* (Washington, DC 2000), 20–56.

in Barcelona in remembrance of the “death of citizens who defended the Catalan Fatherland back in 1714”.<sup>27</sup> Among other activities, authorities planned a funeral oration at Santa Maria del Mar, a Gothic church located in the Barcelonian medieval Ribera district, considered one of the town’s important historical sites with regard to the War of Succession. The priest, writer, and journalist Jaume Collell was supposed to perform a funeral in Catalan for the victims of the conflict who were buried in that district. But the Bishop of Barcelona, Jaume Català, probably influenced by the general and statesman Arsenio Martínez Campos, forbade the sermon by arguing that religious places of worship should not serve political purposes.<sup>28</sup> While preaching in Catalan was not an issue in previous centuries,<sup>29</sup> from the late nineteenth century it became a fundamental question for the Spanish administration.

The Collell affair was the opening of a conflict over the Catalan language that linked the political and religious arenas. Some years later, in 1900, Josep Morgades, Bishop of Vic and then of Barcelona, wrote a pastoral letter in which he highlighted the necessity of teaching the catechism in Catalan. Another Bishop of Vic, Josep Torras, Morgades’s successor, also became an important figure in the promotion of Catalan in religious services.<sup>30</sup> Morgades argued that reason and experience recommended using the vernacular language since this was the only way to guarantee the pastoral goals, since both priest and believers could express themselves better in their mother tongue. Morgades thus considered Spanish completely inadequate for indoctrination.

Such examples are interesting for two reasons. First, these figures were part of the *Renaixença*, a cultural movement that promoted the use of the Catalan language.<sup>31</sup> Second, it is no coincidence that all three of them – Collell, Morgades, and Torras – had strong ties with the Catalan town of Vic. This small town of about 11,000 inhabitants at the turn of the century and located in the interior of the Barcelona province, was a religious and industrial centre as well as an important site in the making of a Catalan regional

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27 Quoted in Pere Anguera, *L’Onze de setembre: història de la Diada, 1886–1938* (Barcelona 2008), 27.

28 Ángel Duarte, “Que tremoli l’enemic... o la celebració del vencido. El nacionalismo catalán y sus primeras preces”, in *Revista de Historia Jerónimo Zurita* 86 (2011), 181–204.

29 Juan R. Lodaes, “Language, Catholicism, and Power in the Hispanic Empire (1500–1770)”, in Nelsy Echávez-Solano/Kenya C. Dworkin y Méndez (ed.), *Spanish and Empire* (Nashville, TN 2007), 18.

30 Jordi Figuerola, *El Bisbe Morgades i la formació de l’Església catalana contemporània* (Barcelona 1994).

31 The *Renaixença* was a cultural movement of the second half of the nineteenth century that promoted a revival of Catalan tradition and supported the use of Catalan for literary activities. See Angel Smith, *The Origins of Catalan Nationalism, 1770–1898* (Basingstoke 2014), chapter 3.

culture at the end of the nineteenth century. Indeed, Vic's religious seminary played an active role in the cultural development of the *Renaixença*, while other local cultural associations such as *l'Esbart de Vic* or the *Círcol Literari* also contributed to the promotion of Catalan culture. For these associations, language was a crucial element in the reinterpretation of Catalan culture, and their main activity consisted of organising public readings of poetry and literature.<sup>32</sup> Other Catalan cultural associations also considered language vital to developing Catalanism: the first point of the *Centre Català's* programme was the recognition of Catalan as an official language in Spain. Members of such cultural and literary associations, especially in Vic, had strong ties with priests and bishops.<sup>33</sup> Hence, links between cultural and religious elements in the making of Catalanism were very clear during the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>34</sup>

Analysing why religious elements were so strong in Catalanism's cultural and later political dimensions (and understanding the role of Catalan clergy in the twentieth century) means taking a brief detour back to the establishment of the liberal state in nineteenth-century Catalonia. Carlism – an anti-liberal and legitimist movement that claimed the Spanish Crown from the 1830s and provoked three civil wars during the nineteenth century – was strong in Catalan rural areas and had a particular impact on the clergy.<sup>35</sup> Indeed, clergy and nobility significantly identified with Carlism in the 1830s and 1840s.<sup>36</sup> Decades later, during the Third Carlist War in the 1870s, vast rural areas in Catalonia were taken by Carlist groups without offering strong resistance.<sup>37</sup> Catalan clergymen such as Josep Caixal, Bishop of La Seu d'Urgell, in the western Catalan Pyrenees, were prominent figures of Carlism, and in Berga, an important Carlist centre close to Barcelona, its 1840 Junta was almost entirely composed of priests and canons.<sup>38</sup> When Carlism was defeated in Catalonia in 1875 in the third and last war between liberals and traditionalists, the clergy, which had strongly supported Carlist positions, had to adjust their outmoded positions to face the new circumstances. The traditionalist school centred in Vic already had established credentials in developing conservative

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32 Josep Maria Fradera, *Cultura nacional en una sociedad dividida: Cataluña, 1838–1868* (Madrid 2003), 254–258.

33 Among them was Jacinto Verdager, the most influential poet of the *Renaixença*, who was ordained as a priest in Vic, but also the poet Víctor Balaguer and the historian Antonio de Bofarull.

34 Fradera, *Cultura nacional*, 263–281.

35 Josep Maria Fradera/Jesús Millán/Ramón Garrabou (ed.), *Carlisme i moviments absolutistes* (Vic 1990).

36 Manuel Santirso Rodríguez, “El incierto cénit del carlismo catalán (1837–1840)”, in *Gerónimo de Uztáriz* 14–15 (1999), 153–178, on p. 155; Jesús Millán, “Una reconsideración del carlismo”, in *Ayer* 29 (1998), 91–108.

37 Albert Ballcells, *Cataluña contemporánea (siglo XIX)* (Madrid 1977), 210.

38 *Muerte del Conde de España y biografía del Cura Merino* (Madrid 1840), 3.

philosophy in response to modernity. The most influential thinker in this context was Jaume Balmes, who was strongly linked to Vic, where he had been born.<sup>39</sup>

A consideration of Balmes shows how regionalism enabled the updating of traditionalist thinking. Balmes, a theologian and philosopher, strongly influenced the intellectual and clerical circles of rural Catalonia in the second half of the nineteenth century. His thought was characterised by criticism of liberalism and political parties.<sup>40</sup> However, Balmes's theories needed to be revisited in the 1870s, when the social and political situation had changed substantially from the 1830s and 1840s, when Balmes had written his books. Traditionalist scholars from areas where Carlism was rooted were especially attracted by such theories, but they had to adapt them to the new circumstances of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Some scholars have pointed out the links between Balmes's thought and the origins of Catalan regionalism.<sup>41</sup> For instance, Vicens Vives has argued that *The Catalan Tradition* – the major work of the Bishop of Vic, Josep Torras – “is the consequence of the direct impact of Balmes at the core of Catalan Catholicism”; moreover, Vives also pointed out that Torras directed the church's positions on nineteenth-century liberal and revolutionary issues away from traditionalism.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, leading clergymen in Catalonia found in Catalanism the social and spiritual regeneration they sought.<sup>43</sup> At that time, both the political oligarchy and church sought to promote a regional cultural identity. Nonetheless, while oligarchs wanted to challenge the stagnant political system of Spain and break the dynamics of political patronage, clergymen promoted a translation of their ideological traditionalism into modernity. Catalanism, first in its cultural and then in its political form, served both purposes.

Their common interests increased contacts between the clergymen and the bourgeoisie. For instance the opening session of the Academy of Jurisprudence from the presidency of Manuel Durán in 1868 onwards encouraged contacts between clerics and bourgeois in public spaces.<sup>44</sup> Clergymen also contributed to the making of a new cultural memory and symbolism

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39 Josep Maria Fradera, *Jaume Balmes: els fonaments racionals d'una política catòlica* (Vic 1996).

40 Ignacio Fernández-Sarasola, *Los partidos políticos en el pensamiento español: de la Ilustración a nuestros días* (Madrid 2009), 87–89.

41 Jesús Pabón, *Cambó, 1876–1947* (Barcelona 1999), 104.

42 Jaime Vicens Vives, *Cataluña en el siglo XIX* (Madrid 1961), 445.

43 María José Vilalta, “Una tradición respetada: clérigos de sociedad, clérigos de familia en la narrativa catalana del siglo XIX”, in Roberto Fernández/Jacques Soubeyroux (ed.), *Historia social y literatura: familia y clero en España (siglo XVIII y XIX)*, vol. III (Lleida 2004), 293–294.

44 Stephen Jacobson, *Catalonia's Advocates: Lawyers, Society, and Politics in Barcelona, 1759–1900* (Chapel Hill, NC 2009), 129–130.

of Catalanism. Commemorations of the Napoleonic Wars made clear the dominance of the Carlist and Catholic sectors over that of political liberalism, while priests and bishops gained prominence through performing public ceremonies.<sup>45</sup> Not accidentally, the cult of the Virgin of Montserrat and Saint Jordi began in the 1880s by acquiring a regional symbolism.<sup>46</sup>

As noted, language was a key part of the Catalanist project, and the main religious actors in this process also played an important role in promoting Catalan. The priest Jaume Collell wrote several texts defending the use of Catalan in public spaces.<sup>47</sup> He was also a key figure in challenging the use of Spanish as the sole official language at public events. This issue was an important matter in religious newspapers such as *La Veu de Montserrat*, in which conservatives and clerics started not only to discuss the confluence of Catalan traditions and an autochthone Christianity but also to highlight the role of language, especially with regard to Catholic indoctrination.<sup>48</sup> Initiatives such as the restoration of the Ripoll Monastery, the defence of Catalan civil law, or the *Certamen Catalanista de la Juventud Catòlica* could not be understood without taking into account the promotion of Catalan language. It was in this context of interwoven concerns about regionalism, language, and religion that key episodes linking Christianity to the contestation between Spanish and Catalan national identities occurred.

### Morgades's Pastoral of 1900 and the 1919 Corpus: The Spanish Reaction

The promotion of Catalan in the public sphere provoked a reaction from Spanish nationalists, who, no less than Catalanists, valued language as an articulation of national belonging. From 1900 onwards, legislation reinforced the role of Spanish in public life.<sup>49</sup> At the same time, advocates of Spanish

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45 Lluís Ferrán Toledano González and Maria Gemma Rubí i Casals, "Las Jornadas del Bruc y la construcción de memorias públicas nacionales", in Christian Demange (ed.), *Sombras de mayo: mitos y memorias de la Guerra de la Independencia en España (1808–1908)* (Madrid 2007), 87–110.

46 Joan Bonet i Baltà, *L'Església catalana, de la Il·lustració a la Renaixença* (Montserrat 1984), 137–146.

47 Benjamí Montserrat Satorre, *Jaume Collell i Bancells: perfil biogràfic d'un activista catòlic del catalanisme*, Doctoral Dissertation UPF 2002; A selection of texts in Joan Requesens i Piqué (ed.), *Jaume Collell i la llengua catalana. Selecció de textos* (Girona 1994).

48 Solange Hibbs-Lissorgues, "La *Veu de Montserrat* y la identidad catalana", in Nathalie Ludec/Françoise Dubosquet Lairys (ed.), *Centros y periferias: prensa, impresos y territorios en el mundo hispánico contemporáneo. Homenaje a Jacqueline Covo-Maurice* (Paris 2004), 123–124.

49 Núñez Seixas, "La(s) lengua(s) de la nación", 248.

nationalism reacted harshly to the use and promotion of other languages in peripheral Spanish areas. As we have seen, discussions took place around the use of language in education; however, this was not the only field of debate.

The leading role of clergymen in the promotion of Catalan allowed Spanish nationalists to depict Catalanism as a clerical movement strongly linked to anti-liberal positions. Indeed, liberals took a lead in criticising such positions since republicans and socialists – whose interests mostly lay elsewhere – took relatively little part in such debates. Supporters of Spanish nationalism, such as scholars, journalists, and politicians, understood the Catalan and Basque challenges as movements opposed to modernity and progress. Indeed, the influence of traditionalist positions on Catalanism enabled some observers to even label it as pre-modern. In *El Imparcial*, a journalist argued that regionalists were “always at the borderline to reactionary elements, near Carlism and traditionalism”.<sup>50</sup> The republican, populist politician Alejandro Lerroux spoke in the same vein when he argued that Catalanism was

clerical, reactionary, and separatist; it is not a social movement and it is also Carlist [...]. Catalanism is a hybrid product, the result of the cohabitation between clerical and backward, bourgeois elements [...]; Catalanism is a collection of failed political elements.<sup>51</sup>

At the turn of the century, the bishops of Vic and Barcelona were criticised for promoting Catalan. The MP Francisco Romero found it unacceptable that the bishop of Vic boasted of not speaking Spanish.<sup>52</sup> At the same time, the bishop of Barcelona was denounced for wanting to conduct religious services in Catalan. Evocations of national unity and cultural values again centred on language, but religion made the debate more complex. Francisco Romero rhetorically asked his fellow deputies in Parliament: “Don’t you know, gentlemen, that Catalanists are not liberals? Don’t you know that this movement has the Carlist leavening and the backward impulse of bishops and sacristies?”<sup>53</sup>

These arguments returned in 1908, in a debate about the territorial division of the administrative structure of the state. The conservative minister Antonio Maura wanted to revisit the issue of the local administration, and Catalanists used this opportunity to demand the establishment of a regional administration in Catalonia. The reaction from Madrid was, again, harsh. *El Imparcial* repeated the arguments used some years before. A journalist

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50 *El Imparcial*, 17 November 1901, 1. “Movimiento regresivo.”

51 *Diario de Sesiones de Cortes*, 28 November 1901, 1933, 1937, and 1938. Intervention of Alejandro Lerroux.

52 *El Imparcial*, 29 July 1899, 1–2.

53 *Diario de Sesiones de Cortes*, 20 February 1900, 4649. Intervention of Francisco Romero Robledo.

referred to Catalanism as “a deeply reactionary, clerical, and plutocratic undertaking”.<sup>54</sup> This newspaper even linked the terrorism that lashed Barcelona in those years with Catalanism.<sup>55</sup> The announcement that the former anarchist terrorist Joan Rull worked as informant for several governors of Barcelona was interpreted by some in the Spanish press as proving links between Catalanism and terrorism as well as evidence that terrorists and Catalanists were agents of Carlism and servants of the clerical faction.<sup>56</sup> Claims about Catalanism and terrorism never re-emerged, but the linkage between Catalanism and the clergy continued to be made through the first two decades of the twentieth century. The two main examples of this posture are the discussion of the pastoral letter of Bishop Morgades in 1900 and the Corpus Christi feast – a ceremony in which Catholics celebrate the Eucharist – in Barcelona in 1919.

Josep Morgades, appointed bishop of Vic and later of Barcelona, defended Catalanism and supported cultural and political regionalism. In 1900, he wrote a pastoral letter on the use of the Catalan language in teaching the catechism.<sup>57</sup> In his letter, he emphasised the need for the language of the catechism to match the language of the congregation.<sup>58</sup> His fellow bishop, Josep Torras, had already developed this point in his book *The Catalan Tradition*, where he strongly advocated using vernacular language in religious services.<sup>59</sup> The Spanish reaction to Morgades’s pastoral was harsh, showing how language and religion converged in articulating responses to the Catalanist aim of promoting the use of Catalan in the public sphere. A journalist from *El Norte de Castilla* accused the bishop of Barcelona of speaking “not as the head of a flock of faithful [...], but as a supporter of anti-Spanish doctrine”.<sup>60</sup> The MP Francisco Romero declared in Parliament that “instead of taking care of souls for salvation in the world beyond, the bishop is looking after petty interests and political passions of this world”.<sup>61</sup> This criticism

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54 *El Imparcial*, 25 March 1908, 1. “La derecha solidaria. Su verdadera finalidad.” This argument was used again in the same newspaper on 11 February 1909, 1, “El triunfo de los solidarios.”

55 Recurrent anarchist bombings, attacks, and murders occurred in Barcelona in the 1890s and 1900s. See Joaquín Romero Maura, *La Romana del Diablo: ensayos sobre la violencia política en España* (Madrid 2000).

56 *El Imparcial*, 21 May 1909, 5. “La ley de administración local.” About the Rull affair see, Eduardo González Calleja, *La razón de la fuerza: orden público, subversión y violencia política en la España de la Restauración (1875–1917)* (Madrid 1998), 397–403. Richard Bach Jensen, *The Battle Against Anarchist Terrorism: An International History, 1878–1934* (Cambridge 2014), 50.

57 Albert Ballcells, *Cataluña contemporánea II (1900–1939)* (Madrid 1984), 64–67.

58 Josep Grau, *La Lliga Regionalista i la llengua catalana (1901–1924)* (Barcelona 2006), 82–98; Àlvar Maduell, *Las Bases de Manresa i la pastoral de Morgades, 1900* (Barcelona 1992).

59 Josep Torras i Bages, *Obres completes IV. La tradició catalana* (Barcelona 1913), 29–57.

60 *El Norte de Castilla*, 21 January 1900, 1, “Un prelado catalanista.”

61 *Diario de Sesiones de Cortes*, 19 January 1900, 3642.

was strongly linked to the idea that such positions could undermine Spanish national unity. Giving permission to use other vernacular languages in official acts could bring, some politicians and intellectuals from Madrid claimed, the risk of separatism. Regarding the issue of the pastoral letter, a journalist from *El Imparcial* argued that “breaking the link of Spanish, common language to the nation and a binding factor that ensures the unity of Spain, means to break that unity”.<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, Romero accused the bishop of Barcelona of “trying to override the work of four centuries as well as to uproot the Spanish language by restoring Catalan”.<sup>63</sup> The Vatican took an ambivalent position on this pastoral letter. On the one hand, it was concerned about the emergence of regionalism in politics<sup>64</sup>; on the other, they prevented the Spanish government from interfering in issues in which a bishop was involved. Apostolic Nuncio Aristide Rinaldini warned the Spanish Prime Minister Francisco Silvela, with whom he was in close contact in 1900, that the Vatican would not allow reprisals against Morgades.<sup>65</sup>

Similar arguments and debates arose during the Corpus Christi feast in Barcelona in June 1919; however, this time the conflict was channelled through symbols rather than language. A non-Catalanist bishop ordered the removal of a Catalan flag from the cathedral’s tower before the Corpus procession, an important Catholic celebration. This action provoked a conflict between local political and religious authorities.<sup>66</sup> At that time, Catalanism was already a prominent political movement in Barcelona and Catalanists had even taken seats in the Spanish Parliament.<sup>67</sup> Catalanism was therefore a political force to be reckoned with. Catalanists considered the removal of the flag to be an affront to local autonomy, although the affair did not produce a response as harsh as the opposition to the use of Catalan at the religious services had caused. Unlike in 1900, this time the bishop did not advocate Catalanist positions. Moreover, the affair caused some division between Catalanist politicians in both the town and provincial councils in Barcelona, since some of them were as interested in the celebration of the

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62 *El Imparcial*, 20 January 1900, 1. “El obispo discutido.”

63 *Diario de Sesiones de Cortes*, 19 January 1900, 3643.

64 Hibbs-Lissorgues, “*La Veu de Montserrat*”, 118.

65 Ramon Corts i Blay, *Josep Puig i Cadafalch: un polític catalanista i catòlic. Els fets del Corpus de Barcelona de 1919* (Mataró 2002); Cristóbal Robles Muñoz, “Santa Sede y Catalanismo. El Vaticano y el obispo Morgades (1900)”, in *Analecta Sacra Tarraconensa. Revista de ciències histórico-eclesiàstiques* 60 (1987), 185. See also José Andrés Gallego, *La política religiosa en España 1889–1913* (Madrid 1975), 228–229, who quotes documents from the Spanish Archive of Foreign Affairs on this matter, now temporarily closed.

66 Ramón Corts i Blay, “Els fets de Corpus de 1919: el bisbe de Barcelona, Enric Reig i Casanova, i el president de la Mancomunitat, Josep Puig i Cadafalch, davant del sentiment catalanista del inici del segle XX”, in *Analecta Sacra Tarraconensa: Revista de ciències Historicoeclesiàstiques* 75 (2002), 433–494.

67 Borja de Riquer, *Escolta, Espanya: la qüestió catalana en la època liberal* (Madrid 2001).



religious festival as in promoting Catalanism. More importantly, the Catalan flag did not, in the end, wave on the cathedral during the religious parade, which avoided conflicts with Madrid. However, referring to this issue, the intellectual, politician, and journalist Antonio Royo Villanova – who was fiercely opposed to Catalanism – argued that

it is untenable that bishops are supposed to be regional civil servants [...]. There is nothing more absurd than seeking to turn the Catholic religion, which is universal, into a regionalist cult. It is nothing more than natural that a prelate of the Spanish Church feels Apostolic Roman Catholic, but not Apostolic Catalanist Catholic.<sup>68</sup>

Royo followed the same arguments used for opposing Morgades's pastoral letter in 1900. According to him, clergymen should support the Spanish nation since the Catholic Church was one of the main foundations of Spanish nationalism. In the eyes of Spanish nationalists, the universality of the Church could not coexist well with regional particularism, namely Catalanism. All the same, the Corpus affair of 1919 is another example of clashing symbolic politics between Spanish nationalism and Catalanism. Indeed, the same mechanisms that allowed the Church to become one of the pillars of Spanish nationalism also worked in the Catalan case.

## Conclusions

The competition for establishing the official status of one or more languages in the public sphere channelled debates on national identity: both Spanish nationalists and Catalanists saw language as fundamental to nationhood.<sup>69</sup> Although, in 1900, cultural and political Catalanist claims did not imply the idea of nation, at least as a central issue, it did some years later when in 1906 Prat de la Riba published *The Catalan Nationality*, which defined Catalanism as a national movement. In this book, Prat de la Riba gave enormous importance to language, while nationality and religion were depicted as coming together. Previously, for instance, he had stated that “Catalanist religion has the Fatherland as God.”<sup>70</sup>

In essence, these claims were about the recognition of plurality within the Spanish state. For some Spanish nationalists, it was inconceivable a language

68 *ABC*, 2 July 1919, 3–4, “Catolicismo y catalanismo”, by Antonio Royo Villanova. Also reproduced in *El Norte de Castilla*, 4 July 1919, 1.

69 Núñez Seixas, “La(s) lengua(s) de la nación”, 249–250.

70 Enric Prat de la Riba, *La nacionalitat catalane* (Barcelona 1989), 47–48; Rafael Olivar Bretrand, *Prat de la Riba* (Barcelona 1964), 73. Enric Prat de la Riba and Pere Muntanyola, *Compendi de la Doctrina Catalanista* (Sabadell 1894).

other than Spanish could be used in the public sphere, and they were concerned that such use would legitimate a rethinking of the idea of national sovereignty. They reacted severely to that possibility, understanding it as a threat to a unified Spanish nation. In this context, religion was a key arena in which language debates played out. Catholicism was also a resource for legitimising both Spanish nationalist and Catalanist positions since religion was at the core of both movements. The interweaving of universal values and local responses of the Catholic Church came into tension with the regional and national spheres at the turn of the century. Language and symbols were the main elements that channelled the conflict on national identity while, at the same time, Catholicism was supposed to legitimise both sides' positions as the conflict developed. On both sides, language articulated national self-assertions.

Catalan clergymen saw in regionalism a vehicle for reshaping the traditionalist positions that they had tended to adopt until the 1870s. The specificities of liberalism in North-Eastern Spain, with a strong Carlist background, explain the marriage of regionalism and religion in the Basque and Catalan cases. To put it another way, in adapting Balmes's theories, from which their inspirations substantially derived, sectors of the Carlist movement in Catalonia embraced regionalism. In doing so, they followed Balmes's advocacy of articulating traditional with modern political and cultural positions.<sup>71</sup>

However, it would not be adequate to interpret regionalism as a continuity of traditionalism. Catalan clergymen saw in regionalism a way to translate old-fashioned positions to modernity by developing Balmes's thought. Indeed, Catalanism should be interpreted as a cultural and political response to modernity. Its main bearer was the wealthy Barcelonian business elite, who embraced the political, cultural, and economic values of liberalism. The social face of Catalanism was that of the rising middle class. They constructed a self-image based on modernity, and they even promoted modern arts and architecture as a demonstration of their Europeaness. Seen from within, this modernity is not in contradiction with Catalanist traditional roots. Looking on from the outside, however, some opponents of Catalanism took a different view.

Spanish nationalists interpreted Catalanism as opposed to modernity and liberalism. Accordingly, they focused intensely on the Catalan clergy, since Catalan clergymen had defended traditionalist positions during the Carlist civil wars. The proposals for preaching in Catalan provoked huge reaction by prominent politicians and intellectuals in Madrid and involved a negative interpretation of Catalanism as a movement contrary to modernity and the tendencies of the times. They understood such ideas as leading toward

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71 Fradera, *Cultura nacional*; Fradera, *Jaume Balmes*.

separatism and expressing a disdain for Spanish culture. Some politicians, such as Francisco Romero and Antonio Royo Villanova – and some newspapers, such as *El Imparcial* or *El Norte de Castilla* – took religion's centrality in the definition of Catalanism for granted. Over the first third of the twentieth century, Spanish nationalism defined Catalanism as an anti-liberal, clerical, and Carlist movement. For actors on both sides, religion became a key element for interpreting the clash of national identities that emerged at the turn of the twentieth century.



John Wolffe

## Forever England beneath the Cross of Sacrifice

### Christianity and National Identity in British First World War Cemeteries<sup>1</sup>

If I should die, think only this of me:  
That there's some corner of a foreign field  
That is forever England.<sup>2</sup>

Rupert Brooke subsequently imagines an “English heaven” of flowers, clean air and rivers, the laughter of friends, and “hearts at peace”, in stark contrast not only to the horrors of trench warfare but also to his own inner turmoil and to the realities of life at home for the majority of his compatriots. Nevertheless, despite or perhaps because of its naïve sentimentality, Brooke’s “The Soldier” is “probably the best-known sonnet published in English in the twentieth century”<sup>3</sup> and serves as a paradigmatic articulation of English national identity in the face of the trauma of the First World War. Its mystique was heightened by the poet’s death on the way to Gallipoli in April 1915, which although attributable to an infected mosquito bite rather than to heroism in battle, led to him being eulogised in *The Times* for his willingness to die “for the dear England whose beauty and majesty he knew”. The writer, probably Winston Churchill, hailed Brooke as “all that one would wish England’s noblest sons to be in days when no sacrifice but the most precious is acceptable”.<sup>4</sup>

Brooke’s and Churchill’s “England” was at odds with the multi-national and multi-ethnic composition of the British imperial forces that went to war in 1914. Indeed, such a concept of “England” was not a literal geographical

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1 The research for this essay was funded by an RCUK Global Uncertainties Leadership Fellowship. I am also grateful to the editors of the *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* and to Taylor & Francis for permission to reprint some passages that first appeared in my article in that journal, 15:1 (March 2015), 23–38, “Martyrs as really as St Stephen was a martyr”? Commemorating the British dead of the First World War”.

2 Rupert Brooke, “The Soldier”, <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poem/2279> (accessed 25 May 2015).

3 Adrian Caesar, “Brooke, Rupert Chawner (1887–1915)”, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford 2004); online edn, May 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32093> (accessed 18 May 2015).

4 “Death of Mr. Rupert Brooke”, *The Times*, 26 April 1915, 5. The circumstantial evidence for Churchill’s authorship are the attribution of the eulogy to “W.S.C.” and his office as First Lord of the Admiralty while Brooke was a serving officer in the Royal Navy.

or political description but rather an abstraction that implicitly – and sometimes explicitly – subsumed not only Ireland, Scotland, and Wales but also the overseas empire, or at least its white settler communities. It was a secular vision of England, but one that could at times merge almost seamlessly into the Christian language in which others justified and interpreted Britain's role in the war. Arthur Winnington-Ingram, the Bishop of London, appeared to equate the cause of Christianity with the cause of the nation when he described the war dead as “martyrs dying for their faith as really as St Stephen, the first martyr, died for his”.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, Charles Gore, Bishop of Oxford, pointed out that the Bible warned against “the sufficiency of patriotism” and that self-sacrifice for one's country was not distinctively Christian.<sup>6</sup> Later, in July 1917, despite the anguish of three years of war, the House of Laymen of the Canterbury Convocation, representing Anglicans in the south and midlands of England, passed a resolution affirming that “Christians owe their first and highest allegiance to the Catholic Church which is the Body of Christ”, meaning that Christians of any nationality should be loved as “brethren”.<sup>7</sup>

Rupert Brooke's interment in his particular “corner of a foreign field” on the Greek island of Skyros foreshadowed the massive task that in subsequent years faced the Imperial (now Commonwealth) War Graves Commission (WGC) following its formation in 1917. It was manifestly impracticable to repatriate hundreds of thousands of bodies, many of them unidentified, and hence cemeteries were constructed on the Western Front, and the other theatres of war. If these were to be “forever England” what physical form should they take?

In this essay national identity and Christianity are defined and approached primarily through their expression in discussions over the material fabric of the British cemeteries of the First World War.<sup>8</sup> The interface between them was fluid and contested as the WGC developed policies for the burial and memorialisation of the casualties. In written and spoken discourse secular evocations of national identity could run in parallel with the various endeavours to find Christian meaning and consolation amidst the slaughter, with no need to reconcile them. Designers of physical cemeteries, however, had to accommodate both religious and secular national impulses if they were to

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5 Arthur F. Winnington-Ingram, *A Day of God: Being Five Addresses on the Subject of the Present War* (London 1914), 75; John Wolffe, *God and Greater Britain: Religion and National Life in Britain and Ireland 1843–1945* (London 1994), 234–235.

6 Alan Wilkinson, *The Church of England and the First World War* (London 1978), 222.

7 *Ibid.*, 225.

8 Specific supporting examples are drawn primarily from the Western Front; however the policies discussed were also applied in other theatres of war.

satisfy bereaved families with diverse beliefs – including Hindus, Jews, Muslims, and Sikhs as well as Christians – as well as a wider body of believing and non-believing public opinion.

### Designing the War Cemeteries

From the outset the WGC struggled to find a consensual accommodation between national and Christian influences, with the complexity of its task augmented by diversity within Christianity and the need to memorialise appropriately casualties of other faiths. Fabian Ware – the Commission’s Vice-Chairman and effective founder, from a Nonconformist background and a former member of Alfred Milner’s “Kindergarten” of young administrators in southern Africa – was committed to an imperial vision and no friend to an exclusive, dogmatic Christianity.<sup>9</sup> Differences over the religious symbolism of the cemeteries quickly emerged. Soon after the Commission was formally constituted in May 1917, it sent two leading architects, Herbert Baker and Edwin Lutyens, and Charles Aitken, Director of the Tate Gallery, to France to offer preliminary advice on the design of cemeteries. All three agreed that there should be “some recurring symbolical object”<sup>10</sup> as a focal point for each cemetery but disagreed as to its form. Aitken and Baker proposed that it should be a cross “as a mark of the symbolism of the present crusade”,<sup>11</sup> thus clearly identifying the national cause with Christianity. Lutyens, however, proposed that it should rather to be “one great fair stone of fine proportions [...] flanked with sentinel cypresses or pyramidal oaks” raised on steps facing westward towards the graves, which would face east towards the enemy. Such a structure, he argued, would give equality of honour to “Christians of all denominations, [...] Jews, Mussulmans, Hindus and men of other creeds” in “one vast cathedral whose vault is the sky”.<sup>12</sup>

Baker and Lutyens both pressed their respective ideas on Ware, and claimed religious endorsement for them. Baker suggested that a Cross should surmount a “pentagonal monolithic obelisk” to represent the five self-governing Dominions of the Empire, with an additional Asoka pillar in cemeteries with Indian graves. He thought his proposal would satisfy “the

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9 David Crane, *Empires of the Dead: How One Man’s Vision Led to the Creation of WWI’s War Graves* (London 2013).

10 Maidenhead, Commonwealth War Graves Commission Archives [hereafter WGC], WG18/293, Report on military cemeteries in France, July 1917.

11 WGC, WG18/299, Minute of visit to France, July 1917.

12 WGC, WG18/238, Memorandum by Lutyens, 28 August 1917. For perspectives on these discussions from architectural historians see Tim Skelton/Gerald Gliddon, *Lutyens and the Great War* (London 2008) and Jeroen Guerst, *Cemeteries of the Great War by Sir Edwin Lutyens* (Rotterdam 2011).

Indian sentiment” and that Jews and Unitarians would not object to a cross. He reported conversations with a Roman Catholic and a High Anglican who both “are strongly in favour of the cross”.<sup>13</sup> However, J.M. Barrie, the leading Scottish author and creator of Peter Pan, hinted at Presbyterian reservations, suggesting that “what appeals to the English church party does not appeal to all”.<sup>14</sup> Lutyens listed the rich symbolic meanings of a stone, and claimed support and agreement as to the “banality” of a Cross from Arthur Balfour, then Foreign Secretary, “Labour members, Jews, R. Catholics, Non-conformists, [and] ladies of fashion, especially those that suffer a loss”.<sup>15</sup> He caught the Archbishop of Canterbury, Randall Davidson, off guard in the Athenaeum, and formed the impression that he too “liked the idea” and would be willing to celebrate Holy Communion on such a stone.<sup>16</sup> On the strength of these conversations, Lutyens and Ware, who was supportive of his proposal, appear to have concluded that it would be acceptable to Christians, so it came as a shock when Davidson subsequently expressed a negative view.<sup>17</sup> The Archbishop seemed “rather agitated” about Lutyens’s proposal and now dismissed such a stone as “meaningless and [...] useless”. Ware considered setting up a Religious Advisory Committee, in the hope of getting some consistent and authoritative guidance on such matters, but found that Davidson preferred to leave controversial decisions to the Commission.<sup>18</sup>

Instead, at its meeting on 20 November 1917, the WGC appointed Sir Frederic Kenyon, Director of the British Museum, to review the various proposals and recommend ways forward. Kenyon’s terms of reference were brief and open-ended but they included an explicit requirement “to consult the representatives of the various churches and religious bodies on any religious questions involved”.<sup>19</sup> In his report, submitted to the Commission in early 1918 but not published until after the Armistice, Kenyon acknowledged that the matter was one of “some difficulty” as the monument would need to “satisfy the religious emotions of as many as possible” while not giving reasonable ground of offence to others. Its central purpose should be to represent “a grateful and undying remembrance of [...] sacrifice”. He therefore proposed that the central feature of the cemeteries should be both a “great fair stone” and a Cross. From a secular point of view the stone would be merely a memorial, but it could also be regarded as an altar, which was “one of the

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13 WGC, WG18/277–278, 265–266, Baker to Ware, 27 July, 1 August 1917.

14 WGC, WG18/284–285, Barrie to Ware, 25 July 1917.

15 WGC, WG18/279, 259, Lutyens to Ware, 27 July, 3 August 1917.

16 WGC, Add 1/1/3, Lutyens to Ware, 7 August 1917 (copy).

17 Clayre Percy/Jane Ridley (ed.), *The Letters of Edwin Lutyens to His Wife, Lady Emily* (Harmondsworth 1988), 351, 355–356, 23 August, 14 October 1917; cf. Crane, *Empires of the Dead*, 114–115.

18 WGC, WG18/206, Note on interview with the Archbishop of Canterbury, 17 October 1917.

19 WGC, Minutes, 20 November 1917.



most ancient and general of religious symbols” and would also symbolise “the sacrifice which the Empire has made of its youth”. On the other hand it was also essential to have the Cross, both as a symbol of *self*-sacrifice and because “great distress would be felt if our cemeteries lacked this recognition of the fact that we are a Christian Empire”.<sup>20</sup> The WGC, its paymasters in the British and Dominion governments, and it seems public opinion in general, initially readily accepted Kenyon’s recommendation for two central monuments in every cemetery despite the confused messages and substantial additional cost that they would entail. It was a striking manifestation of desire for consensus grounded in recognition of both religious and non-religious perspectives.

Kenyon’s report left the specific design of the Cross unresolved. Indeed he initially envisaged that its “size, pattern and position would be left to the artist who designs each cemetery”.<sup>21</sup> In the event, however, after several designs were considered, Reginald Blomfield’s sword within a stone cross was universally adopted. The specific symbolism of the design is ambivalent: the association of sword and cross had resonances of crusade, but the more widespread interpretation is to suggest a parallel between the self-sacrifice of the war dead and that of Christ himself. Such an idea had enjoyed wide currency during the war, for example through the popularity of James Clark’s painting of “The Great Sacrifice” showing a dead soldier at the foot of the cross,<sup>22</sup> and was echoed in the words of John Arkwright’s poem which became a popular hymn in the immediate aftermath of the war:

Still stands His Cross from that dread hour to this,  
Like some bright star above the dark abyss;  
Still, through the veil, the Victor’s pitying eyes  
Look down to bless our lesser Calvaries.

These were His servants, in His steps they trod,  
Following through death the martyred Son of God:  
Victor, He rose; victorious too shall rise  
They who have drunk His cup of sacrifice.<sup>23</sup>

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20 Frederic Kenyon, *War Graves: How the Cemeteries Abroad Will Be Designed* (London 1918), 10–11.

21 *Ibid.*, 11.

22 The original is in Whippingham Church, Isle of Wight. For a reproduction with commentary see Paul Breen, “The Art of Sacrifice”, <http://ukniwm.wordpress.com/2010/03/31/the-art-of-sacrifice/> (accessed 20 October 2014).

23 [http://www.hymnary.org/text/o\\_valiant\\_hearts\\_who\\_to\\_your\\_glory\\_came](http://www.hymnary.org/text/o_valiant_hearts_who_to_your_glory_came) (accessed 25 May 2014).

Whatever its particular meaning to individuals, the “Cross of Sacrifice”, as it came to be known, made the association of Christian and national identities a focal point of all the war cemeteries. In practice it is usually a more prominent feature than the war stone. At Étapes it confronts the visitor entering from the main road and dominates the enormous cemetery from its position at the top of the hillside, overshadowing the war stone on the terrace below. At Tyne Cot it is placed on top of the remains of a German blockhouse, producing a similarly dominant effect, reinforced by the rising ground. From below it obscures the view of the war stone behind. At Bedford House, near Ypres, which has a figure of eight layout, the Cross is placed at the intersection of the two portions of the cemetery and is thus clearly visible from most of the graves, whereas the war stone at the far end is relatively inconspicuous.<sup>24</sup>

Moreover, by the summer of 1919 it was becoming clear that systematic implementation of Kenyon’s recommendation that both war stone and Cross should be included in all the cemeteries would not only add unacceptably to costs, but produce an “inartistic” appearance in the smaller cemeteries. Hence the Commission decided smaller cemeteries would have only one central monument. Despite Ware pointing out that Lutyens attached great importance to the war stone as the “permanent mark of a British cemetery all over the world” and Rudyard Kipling’s view that the choice of monument should be left to the architect, it was decided that “if either of the central memorials had to be omitted, the war stone would be the first to be omitted”. The Commissioners were presumably swayed by Kenyon’s view that he would be “very sorry” to see the Cross omitted but did not feel so strongly about the war stone, and the concern of other members that omission of the central Cross would increase pressure on them to give into current public demands for cruciform monuments on individual graves.<sup>25</sup> Thus it was the Cross rather than the stone that became the universal central focus of British war cemeteries, drawing the eye amidst the flat landscapes of Flanders and northern France. This was intentional: in February 1918 Blomfield had written that “a Cross well set up, would in addition to its symbolism, mark the site of the cemetery”.<sup>26</sup> Hence a Christian symbol of national identity gained the ascendancy over the more secular, or arguably pagan,<sup>27</sup> associations of

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24 Personal observation during visits 30 April and 1 May 2015. See also the plans on the CWGC website, <http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery.aspx>. The positioning of the cross at Tyne Cot was attributed to George V, who when visiting in 1922, said that the blockhouse should not be moved (*The King’s Pilgrimage* [London 1922]).

25 WGC, Minutes, 22 July 1919.

26 WGC, Add 1/6/1, Report by Blomfield on his visits to cemeteries, February 1918.

27 The charge that the stone was “pagan” was made in complaints to Archbishop Davidson by E.R. Lindsay of the Archbishop’s Western Canada Council who alleged that it “derived from the heathen sentiment supposed to linger still in our race” and from Lord Hugh Cecil who claimed “it has nothing behind it except Pagan associations”. Davidson himself though merely



**Figure 1:** Étapes Cemetery, designed by Lutyens, showing the prominent high and central position of the Cross of Sacrifice, and the array of the thousands of headstones, reflecting Kenyon's vision of military "discipline and order". Photograph by John Wolffé.

Lutyens's stones. Furthermore in searching for a text to inscribe on the war stones Kipling turned to the Bible "as being the one book which was beyond criticism", selecting Ecclesiasticus 44:15, "Their name liveth for evermore".<sup>28</sup> His somewhat disingenuous choice of a text from the Apocrypha, of questionable authority for conservative Protestants, does not appear to have aroused controversy.

### Hindus, Jews, Muslims, and Sikhs

The Commission's task was further complicated by its concern, with a particular eye to the Indian dead, to demonstrate sensitivity to religions other than Christianity. Kenyon thought that Jews would accept the presence of a Cross in the cemetery provided that they were allowed to include a Star of David on their own headstones, and recommended that Hindus, Muslims and others be buried separately "in accordance with their own religious beliefs and practices".<sup>29</sup> However, when the Commission discussed his report, Lord Islington, the Secretary of State for India, thought this recognition did not go far enough, because, as he pointed out, "it was a rule of the Mohammedan faith that no body should be exhumed; on the other hand, Hindus were cremated at death wherever possible". He also urged care to ensure that any mosques or temples that might be built conformed to religious requirements and that "there should be nothing in the nature of disparity between cemeteries of Indians and those of Christians".<sup>30</sup>

In response the Commission asked the military to gather information about existing Indian graves, of which there were already over 2000 in France and Belgium alone, some in specifically Indian cemeteries, but others scattered among other military and civilian cemeteries.<sup>31</sup> A prominent Muslim, Sahibzada Aftab Ahmed Khan, and a prominent Hindu, Sir Prabhashanker Pattani, were invited to submit memoranda on the requirements of their respective faiths. They then met with representatives of the WGC and the India Office to agree recommendations. These were in summary that Muslim remains should not be exhumed unless absolutely necessary, that Hindu

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saw it as "a meaningless creation" (Lambeth Palace Library, Davidson Papers [hereafter DP], vol. 377, fos. 264, 267, Lindsay to Davidson, 18 February 1919, Cecil to Davidson, 12 February 1920).

<sup>28</sup> WGC, Minutes, 19 November 1918.

<sup>29</sup> Kenyon, *War Graves*, 11.

<sup>30</sup> WGC, Minutes, 18 February 1918.

<sup>31</sup> WGC, WG 909/9, Copy letter to General Herbert Cox (Military Secretary to India Office) and list of cemeteries.

remains should be cremated if possible, and that designs should be drawn up for a mosque and a temple “in some accessible part of France”.<sup>32</sup>

The plans for a mosque and a temple proved problematic. Pattani later conceded that what he had in mind was more of the nature of a “memorial shrine” which would take account of the internal diversity of Hinduism.<sup>33</sup> Meanwhile, Aftab Ahmed Khan was cherishing grandiose ideas for building a copy of the Taj Mahal in northern France, an idea that even Lutyens, not normally a man to resist architectural overstatement, considered overblown.<sup>34</sup> For its part the Canterbury House of Laymen passed a resolution accepting that Hindus and Muslims should be commemorated in a manner appropriate to their religion but opposing monuments that would be places of worship.<sup>35</sup> Lord Hugh Cecil, the prime mover of the motion, wrote to Davidson that such provision would be “absurd and offensive” and that Christians should not be asked “to further the actual practice of the worship of such religions”.<sup>36</sup> What finally doomed the scheme, however, was the unenthusiastic response of the government of India, which was not prepared to pay for a “very lavish” project and pointed out that if the “British public” paid they would also need to provide for the Sikhs, who, not unreasonably, would “require a separate temple of their own”, while the Nepalese Gurkhas, although Hindus, would also want a separate memorial. Moreover “Indian opinion seemed to favour separate memorials rather than collective ones.”<sup>37</sup> At a conference between the WGC and the India Office on 27 July 1920 it was therefore decided to abandon the scheme.<sup>38</sup> Instead, religious sensitivities were addressed by omission rather than addition or substitution: for example the small exclusively Indian cemeteries at Neuville-sous-Montreuil and Zelobes lack either of the two central monuments, while the somewhat larger Meerut cemetery at St Martin-les-Boulogne has a war stone and a memorial to men cremated in the cemetery but no Cross.<sup>39</sup>

A generic monument to the Indian dead of the Western Front, designed by Herbert Baker, was eventually built at Neuve Chapelle and opened in 1927. Great care was taken to ensure neutral imagery and inscriptions, with Kenyon advising the Commission to take “the best native opinion”. On the

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32 WGC, SDC 86, Minutes of meeting of Indian Graves Committee, 20 March 1918; Memoranda on Hindu and Muslim graves.

33 WGC, WG 909/9, Baker to Kenyon, 15 August 1918 (copy).

34 WGC, WG 909/9, Lutyens to Kenyon, 20 December 1918.

35 WGC, WG 959, Resolution of Canterbury House of Laymen, 12 February 1920.

36 DP, vol. 377, fos. 267–268, Cecil to Davidson, 12 February 1920.

37 WGC, WG 309/7, Memorandum by A.H. Bingley, Army Secretary to the Government of India (copy).

38 WGC, WG 909/7, Memorandum by G.M. Young, 29 July 1920.

39 Personal observation, 30 April, 1 May 2015; plans on WGC website.

imperial crown that tops the central Asoka column the normal Maltese Cross was replaced by the star of India. The only religious allusion is in the inscription on the column:

GOD IS ONE  
HIS IS THE  
VICTORY

in English, Hindi, Urdu, and Gurmukhi.<sup>40</sup>

### The Headstone Controversy

By responding to Christian and other religious concerns, the WGC was able to navigate the controversies around the central monuments without too much difficulty, but the matter of the individual headstones proved much more troublesome, again largely for religious reasons. From the outset the Commission inclined to a policy of itself providing headstones to a standard rectangular pattern so as to ensure the orderly appearance of the cemeteries and avoiding the social distinctions that would arise if wealthier families were allowed to provide their own more elaborate monuments. Kenyon recommended that the headstones should state the rank, name, regiment, and date of death together with “an inscription of the nature of a text or prayer”, if desired and paid for by the next of kin, but not “the effusions of the mortuary mason, the sentimental versifier, or the crank”.<sup>41</sup> He explained the rationale for uniformity:

The sacrifice of the individual is a great idea and worthy of commemoration; but the community of sacrifice, the service of a common cause, the comradeship of arms which has brought together men of all ranks and grades – these are greater ideas, which should be commemorated in these cemeteries where they lie together, the representatives of their country in the lands in which they served.<sup>42</sup>

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40 WGC, WG 861/2/4, Kenyon to Lord Arthur Browne, 11 March 1926; *Neuve Chapelle: India's Memorial in France* (London 1927); personal observation, 1 May 2015. Michèle Barrett, “Subalterns at War”, in Rosalind C. Morris (ed.), *Can the Subaltern Speak? Reflections on the History of an Idea* (New York 2013), 156–176 demonstrates, however, that Indian and colonial graves were less equitably treated in non-European theatres of war.

41 Kenyon, *War Graves*, 9.

42 *Ibid.*, 6.

The place for distinctive individual memorials, he argued, was at home. The ordered ranks of the headstones in the cemeteries would “carry on the military idea [...] suggesting the spirit of discipline and order which is the soul of an army”.<sup>43</sup>

Even as Kenyon was working on his report, however, the Commission had a warning of troubled waters ahead, in correspondence with Anna Burrows, wife of the Bishop of Sheffield, whose son had been killed near Ypres in October 1915. Mrs Burrows wrote in November 1917 asking to be allowed to place a wooden Cross, carved by a friend, on her son’s grave.<sup>44</sup> She subsequently sent a photograph and explained its elaborate patriotic and Christian symbolism:

We wanted it in British oak since he died for England, in defence of France. The Cross running through the Circle being typical of GOD’s Unity and Universality, traversed by the self-sacrifice of the Redeemer. The line of life carved in the Cross, forms itself into a lesser circle traversed by the cross, typifying the imitation of the Great Example by our brave soldiers [...]

Many other parents, she thought, had been similarly consoling themselves by designing headstones, and she argued that their wishes should be accommodated by allowing diversity.<sup>45</sup> Blomfield expressed “great sympathy” with Mrs Burrows, but, he wrote to Kenyon, “what are we to do – if we admit one, it would be arbitrary and heartless not to admit all designs”, leading to a random collection of graves.<sup>46</sup> Kenyon had already replied, tactfully praising the proposed design, but even in the face of the intense but lucid arguments of a bereaved mother, he was clear that the Commission had to stand firm, and wrote to her of the importance of affirming “the common life, the common death, the common sacrifice” through the uniformity of the headstones.<sup>47</sup> In his report he acknowledged that some relatives had “devoted much time and thought” to designing “beautiful and significant” personal memorials, but hoped that they would be reconciled by the provision of individual headstones rather than merely a central monument.<sup>48</sup>

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43 Ibid., 7.

44 WGC, WG 18/175, Burrows to Long, 24 November 1917 (copy).

45 WGC, WG 18/130, Burrows to WGC, 29 December 1917.

46 WGC, SDC 61, Blomfield to Kenyon, 6 March 1918.

47 WGC, WG 18/18, Kenyon to Burrows, 10 January 1918.

48 Kenyon, *War Graves*, 8–9.

The Commission's intentions were not general public knowledge while hostilities continued, but when, shortly after the Armistice, Kenyon's report was published, it immediately gave rise to controversy in the letters columns of *The Times*, which received "many" letters from "distressed" correspondents. The paper itself supported the WGC's position although suggesting it should allow greater freedom in the content of personal inscriptions than Kenyon proposed.<sup>49</sup> T.C. Fry, the Dean of Lincoln, prompted by "several families who have suffered grievous loss", wrote to deride the proposals, which he attributed to misplaced parsimony. He proposed that bereaved families who had "learnt [...] the meaning of the Cross" should have the option of paying the additional cost to provide a cruciform rather than rectangular headstone.<sup>50</sup>

The campaign for optional cruciform headstones gathered momentum. Lady Florence Cecil, wife of the Bishop of Exeter, who having had three sons killed in the war had an answerable case for public sympathy, organised a petition to the Prince of Wales, as President of the Commission. The campaign was something of a Cecil family concern as its leading supporters included Lady Selborne (*née* Cecil), Lady Florence's sister-in-law, Lords Hugh and Robert Cecil, her brothers-in-law, and Viscount Wolmer, her nephew. However it also engaged Lord Balfour of Burleigh, a prominent lay representative of the Church of Scotland who complemented the Anglican loyalties of the Cecils. In Lady Florence's opinion the Commission's policy was "almost secular"<sup>51</sup>, and the language of her petition was emotive. It claimed to represent "thousands of heartbroken" relatives who had been "deeply wounded" by the Commission's decision. It continued:

It was through the strength of the Cross that many of them were enabled to [give their lives]. It is only through the hope of the Cross that most of us are able to carry on the life from which all the sunshine seems to have gone, and to deny us the emblem of that strength and hope add heavily to the burden of our sorrow.

Thus the petition illustrated the fluid meaning of the Cross by emphasising its significance as a symbol of Christian hope rather than viewing it, as Kenyon did, primarily as a symbol of self-sacrifice. It attracted 8,000 signatures, indicative of significant unease with the Commission's policy. Although the majority of names reflected the upper-class Anglican leadership of the movement, there was some systematic signing in working-class

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49 *The Times*, 2 December 1918, 9.

50 *The Times*, 4 December 1918, 6.

51 *The Times*, 8 February 1919, 1.



districts and among former soldiers.<sup>52</sup> Lady Florence's campaign also highlighted the absence of any women on the Commission itself, and prompted perceptions that it was therefore insensitive to the feelings of bereaved wives and mothers.<sup>53</sup>

It was unfortunate that the Commission's early announcements did not emphasise its intention to have Crosses incised on the rectangular headstones, which might have pre-empted some of the criticism. Kenyon's report did state that this would be the case, but only in passing in an addendum that would have been missed by many readers.<sup>54</sup> In mid-1919 the Commission published a pamphlet by Kipling, which further explained its policy, stating clearly that "the Cross or other religious symbol of the dead man's faith could be carved" on the headstone, and included images of the proposed designs.<sup>55</sup> That, however, was not now enough to satisfy its critics, who continued to press for individual cruciform memorials. In a further endeavour to reconcile them, Winston Churchill, now Secretary for War and Chairman of the Commission, received a deputation. At a subsequent meeting, the practical problems of transporting stone Crosses and of providing enough space for inscriptions were explained.<sup>56</sup> Balfour of Burleigh then commissioned his own design for a Cross on a squat base with space for inscriptions, but this was derided by the Commission's architects and advisors. Blomfield thought it "quite unsuitable" and Lutyens "extraordinarily ugly". Kenyon wrote that, "It is to me quite unintelligible that anyone should feel that the Christian emblem is more worthily represented by this design than by the incised cross which appears on the headstone adopted by the Commission." Moreover, on principle he opposed intermingling patterns as this would compromise "the ideas of uniformity of service, equality of sacrifice, and the comradeship of all ranks and classes".<sup>57</sup> At a more mundane level, it was calculated that the cruciform stones would be substantially more expensive, especially when the need to transport them in crates, unnecessary for the rectangular headstones, and the likelihood of a higher proportion of breakages, were taken into account.<sup>58</sup>

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52 CWGC, Add 4/2/7. Cf. Philip Longworth, *The Unending Vigil: The History of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (London 1967), 47–52.

53 WGC, Minutes, 20 May 1919. Ware suggested setting up an advisory committee of women to address this concern, but his proposal does not appear to have been implemented.

54 Kenyon, *War Graves*, 23.

55 Rudyard Kipling, *The Graves of the Fallen* (London 1919), 6.

56 WGC Minutes, 1 October 1919.

57 The offending design is in WGC, SDC 30, with comments from Lutyens (24 September 1919), Blomfield (25 September 1919), and Kenyon (26 September 1919). Letters in the file from other design experts consulted are equally dismissive.

58 WGC, Add 1/1/5, *Memorandum on Headstones Exhibited in the House of Commons Tea Room, February 1920*.



**Figure 2:** Headstones at Terlincthun Cemetery (near Boulogne) with incised crosses. Their visibility, with the particular design varying according to the need to accommodate different regimental badges, bears out Churchill's claim that "the Cross is a most conspicuous element". Photograph by John Wolffe.

The Commission, with some justification, resented the implication of the campaigners that it was hostile to Christianity, when it perceived the issue as being not whether but how the Cross was to be represented on the individual gravestones.<sup>59</sup> Nevertheless, Kenyon's vision was one that merged the Christian and the national rather than allowing scope in the cemeteries for assertion of a more distinctive Christian identity. For Robert Cecil this was the central issue. He argued that the Commission was adopting an unprecedented and, by implication, illegitimate policy in turning "the individual memorials to individual persons into a national memorial against the will and against the desire of their relatives".<sup>60</sup> In his view, intrinsic to the individuality of the dead was the right of their relatives to express their religious identity through the design of their monument. The Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress, however, took an exactly opposite view, arguing that as "all classes have joined equally in the suffering and sacrifice of life through which victory has been achieved", individual preferences should be set aside in order to ensure "the completeness of the scheme of national commemoration".<sup>61</sup>

The campaigners against the Commission's plans attempted to enlist Davidson's support. Kenyon sought to pre-empt them by writing to the Archbishop, stating that their proposals cut "at the root of the principle of equality of treatment".<sup>62</sup> Davidson did not take a public position, but, prompted by the Earl of Selborne, he wrote privately to Churchill urging him not "to brush aside lightly a feeling which is finding expression on the part of so many religious people".<sup>63</sup> A robust exchange of letters ensued.<sup>64</sup> Churchill denied that the Commission was disregarding Christian sentiment: on the contrary it had seriously considered cruciform headstones and had only rejected them for practical reasons. The rectangular headstone should be considered in conjunction with the central Cross. He berated the Archbishop that it was "most embarrassing not to have your active support in endeavouring to reconcile relatives to a decision which must necessarily give pain to some".<sup>65</sup> Davidson acknowledged that he had approved of the central Cross (but not the Lutyens stone) and with the principle of equality of treatment. However he thought this "quite compatible with a reasonable regard to wishes that have found

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59 There is a document in the WGC archive (Add 1/1/5) headed "Specimens of misrepresentation" listing misleading advertisements by Lady Florence Cecil and a parliamentary question by Viscount Wolmer.

60 *Hansard*, 4 May 1920, c. 1961.

61 WGC, WG 999, TUC Parliamentary Committee to Prince of Wales, 28 May 1919.

62 DP 377, fo. 270, 10 March 1920.

63 DP 377, fos. 274–275, 20 March 1920.

64 Cf. David Nash, *Christian Ideals in British Culture: Stories of Belief in the Twentieth Century* (Basingstoke 2013), 113–115.

65 DP 377, fos. 276–278, 23 March 1920.

widespread expression” for memorials of “a more markedly and emphatic Christian character” for those who desired them. As the WGC had not formally consulted him they could not now claim his official endorsement of their plans.<sup>66</sup> Churchill was surprised that Davidson did not accept the headstone as “distinctively and obviously Christian” as “the Cross is a most conspicuous element [...] which cannot be overlooked by anyone who sees it.” Indeed, he argued, incised or relief Crosses had early Christian precedents, whereas cruciform headstones were “a comparatively modern development”. He reminded him that Kenyon had consulted representatives of the churches, including himself, at an early stage and that they had endorsed the very principle of corporate memorials “expressive of [...] comradeship and community of sacrifice” that would be undermined by conceding the demands of the Commission’s critics. Hence, Churchill concluded,

I trust that you will not now consider it right to brand as inadequately Christian a scheme which certainly is not so in intent, and which I have reason to believe is not so regarded by the majority of those who have had the opportunity of making themselves acquainted with it.<sup>67</sup>

Davidson denied that he had any such intention, and indeed did not think they were in any fundamental disagreement, except over the war stone. He still thought, however, that there could have been more flexibility in the shape of the headstone, bearing in mind that

One can’t quite expect logical thought on such a matter on the part of parents whose whole heart is as it is, and who have strong views on the religious aspect of the questions, and I do not myself believe that the social principle of equality of treatment need have involved quite so rigid a uniformity of detail.<sup>68</sup>

Churchill reiterated that he was “very anxious indeed [...] to do everything that is possible to emphasise the distinctively Christian and religious character of these memorials”. For Churchill, however, who was to equate the Allied cause in the Second World War with the defence of “Christian civilisation”,<sup>69</sup> Christianity was primarily a matter of collective social values that could blend seamlessly with patriotism; for Davidson and the Cecils it implied personal conviction and commitment that could not be so comfortably merged into an idealised national community.

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66 DP 377, fo. 279, 27 March 1920.

67 DP 377, fos. 280–283, received 13 April 1920.

68 DP 377, fo. 284, 13 April 1920.

69 See Keith Robbins, “Britain, 1940 and ‘Christian Civilization’”, in Derek Beales/Geoffrey Best (ed.), *History, Society and the Churches* (Cambridge 1985), 279.

The issue was settled in a debate in the House of Commons on 4 May 1920. The Commission's leading advocate was the MP and philanthropist William Burdett-Coutts, who published and circulated a paper offering a detailed defence of its proposals. He argued that "the design is instinct with the spirit of Christianity [...] but tolerant so as to include the many Churches, branches, divisions and sects of the Christian faith". In the Commons, Robert Cecil led the attack on the Commission, finding it "incredible" that they should disregard the feelings of mothers who had lost sons in the war.<sup>70</sup> Churchill reiterated the arguments he had used to Davidson, highlighting the practical issues, and that lack of standardisation would greatly complicate and prolong the work of the Commission. As there would be a Cross of Sacrifice in every cemetery it was, he said, "altogether wrong" to allege that religious feeling was lacking.<sup>71</sup> With the ground prepared by Burdett-Coutts, Churchill's arguments won the day and the motion was rejected without a division.<sup>72</sup>

Relatives were left with one means to express individuality and distinctive religious profession: the personal inscriptions which Kenyon had somewhat grudgingly conceded. Next of kin were, in practice, allowed a free choice in this matter. Analysis of a sample of these texts from three cemeteries on different parts of the Western Front gives some insight into the feelings of the bereaved. Of the 355 headstones of identified casualties examined, only 139 carry a personal inscription. The feelings of the majority of relatives who did not request a personal inscription are of course unknown: some were no doubt deterred by the prospect of a charge, although the WGC privately decided not to press for payment.<sup>73</sup> 66 of the inscriptions can be classed as wholly secular, characteristically giving details of the deceased's parentage or an expression of devotion from a mother or widow. 31 were identifiably Christian, usually quoting a biblical text or a line of a popular hymn. A further 2 were Jewish. 24 expressed a non-specific religiosity, such as the hope of heavenly reunion, while 14 expressed the idea of sacrifice without explicit religious allusion, as in the statement "He gave his life for us". It is striking that only two headstones in the sample, both of officers, clearly linked religious and national identities: the grave of Lieutenant G.M. Doughty, MC carries the inscription "For God, King and Country"; that of Captain A.J. Leeming "Sleep in thy perfect peace O son of England". It might plausibly be argued that some, or even many, of those who did not ask for personal

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70 *Hansard House of Commons Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 128, 4 May 1920, cols. 1961, 1964.

71 *Ibid.*, cols. 1966–72.

72 For alternative accounts of this controversy see Longworth, *Unending Vigil*, 46–55 and Crane, *Empires of the Dead*, 138–65.

73 WGC Minutes, 21 October 1919.

inscriptions tacitly concurred in the official Ware-Kenyon-Churchill narrative affirming Christianity through national community, but on the evidence of this particular sample explicit assent to it was quite rare.<sup>74</sup>

The use of standard rectangular headstones meant that Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, and Sikh graves were not at a distance distinguishable from Christian ones, thus reinforcing the image of imperial solidarity. When viewed close to, however, the inscription of texts in, respectively, Arabic, Hindi, and Punjabi on Muslim, Hindu, and Sikh headstones and of the Star of David on Jewish ones were indicative of careful attention to religious distinctions. The Arabic texts were standard Muslim prayers for the dead; the Hindi one uses a generic term for God, Bhagavan, rendering it appropriate to diverse sub-traditions of Hinduism.<sup>75</sup> The inscription “The following Hindu [or Sikh] soldier of the Indian Army is honoured here”, which appears on a number of headstones and other monuments, implies that he had in fact been cremated nearby. Jewish casualties were not immediately so easily distinguishable as Indian ones, and Michael Adler, the senior Jewish army chaplain, was fearful that many of them were liable to be buried inappropriately under a headstone with an incised cross. He was, however, encouraged to carry out his own tour of inspection, during which he carefully identified Jewish graves and conducted memorial services for the fallen. Adler praised “the wonderful work that is being performed for Jew and Christian and Mohammedan alike in a spirit of true reverence”. Ware subsequently thanked Adler for his assistance “which has been so helpful in dealing with many difficult questions”.<sup>76</sup>

## Conclusion

Before concluding, it is useful to make brief comparisons with the French and German cases, which indicate some significant contrasts. In view of the separation of church and state in France in 1905, it is an intriguing irony that graves in French military cemeteries are marked by white crosses.

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74 The sample, from personal observation on 1 and 2 May 2015, is from Bedford House (near Ypres), Plot 8, Pont du Hem (near Bethune), Plot 6, and Arras Faubourg D’Amiens, Plot 3. The manuscript headstone schedules can be accessed online at <http://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead>. The graves of Doughty and Leeming are both at Bedford House. The phrase “perfect peace” has a biblical origin (Isaiah 26:3) and is a reiterating theme in a popular hymn by Edward Henry Bickersteth.

75 I indebted, respectively, to Robert Gleave and to Gwilym Beckerlegge for translating and discussing the Arabic and Hindi inscriptions. The WGC files, especially SDC 86, WG 909/7 and WG 909/9, are suggestive of considerable attention to detail in the arrangements for Indian graves.

76 WGC, WG 66, especially Adler to Ware, 22 November 1920, Ware to Adler, 27 October 1926; *The Jewish Chronicle*, 7 October 1921, 17–18 (cutting in WG66).



**Figure 3:** Muslim headstone at Neuville-les-Montreuil Cemetery. The Arabic inscriptions mean “He is the Forgiving one/the one who blots out sins” and “We are of God and to Him we will all return”. (Translations: Robert Gleave). Photograph by John Wolffe.

As Annette Becker pithily puts it, “la République laïque [...] enterrait ses sacrifiés sous un symbole qu’elle interdisait par ailleurs sur tous ses monuments publics”.<sup>77</sup> Moreover, while official central monuments are secular, at the centre of the massive cemetery at Ablain St Nazaire, near Arras, is the large basilica of Notre Dame de Lorette. German practice varied: at Langemarck near Ypres the graves are marked by stone slabs without religious symbols, although they are interspersed by rough-hewn stone crosses, but at Neuville-St Vaast, near Arras, crosses were used. The effect, both here and in the French cemeteries, is that occasional Jewish and Muslim rounded headstones are immediately conspicuous and distinguishable in a way they are not in the British cemeteries. The more conspicuous Christian symbolism of the individual graves is however balanced by the absence of any recurrent central monument analogous to the British Cross of Sacrifice. Moreover the French crosses are all inscribed with a blunt secular nationalist interpretation of death in war “Mort pour la Patrie”, or (in Belgium) “Mort pour la France”: *laïcité* was only making a partial concession to Catholic sentiment.<sup>78</sup>

Whereas there is at the heart of French war cemeteries an unresolved tension between Christian and secular national identities, and German ones explore diverse solutions, the British WGC edged its way to consistent but somewhat uneasy compromises. Its task was further complicated by a vision that was imperial as well as national, and a consequent awareness – in some ways ahead of its time for Europeans of that era – that by no means all religion was Christian.<sup>79</sup> The accompanying controversies reveal how both Christian and national identities were fluid and contested. Conflicting expectations were epitomised by the stances of the Cecils on the one hand and of Churchill on the other. Although the consequent disputes played themselves out primarily among the political and religious élite, both archival and newspaper sources suggest they reflected wider divergences in public opinion. The war cemeteries created an abiding image of a cohesive national and imperial community united in its predominantly Christian profession and recognition of the sacrifice of its young men to the cause of “God, King and country”. Realities were always much more complex.

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77 Annette Becker, *La guerre et la foi: de la mort à la mémoire, 1914–1930* (Paris 1994), 106.

78 Personal observation at the French cemeteries at Ablain St Nazaire and St-Charles-de-Potyze (near Ypres) and the German cemeteries at Langemarck and Neuville-St Vaast, 1–2 May 2015.

79 For similar endeavours to recognise religious diversity at the inauguration of the Cenotaph on 11 November 1920 see Wolffe, “Commemorating the British Dead of the First World War”, 32; for analysis of attitudes to other faiths in Britain at this period see Charlotte Methuen/ Andrew Spicer/John Wolffe (ed.), *Christianity and Religious Plurality: Studies in Church History* 51 (Woodbridge, 2015), especially the essays by Jacob, Mews, Wellings and Wolffe.



Gladys Ganiel

## Secularisation, Ecumenism, and Identity on the Island of Ireland

Throughout the twentieth century, both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland retained higher rates of religious practice and belief than most other European states. The island seemed to be an exception to wider European trends of secularisation, with some arguing that this was down to the relationship between religion and national identities: because religion reinforced and partly constituted competing national identities, it was kept artificially alive as a weapon to be used in nationalist battles. This does not mean that division and violence on the island was *caused* by religious differences. Rather, religion has been one component of oppositional, constructed national identities, which also include ethnic, cultural, economic, and social differences. The island has been a case where religion was “imbricated or intertwined” with nationalism.<sup>1</sup> Religion provided much of the socio-structural basis for division through organising community life, promoting segregated schooling, and encouraging endogamy; it also supplied much of the ideological ammunition, symbolism, and ritual for constructing identities over and against each other, what I refer to in this essay as “oppositional” identities.<sup>2</sup>

With religion such a significant component of oppositional national identities, some, like Brewer et al., have claimed that because it has been part of the problems of division and violence, it also must be part of the solution.<sup>3</sup> Although Brewer might not advocate this position, one conclusion that might be drawn from such an argument is that secularisation – by reducing the importance of religion – could contribute to changes in the relationship between religion and national identity, thus contributing to the journey to peace.<sup>4</sup> Another conclusion that might be drawn is that religious activists could themselves contribute to changes in the relationship between religion and national identity. For example, the development of an ecumenical Christian identity might prove an alternative to the competing Catholic-Protestant

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1 Rogers Brubaker, “Religion and Nationalism: Four Approaches”, in *Nations and Nationalism* 18 (2012), 2–20.

2 Claire Mitchell, *Religion, Identity and Politics in Northern Ireland: Boundaries of Belonging and Belief* (Aldershot 2006).

3 John D. Brewer et al., *Religion, Civil Society and Peace in Northern Ireland* (Oxford 2011).

4 This argument has been to varying degrees explicit and implicit among some journalists on the island. See Eamonn McCann, *Dear God: The Price of Religion in Ireland* (London 1999).

Christianities of the island. Indeed, from the start of the Troubles in Northern Ireland in 1968, via the Good Friday Agreement of 1998 and up to the present, there has been evidence of increased secularisation on the island, as well as positive evaluations of ecumenism's role in the peace process.<sup>5</sup> So we can ask: Has secularisation or ecumenism, or some combination thereof, contributed to changes in the relationship between religion and national identities in ways that have lessened the oppositional religious content of identities, thus contributing to peace?

This chapter lays the groundwork for exploring this question. First, it provides a brief overview of the relationship between religion and national identities on the island. It presents evidence that the relationship between religion and national identity has changed since the partition of the island in 1921, with religion retaining more importance for both Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland than for their counterparts in the Republic. Having said that, it recognises that even if religion remains important, it does not necessarily mean either that the religious aspects of people's identities continue to be defined in opposition to each other or have become ecumenical. It then presents data about secularisation and ecumenism in both parts of the island, the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. It argues that the evidence for secularisation on the island is more limited than may be supposed and that what is more likely occurring are processes of religious individualisation, de-institutionalisation, and liberalisation.<sup>6</sup> These processes resonate with Casanova's argument that secularisation should not be defined solely in terms of declines in belief, but also should be analysed according to the "functional differentiation" of institutional spheres related to religion. Functional differentiation includes processes whereby state, economy, science, and so on are separated from religious institutions and norms.<sup>7</sup> This helps create contexts where individuals have more freedom to make choices about their religious beliefs and practices. With regard to ecumenism, there is some qualitative evidence that the work of committed activists has contributed to small-scale changes in the way people think about their own and others' identities and the possibilities for reconciliation. But many people on the island do not know what ecumenism is or are suspicious of the term and the motivations of what some of them refer to dismissively as "ecu-maniacs".

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5 Gladys Ganiel, "Can Churches Contribute to Post-Violence Reconciliation and Reconstruction? Insights and Applications from Northern Ireland", in John Wolffe (ed.), *Catholics, Protestants, and Muslims: Irish "Religious" Conflict in Comparative Perspective* (Basingstoke 2014), 59–75.

6 Gladys Ganiel, *Transforming Post-Catholic Ireland: Religious Practice in Late Modernity* (Oxford 2016).

7 José Casanova, "Rethinking Secularization: A Global Comparative Perspective", in *The Hedgehog Review* 8 (2006), 7–22.

The data on secularisation and ecumenism that are available cannot fully answer our question about their role in contributing to changes in the relationship between religion and national identity. However, the evidence hints that neither has been as important as their respective advocates would like to suppose, even if further research is required before that conclusion can be drawn definitively.

### The Relationship between Religion and National Identity

The island of Ireland was colonised by Britain over hundreds of years, with English and Scottish Protestant settlers achieving economic, political, and social dominance over the much larger “native” Irish Catholic population. The settlers and the crown on whose behalf they journeyed to Ireland generally viewed Catholicism as an inferior, superstitious religion. Particularly after the major Plantations of Ireland in the early 1600s, Catholicism was linked with Irishness and Protestantism was linked with the colonial power that was the British Empire, even though Scottish Presbyterian settlers in Ulster also experienced some discrimination at the hands of the established Anglican Church (the Church of Ireland).

Before and during the famine years of the 1840s, the British state had attempted to repress Catholicism through penal laws. This only seemed to strengthen the resolve of the Irish to remain Catholic. So, despite objections from Protestants living in Ireland, the British state began to cultivate a strategic alliance with the Catholic Church, passing Catholic Relief Acts in 1762, 1774, 1778, and 1782 and Emancipation Acts in 1792 and 1792.<sup>8</sup> The British Government came to view the Catholic Church as an institution that could be used for the civilising of the Irish, keeping unruly and rebellious peasants under control. The tenure of Cardinal Paul Cullen (1852–1878) also worked to consolidate the institutional power of the Catholic Church. Cullen was part of the Ultramontane movement, which advocated greater control for Rome within the Catholic Church throughout Europe. Cullen achieved greater control by fixing Episcopal appointments in Ireland and cultivating a burgeoning “devotional revolution”, which had been spurred by the renewed religiosity that emerged in the aftermath of the famine.<sup>9</sup> The devotional revolution also can be read as a response to the increased proselytising efforts of evangelical Protestants.<sup>10</sup>

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8 Tom Inglis, *Moral Monopoly: The Rise and Fall of the Catholic Church in Ireland* (Dublin 1998), 115.

9 Emmet Larkin, “The Devotional Revolution in Ireland”, in *The American Historical Review* 77 (1972), 625–652.

10 Joseph Liechty/Cecelia Clegg, *Moving Beyond Sectarianism. Religion, Conflict, and*

Most Protestants living in Ireland, who would have identified with the British state, were wary of the increased power of the Catholic Church. Around the turn of the twentieth century, their fears were stoked by Irish agitation for “home rule”, because they were convinced that this would mean being forced into a state under the control of the Catholic Church. The pithy “home rule is Rome rule” slogan summed up the sentiment, expressed more expansively in the 1912 Ulster Covenant, which asserted that home rule “would be disastrous to the material well-being of Ulster as well as the whole of Ireland, subversive of our civil and religious freedom, destructive of our citizenship, and perilous to the unity of the Empire”.<sup>11</sup> The home rule issue was set aside when Britain entered the Great War, but put back on the agenda with the 1916 Easter Rising in Dublin and the subsequent War for Independence. This resulted in partition through a treaty (1921) establishing a 26-county Irish Free State (now the Republic) in 1922, in which Catholics were the vast majority, and a six-county Northern Ireland with a Protestant majority.

Catholicism provided the young Irish Free State, which officially became the Republic of Ireland in 1949, with the most defining feature of its national identity. As Northern Ireland settled into a long period of Unionist rule between 1921 and 1972, Catholicism provided the northern minority with the most defining feature of its communal identity. To be Irish, on both sides of the border, was to be not-British and not-Protestant. Although Claire Mitchell’s work has been focused primarily on Northern Ireland, her insights are relevant for the development of an island-wide Irish Catholic identity.<sup>12</sup> Mitchell’s Catholic interviewees continued to affirm the importance of the Catholic Church in their everyday lives, which included the influence of a “religious ideology”, which she characterises as “informed by religious doctrines but [...] not concerned with answering spiritual questions”.<sup>13</sup> Mitchell argues that even people who do not attend church or consider themselves religious are influenced by religious ideologies, and for northern Catholics the key ideas are “victimhood and sacrifice” and “anti-Protestantism”. Mitchell explains that Catholics have perceived themselves as the innocent victims of persecution and discrimination, identified with the suffering of Christ as a victim, and have hoped “for redemption through sacrifice or martyrdom”.<sup>14</sup>

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*Reconciliation in Northern Ireland* (Dublin 2000); Marianne Elliott, *When God Took Sides: Religion and Identity in Ireland, Unfinished Business* (Oxford 2009).

11 Nicola Morris/David Tombs, “A ‘Solid and United Phalanx’? Protestant Churches and the Ulster Covenant, 1912–2012”, in John Wolfe (ed.), *Catholics, Protestants, and Muslims: Irish “Religious” Conflict in Comparative Perspective* (Basingstoke 2014), 23–41.

12 Mitchell, *Religion, Identity and Politics*.

13 *Ibid.*, 91.

14 *Ibid.*, 105.

Those who instigated the Easter Rising also appealed to a Catholic sense of victimhood and martyrdom.<sup>15</sup> At the same time, most Catholics do not think that the conflict has “religious” components – unless they point to people who are fervent Protestants. This leads Mitchell to introduce the subtle idea of “anti-Protestantism”, arguing that Catholics contrast the inflexible religious fanaticism of the “other” community with their own humble and laid-back attitudes, using religious ideas to establish a firm boundary between themselves and Protestants. Mitchell’s analysis of anti-Protestantism provides a fresh contrast to the more pervasive, and more extensively researched, phenomenon of anti-Catholicism, which has a long legacy not only on the island of Ireland but also in Europe and North America.<sup>16</sup>

In my previous work, I have argued that over the course of the Troubles, religion has been more important for Protestants than for Catholics, both socially and politically.<sup>17</sup> Evangelicalism has been a central and unifying force for Protestants, crossing denominational boundaries and providing the substance at the core of Protestants’ ethno-national identity.<sup>18</sup> Protestants have constructed an “ideology” that has been more clearly and more often articulated, by public figures like politicians and clergy as well as by “ordinary” people, than the Catholic ideology described here. This ideology has centred on ideas such as Protestants as a “chosen people” (with Ulster as their “promised land”), Protestants’ covenantal relationship with God and the British state, Protestant liberty as opposed to enslavement by the Catholic Church, Protestant honesty as opposed to Catholic treachery, and anti-Catholicism.<sup>19</sup> The Catholic Church has been equated with the anti-Christ, at times leading to apocalyptic interpretations of the Bible that justify violence.<sup>20</sup>

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15 Johnston McMaster, *Overcoming Violence: Dismantling an Irish History and Theology. An Alternative Vision* (Dublin 2012).

16 Yvonne Maria Werner/Jonas Harvard, *European Anti-Catholicism in a Comparative and Transnational Perspective* (Leiden 2013); John D. Brewer/Gareth I. Higgins, *The Mote and the Beam: Anti-Catholicism in Northern Ireland 1600–1998* (Basingstoke 1998).

17 Gladys Ganiel, *Evangelicalism and Conflict in Northern Ireland* (New York 2008); Gladys Ganiel/Paul Dixon, “Religion in Northern Ireland: Rethinking Fundamentalism and the Possibilities for Conflict Transformation”, in *Journal of Peace Research* 45 (2008), 421–438; Claire Mitchell/Gladys Ganiel, *Evangelical Journeys: Choice and Change in a Northern Irish Religious Subculture* (Dublin 2011).

18 Steve Bruce, *God Save Ulster: The Religion and Politics of Paisleyism* (Oxford 1986).

19 Frank Wright, “Protestant Ideology and Politics in Ulster”, in *European Journal of Sociology* 14 (1973), 213–280; Donald Akenson, *God’s People: Covenant and Land in South Africa, Israel and Northern Ireland* (Ithaca, NY 1992); Brewer/Higgins, *The Mote and the Beam*.

20 Brewer/Higgins, *The Mote and the Beam*; Joshua Searle, *The Scarlet Woman and the Red Hand. Evangelical Apocalyptic Belief in the Northern Ireland Troubles* (Eugene, OR 2014).

After partition, the Protestant minority in the Free State, like the Catholic minority in Northern Ireland, was “beached”, harbouring feelings of insecurity and abandonment.<sup>21</sup> The Protestant population of the Free State had declined from 10.4 per cent in 1911 to 7.4 per cent in 1926, due to factors including emigration, violence and intimidation, intermarriage (though rare), lower birth rates, and the disproportionate death of young Protestant men during the Great War. Marianne Elliott concludes that although northern Catholics and southern Protestants “shared many of the characteristics of aggrieved minorities”, southern Protestants “were more likely to be insulted than persecuted”, as southern Protestants tended to maintain a privileged economic position.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, the dramatic decline in the Protestant population in the south caused great anxiety among northern Protestants, as it seemed to prove that home rule would indeed be Rome rule, with Protestants unwelcome in an Irish Catholic state. Over time, two further factors served to loosen Protestants’ identification with each other on either side of the border. First, while Presbyterianism and other smaller Calvinist denominations retained a numerical majority in Northern Ireland, Presbyterianism and Methodism “all but disappeared” in the Republic, combining to form only one per cent of the population by 1961.<sup>23</sup> The Church of Ireland remained the majority religion for southern Protestants. This meant that northern Protestants retained more of a Calvinist-inspired covenantal, oppositional Protestant ideology, which was reinforced by their greater experiences of sectarianism and violence. Second, southern Protestants stopped identifying with Britain and took on state-centred Irish identities. Even if at times they felt that the Catholic majority questioned the authenticity of their Irishness, they felt alienated by what they increasingly saw as the extremism of northern Protestants.

Surprisingly little research has been devoted to exploring the division between the hearts and minds of southern and northern co-religionists, although scholars’ tendency to write about religion either in the north *or* south is a tacit acknowledgement of the division. John Coakley summarises how “patterns of ethnic identity have been significantly ruptured by partition”:<sup>24</sup>

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21 Elliott, *When God Took Sides*, 215–256.

22 *Ibid.*, 227–226.

23 *Ibid.*, 224.

24 John Coakley, “Religion, National Identity and Political Change in Modern Ireland”, in *Irish Political Studies* 17 (2002), 4–28, on p. 14.

- In the south, nationalism has become territorial in that people are more likely to identify with the 26-county state, rather than the 32-county imagined ethno-religious community.
- In the south, the British Protestant ethnic minority dwindled and became an Irish Protestant religious minority.
- In the north, there are signs that some Catholics identify with the British state, and/or a Northern Irish identity.
- In the north, Protestants continue to identify with Britain, but some are open to a Northern Irish identity that includes Catholics.

But Jennifer Todd has argued that “partition in Ireland created much less national division than political leaders in the North desired and intellectuals in the South supposed”.<sup>25</sup> Drawing on a dataset of 220 qualitative interviews with “ordinary people” living in border areas (145 in the Republic and 75 in Northern Ireland), she finds “significant continuity in national identity” despite partition. For her, nationality is a “composite construct” consisting of elements such as “a name, a sense of place, a set of related categories, a set of assumptions and values embedded in cultural practices and associational life, historical narratives and a set of political reference points”.<sup>26</sup> Both north and south, the elements of these constructs remain the same, although different people may emphasise different elements. What is different is “the symbolic grammar by which the elements are articulated”.<sup>27</sup> By “grammar”, she means the “way of interrelating the elements”, which she sees as having diverged in north and south. In particular, the “grammar of nationality is more sensitive to state-belonging than its elements”, so that while people north and south continue to speak about the same elements, they speak about them in ways that are framed by the state in which they are located.<sup>28</sup> So for example, people in the south had a sense of “identity-as-belonging ([...] at-homeness in the national community)” while people in the north had a sense of “identity-as-orientation (a personalised project encompassing a value perspective, assumptions and expectations)”, that belied an uncertainty about identification with a state.<sup>29</sup> Finally, unlike some political elites or ideologues, “ordinary people” presented their religious and national distinctions as “permeable rather than exclusivist”.<sup>30</sup>

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25 Jennifer Todd, “Partitioned Identities? Everyday National Distinctions in Northern Ireland and the Irish State”, in *Nations and Nationalism* 21 (2015), 21–42, on p. 37.

26 *Ibid.*, 22.

27 *Ibid.*, 23.

28 *Ibid.*, 22.

29 *Ibid.*, 31.

30 *Ibid.*, 26.

While emphasising continuity and similarity in national identities since partition, Todd has found the most significant north-south divergence is in the relationship between religion and national identity in each jurisdiction. She links these divergences in identities to “the contrasting socio-political structure, North and South”.<sup>31</sup> Todd compares these structures as they stood in the early 2000s, contrasting the following variables: demography (53 per cent Protestant and 44 per cent Catholic in Northern Ireland versus 4 per cent Protestant and 89 per cent Catholic in the Republic); consociational or shared political institutions in Northern Ireland versus majority ethos and dominance in the Republic; a shift in power resources with radical changes towards equality in Northern Ireland versus stability and “minority comfort” in the Republic; violence within memory of most adults in Northern Ireland versus violence close to a century ago in the Republic; and divided/contested associational life in Northern Ireland (albeit with a growing “mixed” sector), versus strong minority associations and a growing “mixed” sector in the Republic.

Todd sees these different structures as having shaped the experiences and identifications of the people her research team interviewed in border regions. She found that the nominal categories of Catholic and Protestant were used “differently by different subgroups in different parts of the island”.<sup>32</sup> A subgroup’s position as a majority or minority impacted on the importance they placed on their religious identification.<sup>33</sup> In the Republic, only one in five Catholic interviewees volunteered their religion unprompted, compared to two-thirds of the minority Protestants. In Northern Ireland, with a relatively even population balance of 53 per cent Protestant and 44 per cent Catholic, just over half of all interviewees volunteered their religious identity.<sup>34</sup> Further, Todd found that in the Republic the Irish state “provides the implicit frame for most debates” rather than religion or religious identification.<sup>35</sup> Of eight factors identified for “being Irish in the Irish state”, Catholicism was just eighth on the list and was “mentioned as an essential part of being Irish only by a small minority of older respondents”.<sup>36</sup> In contrast, in Northern Ireland people drew boundaries around four “fault-lines”, the first of which was “The Protestant/Catholic religious division in its different interpretations. This is almost always noted, whether to be rejected, accepted or reformulated”.<sup>37</sup>

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31 Jennifer Todd, “Social Structure and Religious Division: Comparing the Form of Religious Distinction in the Two Irish States”, in John Wolffe (ed.), *Catholics, Protestants, and Muslims: Irish “Religious” Conflict in Comparative Perspective* (Basingstoke 2014), 42–58.

32 *Ibid.*, 44.

33 *Ibid.*, 46.

34 *Ibid.*, 44.

35 *Ibid.*, 52.

36 *Ibid.*, 51.

37 *Ibid.*, 52.



In light of this chapter's question about changes in the relationship between religion and national identity, what Todd's data seems to suggest is that Catholicism is no longer as important an aspect of Irish national identity in the Republic as it once was. But in Northern Ireland, Protestantism and Catholicism remain important aspects of British and Irish identities, respectively. We cannot be sure whether religion's continuing importance as an aspect of identity means that it is primarily contributing to the construction of oppositional identities or to more open, inclusive identities. Todd hints that in the complexities of ordinary people's stories religion can take on either of these roles. At the same time, we cannot be sure what role secularisation and ecumenism might have played in changing the relationship between religion and national identity. Further publications from Todd's qualitative interview data, as well as new and focused research projects by others, might begin to explore those questions. Having said that, reviewing the literature on secularisation and ecumenism can point us in directions for future research.

### Secularisation

In light of the changes and differences in the relationship between religion and national identity in Northern Ireland and the Republic, it might be asked if or how secularisation relates to these differences. For example, has there been greater secularisation in the Republic, thus contributing to a loosening of the relationship between religion and national identity (or vice versa)? Some data support the claim that there has been greater secularisation in the Republic than in Northern Ireland. There are various ways to "measure" secularisation, such as charting declines in religious vocations, the public role of churches, churches' influence on politics and policy makers, and in traditional religious beliefs.<sup>38</sup> These declines have been noted in the Republic and Northern Ireland, but one of the most used measurements is rates of church attendance, where there have been significant declines, north and south.

Catholics almost always out-attend Protestants because of the importance placed on regularly receiving the Eucharist. Since the Republic has a predominantly Catholic population, it is more instructive to compare rates of attendance between northern and southern Catholics rather than straight attendance rates between north and south. Together with another predominantly Catholic country, Poland, the Republic once had the highest rates of weekly mass

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38 Inglis, *Moral Monopoly*; Slavica Jakelic, *Collectivistic Religions: Religion, Choice, and Identity in Late Modernity* (Farnham 2010); Louise Fuller, *Irish Catholicism since 1950: The Undoing of a Culture* (Dublin 2004).

attendance in the Western world. Mass attendance has now declined from 91 per cent in 1972 to 35 per cent in 2012, with figures throughout this period as follows: 88 per cent in 1988, 66 per cent in 1997, 44 per cent in 2007.<sup>39</sup> O'Mahony's analysis of European Social Survey data reveals higher rates of weekly/more than once per week mass attendance between 2002 and 2010, with figures at 63 per cent in 2002, 56 per cent in 2006 and 48 per cent in 2010.<sup>40</sup> Analysis of the 2008 European Values Study put weekly/more than once-per-week mass attendance in the Republic at 45 per cent, with significant regional variation: 59 per cent in the border area, 59 per cent in the west, 38 per cent in the mid-east, and 25 per cent in Dublin. Twenty-two per cent of Catholics in Dublin said they never attend mass.<sup>41</sup> In Northern Ireland, there also has been a sharp decline in mass attendance: from 95 per cent in 1968 to 41 per cent in 2008 and 39 per cent in 2012.<sup>42</sup> O'Mahony's figures show less of a drop, with weekly/more than once-per-week mass attendance at 59 per cent in 2008, 14 percentage points higher than the Republic.<sup>43</sup> As in the Republic, there are regional variations among those who attend mass weekly/more than once per week: 51 per cent in Belfast, 72 per cent in outer Belfast, 52 per cent in the east of Northern Ireland, 64 per cent in the north of Northern Ireland, and 73 per cent in the west and south of Northern Ireland. Although the drop in urban attendance is not as profound in Northern Ireland as in the Republic, a 2012 survey reported regular mass attendances of just four per cent in Poleglass in West Belfast and only 17 per cent in Holy Family in North Belfast.<sup>44</sup> There also has been a decline in church attendance among Protestants in Northern Ireland, although it is not as steep as among Catholics. Between 1968 and 2008, when mass attendance declined by 55 per cent, church attendance declined by 30 per cent in the Church of Ireland and 21 per cent among Presbyterians.<sup>45</sup>

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39 Figures sourced at Mass Appeal – Church Attendance in Ireland, [http://knowyourfaith.blogspot.co.uk/2009/11/mass-appeal-church-attendance-in\\_20.html](http://knowyourfaith.blogspot.co.uk/2009/11/mass-appeal-church-attendance-in_20.html) (posted 20 November 2009; accessed 21 January 2015).

40 Eoin O'Mahony, "Religion and Beliefs among Catholics in Ireland: A Short Review of Recent ESS Data", Dublin: Council for Research and Development IBC 2013, 2.

41 Eoin O'Mahony, "Religious Practice and Values in Ireland: A Summary of European Values Study Fourth Wave Data", Dublin: Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference 2010, 7.

42 Bernadette C. Hayes/Lizanne Dowds, "Vacant Seats and Empty Pews: Research Update 65", Belfast: Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster – ARK 2010, 3.

43 O'Mahony, "Religious Practice and Values in Ireland", 5.

44 Slugger O'Toole Blog. The withering of Irish Catholicism sees Sunday attendance plummet in the cities, <http://sluggerotoole.com/2012/05/18/the-withering-of-irish-catholicism-sees-sunday-attendance-plummet-in-the-cities/> (posted 18 May 2012; accessed 4 February 2015).

45 Hayes/Dowds, "Vacant Seats and Empty Pews", 2–3.

But there are reasons to believe that declines in attendance are not straightforward evidence of secularisation. Both north and south, people retain relatively high levels of religious identification and belief, confirming what Grace Davie has called the trend of “believing without belonging” that she observed in other European states. Religious identification is the willingness of people to state that they adhere to a religion whether they attend church regularly or not.<sup>46</sup> Eighty-four per cent of the population of the Republic, 3.86 million people, identified as Catholic in the 2011 Census. Between 1926 and 1991, more than 90 per cent of the population identified as Catholic (peaking at 94.9 per cent in 1961), with the figures finally dropping below 90 per cent in 2002. The overall percentage of Catholics in the population has kept declining at each Census since then. But the total number of Catholics in 2011 was the highest on record, a figure boosted by population growth and Catholic immigrants.<sup>47</sup> In Northern Ireland, religious identification also has remained robust, especially among Catholics. Those who are willing to self-identify as Catholic matches, relatively closely, those who could be classified as from Catholic backgrounds, standing at 41 per cent in 1968 and 37 per cent in 2008 (the Catholic background population during this time grew to between 40 and 45 per cent).<sup>48</sup> This may in part be explained by demographics: the percentage of the overall population of people from Catholic backgrounds is growing, and the Protestant-background population is declining due to lower birth and higher emigration rates. Between 1968 and 2012 the two largest Protestant denominations, Presbyterian and Church of Ireland, experienced a steady decline in adherents, with Presbyterians falling from 28 per cent to 15 per cent and Church of Ireland receding from 22 per cent to 15 per cent.

In addition, people on the island have retained relatively high levels of traditional Christian beliefs. O’Mahony provides the figures for these questions from Northern Ireland (NI) and the Republic in 2008: belief in God – 93 per cent NI, 90 per cent Republic; life after death – 79 per cent NI, 72 per cent Republic; hell – 79 per cent NI, 50 per cent Republic; heaven – 89 per cent NI, 77 per cent Republic; and sin – 92 per cent NI, 75 per cent Republic.<sup>49</sup> The same survey reported that 47 per cent of Catholics in Northern Ireland and 40 per cent in the Republic pray daily.<sup>50</sup> The 2008 Northern Ireland Life and

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46 Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain Since 1945: Believing Without Belonging* (Oxford 1994).

47 Central Statistics Office, Profile 7. Religion, Ethnicity and Irish Travellers, <http://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/census/documents/census2011profile7/Profile,7,Education,Ethnicity,and,Irish,Traveller,Commentary.pdf>, 2012 (2 February 2015).

48 Hayes/Dowds, “Vacant Seats and Empty Pews”, 1.

49 O’Mahony, “Religious Practice and Values in Ireland”, 13.

50 *Ibid.*, 14.

Times Survey also asked questions about religious belief. Among Catholics, 83 per cent believed in God, 76 per cent in life after death, 85 per cent in heaven and 65 per cent in hell.<sup>51</sup>

Such trends have led some scholars to conclude that what is happening on the island is not secularisation. Rather, processes of religious individualisation, de-institutionalisation or liberalisation are taking place.<sup>52</sup> There is evidence of individualisation and liberalisation in a 2012 survey commissioned by the Association of Catholic Priests, which showed that most Irish Catholics do not agree with official Church teachings on a range of matters. It found that official Catholic Church teachings on sexuality have no relevance for 75 per cent of Irish Catholics, that 87 per cent believe priests should be allowed to marry, 77 per cent believe there should be women priests and 72 per cent believe older married men should be allowed become priests.<sup>53</sup> Evidence of de-institutionalisation can be found in a 2011 survey commissioned by the Iona Institute, which reported that 47 per cent of Irish Catholics have an unfavourable view of the Church, with 24 per cent reporting a favourable view and 25 per cent neither favourable nor unfavourable. When those with an unfavourable view were asked why, 56 per cent said child abuse, 23 per cent history/structure, 18 per cent cover-ups, and six per cent loss of trust. Remarkably, almost one in four people agreed with the statement: “I would be happy if the Catholic Church disappeared from Ireland completely”.<sup>54</sup> As Inglis puts it:

The majority of Irish Catholics still see and understand themselves as Catholics, have a strong sense of belonging and loyalty to a Catholic heritage, and accept most of the Church’s key teachings and beliefs. Yet an increasing number of Irish Catholics are becoming spiritually and morally detached from the institutional Church. [...] In so far as they see themselves as belonging to a religious heritage without embodying institutional beliefs and practices, they [...] are becoming more like their Protestant counterparts.<sup>55</sup>

Declines in *weekly* church attendance, both north and south, have been balanced by a *rise* in less frequent attendance as opposed to never attending church. Writing about Northern Ireland, Hayes and Dowds point out that this

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51 Hayes/Dowds, “Vacant Seats and Empty Pews”, 3.

52 Ganiel, *Transforming Post-Catholic Ireland*.

53 Contemporary Catholic Perspectives, <http://www.associationofcatholicpriests.ie/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Contemporary-Catholic-Perspectives.pdf>, 2012 (21 January 2015).

54 Attitudes Towards the Catholic Church, <http://www.ionainstitute.ie/assets/files/Attitudes%20to%20Church%20poll.pdf>, 2011 (21 January 2015).

55 Tom Inglis, “Catholic Identity in Contemporary Ireland: Belief and Belonging to Tradition”, in *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 22 (2007), 205–220, on pp. 217–218.

“has now become the norm for a majority of individuals in Northern Ireland”.<sup>56</sup> Speaking at the 2014 Memorial Lecture to honour David Stevens, a former leader of the ecumenical Corrymeela community, Brewer concurred, arguing that this is evidence that Christians have liberalised rather than secularised.<sup>57</sup> But Brewer also thinks that religious liberalisation is a gateway to secularisation, concluding his lecture with these words<sup>58</sup>:

What is Northern Irish society’s gain is the Church’s loss. People are *not* being persuaded to the principle of a shared society by religious faith, as was the hope of the Ecumenists in the community relations field from the 1960s onwards. Rather, it is the *rejection* of institutional religion that is inspiring today’s dreamers of a shared society as a result of their dissatisfaction with identity politics. Breaking the link between religion and politics foreshadows more enlightened politics but promises to threaten the practice of religion. David’s shared society may well be a secular one.

From this perspective, religious individualisation, de-institutionalisation, and liberalisation were part of the journey to peace rather than secularisation, for which there is quite limited evidence. Secularisation, therefore, may not be as much a part of the path to peace as its advocates have supposed.

## Ecumenism

Brewer concluded his David Stevens lecture by evoking the failed dreams of ecumenists. Elsewhere, he and others have argued for the failure of ecumenism, in contrast to a literature that has built up praising the contributions of ecumenists to the peace process.<sup>59</sup> Much of this literature has focused on how ecumenical organisations like Corrymeela or the Irish School of Ecumenics promoted reconciliation, encouraged cross-community interaction, and emphasised building grassroots relationships.<sup>60</sup> I also have questioned the effectiveness of ecumenical peace activists, arguing that because ecumenism lacks legitimacy in Northern Ireland – due in no small part to fundamentalist/evangelical Protestants’ persistent campaign against it – its

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56 Hayes/Dowds, “Vacant Seats and Empty Pews”, 4.

57 John D. Brewer, “Religion and Politics in a Changing Northern Ireland. Annual David Stevens Memorial Lecture 2014, Belfast”, <http://www.qub.ac.uk/research-centres/CompromiseAfterConflict/Publications/> (accessed 24 March 2015).

58 *Ibid.*, 9.

59 Brewer, et al., *Religion, Civil Society and Peace in Northern Ireland*. The literature that praises ecumenical activists includes: Scott Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred* (Lanham 2000); Maria Power, *From Ecumenism to Community Relations* (Dublin 2007); Ronald Wells, *Hope and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland: The Role of Faith-Based Organisations* (Dublin 2010).

60 Ganiel, *Transforming Post-Catholic Ireland*.

efforts to contribute to peace were not as important as those of some evangelicals who were able to critique and reform their own tradition by speaking powerfully to it *from within*.<sup>61</sup> Brewer et al. also challenge what they see as the “lionization of the ecumenist movement as the main religious carrier of peace”.<sup>62</sup> They note that ecumenists prioritised the “social peace process” of building grassroots relationships over involvement in the “political peace process”, which was a missed opportunity to contribute to more significant socio-structural changes. They also observe that ecumenists failed to mobilise people outside their own small constituency, reducing them to “a laager of a very different kind to that within conservative Afrikaner religion but separatism nonetheless”.<sup>63</sup>

In 2009, while working for the Irish School of Ecumenics, I conducted two island-wide surveys (one for clergy / faith leaders and one for laity) which asked questions about ecumenism, as well as diversity and reconciliation.<sup>64</sup> The results of these surveys seemed to confirm the relative insignificance of ecumenism on the island. One conclusion that could be drawn from the surveys was that ecumenism’s contributions to changing the relationship between religion and national identity, and to promoting peace, were quite limited. For example, while some survey respondents indicated positive ideas about ecumenism, others strongly disliked the term, with some disparaging ecumenists as “ecu-maniacs” when they had the opportunity to write in responses to questions. One question asked people to write, in a few short words, what ecumenism meant to them. Among laity, some admitted that they would need a dictionary to define it, that they had no idea what it was, or that it was irrelevant to them. Some associated the term with its use on the sitcom *Father Ted*, rather than anything they had learned through their faith communities. Several responded simply with the catchphrase from the sitcom: “That would be an ecumenical matter”! Some of the negative definitions of ecumenism included:

- “Diluting the Protestant faith. Going back on what the Reformation was all about.” – Male, Church of Ireland, Co. Fermanagh;
- “Religious political correctness.” – Male, Independent Evangelical, Co. Down;

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61 Ganiel, *Evangelicalism and Conflict in Northern Ireland*.

62 Brewer, et al., *Religion, Civil Society and Peace in Northern Ireland*, 214.

63 *Ibid.*, 216. The term *laager* evokes the defensive circle that Afrikaners would form with their wagons while setting up camp on their colonising trek across South Africa, implying a defensive, siege mentality against those on the outside.

64 Ganiel, *Transforming Post-Catholic Ireland*.

- “I’m not a fan. I feel it is a watering down of what each denomination believes in. It’s ‘PC’ and ultimately pointless.” – Female, Church of Ireland, Co. Tipperary;
- “It is an effort to bring different faiths together and thus a departure from the truth of the Gospel.” – Free Presbyterian minister, Co. Tyrone.

Even some people who had positive ideas about ecumenism said they found the term alienating, a hindrance to better relationships with others:

It’s a word that sadly needs to go on the junkpile because of the way that it is received. Although, I appreciate it and would unashamedly call myself an ecumenicist, I think it is commonly read as a word for exchange without critique; a project of empty relativism that can’t feed into discipleship of Christians or the increase of justice in the land. – Presbyterian, Co. Kildare

These responses seem to confirm Brewer’s analysis about the failure of the island’s ecumenical project. I agree with the general thrust of his conclusions, but I do not think that the evidence of ecumenism’s role in prompting even limited personal and grassroots change is totally insignificant. Other scholars, relying primarily on qualitative interviews and historical documents such as clergy statements and letters, have found evidence that ecumenism contributed to better community relations and promoted reconciliation among some individuals.<sup>65</sup> In more recent research I have uncovered evidence that ecumenical activism has contributed to a “normalisation” of good relations in certain localities, for example through mechanisms like church forums.<sup>66</sup> It also should be kept in mind that there is very limited data on the role of ecumenism in contributing to changes in the relationship between religion and national identity: most of it is qualitative and there has been very little written about ecumenism in the Republic.<sup>67</sup> Further, it is not necessarily clear what the goals of the ecumenical movement were, so it may be somewhat unfair to have expected it to contribute more to changing the relationship between religion and national identity than it did – we cannot assume that this is what all ecumenists were working for. It is likely that ecumenism has played some part on the journey to peace, but it has not been as significant as its advocates would like to believe.

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65 Power, *From Ecumenism to Community Relations*; Wells, *Hope and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland*.

66 Ganiel, *Transforming Post-Catholic Ireland*, chapter 10.

67 The Irish School of Ecumenics has bases in Dublin and Belfast and has been all-island in its scope. See Michael Hurley (ed.), *The Irish School of Ecumenics* (Dublin 2008).

## Conclusions

There is no doubt that the relationship between religion and national identity on the island of Ireland has changed over the course of the twentieth century – a process that remains ongoing in the early years of the twenty-first century. The intertwining of religion and national identity in the island's past has included religious justification for division, opposition, and violence. So it could be argued that changing or uncoupling the relationship between religion and national identity could contribute to peace. Research by Todd and others indicates that since the partition of the island in 1921, Catholicism has become less important as a feature of Irish national identity in the Republic, while religion has remained a significant component of both British and Irish identity in Northern Ireland (though it remains unclear to what extent religion is playing an oppositional role in the construction of northern national identities). While recognising that many factors other than religion contribute to changes in identity, this chapter has focused on two processes related to religion which potentially could have contributed to identity change: secularisation and ecumenical activism. It has asked: Has secularisation or ecumenism, or some combination thereof, contributed to changes in the relationship between religion and national identities in ways that have lessened the oppositional religious content of identities, thus contributing to peace?

This essay has reviewed literature that has cast doubt on the claims that either secularisation or ecumenism were causal or significant factors in contributing to changes in the relationship between religion and national identity. While there is some evidence of secularisation, especially in more recent years in the Republic, other trends indicate that what might be taken for secularisation are more likely processes of religious individualisation, de-institutionalisation, and liberalisation. It is possible that religious individualisation, de-institutionalisation, and liberalisation might be even more effective than secularisation in breaking down oppositional national identities with religious components. But further research is required that might reveal the extent that people on the island of Ireland have altered their religious identities – whether through individualisation, de-institutionalisation, or liberalisation – so that religion no longer remains an oppositional aspect of their national identity.

Given the responses to the Irish School of Ecumenics' surveys, which uncovered much bewilderment or hostility around ecumenism, it seems that the ecumenical movement's contributions to changing the relationship between religion and national identity may not have been as significant as its advocates suppose. The extent to which the activities of ecumenists themselves contributed to processes of religious individualisation, de-institutionalisation, and liberalisation is also not clear. In contrast, my own and



Brewer et al.'s research has judged the activities of those who tried to change their religious traditions from within – such as evangelicals or those acting within denominational structures – as more effective than the ecumenists who attempted to transcend old religious identities and structures.

The evidence for or against the contributions of secularisation or ecumenism to changing relationships between religion and national identity on the island of Ireland is inconclusive. Of course, there is never any single factor that causes changes in identity – multiple factors are always at play and at various times in people's lives some factors matter more than others. But there is room for future research to shed more light on the role of a so-called secularisation (or, as I prefer, religious individualisation, de-institutionalisation, and liberalisation) and ecumenism in changing relationships between religion and national identity. Future research could ask more focused questions about what are the specifically religious factors that push or pull people's national identities in various directions, from retrenching them in the oppositional identities of the past to opening them up to inclusive identities that still retain religious elements.



Mihai-D. Grigore  
“Orthodox Brothers”

Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction, National Identity, and Conflict between  
the Romanian and Russian Orthodox Churches in Moldavia

On 30 July 2007, the elderly Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, Teoctist Arăpașu, died in hospital.<sup>1</sup> With his death, a controversial era of religious politics in the transformation period following the collapse of the communist regime in Romania also came to an end. Teoctist, the fifth Romanian Patriarch, was conferred the patriarchal dignity in 1986. He led the Romanian Church for two decades, through the last years of the dictator Ceaușescu and the first seventeen years of the “free Romania” that followed the national revolution in 1989. He has been a deeply polarising figure: given his prominent position in the hierarchy of Ceaușescu’s regime, it seems quite plausible that he and his entourage would have worked closely with the oppressive communist authorities,<sup>2</sup> an accusation that has been made both in ecclesiastical circles and by representatives of Romanian civil society. He may well have been an informer for and a collaborator with the *Securitate* (the main Romanian secret service). These accusations led to Teoctist’s temporary withdrawal from public life in 1990 (from 10 January through 4 April). However, because no conclusive proof of his collaboration with the communist regime emerged, Patriarch Teoctist returned to his position.

Many Romanian Orthodox believers wanted their shepherd back and were relieved at the Patriarch’s return. This substantial group of the faithful trusted Teoctist to be capable enough to guide the Romanian Church and society (in 1992, 86.8 per cent of the population declared themselves to be Orthodox<sup>3</sup>) through the difficult transition after the December 1989 “revolution”.

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1 See *Gandul.info*, s.v. “Patriarhul Teoctist a murit”, <http://www.gandul.info/stiri/patriarhul-teoctist-a-murit-867789> (accessed 5 June 2015).

2 See the polemical article by Felix Corley from 2 August 2007, after the death of Teoctist in “The Independent” (Romanian translation on *Romanialibera.ro*, s.v. “*The Independent: Teoctist, cântărețul lui Ceaușescu*”, <http://www.romanalibera.ro/actualitate/international/the-independent-teoctist-cantaretul-lui-ceausescu-102797> (accessed 5 June 2015); further articles against Teoctist on the web-page of *Evenimentul Zilei*, s.v. “Trecutul comunist al Patriarhului Teoctist”, <http://www.evz.ro/trecutul-comunist-al-patriarhului-teoctist-423690.html> (accessed 5 June 2015).

3 See *Colectaredate.insee.ro*, s.v. “*Recensământul populației și locuințelor*”, <http://colectaredate.insee.ro/phc/aggregatedData.htm> (accessed 5 June 2015).

Patriarch Teoctist did not disappoint his supporters in this regard.<sup>4</sup> After his return to the Patriarchal See and until his death in 2007, he managed to consolidate the popularity of the Church in Romanian society: surveys have consistently shown it to be the country's most trusted institution. He also cultivated constructive relations with the political leadership and promoted the restitution of Church property confiscated by the communists in the 1940s and 1950s. Teoctist also helped to ensure a positive reputation for the Romanian Orthodox Church on the European level, establishing good relations with both Protestant and Catholic Churches. It should not be forgotten that Romania was the first Orthodox country to receive the visit of a pope when John Paul II was the guest of Patriarch Teoctist in May 1999.

However, the most important accomplishment of the long pastoral activity of Teoctist is his success in maintaining the unity of the Romanian Orthodox Church. It has been the only Orthodox Church in the former Eastern Bloc not to become divided into different competing "Patriarchates" and "Metropolises",<sup>5</sup> a development that has occurred in the Churches of Ukraine, Bulgaria, and Serbia, among others. Teoctist succeeded in preserving one Church for one nation: the Romanian Orthodox Church<sup>6</sup> is therefore today the second largest autocephalous Orthodox Church in the world after the Russian Orthodox Church. It has a broad basis of almost 17 million ethnic Romanians and propagates an influential discourse of a purportedly intrinsic link between "the Romanian people" (*neam*), their "Forefathers' faith" (*crediința strămoșească*), and "Romanian lands" (*țară*). This strong association of Romanian faith, ethnicity, and territory has sometimes involved the Romanian church in intense rivalries and contests for power and influence with other Orthodox Churches: in particular, there have been a number of conflicts with the Russian Orthodox Church.

Beneath the surface unity of Eastern Orthodoxy, there have been (and continue to be) many tensions over and struggles for influence, pre-eminence, jurisdiction, and popularity. The Orthodox Churches share a common dogma, doctrine, and liturgical communion as well the tradition of the Church Fathers and the Seven Ecumenical Councils (between 325 and 787). They are

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4 See <http://ziarullumina.ro/memoriu/patriarhul-teoctist-de-un-lumea-dreptilor> (accessed 5 June 2015).

5 Usually the Patriarchate is the highest administrative level of a Church, signifying that that Church is independent (autocephalous). A Patriarchate consists of several Metropolises. There are also autocephalous Churches organised as Metropolises or Archbishoprics – for instance the Greek Orthodox Church. Both "Patriarchate" and "Metropolis" are administrative units of the Churches, not hierarchical pastoral categories. Orthodox ecclesiology recognises only three hierarchical levels: deacons, priests and bishops. Therefore, Patriarchs and Metropolitan are regular bishops entrusted with specific administrative duties.

6 See *Patriarhia.ro*, under "Administrative Organisation", <http://patriarhia.ro/administrative-organisation-5656-en.html> (accessed 5 June 2015).

organised according to the so-called synodic principle of brotherly equality between the autocephalous Churches, which take fundamental decisions (dogmatic, cultic, and jurisdictional) only in ecumenical synods. However, while such institutional factors theoretically provide a framework of harmony and inter-church agreement, this has often been undermined in specific historical contexts. The last universally recognised Ecumenical Council was in the eighth century, and as a result many jurisdictional problems linked to the historical evolution of the various churches over almost 1200 years have remained unsolved. While the Orthodox Churches have indeed been capable over this long period of time of preserving a substantial degree of dogmatic, liturgical, and spiritual unity, they have failed in many regards to clarify their jurisdictional problems. Since the nineteenth century, these difficulties have become particularly intertwined with *national* interests and identities.

In this essay, I will demonstrate the complexity of the divisions within Eastern Orthodoxy with regard to national identity through considering the example of the Romanian and Russian Orthodox Churches after 1989, giving particular attention to their struggles over the status of the Orthodox Church in Moldavia. The sources I use to explore this issue consist mainly of newspaper articles in the media debate caused by the jurisdictional frictions between the two Churches. The debate surrounding the Moldavian issue has been highly public, and the churches themselves as well as their respective supporters on both sides have been key actors in shaping the resulting press and political discourses. However, religious viewpoints have been expressed well beyond the official churches or even the faithful more broadly defined. Of particular interest with regard to the issue of faith and national identity, it is striking to find that in Romania, for example, even anti-clerical newspapers (such as *Adevărul* [“The Truth”]) took the side of the Romanian Orthodox Church in debates over Church jurisdiction, putting national interests ahead of their otherwise critical position on institutionalised religion.

### Orthodoxy and Nation

The Romanian Church has sought to use the historical and nationalist argument of “one people, one faith, one Church”, and it has also made reference to the thirty-fourth Apostolic Canon, which stipulates that every ethnic group has the right to choose its own bishops and create its own autonomous Church body.<sup>7</sup> In addition, the canons of the second and third Ecumenical

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7 Ferdinand Boxler (ed.), “Die sogenannten apostolischen Constitutionen und Canonen”, in *Bibliothek der Kirchenväter online*, 1874, <https://www.unifr.ch/bkv/kapitel3180.htm>; Theresia Hainthaler, “Autorität und Autoritäten in der Alten Kirche. Patristische Anmerkungen zum

Councils from 381 and 431 forbid jurisdictional appropriations between bishops.<sup>8</sup> These are basic elements of the theological attitude of Orthodoxy towards ethnicity and nation. The “nation” is thus accepted as a legitimate category for the organisation of religious communities and discourses, and in defining what a “nation” is, ethnicity is given particular importance. There is nothing inherently contradictory, from the Orthodox perspective, about even a relatively strong association between nation and faith. The tensions between universalism and particularism – which are in themselves not specific to Orthodox Christianity – have continued to shape the history of the church through the twentieth century and up to the present day.

Shifting our gaze to the historical context of the Kingdom of Greater Romania after the Treaty of Versailles, we notice that the entire inter-war period was characterised by discursive, political, administrative, economic, cultural, and – closest to the focus of this essay – theological attempts to define the nature and character of the “Romanian nation”.<sup>9</sup> In Romania in the 1930s, two highly influential Orthodox theologians, Nichifor Crainic (1889–1972) and Dumitru Stăniloae (1903–1993), wrote two major theological works (in 1938 and 1939) with the aim of underpinning the link between Orthodox faith (with its universalist valences) and national particularism.<sup>10</sup> Stăniloae’s main line of argumentation is highly dogmatic. The ideal type of inter-personal communion, he argues, is that represented by the Holy Trinity. A communicative field leading to community and further to communion<sup>11</sup> can only be established between personal beings – i.e. beings with their own will, affect, and rationality – and human community and communion should also function in ways analogous to the pattern of the Trinity. Human communities are structured by common determinants, common history, and common aspirations, shared among all those who belong to them. What Christ did was to re-establish a functional communicative and communal field among all human beings; however, those people themselves have to take

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Ravenna-Dokument”, in Christoph Böttigheimer/Johannes Hofmann (ed.), *Autorität und Synodalität. Eine interdisziplinäre und interkonfessionelle Umschau nach ökumenischen Chancen und ekklesiologischen Desideraten* (Frankfurt a.M. 2008), 49–78, on pp. 64–67.

8 Cemărtan, *Mitropolia Basarabiei*, 36.

9 Florian Kühner-Wielach, *Siebenbürgen ohne Siebenbürger? Zentralstaatliche Integration und politischer Regionalismus nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg* (Munich 2014).

10 Nichifor Crainic, *Ortodoxie și etnocrație* [Orthodoxy and Ethnocracy] (Bucharest 1997); Dumitru Stăniloae, *Ortodoxie și românism* [Orthodoxy and Romanianhood] (Bucharest 1998). See also Dumitru Stăniloae, *Națiune și creștinism* [Nation and Christianity] (Bucharest 2003).

11 “Communion” is the spiritually deeper form of religious bond between human beings and creation on the fifth level, among human beings on the fourth level, among Christians on the third level, between Christians and their God on the second level, and between God-Father, God-Son and the Holy Ghost within the Holy Trinity on the first level.

the initiative and shape their relations in the specific social circumstances in which they live. In doing so, they should orient their efforts on the model of community and communion established by God: the nation, Stăniloae wrote, would in this view be the sign of a functional community leading to communion between human beings according to the pattern of Holy Trinity. “In God there has to be a Father, a Son, and a Holy Ghost. These divine persons do not change places between them. On the other hand, because they possess the same common godly nature in one common dimension of love, they are on equal positions to each other and not in a relationship of superiority and inferiority or how people are to *foreign persons*.”<sup>12</sup> It suggests that while relationships in one’s own community should be based on the equalitarian relations of the Trinity, relations with those *outside* that community might be legitimately addressed as a form of (inferior) otherness. Further, Stăniloae developed his argument in the direction of *national* communion, which, in his view, would be built upon an intrinsic quality of every person: “[This national quality] is part of the essential horizon of every human being; his national quality counts among the determinants of his eternal visibility and presence. The heavenly pattern of every human being is the concrete pattern of the historically articulated human being.”<sup>13</sup> And this is, of course, the national, particularistic valence of humanity. Nichifor Crainic is more subtle and speaks of a “Christian nationalism” of the Romanians grounded in the timeless values of the Romanian peasantry. “Nationalism”, he wrote, “represents the integrative factor of spiritual solidarity which shapes the way of life of our peasantry”:

The Orthodox spirit is the formula of Romanian solidarity, but the Romanian solidarity does not exhaust the Orthodox spirit, which can also be deeply rooted in other [national] solidarities, such as the Greek, Serbian, or Bulgarian ones. [...] In Orthodoxy, Greeks live like Greeks, Serbians like Serbians, Romanians like Romanians. Ethnic unity is the spiritual basis of Orthodoxy. The Orthodox universalism or the ecumenicity concretize in the harmonic symbiosis between nations, which are differentiated by race but related in the Holy Ghost. The Church, in its earthly organisation, follows this principle: it is ecumenical in doctrine, hierarchy and discipline, but national in the specific ways of administering the ecumenicity.<sup>14</sup>

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12 Apud Constantin Schifirneț, “O concepție antropologică creștin-ortodoxă despre națiune” [An Anthropological Christian-Orthodox Concept of Nation], in Dumitru Stăniloae, *Ortodoxie și românism*, ed. by Constantin Schifirneț (Bucharest 1998), V–XXXVII, on p. XVI. Emphasis added.

13 Schifirneț, *Concepție*, XVIII.

14 Crainic, *Ortodoxie*, 150.

We see that Crainic was more preoccupied with conciliating national particularism and Orthodox universalism; for this reason, rather than addressing dogmatic and theological arguments (like Stăniloae), he focused on cultural and ethnic patterns. The theological perspectives of Stăniloae and Crainic – as leading Romanian theologians – have been deeply influential on (and remain quite typical of) Romanian Orthodox views in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. They are at least implicitly visible in the context of more recent issues.<sup>15</sup> Before explaining them, however, we must turn to other important elements of the historical background to the Orthodox dispute over Moldavia.

### Historical Background on the Religious Conflict over Moldavia

The role of the Moldavian Church as a “battlefield” on which the Russian and Romanian Orthodox Churches have struggled started in the early nineteenth century, when the Russian Empire incorporated a substantial part of the territory of the Principality of Moldavia (between the Rivers Dniester and Prut). This was a result of the 1812 Treaty of Bucharest ending the Russo-Turkish war, which had begun six years earlier.<sup>16</sup> Since that time, this new territory under tsarist authority has been referred to as “Bessarabia”. Prior to the treaty, the old Principality of Moldavia had had – since the fourteenth century – its own Church organisation: a Metropolitan see under Constantinople jurisdiction in the capital Jassy. After the loss of Bessarabia, the two bishoprics of the Moldavian Church that lay beyond what had become the frontier river of Prut, Hotin and Chişinău, passed into the jurisdiction of the Muscovite Patriarchy. At first, they formed their own Metropolis, which was later downgraded to the level of an archbishopric.<sup>17</sup> This situation continued with only slight changes for nearly a century until 1919, when the Treaty of Versailles recognised the Bessarabian Great Council’s (*Sfatul Ţării*) decision from 27 March 1918 to become part of the Kingdom of Romania.<sup>18</sup>

After 1812, the Russian Patriarchy had acted like every other imperial Church in European history with regard to the new territory: the ecclesial organisation was made to correspond to the provincial organisation of the

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15 Nicolai Staab, *Rumänische Kultur, Orthodoxie und der Westen. Der Diskurs um die nationale Identität in Rumänien aus der Zwischenkriegszeit* (Frankfurt a.M. 2011).

16 Charles King, *The Moldovans. Romania, Russia, and the Politics of Culture* (Stanford, CA 2000), 19.

17 Lucian Turcescu/Lavinia Stan, “Church-state Conflict in Moldova: The Bessarabian Metropolitanate”, in *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 36 (2003), 443–465, on p. 445.

18 The Kingdom of Romania resulted from the union of the Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia in 1859. After the end of the First World War, Bessarabia and Transylvania were added to these initial territories to form the so-called “Great Romanian Kingdom” (*Regatul României Mari*).



imperial state. This old pattern had roots in the first Church organisation under Emperor Constantine the Great (306–337), when the dioceses were based upon the existing provincial units of the Roman Empire.<sup>19</sup> Since that time, all other European Empires, including Tsarist Russia, had followed the same procedure. But while there was nothing new in this strategy, what had changed in south-eastern Europe by the nineteenth century was that the process of nation-building was in full swing.<sup>20</sup>

In the early nineteenth century, the ethnic Romanians in the Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia were fully conscious of sharing a cultural and linguistic unity with each other, and there were popular movements in both territories that aimed toward a political unification. This was realised in 1859 with the formation of a single Romanian state. Therefore, we can understand that the incorporation of a substantial part of the Moldavian territory into the Russian Empire was seen by the young Romanian nation as a rupture.<sup>21</sup> The transnational system of the Russian Empire<sup>22</sup> had to confront the national structures and mentalities of the Principality of Moldavia, where the Moldavian Orthodox Church represented the backbone not only of the nation but also of the state. This role had a long history: in the fourteenth century, when the Moldavian Metropolis under Constantinople jurisdiction had been established, this new institution had offered the former lords of the land the necessary instrument to preserve the autonomy of the Moldavian Principality, which was surrounded by Catholic powers such as Poland and Hungary. The same can be said, in the later period, of the Orthodox Church – which had

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19 Elisabeth Hermann-Otto, *Konstantin der Große* (Darmstadt 2007), 166–168.

20 Holm Sundhaussen, “Nationsbildung und Nationalismus im Donau-Balkan-Raum”, in *Forschungen zur osteuropäischen Geschichte* 48 (1993), 234–235; Mark Mazower, *The Balkans: A Short History* (New York 2000); Thomas Bremer, “Nationalismus und Konfessionalität in den Kriegen auf dem Balkan”, in Konrad Clewing/Oliver Jens Schmitt (ed.), *Südosteuropa: von vormoderner Vielfalt und nationalstaatlicher Vereinheitlichung: Festschrift für Edgar Hösch* (Munich 2005), 463–476, on pp. 464–472; Hans-Christian Maner/Norbert Spannenberger (ed.), *Konfessionelle Identität und Nationsbildung in Ostmittel- und Südosteuropa im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart 2007); Konrad Clewing, “Staatsensystem und innerstaatliches Agieren im multiethnischen Raum: Südosteuropa im langen 19. Jahrhundert”, in Konrad Clewing/Oliver Jens Schmitt (ed.), *Geschichte Südosteuropas. Vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart* (Regensburg 2011), 432–553; Ulf Brunnbauer, “Der Balkan”, in *EGO. Europäische Geschichte Online*, 10 June 2013, <http://ieg-ego.eu/de/threads/crossroads/grenzregionen/ulf-brunnbauer-der-balkan>, pp. 24–34.

21 By “nation” I refer to a common national sense of belonging, one that may well precede the formation of the national state. This sense of belonging was based upon a common language, common religion and common culture. All these tendencies were crowned in 1859 when territorial unity was gained and the “Romanian nation” could finally be regarded as fact.

22 In order to maintain its unity every imperial political form has to develop integrative structures that are able to offset the different boundaries between local traditions and cultures included in that empire. For pre-modern empires the ethnic units were the problem, while for modern empires, like the Russian or the Habsburg ones, the nations were the most powerful destabilisation factor.

long successfully resisted Latin missionary efforts – which offered a resource for seeking and maintaining political autonomy by establishing a religious identity coupled with ethnic allegiance. Now that much of Moldavia's territory and population had been separated from it by force, after almost five centuries of unity, intense national resentments emerged in Bessarabia that posed a potential threat to the Russian imperial order in the region.

Given the strength of proto-national feeling in the newly acquired territory, the Russian authorities realised that simply transferring some bishoprics from the Moldavian Metropolis (which was under the jurisdiction of Constantinople) to the authority of the Muscovite Patriarchy – i.e., precisely the venerable imperial strategy described above – would not function as well as it once had. The Bessarabian Bishoprics and their flock first had to be, in a sense, de-nationalised in order to weaken their national feelings and turn them into potentially loyal subjects of the Russian order. As a result of this awareness, between 1812 and 1918 both the secular and ecclesiastical authorities of Russia engaged in an aggressive de-nationalisation policy in Bessarabia – through re-settlement, attempts to change language, and the installation of Russian hierarchs for Bessarabian bishoprics.<sup>23</sup> The national thinking of the Bessarabian people was the chief opponent of the transnational imperial system of the Tsarist Empire: from the Russian perspective, therefore, it had to be broken. This campaign cannot be regarded as successful, given the ease and near mutual unanimity with which – after almost a century of Russian rule – the political union of Bessarabia with Romania in 1918 was achieved.

After 1919 and the treaty of Versailles,<sup>24</sup> the Romanian Church, after banishing the Russian Metropolitan Anastasij Gribanovski, reintegrated the Bessarabian Church into its structures. A new head of the Bessarabian Church (consisting of the two aforementioned dioceses of Hotin and Chişinău) was appointed: Gurie Grosu, who became Archbishop of Hotin and Chişinău after being officially confirmed by the Romanian Synod in Bucharest on 30 December 1919.<sup>25</sup> This state of affairs ended with the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact in 1939, when Bessarabia returned to the Soviet Union, the heir of the Tsarist Empire.

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23 Of course, language was the main source of national cohesion. Well before the annexation of Bessarabia into the Russian Empire in 1812 the Romanian language had come to replace Slavonic as the liturgical language of the Church. Thus it was the Romanian language that was seen as one of the prime “enemies” in the new situation, in which Slavonic was reintroduced by the Russian state and ecclesiastical authorities as the cultic language of the Bessarabian Church.

24 King, *Moldovans*, 32–35.

25 Turcescu/Stan, *Church-state Conflict*, 446–447.

After 1945, the Church rivalry lost much of its intensity because both Romania and Russia were governed by repressive, officially atheist communist regimes. The Russian Orthodox Church was almost extinguished by Russian authorities. While the Romanian Church could preserve most of its structures (with regard to, for example, bishoprics, the educational system, monasteries, and media) one cannot say that the Romanian communist regime was more permissive than the Russian: the Church was officially marginalised in Romania. In both countries the Churches were for the most part preoccupied with struggling for their own survival, leaving relatively few resources and little opportunity for international relations. One might think that the fact that both the Romanian and Russian Churches were victims of communist oppression would have enhanced their brotherly feeling of solidarity on the basis of a common martyrdom. Nothing of the kind: effective collaboration and good relations between the Churches in hardship would have been at least indirectly taken as a critique of the totalitarian regimes in Russia and Romania. Churches avoided seeking to develop collaborations since this would have only increased their suppression by the state. So every attempt to open themselves was inhibited. In these conditions, the jurisdictional problem of the Bessarabian Church simply dropped off the agenda. However, the issue rose again after 1989 and the freeing of Romania from Soviet domination.

### The Situation after 1989

Among the many transitions to post-Communist rule in Eastern Europe that began in 1989, the Romanian “revolution” of that year was marked by an exceptional degree of violence, signified not least by the trial and execution of Nicolae Ceaușescu and his wife. It has been argued that, in the wake of these events:

Moldovan Romanian-speakers<sup>26</sup> expectations for political independence from Moscow to be followed by religious independence reactivated the centuries-old conflict between the world’s largest Orthodox Church bodies, since neither the Moscow

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26 The issue of language is a vital and complex issue in this situation. A shared Romanian language may have been the first and most important element in the building of a national consciousness in Romania. Since Moldavia was a historical part of this linguistic area from the Middle Ages up to the present day, it is probably not surprising that many of the “national struggles” centred on linguistic issues. Romanian had already been introduced as the liturgical language since the eighteenth century, so the partition of Moldavia after 1812 implied the attempt of the Russian authorities to reintroduce Slavonic as the cultic language for the Bessarabian Church. During

Patriarchate nor the Bucharest Patriarchate were willing to relinquish traditional dominance over Moldovan church affairs.<sup>27</sup>

The years immediately following the revolution in Romania saw a growing instability of the Soviet system, posing a variety of challenges to the existing institutional arrangements, and those involving faith were no exception.

The proclamation of independence by the former Soviet Republic of Moldavia (27 August 1991) brought the historically charged issue of the Moldavian Church's allegiances to the fore.<sup>28</sup> The Metropolis of Bessarabia was reactivated by the Romanian Church in September 1992; it functioned in parallel to the so-called Metropolis of All Moldavia under the Muscovite jurisdiction. However, two centuries of de-nationalisation policies under both Tsarist and Soviet regimes had reduced the "Romanian" population of Moldavia to a narrow majority over Ukrainians and Russians.<sup>29</sup> There was, however, an important difference of definition between the two churches with regard to how nationality was defined: as seen by the Romanian Orthodox Church, this group consists of "Romanians" while the Russian Orthodox Church sees them as "Moldovans".<sup>30</sup> This enabled the Russian Orthodox Church to continue the "classical" religious policy of the Russian State: it put the Moldavian Church under Muscovite jurisdiction in January 1991. Moldavia's secular authorities officially recognised this latter form of Church reorganisation in 1993 under the name *Metropolis of Chişinău and All Moldavia (Mitropolia Chişinăului și a întregii Moldove)*. So both the Russian and Romanian Churches established simultaneous claims to the Moldavian Church, each arguing the Moldavian Church was under its jurisdiction. The secular government of the Republic of

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the period of Soviet rule Moldavians were similarly only able to speak their language at home: at school Romanian was only offered as a foreign language. Everything else was in Russian. Both Tsarist and Soviet regimes tolerated at most the term "Moldovan language", but never admitted that Bessarabian Moldavians, in fact, speak Romanian.

27 Turcescu/Stăn, *Church-state conflict*, 454.

28 See the original Romanian text: "Declarația de Independență a Republicii Moldova (1991)", in *istoria.md*, [http://istoria.md/articol/573/Declara%C5%A3ia\\_de\\_Independen%C5%A3%C4%83\\_a\\_Republicii\\_Moldova](http://istoria.md/articol/573/Declara%C5%A3ia_de_Independen%C5%A3%C4%83_a_Republicii_Moldova) (accessed 11 June 2015).

29 King, *Moldovans*, 68–70. In the census in 2004 75.8% of the population declared themselves to be "Moldovans" and only 2.13% to be "Romanians", <http://www.statistica.md/pageview.php?l=ro&idc=295&> (accessed 11 June 2015). A new census took place from 12 to 25 May 2014 in the Republic of Moldavia, but its results have not yet been published, <http://www.statistica.md/newsview.php?l=ro&idc=30&id=4615> (accessed 11 June 2015). However, the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Moldavia decided in December 2013 that the official "Moldovan" language has to be replaced in the text of the Constitution by "Romanian": "Chisinau Recognizes Romanian as Official Language", in *Radio Free Europe*, 5 December 2013, <http://www.rferl.org/content/moldova-romanian-official-language/25191455.html>.

30 Andrei Panici, "Romanian Nationalism in the Republic of Moldova", in *The Global Review of Ethnopolitics* 2/2 (2003), 37–51, on p. 37 and pp. 40–41.

Moldavia then intervened and recognised the Russian claim only, its decision being influenced by the great economic and political dependence of Moldavia on Russia in the 1990s.

The parallel Romanian Orthodox institution, the Metropolis of Bessarabia that had been reactivated under the authority of the Bucharest Patriarchy, did not obtain the official recognition of the Moldavian authorities (who were, it should be noted, officially communist) in spite of having made eleven applications. While theoretically and ecclesiologically it is technically impossible to have two overlapping jurisdictions, the fact is that there, somewhat absurdly, are. Moreover, the Romanian Orthodox Church suffered diverse forms of harassment – financial, institutional, and juridical – at the hands of the Moldavian regime, which was afraid to compromise its relations to the Russians, who supplied the country with energy. The result was that the only officially recognised Moldavian church was organised solely under Russian rather than Romanian Orthodox authority.

The Romanian Orthodox Church’s reaction came promptly: Patriarch Teoctist recognised without consultation with the Russian Patriarch Aleksey the Bessarabian Metropolis as the *Metropolis of Bessarabia, autonomous and of old style* (*Mitropolia Basarabiei, autonomă și de stil vechi*) on 19 December 1992, and included the Metropolitan Petru in the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church.<sup>31</sup> The reactivation of the Bessarabian Metropolitanate was considered in the official *Patriarchal and Synodal Document from 19 December 1992* – issued by the Romanian Church – to be “a holy act of truth and justice, which completes the unity of our forefathers’ faith and the community of Romanian consciousness”.<sup>32</sup> The Russian Church, unsurprisingly, protested vigorously, invoking vague “canonical regulations” that were not given any further explanation. The Muscovite Patriarchy threatened the calling of a pan-Orthodox tribunal to condemn the unilateral reactivation of the Bessarabian Metropolis by Bucharest. However, this threat was never acted upon: the Russian Church knew it would in all likelihood lose the case, since there were similar precedents in the Orthodox world to bear out the actions taken by the Romanian Orthodox Church.<sup>33</sup>

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31 Romeo Cemârțan, *Cazul Mitropoliei Basarabiei – interferențe politice și religioase* (Chișinău 2004), 15–20; Turcescu/Stăn, *Church-state conflict*, 454–455. See the administrative organisation of the Romanian Orthodox Church on the official web-site, <http://patriarhia.ro/administrative-organisation-5656-en.html> (accessed 11 June 2015).

32 Gheorghe Badea, “O victorie a adevărului istoric – 7 ani de la recunoașterea oficială a Mitropoliei Basarabiei de către Guvernul Republicii Moldova”, in *Mitropolia Basarabiei*, <http://www.mitropoliabasarabiei.md/news/47/> (accessed 11 June 2015).

33 Cemârțan, *Mitropolia Basarabiei*, 22–23.

Nonetheless, the Bessarabian Metropolis – although it had been recognised by the Romanian Church – at first remained unrecognised by the Moldavian government. Romanian State authorities as well as the Romanian Orthodox Church sought to bring pressure on the Moldavian authorities to compel this official recognition. They commenced, for instance, a legal action at the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), which ultimately decided that the Moldavian authorities were legally obliged to recognise the Bessarabian Metropolis. The Moldavian authorities postponed the implementation of the ECHR verdict as long as they could, but finally complied in 2002.

The Bessarabian Metropolis saw the recognition as a “victory of the Romanian Orthodoxy”, as it declared on its official website.<sup>34</sup> This international success was built upon by the new Patriarch, Daniel Ciobotea, elected on 12 September 2007. Ciobotea’s first pastoral decision was to strengthen the Metropolis of Bessarabia. Between 22 and 24 October 2007, he reactivated three bishoprics within it: the bishopric of Bălți (former Hotin), the bishopric of Cantemir (former Cetatea Albă-Ismail) and the bishopric of Dubăsari and All Transnistria (formerly the Romanian Orthodox Mission of Transnistria). While the two first bishoprics were old Romanian bishoprics that had been disaffiliated by the Soviets after 1945, the third is a new creation. Transnistria was never part of the old Principality of Moldavia, so the Moldavian Church or later the Romanian Church lacked the historical argument invoked for the Metropolis of Bessarabia: in fact, it did not have any jurisdictional claim to the territories beyond the Dniestr. Thus, by creating this bishopric, the Romanian Orthodox Church was seeking to extend its authority into new areas that had historically been in the hands of Russian Orthodoxy.

The Muscovite Patriarchy’s reaction was vehement.<sup>35</sup> Previous Soviet “provinces” such as the Ukrainian Church or the Metropolitanate of Chișinău and All Moldavia (see above) unanimously condemned the decision of the Romanian Church as a form of Romanian “invasion” (*năvălire*) in Moldavia.<sup>36</sup> The Ukrainian blog *Voices from Russia*, for example, took over the

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34 “Victorie a ortodoxiei românești” in *Mitropolia Basarabiei*, <http://www.mitropoliabasarabiei.ro/evolutia-procesului-de-inregistrare/victorie-a-ortodoxiei-romanesti/> (accessed 11 June 2015).

35 Alina Neagu, “Patriarhia Rusă cere BOR să nu reactiveze cele trei eparhii în Republica Moldova”, in *hotnews.com*, 8 November 2007, <http://m.hotnews.ro/stire/1003934>.

36 Serinela Spătăreanu, “Mitropolitul Ucrainei acuză Biserica Ortodoxă Română”, in *ziare.com blog*, 27 December 2007, <http://www.ziare.com/stiri/acuzatii/mitropolitul-ucrainei-acuzabiserica-ortodoxa-romana-203240>; Adriana Toma, “BOR criticată din nou de patriarhul rus Aleksei al II-lea”, in *ziare.com blog*, 18 December 2007, <http://m.ziare.com/stiri/bor-criticatadin-nou-de-patriarhul-rus-aleksei-al-ii-lea-197914>; Alexandru Canțir, “Biserica Moldovei critică năvălirea României”, in *BBCRomanian.com*, 16 November 2007, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/romanian/moldova>.

title of an Interfax report, “Ukraine’s Moscow-run Church Slams Romanian Synod”,<sup>37</sup> and changed it to the more polemical “Canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church Slams Romanian Synod”.<sup>38</sup>

The Moldavian communist regime joined this campaign and threatened to withdraw the official recognition of the Bessarabian Metropolis that it had (reluctantly) granted in 2002.<sup>39</sup> The Moldavian President Vladimir Voronin compared the reactivation of the Bessarabian Bishops with the unilateral declaration of independence in Kosovo. He further stated, as the Moldavian press agency IPN reported on 1 December 2007 (the national holiday of Romania), that “it [was] the same provocation scheme against us, against the independence, sovereignty, against the country, identity and people [of the Republic of Moldavia]”.<sup>40</sup> The Russian press agency Interfax headlined an article on 6 November 2007: “Romanian Orthodox Church to gain strength in Moldova and Ukraine”.<sup>41</sup> Russian President Vladimir Putin himself took a position on the issue, bestowing the Award of the Russian Orthodox Church on President Voronin. In his accompanying speech, Putin stated that the “consolidation of Orthodoxy represents the foundation for the positive development of inter-state relations”. He congratulated Voronin, saying that “this is an homage and a recognition of the personal merits Your Excellency has in the consolidation of spiritual relationships between Orthodox peoples and, especially, between our countries” (as quoted by the press-agency *Amos News* on 22 January 2008).<sup>42</sup>

These critics (Voronin, the Russian Patriarch, Hierarchs of the Ukrainian and Moldavian Church) accused the Romanian Church of “nationalist expansion”, and, indeed, this claim might not be that far from the truth, since in 2007 the Romanian Orthodox Church implemented the Bessarabian Metropolis in a foreign territory. But the Romanian Church claims it is extending

37 “Ukraine’s Moscow-run Church slams Romanian Synod”, in *Interfax*, 25 December 2007, <http://www.interfax-religion.com/?act=news&div=4108>.

38 “Canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church Slams Romanian Synod”, in *Voices from Russia*, 26 December 2007, <https://02varvara.wordpress.com/2007/12/26/canonical-ukrainian-orthodox-church-slams-romanian-synod>. “Canonical Ukrainian Church” implies here the claim that only the ex-Soviet Churches under Muscovite jurisdiction are to be considered “canonical”, the others, like the Estonian Church or Bessarabian Church, are “schismatic”.

39 Serinela Spătăreanu, “Mitropolitul Ucrainei acuza Biserica Ortodoxa Romana”, in *ziare.com blog*, 27 December 2007, <http://www.ziare.com/stiri/acuzatii/mitropolitul-ucrainei-acuza-biserica-ortodoxa-romana-203240>.

40 “Vladimir Voronin threatens Bessarabian Metropolitan Church with annulment of its registration”, in *ipn*, 1 December 2007, <http://www.ipn.md/en/politica/11804>.

41 “Romanian Orthodox Church to gain strength in Moldova and Ukraine”, in *Interfax*, 6 November 2007, <http://www.interfax-religion.com/?act=news&div=3885>.

42 “Putin a apreciat poziția lui Voronin în cazul Mitropoliei Basarabiei”, in *Amos News*, 22 January 2008, <http://www.amosnews.ro/arhiva/putin-apreciat-pozitia-lui-voronin-cazul-mitropoliei-basarabiei-22-01-2008>.

its pastoral care to people who are Romanians, even if they happen to live outside of the Romanian state's borders. So, in this case, territorial interference was at the centre of the religious and nationalist policy not only of the Romanian Church but also – at least implicitly – of the Romanian State, which has consistently supported the decision of the Bucharest Holy Synod from October 2007 to reactivate the Bessarabian bishoprics.<sup>43</sup>

However, criticism from within Orthodoxy of the actions of the Romanian Church in 2007 has come not only from the Churches of ex-Soviet provinces (such as the Ukrainian one): the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in Istanbul (Constantinople) also stated that it was illegal to organise Church structures according to nationalist criteria. This position is understandable since it represents the old Byzantine imperial ideology, which has long remained influential at the Ecumenical Patriarchy. For example, the aggressive centralisation policy of the Ecumenical Patriarchy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was fully in accordance with this ideology, which was developed in order to combat the rise of national Churches in south-eastern Europe.<sup>44</sup>

The issue of ecclesiastical jurisdiction in the Republic of Moldavia remains unsettled to this day, and there are thus two concomitant metropolitan sees – one under Muscovite the other under Bucharest jurisdiction – each of which has parallel functioning bishoprics. Furthermore, they very clearly do not always get along. For example, the Bishop of Dubăsari (within Muscovite jurisdiction) attacked the Bishop of Dubăsari (under Bucharest jurisdiction) – implicitly targeting the entire Romanian Orthodox Patriarchy – in his comments in 2007 to the Russian news agency *Ria-Novosti* that the Romanian Patriarchy had started a “crusade against the Russian Orthodox Church” that risked “destabilizing the foreign context in Western Europe”.<sup>45</sup>

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43 “Patriarhia Moscovei acuza Patriarhia Romana de expansiune nationalistă”, in *România Liberă online*, 1 November 2007, <http://www.romanalibera.ro/actualitate/eveniment/patriarhia-mosco-vei-acuza-patriarhia-romana-de-expansiune-nationalista-110213>.

44 Vasilios N. Makrides, “Why are Orthodox Churches Particularly Prone to Nationalization and even to Nationalism?”, in *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 54:3–4 (2013), 325–352, on pp. 325–328.

45 “Romanian Patriarchy attacked by the bishop of Tiraspol and Dubasari”, *HotNews.ro*, 30 October 2007, <http://english.hotnews.ro/stiri-archive-1750206-romanian-patriarchy-attacked-the-bishop-tiraspol-and-dubasari.htm>.



## Conclusion

In this essay I have outlined the post-1989 jurisdictional conflict within the Eastern Orthodox Church around the ex-Soviet Republic of Moldavia with its Romanian speaking majority population.<sup>46</sup> The main protagonists were the leadership of the Russian and Romanian Orthodox Churches, each of which offered arguments based upon history and national identity. The Russian Church has claimed that the Moldavian bishoprics are within its own jurisdiction because they belonged to the Russian Empire in the nineteenth century and to the Soviet Union in the twentieth century. The Russian Church has thus applied the imperial argument that Church administration has to follow provincial partition. As a former Tsarist and Soviet province, the Moldavian Church, in this view, has to subordinate itself to the Muscovite hierarchy. Its statute (administrative law) reveals the fact that the Russian Church’s argumentation is based upon an imperial logic: when compared to the Romanian Church’s statute we see that the Russian Patriarchy tends toward employing a more centralising set of coercive measures towards its Metropolises (including the Metropolis of Chişinău and All Moldova). For instance, its priests and laypeople do not have the same autonomous rights of self-administration as those granted by the statute of the Romanian Church for the Metropolis of Bessarabia.<sup>47</sup>

During his first pastoral visit to Moldavia, from 7 to 9 September 2013, the new Russian Patriarch, Patriarch Kyrill, affirmed: “our [Russian] Church is *multinational* and comprises tens of millions of people in sixty-two countries”.<sup>48</sup> Nationalistic Moldavian circles, represented by the voice of the Mayor of Chişinău, Dorin Chirtoacă, accused Kyrill of playing the games of the political leadership in Moscow. The suggestion that there was a political dimension to Kyrill’s comments seems to be justified, since his pastoral visit to Moldavia took place immediately after the Russian Premier, Dmitrij Rogozin, warned the Republic of Moldavia on 2 September 2013 not to sign the EU association accord, as was reported by *EurActiv.com*.<sup>49</sup> That this was mere coincidence seems highly unlikely.

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46 See above on the issue “Moldavian” vs. “Romanian” in the respective discourses of Romanian nationalism and Soviet imperialism.

47 “Statutul pentru organizarea și funcționarea Bisericii Ortodoxe Române”, *patriarhia.ro*, <http://patriarhia.ro/statutul-bor-1400.html> (accessed 6 August 2015); Alexej Klutschewsky/Thomas Németh/E. Synek, “Das Statut der Russischen Orthodoxen Kirche”, in C.G. Fürst/R. Potz (ed.), *Kirchenverfassungen* (Egling 2006), 41–72; Cemârtan, *Mitropolia Basarabiei*, 25.

48 “His Holiness Patriarch Kirill meets with Mr. Nicolae Timofti, President of Moldova”, in official website of the Russian Orthodox Church, 8 September 2013, <https://mospat.ru/en/2013/09/08/news90465/>. Emphasis added.

49 “Russia threatens Moldova over its EU relations”, in *EurActiv.com*, 3 September 2013, <http://www.euractiv.com/europes-east/russia-keeps-threatening-neighbor-news-530198>.

The official reason for the visit was the celebration of the inclusion of the Bessarabian Bishopricks of Hotin and Chişinău in the Russian Church in the year 1812; as should be clear from the historical background provided above, this was a highly sensitive issue in the relations between Romania and Russia. Tendentially describing what might be seen as a historical act of forcible incorporation as having instead resulted from “the burning desire of Moldavians to be in unity with the peoples of *Sacred Rus*”, the Russian high prelate warned that “false teachings of modernity, improperly understood liberalism, economic problems, and many other temptations have become a serious challenge for Moldavian society”. He further recommended “the Orthodox Church of Moldova” as being “the key to the preservation of the national identity and cultural independence of the Moldavian people”.<sup>50</sup> In other words, the “Moldavian identity” – administrated by the Metropolis of Chişinău and All Moldavia – would be endangered by the association with the EU. Moldavia, it was argued, should thus remain in the brotherly community of all peoples of “Sacred Rus”. This interpretation not only involved the location of Moldavian national identity within a historically imperial (and Russian) context but also the self-arrogation by Russia of the right to act as a necessary protector of a purportedly more genuine form of national community.

On the other hand, the Romanian Church has openly framed its arguments in terms of the national and ethnic identity of the Moldavians: taking a dramatically different perspective than that offered by the Russian Church, it has emphasised not only that Moldavians are linguistically and culturally Romanians but also that Romanians historically once formed a unified political body with the “Moldavians” in what is today Romania, i.e. in the form of the historical Principality of Moldavia. It is not incidental to this argument that the restoration of political unity is desired by broad circles of the Moldavian and Romanian population.<sup>51</sup> Against this background, the Romanian Church has sought to use the historical and nationalist argument of “one people, one faith, one Church”,<sup>52</sup> and it has also referred to the thirty-fourth Apostolic Canon (mentioned above) in justifying its claims. In addition, the aforementioned canons of the second and third Ecumenical Councils from 381 and 431 are also quoted. However, Romanian responses to the issue of the Moldavian Church have gone well beyond legalistic interpretations of canon

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50 Pavel Korobov, “Canonical Diplomacy”, in *Komersant*, 9 September 2013, via *Russian Religion News*, <http://www2.stetson.edu/~psteeves/relnews/1309b.html>.

51 Panici, *Romanian Nationalism*, 42.

52 In Bucharest, Bishop Ciprian Cămpineanu stated: “The Republic of Moldavia always was a canonical province of the Romanian Orthodox Church”: “Republica Moldova a fost dintotdeauna teritoriul canonic al BOR”, in *Catholica*, on 7 November 2007, <http://www.catholica.ro/2007/11/07/republica-moldova-a-fost-dintotdeauna-teritoriul-canonic-al-bor/>.

law, and it is clear that nationalist sentiment has played an important role in shaping the public discourse around the dispute. For example, it is striking that the highly influential Romanian newspaper *Adevărul* (The Truth), despite its virulent anti-clericalism, has backed the actions of the Romanian Orthodox Church on the question of the Bessarabian Metropolis: its criticism of the Church has taken a back seat to Bucharest’s national interests.<sup>53</sup>

For its part, the Russian Church has also tried to argue on the basis of the aforementioned canonical stipulations of the Ecumenical Councils. It is a fact that the reactivation of a Metropolis or of new bishoprics while their equivalents still exist is uncanonical. Nevertheless, this was also the situation in 1812. In order to use the stipulations of the thirty-fourth Apostolic canon on the freedom of ethnic groups to have their own Church organisations, the Russian Church needs to identify a nation in the Republic of Moldavia: and this is, in their view, the “Moldavian nation”. However, if we consider four key criteria of a national unit – language, culture, territory, and religion – we see that the “Moldavian nation” as defined by the Russian Church and by Russian secular authorities can claim only its own territory: they do not have a distinct religion from their “Romanian” counterparts nor do they possess a different culture or language. Of course, there has been an attempt to develop the Moldavian idiom of Romanian into a distinct language, but there are a number of linguistic hurdles on the way to establishing a highly ideological concept like “Moldavian language”. Therefore, the absence of a “Moldavian nation” weakens the arguments of the Russian Church with regard to the Apostolic canon.

It is difficult to explain the dispute as being one about material interest – either by Russia or by Romania – in the Moldavian Metropolises, which are not especially wealthy. Their importance in the geopolitical context of the region is a more convincing driver of the dynamics of the conflict, not least since the Russian Church has, since the collapse of the Soviet Union, come to emphasise its cultural role in cementing Russian political, economic and military power and influence. First, the Russian Church has tried to establish its pre-eminence among other Orthodox Cultures, with Moscow serving as a sort of “Third Rome”, after Rome itself and Constantinople. The Russian Church has sought to coordinate its activities with the policies of the Russian state that are aimed at preserving its spheres of influence in areas bordering on the European Union and the NATO alliance. Second, the Romanian Church has sought – in its position as the second-largest Orthodox Church in

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53 Valentina Basiul, “Biserica Ortodoxă Rusă și-a extins jurisdicția sa asupra Basarabiei contrar canoanelor bisericești”, in *adevarul.ro*, 5 September 2013, [http://adevarul.ro/moldova/actualitate/biserica-ortodoxa-rusa-si-a-extins-jurisdicția-basarabiei-contrar-canoanelor-bisericești-1\\_52282e95c7b855ff564a539a/index.html](http://adevarul.ro/moldova/actualitate/biserica-ortodoxa-rusa-si-a-extins-jurisdicția-basarabiei-contrar-canoanelor-bisericești-1_52282e95c7b855ff564a539a/index.html).

the world – to increase its own power and influence in pushing back against the pan-Slavist narrative promoted by the Russian state and the Russian Orthodox Church in a region that is dominated by Slavic cultures. By stressing the national argument of the politically separated but “nationally” unified Romanians, the Romanian Church has tried to lay the ground for a political union between Romania and Moldavia, which has advanced to the top of the Romanian government’s political agenda in the light of recent developments in Ukraine.

While in their outward presentation (in particular on a European or global stage and vis-à-vis Catholics and Protestants) the Romanian and Russian Churches have sought to present themselves as members of a harmonic Orthodox Commonwealth,<sup>54</sup> they have been radically divided by issues of national identity and of foreign (and imperial) policy. The case of Moldavia shows that in both Romania and in Russia the claim of a strict separation between state and church is a fiction: church policies in both countries have served as instruments for the extension of political spheres of influence. In the context of the current crisis in Ukraine, the consolidation of the Bessarabian Metropolis has, for example, served not only the interests of the Romanian State but indirectly also of its NATO allies, who perceive the strengthening of the Moldavian dependence on Romania as a way to extricate it from the sphere of interest of Putin’s Russia. The Russian Orthodox Church, for its part, has quite clearly seen a commonality of interest with the Russian state and even made itself an important ally of Russian foreign policy goals. Even in the contemporaneous Europe of human rights discourse and secular states, religious figures, institutions, ideas, and identities still play a vital role – in some geopolitical contexts – in the regulation of trans-national spheres of influence.

And to return briefly to the crucial figure mentioned at the beginning. The last major project of Patriarch Teoctist was to promote the building of the Cathedral of National Salvation (*Catedrala mântuirii neamului*), which is currently under construction in Bucharest.<sup>55</sup> He died before construction began. Nonetheless, his projects – both material and spiritual – have been carried on by his successor, Patriarch Daniel Ciobotea, whose first major acts involved the reactivation of the Bessarabian bishoprics and pushing forward the Cathedral’s construction. The Cathedral – which will be the tallest Orthodox cathedral in the world when completed and which has been criticised for what some find its excessive scale<sup>56</sup> – seems to symbolise the mixture

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54 Paschalis M. Kitromilides (ed.), *An Orthodox Commonwealth. Symbolic Legacies and Cultural Encounters in Southeastern Europe* (Aldershot 2007).

55 <http://www.catedralaneamului.ro/> (accessed 2 August 2015).

56 Arielle Thedrel, “Les projets pharaoniques de l’Église orthodoxe à Bucarest”, in *Le Figaro*,

of religious and national pride characterising a Romanian Orthodox Church that has played a central role in defining Romania’s national identity and shaping its international relations since 1989. It seems likely that this role will continue in the coming years.

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1 February 2008, <http://www.lefigaro.fr/international/2008/02/01/01003-20080201ARTFIG00478-les-projets-pharaoniques-de-l-eglise-orthodoxe-a-bucarest.php>.



SECTION II:  
RELIGION, NATION, AND THE SOCIAL ORDER





Matthew D. Hockenos

Pastor Martin Niemöller, German Protestantism,  
and German National Identity, 1933–1937

Martin Niemöller's life (1892–1984) spanned two centuries, three world wars, and four radical changes in the German government. Growing to maturity at the end of the long nineteenth century during the *Kaiserreich* (1871–1918), he served proudly in Kaiser Wilhelm II's Imperial Navy from 1910 to 1919. In protest against the socialist revolution that overthrew the Hohenzollern monarchy and established the Weimar Republic (1918–1933), he left the navy, entered the seminary, was ordained a Lutheran pastor in 1924, and received his first parish in 1931. He remained an archconservative during the Weimar Republic, voting for the Nazis after 1924. Initially welcoming Hitler's rise to power, Niemöller quickly came to see that Hitler intended to subordinate the churches to the state and to bring Christian thought into line with National Socialist ideology. In response, Niemöller led the Protestant Church's opposition to Hitler's church policy during the Nazi era (1933–1945), for which he spent eight years in Hitler's jails and camps from 1937 to 1945. From his prison cell in Sachsenhausen concentration camp he controversially volunteered to fight on behalf of the fatherland when World War II broke out in 1939. The German navy turned down his offer, and in 1941 Hitler had Niemöller transferred from Sachsenhausen to Dachau concentration camp, where he remained until 1945. Niemöller survived Dachau, and in the immediate postwar years he acknowledged frequently the complicity of the German Protestant churches in the Nazi era and his own failure to combat anti-Semitism during the Third Reich. A vocal critic of West Germany and the United States during the Cold War, he embraced pacifism, advocated for a united and neutral Germany, and became a leader in the World Council of Churches. He died six years before Germany's fifth radical governmental change in the twentieth century: the unification East and West Germany in 1990.<sup>1</sup>

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1 Martin Niemöller, *From U-Boat to Pulpit*, trans. D. Hastie Smith (Chicago 1937); Franz Hildebrandt, *Pastor Niemöller and His Creed* (London 1939); Dietmar Schmidt, *Pastor Niemöller*, trans. Lawrence Wilson (Garden City, NY 1959); Clarissa Start Davidson, *God's Man: The Story of Pastor Niemoeller* (New York 1959); Jürgen Schmidt, *Martin Niemöller im Kirchenkampf* (Hamburg 1971); James Bentley, *Martin Niemöller: 1892–1984* (New York 1984); John Conway, "The political Theology of Martin Niemöller", in *German Studies Review* 9:3

Niemöller's life is a story of frequent political and personal transformations, each of which he defended fiercely based on his Christianity and nationalism. On his 90th birthday in 1982, Niemöller stated that he had started his political engagement as "an ultra-conservative who wanted the Kaiser to come back; and now I am a revolutionary. I really mean that. If I live to be a hundred I shall maybe be an anarchist."<sup>2</sup> Although this final transformation never came to pass, his colourful life was replete with many twists and turns: Niemöller the U-boat commander became Niemöller the Protestant pastor; Niemöller the Nazi voter became Niemöller the Nazi resister; Niemöller the ultra-nationalist became Niemöller the pacifist and world Christian leader; Niemöller the anti-Semite became Niemöller the critic of anti-Semitism and racism; Niemöller the anti-Communist became Niemöller the left-wing activist.

These transformations testify to Niemöller's willingness to change as he came to terms with the dramatic events of the twentieth century. But Niemöller was neither a chameleon nor an opportunist. At his core was a resolute certainty that his conscience, dictated by his love of God and Germany, would lead him down the right path. His Christian faith and identification with his nation were ever present in his thoughts and actions but manifested themselves differently in different times and places. This essay will examine Niemöller's most celebrated transformation – from supporter to opponent of Nazi church policy – through an analysis of his sermons and other statements from 1 January 1933 until his arrest and imprisonment by the Nazis on 1 July 1937.<sup>3</sup> His early support for the Nazis was rooted firmly in his conviction that their program was good for the nation and the church. When it became obvious that they intended to aggressively subordinate the church to the state and to lend their support to a church faction with dubious Christian credentials, he quickly changed course and led the opposition to Hitler's church policy. Since Niemöller saw German Protestantism as the essence of German national identity, the Nazi state's assault on the former was also experienced as an attack on the latter.

Niemöller's roots were steeped in German nationalism and conservative Lutheranism. He grew up in a proud Prussian household where his father, a Lutheran pastor, instilled in him devotion to God and Germany. The alliance

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(October 1986), 521–546; Wolfgang Gerlach, *And the Witnesses were Silent: The Confessing Church and the Jews*, trans. Victoria Barnett (Lincoln, NE 2000).

2 Bentley, *Martin Niemöller*, 223.

3 Niemöller's sermons during this period have been assembled recently in an attractive volume, Michael Heymel/Zentralarchiv der Evangelischen Kirche in Hessen und Nassau (ed.), *Dahlemer Predigten: Kritische Ausgabe* (Gütersloh 2013). For English translations of some of these sermons see, Martin Niemöller, *Here Stand I!*, trans. Jane Lyburn (Chicago 1937) and Martin Niemöller, *"God Is My Fuehrer": Being the Last Twenty-Eight Sermons*, trans. Jane Lyburn (New York 1941).

of throne and altar was the bedrock of German Protestantism and a core value in the Niemöller household. The concept of princely (secular) authority over the church, the doctrine of two kingdoms, and the theology of the “orders of creation” were core beliefs of the German Protestant churches, and fostered political quietism and subservience to the state.<sup>4</sup> By upending the conservative definition of national identity, especially the alliance of church and state, the Weimar Republic led conservatives like Niemöller to redouble their efforts to seek an alternative political entity that would establish the necessary conditions for the restoration of the German-Protestant symbiosis.

An analysis of Niemöller’s sermons and other statements from 1933 to 1937 reveals the continuities and discontinuities in the ways in which he conceived of the relationship between German Protestantism and German national identity during a period when the German state, traditionally a strong ally of the Protestant church, grew increasingly more hostile to the Christian churches. During the four and a half years under examination, the growing persecution of the churches by the Nazi state and the Nazification of the church’s teachings by the Nazi-backed “German Christian” Movement (*Deutsche Christen*) forced Niemöller and a minority of like-minded conservative Protestants to rethink their conceptions of German national identity, particularly the relationship between church and nation. Niemöller’s experiences under Nazi rule led him after 1945 to embrace a de-nationalised and independent Protestant Christianity without abandoning his devotion to God and Germany. By far the most consistent theme in Niemöller’s sermons from 1933 to his arrest in 1937 was his emphasis on God’s authority over all aspects of one’s life and the responsibility of faithful Christians to fear, love, and obey God. The centrality of these convictions in Niemöller’s worldview largely explains the manner in which he opposed Nazism and the German Christians.

### Hitler and the Dual Awakening of Church and Nation

On New Year’s Day 1933, 30 days before President Hindenburg would appoint Adolf Hitler chancellor, Niemöller preached a sermon on the topic of God’s grace.<sup>5</sup> It was a classic Lutheran sermon tailored to a unique moment. He began by acknowledging many Germans’ anxiety about both their personal lives and the state of their nation. The Great Depression had hit Germany

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4 Fritz Fischer, “Der deutsche Protestantismus und die Politik im 19. Jahrhundert”, in *Historische Zeitschrift* 171 (1951), 473–518; Karl-Wilhelm Dahm, “German Protestantism and Politics, 1918–1939”, in *Journal of Contemporary History* 3 (1968), 29–49.

5 Niemöller, *Here Stand I!*, 1–9.

particularly hard, with unemployment reaching nearly 30 per cent in 1932, resulting in huge electoral victories for the far right and left. “What God’s intentions may be with regard to our nation or to ourselves in the new year”, Niemöller preached, “we do not and shall not know.” But he warned his parishioners that God’s purpose was not to relieve their anxiety or to comfort or console them. That, Niemöller bemoaned, was “easy Christianity” and “artificial grace”. Rather, God wanted Christians to put *their whole trust* in him and his son. Niemöller called this placing of trust in God “repentance” and “faith” – the twin hallmarks of Lutheranism and the subject of virtually every sermon Niemöller gave in the 1930s.

Niemöller greeted Hindenburg’s appointment of Hitler as chancellor on 30 January with euphoria. Not only was Hitler charismatic, nationalist, and anti-Socialist – all essential for Niemöller – he had also repeatedly spoken about the vital role the churches would play in the rebirth of the German nation. In February, Hitler reassured the nation that the government would protect “Christianity as the basis of our morality”<sup>6</sup> and “fill our culture again with the Christian spirit”.<sup>7</sup> Although Niemöller never became a member of the Nazi Party, his friend and colleague in Dahlem, Franz Hildebrandt – a Protestant pastor of Jewish descent – described the Nazi program for national and racial revival as fundamentally the same as Niemöller’s, “[...] with its vehement denial of all that was meant by individualism, parliamentarianism, pacifism, Marxism, and Judaism”.<sup>8</sup> The Nazi revolution, Niemöller believed, was a turning point, not just for the nation, but for the church as well. His sermons at this time were filled with references to the dual awakenings of the nation and the church. Under the Weimar Republic, Niemöller believed, the nation had lost its way and the churches their public significance: the Nazis would help restore Christianity to its rightful place in the nation.

Just over a month after Hitler was handed control, Niemöller addressed the appropriate role of Christians in the public and political life of the nation. “The fact is”, he preached on 5 March, “it is simply impossible for us today to accept the comfortable formula that politics have no place in the church.” The preceding two months’ political events, he maintained, were important “to our fate and to that of our nation”, and he encouraged his parishioners to “take a conscientious stand” on these events.<sup>9</sup> The date of this sermon, 5 March 1933, is particularly significant. Following the fire that gutted the

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6 Jeremy Noakes/Geoffrey Pridham (ed.), *Nazism 1919–1945, vol. 1: The Rise to Power 1919–1934: A Documentary Reader* (Exeter 1983), 131–134.

7 Quoted in Kyle Jantzen, *Faith and Fatherland: Parish Politics in Hitler’s Germany* (Minneapolis, MN 2008), 22.

8 Hildebrandt, *Martin Niemöller and His Creed*, 32.

9 Niemöller, *Here Stand I!*, 10–12.

Reichstag building on 27 February, Hitler declared a state of emergency and the Nazis unleashed a campaign of violence and terror against communists, socialists, trade unionists, and Jews – making the elections on 5 March a legal farce. Niemöller took his “conscientious stand” on these events by voting for the Nazis.<sup>10</sup>

His election-day sermon went on to underscore the decisive role Christianity had played and should continue to play in shaping German national identity. Central to his understanding of that identity was the evolving synthesis of Germanism and Protestantism, supported and guided by German statesmen. “When our German nation was born”, he preached, “God gave it as soul the Christian faith. Our national development [...] has been inwardly based on Christianity, and from the Christianity of the national soul have come all the forces which made our nation develop and grow.” This, he explained, was why there could never be a rebirth of the German nation without a revival of the Christian faith: “This nation – our nation – will either be Christian or it will cease to exist.”<sup>11</sup> Accordingly, Niemöller called on the nation’s new political leaders to take the interests of the Christian community into account and “not to be deluded into thinking that the question of religion can ever be a private matter among us”. If the more fanatical Nazis succeeded in restricting Christianity to the private sphere, he warned, they would be committing national suicide. Responsible German statesmen had to protect and confirm “the alliance between the fate of the nation and the fate of the church”. Niemöller earnestly believed that Hitler had the best intentions regarding the churches and that the Führer understood the vital connection between German faith and identity.<sup>12</sup>

The recovery of the German nation, Niemöller asserted, depended on whether and how far the Christian faith was alive. The Nazis might help this recovery along but ultimately it depended on the Christian community’s willingness to embrace Christ’s passion, his suffering on the cross, and all that that entailed. Christ “wants no frenzied enthusiasm”, Niemöller exclaimed in reaction to the rallies of the German Christians, instead “he treads the path that leads to suffering and to the cross, and his adherents must also tread it, following in his steps”.<sup>13</sup> The greatest service a Christian could render his nation was to offer himself wholly to Christ: “for without the revival of Christianity there can be no rebirth of our nation”. Bemoaning the German Christians’ “large-scale propaganda scheme for Christianity”

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10 Schmidt, *Martin Niemöller im Kirchenkampf*, 48.

11 Niemöller, *Here Stand I!*, 12–13.

12 *Ibid.*, 13–14.

13 *Ibid.*, 17.

and the “sugary Christian confection” they concocted to woo the masses, he advocated instead preaching the “unaffected message of Christ’s word and work, of his life and suffering, of his death and resurrection – and nothing more”.<sup>14</sup>

### The Church Struggle Commences

Concerns over exactly how free the churches were began to mount in April when Hitler appointed a leading German Christian, Ludwig Müller, as his representative to the Protestant Church. With Hitler’s endorsement, Müller called for the unification of the 28 regional churches into one Protestant church under the leadership of an all-powerful Reich Bishop (Müller, of course, had himself in mind), the coordination (*Gleichschaltung*) of the church with the new state, and racial conformity in the church.<sup>15</sup> On this last point the German Christians favoured the implementation of the so-called “Aryan paragraph” in the churches.<sup>16</sup> The Aryan paragraph was part of the Nazis’ April 1933 Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service, which removed most Jews from the civil service. If applied to the churches, the Aryan paragraph would result in the dismissal of any Protestant pastors with a Jewish parent or grandparent.

The sudden ascendancy of the German Christians and their call to fuse racial doctrine with Christian doctrine led a group of young churchmen from Berlin, calling themselves the Young Reformation Movement, to publicly criticise the opportunistic power grab by Müller and to reject racial criteria in the church. At the age of forty-one, Martin Niemöller was among the approximately 3,000 pastors to join the Young Reformers protest against the German Christians. He soon became the movement’s leader.<sup>17</sup>

Alongside growing concerns about Nazi church policy and German Christian theology, Niemöller also appears to have been bothered by the divisive effects of the Nazis’ seizure of power on the fabric of German society. While he did not explicitly object to Nazi attacks on Jews and leftists – including but not limited to the establishment of concentration camps, the terrorizing of Jews and leftists by SA thugs, the 1 April boycott of Jewish businesses, the 7 April Civil Service Law dismissing Jews from the civil service, and the 1 May book burning – he was clearly responding to the increased political and racial tensions in his 21 May sermon by calling on all Christians to follow the

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14 *Ibid.*, 27–28.

15 Klaus Scholder, *The Churches and the Third Reich*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia 1988), 318–319.

16 On the German Christians see, Doris Bergen, *Twisted Cross: The German Christian Movement in the Third Reich* (Chapel Hill, NC 1996).

17 Schmidt, *Martin Niemöller im Kirchenkampf*, 55–60.

gospel's call to "love our enemies" and "pray for all men". "Today we like to talk optimistically of the new fellowship of the nation", Niemöller preached. "But it is becoming more and more evident that even this new fellowship is such that it not only binds but at the same time divides." Should we really expect, he asked, a Nazi storm trooper to pray for a socialist, or a man dismissed from his job because of his background to love the new government responsible for dismissing him? But this is what the Bible says, Niemöller insisted, acknowledging that it was contrary to human nature to pray for one's avowed enemies and persecutors. Christians, he preached, could not be mere spectators to the events transpiring in their midst. The newly revitalised Christian community had to choose: to move toward God or turn away from him. Only by exercising love toward all men and women – "toward Christians and infidels and Jews" – could Christians move toward God.<sup>18</sup>

#### Consent and Dissent:

#### The Pastors' Emergency League and the Confessing Church

Meanwhile, the church situation became more distressing. When the widely respected director of the Bethel Institute, Niemöller's friend Friedrich von Bodelschwingh, won the election for Reich Bishop, Ludwig Müller and his supporters in the Nazi state hounded him out of office, allowing Müller to become Reich Bishop. Moreover, in nation-wide church elections in July 1933 German Christians, with Hitler campaigning for them, won two-thirds of the seats in the national synod. At the Prussian synod held in early September 1933, the German Christian majority voted to enforce the Aryan paragraph in the Prussian churches. Niemöller and several colleagues, including Dietrich Bonhoeffer, believed that the Aryan paragraph directly violated the church's confession by calling into question the efficacy of the sacrament of baptism by denying that baptised Christians of Jewish descent could be Protestant pastors. In the days following the Prussian synod Niemöller and Bonhoeffer drafted a pledge agreeing to hold true to the Reformation Confessions and to stand by their "non-Aryan" colleagues in the clergy.<sup>19</sup> By the end of September nearly two thousand pastors had signed the pledge; by the end of 1933 the number was close to six thousand. Those who signed the pledge became members of the Pastors' Emergency League (PEL), the forerunner of the Confessing Church.<sup>20</sup>

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18 Niemöller, *Here Stand I!*, 39–43.

19 Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer, A Biography*, trans. Victoria Barnett (Minneapolis 2000), 310.

20 Gerlach, *And the Witnesses were Silent*, 32–33.

Despite Niemöller's growing opposition to Nazi church policy, aspects of the national awakening appealed to him, especially Hitler's foreign policy. He joined hundreds of other PEL members in sending Hitler a telegram in October 1933 praising his withdrawal from the League of Nations, calling it a "manly deed" that preserved Germany's honour. "In the name of more than 2,500 Protestant pastors, who are not members of the Faith Movement of German Christians", the telegram read, "we solemnly pledge true allegiance and prayerful commemoration."<sup>21</sup> Niemöller urged his parishioners to support Hitler's action by voting "yes" in the 12 November plebiscite on Germany's withdrawal from the League. Infuriated by Niemöller's position, pastor Hildebrandt – Niemöller's friend whom the Nazis designated a "non-Aryan" because of his mother's Jewish descent – wrote Niemöller: "I find it impossible to understand how you can joyfully welcome the political move in Geneva when you yourselves refuse to adopt an unequivocal attitude toward a church which persistently denies us equality of status [...]."<sup>22</sup>

Niemöller also praised the Führer for declaring the traditional Harvest Thanksgiving in early October an official festival day called "German Peasants' Day". German Peasants' Day, Niemöller enthused, encouraged expressions of national unity and a "healthy organic national life", serving as a positive reminder of the "inescapable demands" of race and nationality on the German people. However, he cautioned, it also served as a reminder that God was the creator of mankind and that men are nothing more than fallen sinners before the almighty God. Celebrating German Peasants' Day, he preached, should not lead us into the fatal error of commending our own virtues when we should be praising God. "It would be a calamity for our nation", Niemöller warned, "if the present upheaval should result in nothing but a new natural piety", which he associated with the blood-and-soil emphasis of the German Christians' *völkisch* or racial theology.<sup>23</sup>

When the German Christians circulated a questionnaire that autumn requiring candidates for the ministry to provide certificates of Aryan ancestry, Niemöller called on candidates not to respond.<sup>24</sup> A few days later in a 5 November sermon he belatedly declared: "the signs do not seem to point to a peaceful development, but rather to the beginning of a struggle".<sup>25</sup> For Niemöller and the vast majority of his PEL colleagues the struggle was primarily a struggle between factions within the church and not a church-state struggle; however, the fact that the Nazis were initially behind the German

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21 Ibid., 231.

22 Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 323.

23 Niemöller, *Here I Stand!*, 47–50.

24 Gerlach, *And the Witnesses were Silent*, 71.

25 Niemöller, *Here I Stand!*, 60.



Christians and continually ratcheted up their persecution of the churches meant that the state's church policy was also the object of Niemöller's disdain.

He took explicit aim in his sermons at the German Christians' pseudo-Christian political theology promoting a "positive Christianity", which they described as, "suited to a truly German Lutheran spirit and heroic piety".<sup>26</sup> A week before the infamous gathering at the Sports Palace in Berlin, where leading German Christians spewed anti-Semitic rants and called for a "religious reformation in the spirit of National Socialism", Niemöller scornfully referred to the offensive in the church as "the new battlefield of German-Teutonic piety". He was especially offended by the German Christians' projection of Luther as a "model prototype of the religious Christian hero". The temptation to worship Luther, Niemöller preached in November 1933, was great because "Luther as a German is nearer to us than the Jewish rabbi from Nazareth". But faith in Luther remained hollow and meaningless "if we do not join with Luther in confessing our faith in Christ and Christ alone".<sup>27</sup>

A year after Niemöller's enthusiastic endorsement of the Nazi seizure of power, he had to acknowledge that "all the signs which seemed to foreshadow a new beginning came to naught". Many men and women stood by their creed, but a growing number of professed Christians, Niemöller lamented, practiced their religion mainly to benefit their race and nation. The German Christians' sheer hubris alarmed him: their suggestion that the German nation had no inheritance of sin and that the nation was "everlasting" disregarded the Christian gospels and placed man on a par with God. Since Christ's enemies, "are leading a war against sin and death and speak about the heroic and the eternal life of our nation and empire", Niemöller proclaimed, Christians must remember that "Christ did not die on a battlefield": he had suffered and died on the cross, and we must be prepared to suffer and die for him.<sup>28</sup>

It was to combat such errors and give the Confessing Church a solid theological foundation that Niemöller and the church opposition met in Barmen in May 1934. At Barmen, confessing churchmen from the Lutheran, Reformed, and united churches in Germany condemned the German Christians' theological errors and affirmed "God's mighty claim upon our whole life", as the confession's second thesis proclaimed. The synod's theological declaration was primarily the work of the Swiss Reformed theologian Karl Barth, but its six articles paralleled Niemöller's repeated emphasis in his

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26 Mary Solberg, *A Church Undone: Documents from the German Christian Faith Movement, 1932-1940*, 169.

27 Niemöller, *Here I Stand!*, 60-62.

28 *Ibid.*, 68-69.

sermons on God's authority over all aspects of one's life and the church's responsibility to preach the unaltered message of Christ's word and work and nothing more. This is not to claim there was nothing innovative about Barth's articulation of the Barmen confession but rather to stress that Niemöller's uncomplicated, biblically-based Lutheran theology served from the start as a bulwark against German Christian heresies. The Barmen Declaration largely reinforced a theological position Niemöller had already staked out.<sup>29</sup> After returning from Barmen, Niemöller conceded that the Protestant tradition of viewing "the church and the nation as one" was in question now that the Christian community was "hated by many, perhaps a majority" in Nazi Germany. The crucial distinction was not one's attitude toward the nation – Nazis and non-Nazis loved their nation – but rather one's attitude toward Christ. Niemöller juxtaposed the Nazi and German Christian hatred for the confessing community with the brotherly love he felt at Barmen. The schism in the Protestant churches was a misfortune, he believed, but it also helped separate the chaff from the wheat, as witnessed at Barmen when confessing Christians agreed to adhere to a theology of *solus Christus* and rejected the "alien principles" of the German Christians.

### The Question of the Church's Relation to the State

In the wake of the second anniversary celebrations of the Nazi seizure of power in early 1935, Niemöller could not help but express his disappointment in both the sphere of religion and politics. "Many of our hopes have been shattered in these two years", he bemoaned: "We see more and more clearly how there is being propagated a new paganism which wishes to have nothing to do with the Savior who was crucified for us, while the church which acknowledges that Savior as its only Lord is reproached with being an enemy of the state [...]"<sup>30</sup> As a devout German Lutheran it seemed preposterous to Niemöller that he or confessing Christians could be seen as anything but loyal German patriots. So he used his sermon of 3 February 1935 to address the relationship between church and state.

The question of Christian conduct in relation to the state, Niemöller told his congregation, is "unequivocally and authoritatively answered",<sup>31</sup> in the apostle Paul's *Epistle to the Romans*, which stated in no uncertain terms that

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29 The major exception was Barmen's fifth thesis on the relationship between church and state, stating that the state was to provide for justice and peace and that the church rejected any totalitarian claims by the state. Niemöller's conservative Lutheran understanding of the relationship between church and state is described below.

30 *Ibid.*, 118.

31 *Ibid.*, 119.

everyone was subject to the governing authorities, and that these authorities had been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebelled against the governing authorities was rebelling against God and would be punished. Christians, Niemöller observed, had combined faith and loyalty to the state since pagan Rome, and Lutherans, in particular, had heeded Paul's words. "The authority peculiar to the state," Niemöller elaborated, "is an ordinance of God subjected to no human conditions whatever and holds good independently of our approval or disapproval." Surely, the duty of the state is to protect the good and punish the evil, Niemöller asserted, but we have no right to oppose or resist a ruling power just because it does not live up to our expectations or hurts our feelings by calling us traitors. Christians owe secular rulers – as "ministers of God" – their "willing obedience" regardless of their moral worth. Secular rulers who fail in their duty to "protect the work of good men and resist the actions of evil doers" *answer only to God* as to how well they have fulfilled their commission. The government's success in carrying out God's commands is irrelevant: "we remain conscientiously bound to give it what is its due: tribute and obedience and respect – and, if need be, body and soul".<sup>32</sup>

Disobedience to a secular power was only warranted, according to Niemöller, when the state asked a Christian to do something wrong – then it was *the duty* of a Christian, in the words of the apostle Peter, "to obey God rather than men".<sup>33</sup> The phrase "to obey God rather than men" is often used – problematically, I believe – as shorthand to describe Niemöller's resistance to Nazism. It implies that he resisted the Nazi state and called on believing Christians to resist whenever the state's actions clashed with Christianity. But this is exactly what Niemöller's entire sermon argued *against*. In the very next sentence he returns to his sermon's main point, that the duty to obey God "does not release us from that other duty 'to render unto Caesar what is Caesar's'".<sup>34</sup> In other words, "to obey God rather than men" did not mean offering political resistance whenever a regime did something immoral or unjust. It meant, as Peter had used it in Acts 5:29, that Christ's followers had a duty to spread the good news of Christ's coming and to live by his word. Niemöller clarified this thought somewhat in April 1935 when he told his parishioners, "For our salvation does not depend upon whether we have been given our rights [...] but it [salvation] is lost and forfeit if the injustice which weighs upon us gains the upper hand and determines our thoughts and actions."<sup>35</sup> No one was treated more unjustly than Jesus, Niemöller reminded

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32 Niemöller, *Here I Stand!*, 120–122.

33 *Ibid.*, 122.

34 *Ibid.*

35 *Ibid.*, 141.

his parishioners, but this did not cause Jesus to lose his faith in God. Rather Jesus said, “Father, forgive them!”<sup>36</sup> Niemöller went on to thank God for giving the German nation a government – the Nazi government – and “for having through it preserved order and peace for us”. He concluded his sermon by praying for God to “guide and rule our Führer and his counsellors, our nation and our church, in such a way that his kingdom may come and be a reality among us”.<sup>37</sup>

It is illuminating to compare Niemöller’s traditional Lutheran understanding of the relationship between church and state with that of his younger and more liberal colleague in the Confessing Church, Dietrich Bonhoeffer. In Bonhoeffer’s April 1933 essay, “The Church and the Jewish Question”, he begins by outlining his understanding of the relationship between church and state, coming to very different conclusions than Niemöller. For Bonhoeffer it is the duty of the church – here he agrees with Niemöller – to affirm that the state is an ordinance of God, or as Bonhoeffer puts it, “God’s order of preservation in the godless world”.<sup>38</sup> The state’s purpose is to preserve law and order – through force when necessary. It is not the church’s place to judge the actions of the state on humanitarian or moral grounds, since: “The Church knows about the essential necessity for the use of force in this world, and it knows about the ‘moral’ injustice that is necessarily involved in the use of force in certain concrete state actions.”<sup>39</sup> In other words, the church, Bonhoeffer acknowledged, was perfectly comfortable with the state using force to maintain law and order in an imperfect and corrupt world.

However, that did not mean, according to Bonhoeffer, that the church was indifferent to the misuse of force by the state. The church was compelled to speak, and in some cases act, when it determined that the state had failed in its primary task to preserve law and order. If the state created *too little* or *too much* law and order, the church had three (incremental) responses: first, it could remind the state of its responsibility to preserve law and order; second, it could come to the aid of the victims of the state’s unjust use of force; and, third, it could take direct political action against the state’s unjust actions.<sup>40</sup> None of these responses by the church called into question the legitimacy of the state as an ordinance of God appointed with the task of maintaining law and order, but each response did, to varying degrees, question whether the state was doing its job properly.

Whereas Bonhoeffer justified political resistance to the state when the state unjustly persecuted a group of people, for Niemöller (at least in early 1935)

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36 Ibid., 143.

37 Ibid., 122.

38 *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works, vol. 12: Berlin, 1932–1933*, 362.

39 Ibid., 363.

40 Ibid., 365.

resistance to the state was the equivalent to resistance to God. Niemöller did allow for an individual Christian to refuse an order by the state when, “we are asked to do wrong”, by which Niemöller presumably meant when the state’s directive clashed with the Christian commandments. But that is a far cry from Bonhoeffer’s clarion call for the church to engage in political resistance when the state denied Jewish citizens their rights or when the state imposed racial laws – the Aryan paragraph – on the church. Niemöller supported the church playing a public role and individual Christians engaging in the public sphere, but he drew the line at Christians as Christians resisting the state simply because they disagreed with it or found its use of force problematic.

### Jews and German Christians – the Dual Threat to Christianity

Although both Bonhoeffer and Niemöller shared an anti-Judaic theology that sought a religious solution to the “Jewish question” in the conversion of Jews, they diverged on the need for action in the face Jewish suffering.<sup>41</sup> Of greater concern to Niemöller than the Nazi state’s persecution of Jews in the mid-1930s was its embrace of German Christian paganism and its harassment of confessing pastors: these were the true threats to the church. When Niemöller addressed the “Jewish question” in his sermons he often found a way to link his aversion to the German Christians to his aversion to Jews. In 1935 he frequently compared German Christian harassment of confessing Christians to the Jews’ alleged mistreatment of Christians. Just as the Jews had rejected Christ and persecuted early Christians for their faith, Niemöller preached, now the advocates of positive Christianity were attacking Christ’s followers for similar reasons. Jews and German Christians were both the enemies of Christianity, Niemöller reasoned, because both rejected Jesus’s emphasis on sin, forgiveness, repentance, and grace in their advocacy of a pure-blooded, race-conscious nation and a national – as opposed to universal Christian – morality. The plight of the Jews, Niemöller believed, was a warning to the German Christians: the Jewish fate was living proof of what happens when you adopt a theology in which race trumps grace.<sup>42</sup>

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41 This essay cannot address Niemöller’s anti-Semitism in any detail. See Martin Stöhr, “...habe ich geschwiegen. Zur Frage eines Antisemitismus bei Martin Niemöller”, <http://www.martin-niemoller-stiftung.de>; Robert Michael, “Theological Myth, German Antisemitism and the Holocaust: The Case of Martin Niemöller”, in *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 2:1 (1987), 105–122; Eberhard Röhm/Jörg Thierfelder, *Juden, Christen, Deutsche 1933–45*, vol. 1: 1933–35, vol. 2: 1935–38, vol. 3: 1938–41 (Stuttgart 1990–95); and Richard Gutteridge, *Open Thy Mouth for the Dumb: The German Evangelical Church and the Jews, 1879–1950* (Oxford 1976).

42 Niemöller, *Here Stand I!*, 196–197.

For Niemöller, the Jewish threat was less immediate than the more pressing one coming from within the church. “We are being drawn into a titanic battle”, he preached in August 1935, “between heaven and hell, between God and the devil, between angels and demons.”<sup>43</sup> And there was no room for compromise in this battle, for that would mean nothing less than granting the pagan god of the Nazis and German Christians a place alongside Jesus.<sup>44</sup> As followers of Jesus, confessing Christians were not called upon to engage in the political affairs of the nation. It was, however, most certainly their duty to halt “the de-Christianizing of our nation” by professing the gospel and declaring there is “no other kingdom than the kingdom of God”.<sup>45</sup>

### Render unto God what is God’s

As the Nazis ratcheted up their persecution of the Confessing Church in the second half of 1936, Niemöller began to rethink – ever so slightly – his position on resistance. Addressing the Gospel passage, “Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s”, he concluded that there could be no peace between the earthly kingdom of the Nazis and the spiritual kingdom of God if the Nazis did not render unto God what was God’s. “For the temporal powers to make such a claim to our whole being is to rob God. We cannot act as though Caesar has the power on earth and God the power in Heaven.” For when Jesus said “Render unto God what is God’s”, Niemöller explained, he meant that our whole being is God’s. “What belongs to God? We ourselves belong to Him, we, totally and wholly!” We are willing uncomplainingly, Niemöller acknowledged, to give the world what belongs to it; however, if the world demands what is God’s, “then we *must manfully resist*, lest we give the world what is God’s [...]”.<sup>46</sup>

Exactly what Niemöller meant by “manfully resist” is unclear, but he seems to have meant something along the lines of Bonhoeffer’s first two options: to remind the state of its duties to preserve law and order, including protecting the church and guaranteeing its independence, and to come to the aid of the persecuted, whom Niemöller explicitly and repeatedly named as confessing Christians. The Confessing Church Memorandum to Hitler of July 1936, which Niemöller helped to draft, did the former, and his intercession sermons and efforts on behalf of pastors detained by the state did the latter.

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43 Ibid., 187.

44 Niemöller, “*God is my Fuehrer*”, 37.

45 Ibid., 42.

46 Niemöller, “*God is my Fuehrer*”, 50.

While showing due deference to the government and emphasising their love for the German nation, the ten authors of the memorandum to Hitler unequivocally accused members of the government of interfering in church affairs and attempting to de-Christianise the nation. They even reproached Hitler for receiving “veneration in a form that is due only to God”.<sup>47</sup> Although the authors’ main concern was to condemn the government’s obstruction of Christian teachings and its efforts to replace the worship of Christ with the glorification of German blood, ethnicity, and race, they also took a forthright stand against Nazi anti-Semitism.

When the Aryan human being is glorified, God’s Word is witness to the sinfulness of all humans; when anti-Semitism, which binds him to hatred of Jews, is imposed upon the Christian in the framework of the National Socialist worldview, then for him the Christian commandment to love one’s fellow human stands opposed to it.

This clear condemnation of anti-Semitism by the Niemöller wing of the Confessing Church is often used to “prove” that Niemöller and the Confessing Church actively challenged the regime’s racial policy, but the overall record of the Confessing Church speaks otherwise. A few individual exceptions aside – and Niemöller is not one of them – confessing pastors did not respond to the persecution of Jews as either humanitarians or as religious brethren. Their focus was unmistakably and unabashedly on the persecution of the churches. Only after 1945 did Niemöller and other members of the radical wing of the Confessing Church come to see the error of their church-centred outlook.

In autumn 1936 Niemöller continued to temper his earlier unwavering defence of the doctrine of two kingdoms. “We love our nation”, he preached, “we must love it – we cannot and dare not and must not do otherwise. But when things change so that the sword ‘reaches unto our soul,’ when the Lord Jesus Christ calls, then we must tear ourselves free of the environment that has denied Him.”<sup>48</sup> Jesus Christ, he told his congregation, carried God’s claim on our lives “into the temporal sphere, into the secular world, into our family and professional life, into our feast-days and ordinary everyday life”.<sup>49</sup> But tearing oneself free of the environment that denied God did not, for Niemöller, imply political resistance. In a sermon preached in May 1937 he declared, “Dear brethren, we should not attempt to offer resistance to these temptations with our own strength, but we should cling to Him Who will let His strength

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47 Peter Hoffmann, *Behind Valkyrie: German Resistance to Hitler: Documents* (Montreal 2011), 101–116.

48 Niemöller, “*God is my Fuehrer*”, 39.

49 *Ibid.*, 121.

become mighty in our weakness [...]”<sup>50</sup> At this time he saw resistance as a two-fold commitment. It was primarily a spiritual commitment to the word of God – a stubborn refusal to alter the Christian message to suit the times. When necessary, it also meant coming to the aid of Christians persecuted by the state for their faith in God and defence of the church’s independence.

In Niemöller’s second-to-last service on 19 June 1937, he read the names of 70 members of the Confessing Church who had been arrested or silenced by the state, referring to them as “the salt of the earth”. What were these men and women arrested for, Niemöller asked his parishioners: they refused to alter their faith in Christ the Lord and to preach the Christian heresies of the Nazis and German Christians. In Niemöller’s most radical decoupling of the German-Protestant symbiosis, he declared in solidarity with the detainees: “And we must not – for Heaven’s sake – make a *German* Gospel out of the Gospel; we must not – for Heaven’s sake – make a *German* Church out of Christ’s Church; we must not – for God’s sake – make *German* Christians out of Evangelical Christians!”<sup>51</sup> He then asked repeatedly if Hitler, who had promised to protect the church and its independence, still stood by his word – in effect questioning the Führer’s trustworthiness. This sermon from mid-June 1937 was a far cry from Niemöller’s optimism in 1933 when he believed the Protestant church and the Nazi state would collaborate on the re-Christianisation and re-Germanisation of the nation.

Niemöller’s last two sermons before his arrest testify to both the distance he had come since 1933 and the continuity of his conservative Protestant outlook. In his final sermon on 27 June 1937 he returned again and again to the theme that in a time of Christian suffering and persecution the Christian should not question God’s plan but rather give oneself wholly to God. “We must not forget”, Niemöller declared, “that God brings about our salvation through the *cross* of His son [...] through His death.” The example of Jesus bearing the cross, Niemöller admitted, is not easy to follow – it’s no “pleasure excursion” – but, like the apostles whom the Jewish authorities had banned from preaching, Christians have a duty to preach the Gospel whatever the consequences.<sup>52</sup> When Niemöller declared one last time that “One must obey God rather than men” he did not mean – as some scholars and Niemöller advocates have suggested – that Christians had a duty to challenge the secular powers on matters of state; instead, he suggested a Christian must accept God’s authority over the world and resist the temptation to believe – as the Nazis and German Christians did – that through human efforts alone personal and national salvation was attainable.

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 230.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 276–277.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 289–293.



## Conclusions

The Gestapo arrested Niemöller at his home on the morning of 1 July 1937 and charged him with making “treasonable statements” and misusing his pulpit for political purposes. During his trial he denied having any political animosity toward the Nazis and emphasised his loyalty to the state and devotion to the nation. His lawyer described him as “a completely unpolitical man, whose activity had been exclusively determined by the word of God”.<sup>53</sup> The judges acquitted Niemöller of the most serious charges and declared that his motives were honourable but found him guilty of a law passed by Hitler, which forbade pastors from reading the names of those who had been arrested from the pulpit. Niemöller was sentenced to time served, fined, and scheduled for release. His victory, alas, was short-lived. Hitler was so incensed by the court’s ruling that he ordered Niemöller confined in a concentration camp as his private prisoner – a sentence that would end only with Hitler’s demise.

The court’s virtual acquittal of Niemöller on the charges of dissent and his own vocal objections to having engaged in political opposition, raise the question of the nature of his resistance. In 1941 Thomas Mann concluded after reading his sermons that Pastor Niemöller had become – unintentionally – a “political agitator”: the same charge the Nazis had made. When Hitler demanded not only what was Caesar’s but also what was God’s, Mann argued, the Führer erased the borderline between religion and politics, forcing Niemöller into the role of political agitator when he came to the defence of his church. “From a mere popular preacher until that hour”, Mann extolled, “you would emerge a political figure day by day, without even realizing it, and your church would loom up as a center of political opposition.”<sup>54</sup> This type of hagiographic interpretation of Niemöller and the Confessing Church – as a centre of political resistance – remains popular despite having been largely discredited by scholars.<sup>55</sup> As I have argued elsewhere, “Niemöller behaved, as did most of his colleagues in the Confessing Church, very much like the conservative elite in the economy, the military, and the Catholic Church. He

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53 Bentley, *Martin Niemöller*, 139.

54 *Ibid.*, preface, 3–5.

55 See Friedrich Baumgärtel, *Wider die Kirchenkampf-Legenden* (Neudettelsau 1959); Klaus Scholder, *The Churches and the Third Reich*, vols. 1–2 (Philadelphia 1987–88); Gerhard Besier, *Die Kirchen und das Dritte Reich: Spaltungen und Anwehrkämpfe 1934–1937* (Berlin 2001); John S. Conway, *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches, 1933–45* (New York 1968); Franklin H. Littell/Hubert G. Locke (eds.), *The German Church Struggle and the Holocaust* (Detroit 1974); Ernst Christian Helmreich, *The German Churches under Hitler: Background, Struggle, and Epilogue* (Detroit 1979); Victoria Barnett, *For the Soul of the People: Protestant Protest Against Hitler* (Oxford 1992); Robert P. Erickson/Susannah Heschel (ed.), *Betrayal: German Churches and the Holocaust* (Minneapolis, MN 1999); and Manfred Gailus, *Protestantismus und Nationalismus. Studien zur nationalsozialistischen Durchdringung des protestantischen Sozialmilieus in Berlin* (Cologne 2001).

supported many of Hitler's policies, opposed a few that affected his or the church's independence, and was ambivalent about the rest."<sup>56</sup> His resistance, in my opinion, is better defined as "churchly resistance" rather than "political resistance". Not only was it aimed at the theological heresies of the German Christians and Hitler's oppressive church policies – not at the Nazi political program – but it also took place within the traditional sphere of church-based activities (preaching, pastoral care, church synods, etc.) and was articulated in the lexicon of Protestant Christianity.

Certainly Niemöller did not believe his Confessing Church activities constituted political agitation against the state. In fact, the only political activity Niemöller engaged in prior to 1945 – as a U-boat commander and as a pastor – was expressly in defence of the conservative nationalist state. In this, he differed from his politically more liberal colleagues such as Bonhoeffer and Karl Barth. What Niemöller objected to during the Third Reich was the attempt by the German Christians and the Nazis to Nazify the Protestant Church by eliminating its traditional emphasis on sin, suffering, death, and redemption; by transforming Jesus of the cross into Jesus the Nordic/Aryan hero; by purging the pastorate of *baptised* Jews; and by restructuring the church according to the Führer principle. Niemöller understood all too well that challenging Hitler on political grounds would discredit the Confessing Church and provide the Nazis with a convenient excuse for rounding up confessing Christians.

German Protestantism, Niemöller wholeheartedly believed, was the foundation of Germany's integrity and virtue; an attack on the Protestant Church was thus not only an attack on Christianity but also on the German nation and its national identity as well. When the Nazis came for the communists, socialists, trade unionists, and Jews – as Niemöller's famous postwar poetic confession acknowledges – he did not protest, but when they came for the church, Niemöller could no longer remain aloof, his Christianity and nationalism summoning him to rebel. But if Nazism taught him anything, it was that while the nation urgently needed the church, the church could survive – even flourish – without the nation.

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56 Matthew D. Hockenos, *A Church Divided: German Protestants Confront the Nazi Past* (Bloomington, IN 2004), 97.

John Carter Wood

“The Rock of Human Sanity  
Stands in the Sea Where It Always Stood”

Christian Intellectuals, British National Character,  
and the Experience of (Near) Defeat, 1937–1942

This essay considers how a Christian intellectual group organised by the ecumenical activist Joseph H. Oldham in the 1930s and 1940s responded to fears of national military defeat and assertions of patriotism in the early years of the Second World War. What I refer to retrospectively as “the Oldham group” developed as a British offshoot of the international ecumenical movement and included theologians, clergymen, writers, academics, civil servants, and activists who believed the disasters of their age could be met through a distinctive amalgam of Christian principles and secular sociology.<sup>1</sup> One of the topics they addressed was national identity, what might be called Britishness (or Englishness, since they tended to use “English” and “British” interchangeably).<sup>2</sup> Concerns about aggressive “nationalism” – especially in the context of a sceptical re-evaluation of the Great War and the rise of continental European authoritarian and totalitarian movements – were widespread in 1930s Britain, contributing to the popularity of pacifism, especially among Christians.<sup>3</sup> Christian critiques emphasised the “idolatrous” elevation of nation, *Volk*, or class to sacred status in Fascism, National Socialism, and

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1 I am currently completing a monograph on the Oldham group. See Jonas Kurlberg, “Resisting Totalitarianism: The Moot and a New Christendom”, in *Religion Compass* 7 (2013), 517–531 for an enlightening analysis and overview of existing research. The term “Oldham group” has been used to refer to later Christian activist and intellectual circles: Duncan B. Forrester, *Beliefs, Values and Policies: Conviction Politics in a Secular Age* (Oxford 1989), 17–22. I use the label to refer only to the group as delineated in this essay.

2 There was a wider tendency in the 1930s and 1940s (particularly, though not exclusively, among English people) to use “England” and “English” synonymously for “Britain” and “British” even when Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland were also meant. This generated some discontent as well as efforts at correction, though the phenomenon continued. See Sonya O. Rose, *Which People’s War? National Identity and Citizenship in Wartime Britain 1939–1945* (Oxford 2003), 2–3, 219–221 and Peter Mandler, *The English National Character: The History of an Idea from Edmund Burke to Tony Blair* (New Haven, CT 2006), 148, 194 and 205.

3 Alan Wilkinson, *Dissent or Conform? War, Peace and the English Churches 1900–1945* (London 1986); Richard Overby, *The Morbid Age: Britain and the Crisis of Civilization, 1919–1939* (London 2009), 219–264.

Communism (though the latter was sometimes seen more ambivalently).<sup>4</sup> While politically minded Christians largely scorned the sacralised, aggressive concepts of totalitarian nationalism, they did not reject, and even encouraged, a strong attachment to “national community”. Debates over where the line should be drawn between a (constructive) “nationality” and a (destructive) “nationalism” were carried on in the ecumenical “Life and Work” movement, which achieved its inter-war high-point at the 1937 Oxford conference on “Church, Community and the State”, at which Oldham group participants played crucial organisational roles.<sup>5</sup>

Commenting on British Christian thought in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Adrian Hastings has noted that “the world set the agenda and could therefore change it”.<sup>6</sup> This was certainly the case with Britain’s declaration of war on Germany in September 1939, which saw the Christian encounter with national identity become increasingly urgent; this was particularly so when the so-called “phoney war” came to an end in early May 1940 with the German invasion of Western Europe and the defeat of British and French forces on the continent in little more than six weeks. A new, initially calamitous phase of the conflict began: Britain suffered several military setbacks, faced the threat of invasion, experienced aerial bombardment (“the Blitz”), and mounted efforts to resist it (the “Battle of Britain”). Britain and its empire “stood alone” until 1941 with the entry into the war of the Soviet Union (in June) and the United States (in December). Even then, the Allies’ situation was “desperate” and “demoralising”, only gradually improving between 1942 and 1944.<sup>7</sup> In what follows, I examine the Oldham group’s thinking about “national identity” in this context of military defeat, national beleaguerment, and patriotic reaction, giving particular attention to their public statements in a jointly produced publication. With “national identity” I refer above all to claims of a distinctive “national character” and ascriptions of specific traditions supposedly particular to the “English” (or “British”).<sup>8</sup> How did

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4 John Carter Wood, “Zwischen Mammon und Marx: Christliche Kapitalismuskritik in Großbritannien 1930–1939”, in Robert König (ed.), *Religion und Kapitalismus* (Kaltenleutgeben 2014), 147–176.

5 On Oxford 1937 see Graeme Smith, *Oxford 1937: The Universal Christian Council for Life and Work Conference* (Frankfurt a.M. 2004); John C. Bennett, “Breakthrough in Ecumenical Social Ethics: The Legacy of the Oxford Conference on Church, Community and State (1937)”, *The Ecumenical Review* 40:2 (1988), 132–146.

6 Adrian Hastings, “The British Churches in the War and Post-War Reconstruction”, in Andrew R. Morton (ed.), *God’s Will in a Time of Crisis: A Colloquium Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Baillie Commission* (Edinburgh 1994), 4–13, on p. 4.

7 Richard Overy, *Why the Allies Won* (London 2006), 18–19.

8 On “national character”, see Peter Mandler, “The Consciousness of Modernity? Liberalism and the English National Character, 1870–1940”, in Martin Daunt/Bernhard Rieger (ed.), *Meanings of Modernity: Britain from the Late-Victorian Era to World War Two* (Oxford 2001), 119–144; idem, *English National Character*; and Matthew Grimley, “The Religion of

the Oldham group respond to the war and the increasing threat to “their” own nation? (Those members of the group who had not been born British had taken British citizenship by 1940.<sup>9</sup>) How did they square support for the war effort with their emphasis on Britain’s cultural and moral shortcomings? What did they make of some politicians’ (and church figures’) definitions of the war as a defence of “Christian civilisation”? I am especially interested in the complexities of the group’s effort to maintain the essentials of their pre-war consensus in the face of a dramatically changing situation. First, I consider the structure and membership of the Oldham group itself. Second, I lay out the key ambivalences in the group’s views on national identity in the late 1930s. Third, I examine the new dynamics that came with the rapid reversals of fortune in the summer of 1940. I conclude with some contextualising thoughts.

### The “Oldham Group”

After the 1937 Oxford ecumenical conference on “Church, Community and State”, Oldham, in 1938, set up an official Church-affiliated organisation (the “Council on the Christian Faith and the Common Life”, hereafter CCFCL) and an informal discussion group (“the Moot”). Within weeks of the war’s outbreak in September 1939, he oversaw the creation of a new weekly periodical *The Christian News-Letter* (CNL), published under the auspices of the CCFCL.<sup>10</sup> My collective term “Oldham group” – taking in the CCFCL, CNL, and Moot – is applied retrospectively, based on the personal connections, shared institutional contexts, and overlapping concepts of the various participants; the group also acted within an even broader network of British and international Christian organisations.<sup>11</sup> Oldham’s role was key: the CCFCL resulted from his personal initiative and was widely referred to as

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Englishness: Puritanism, Providentialism and ‘National Character,’ 1918–1945”, in *Journal of British Studies* 46:4 (2007), 884–906. On definitions of nationalism see Paul Lawrence, *Nationalism: History and Theory* (Harlow 2005), 1–16.

9 T.S. Eliot had become a British citizen in 1927, Karl Mannheim and Adolf Löwe in 1939.

10 A precursor issue appeared in October 1939; regular publication began in November. Paper shortages forced a biweekly schedule from April 1943 until publication ceased in July 1949. In 1942, the CCFCL was folded into the British Council of Churches; Oldham set up the Christian Frontier Council (CFC), which also took over responsibility for the CNL. Issues consisted of a “letter” from the editor and a “supplement” (essay) under the name of a particular author. CNL citations will include issue number, “L” (letter) or “S” (supplement) and date; supplements will also include author name and essay title.

11 Philip M. Coupland, *Britannia, Europa and Christendom: British Christians and European Integration* (Basingstoke 2006).

“Joe’s Council”,<sup>12</sup> the Moot was “firmly Oldham’s project”,<sup>13</sup> and Oldham was editor of the CNL from its start until mid-1945 (when he passed editorial responsibilities to Kathleen Bliss). These institutions, activities, and projects formed an interlocking whole: the CCFCL provided connections to official Christianity, the Moot was an arena for debating ideas, and the contents of the CNL, published under the authority of the CCFCL, were shaped by discussions in the Moot. The sources for this study connect these different organisational aspects of the group, taking into account the minutes of Moot discussions, internal documents related to it and the CCFCL, and published comments and essays from the CNL.<sup>14</sup>

The people Oldham gathered have been aptly described as a “cross-section of the liberal, intellectual British establishment” based in the churches, lay Christian organisations, the media, and universities.<sup>15</sup> The Moot included literary figures (e.g. T.S. Eliot and John Middleton Murry); academic philosophers, theologians, and clergy (e.g. H.A. Hodges, John Baillie, Alec Vidler, and Alexander Miller); educationalists (e.g. Sir Walter Moberly, Sir Fred Clarke, Walter Oakeshott, and Sir Hector Hetherington); and Christian activists (e.g. Eric Fenn, Kathleen Bliss, and Eleanora Iredale).<sup>16</sup> The group had the support of the leadership of the Church of England – especially Cosmo Lang (Archbishop of Canterbury 1928–1942) and William Temple (Archbishop of York 1929–1942 and Canterbury 1942–1944) – and of the non-Anglican “free churches”.<sup>17</sup> It also included émigré sociologists with Jewish backgrounds, such as Karl Mannheim and Adolf Löwe.<sup>18</sup> Mannheim, although personally agnostic, thought Christianity could contribute to a common cultural framework that would strengthen democracy against totalitarianism. Löwe shared similar views, and (as noted below) he offered an influential sociological analysis of “English” traditions of liberty.

The Oldham group was exclusively white, mostly middle-class, largely Oxbridge-educated, and mainly male (though a few women – especially Iredale and Bliss – played key roles). Except for the Roman Catholic historian Christopher Dawson, a Moot member, it was also overwhelmingly Protestant,

12 Eleanor Jackson, *Red Tape and the Gospel: A Study of the Significance of the Ecumenical Missionary Struggle of William Paton (1886–1943)* (Birmingham 1980), 271.

13 Keith Clements, *Faith on the Frontier: A Life of J.H. Oldham* (Edinburgh 1999), 373.

14 The Moot minutes are gathered in Keith Clements (ed.), *The Moot Papers: Faith, Freedom and Society, 1938–1944* (Edinburgh 2010).

15 Tom Steele/Richard Kenneth Taylor, “Oldham’s Moot (1938–1947), the Universities and the Adult Citizen”, in *History of Education* 39:2 (2010), 183–97, on p. 188.

16 There were 23 “members” of the Moot; for short biographies see *Moot Papers*, 24–34.

17 The CCFCL included representatives from the Church of England, Church of Scotland, English Presbyterian Church, Methodist Church, Congregationalist Union, and Baptist Union: Lambeth Palace, Lang 25, ff. 230–231, Minutes of Planning Meeting, 17 March 1938.

18 Löwe changed his name (to Adolph Lowe) but I maintain the spelling as in the Moot meetings.

especially Anglican and Presbyterian. It was, however, intellectually diverse: influenced by an ideal Matthew Grimley has labelled “Christian civil society” – owing much to liberal Anglican traditions associated with Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Thomas and Matthew Arnold<sup>19</sup> – it was also inspired by American “Christian realism” (Reinhold Niebuhr), French neo-Thomism (Jacques Maritain), Russian Orthodoxy (Nikolai Berdyaev), Martin Buber’s “I-Thou” philosophy, and the secular sociology of Mannheim and Löwe. Its participants’ political leanings spanned the political right (Eliot, Dawson, and Philip Mairet) and left (Murry, Hodges, Vidler, and Miller), but the group’s consensus reflected a mixture of self-critical liberalism, mild socialism, commitment to parliamentary democracy, and belief in “decency” common in the period’s Christian social thought.<sup>20</sup>

Group members aimed broadly to encourage the development of a “Christian society” or at least “*more* Christian society” as a means of renewing the culture of Britain, Europe, and the West.<sup>21</sup> They diagnosed the contemporary crises as resulting from a process of secularisation through which Christian principles had lost their dominance as an overarching framework for values, culture, and social practice, being replaced by a value-neutral “liberalism” and the merely instrumental “materialism” of science. Also, they argued that capitalism, urbanisation, and “mass” culture eroded traditional forms of “organic” community life, causing a cultural “disintegration” that had brought forth the totalitarian ideologies. They saw a need for a new “social philosophy” and the re-creation of a social life that would be as compelling as totalitarianism appeared to be but in harmony with “Christian” principles of freedom, responsibility, tolerance, service to others, and community.

While the group was, broadly speaking, relatively well-heeled, well-educated, and well-connected, its members felt themselves to be at odds with the institutions and intellectual contexts in which they were based: orthodox Christian theology, the churches, and the universities. The ineffective efforts of the churches to respond to the challenges of the modern age, for example, were often condemned, a failure group members linked to the lack of real-world experience of most clergy and a lack of constructive Christian engagement with modern secular knowledge (in the form of science, economics, and sociology). Oldham aimed to facilitate precisely this kind of exchange across

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19 Matthew Grimley, “Civil Society and the Clerisy: Christian Élites and National Culture, c. 1930–1950”, in Jose Harris (ed.), *Civil Society in British History: Ideas, Identities, Institutions* (Oxford 2003), 231–247, on p. 236.

20 Bruce Wollenberg, *Christian Social Thought in Great Britain between the Wars* (Lanham 1997), 2, 4; Callum Brown, *Religion and Society in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Abingdon 2006), 49, 163; Kathleen Bliss, *The Future of Religion* (London 1969), 8.

21 Lambeth Palace, Lang 26, ff. 177–178, “An Initiative of the Churches towards a More Christian Society”.

what he called the “frontier” between secularity and faith. Thus, the Oldham group might be seen as an element of a *critical* establishment that, while in possession of significant degree of social capital and ensconced in key social institutions, provided a (self-) questioning perspective on at least some of the leading orthodoxies of its day. It was in the context of this effort that the group sought to navigate the complexities of *nationality* and *nationalism*.

### Between “Nation” and “Nationalism”, 1937–1942

Within the Oldham group, the “nation” was positively connoted as a natural and divinely legitimated form of human community; in contrast, “nationalism” was seen as an idolatrous perversion of that healthy social relationship. This distinction developed within the ecumenical movement from which the group emerged. Tensions had been particularly strong across the inter-war period between Anglo-American and German participants in ecumenical meetings, especially with the coming to power of the National Socialists in 1933 and the ensuing “church struggle” between the pro-Nazi “German Christians” and the “Confessing Church”, which sought to maintain its independence from the regime. Nazi discrimination, oppression, and violence deeply troubled the international ecumenical movement, but it nevertheless sought to keep its German members (associated with the Confessing Church) included. This was not always easy: the Confessing Church rejected key aspects of Nazism, but many of its members had strongly nationalist inclinations.<sup>22</sup>

The confrontation between “healthy” national identity and “destructive” nationalism was a central issue at the 1937 Oxford conference. No German delegation from the Lutheran Church attended, though German delegates contributed to conference publications.<sup>23</sup> The summary report, published as *The Churches Survey Their Task*, and a volume on international relations suggest the conference’s balancing act.<sup>24</sup> “Nation” was at times taken for granted – like “race” – as a natural marker of difference, both in the world at large and with regard to conference participants.<sup>25</sup> The “nation”, like other

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22 Kenneth C. Barnes, *Nazism, Liberalism, & Christianity: Protestant Social Thought in Germany and Great Britain, 1925–1937* (Lexington, KY 1991), 96–101; Richard J. Evans, *The Third Reich in Power* (New York 2005), 220–233. See also the essay by Matthew Hockenos in this volume.

23 A small delegation from the German Free Churches and Old Catholics does appear to have attended and issued a statement in favour of the Nazi regime: *Church Times*, 30 July 1937, 108.

24 *The Churches Survey Their Task* (London 1937); *The Universal Church and the World of Nations* (London 1937).

25 E.g.: “representatives of so many different nations and races”: *Survey*, 13. Also, *ibid.*, 21, 24 (“divergences of tradition and national background”), 40 (“a new spirit in society and among



forms of community, was viewed as “part of the God-given basis and structure of human life”.<sup>26</sup> The naturalness of “nation” was, at times, questioned, and there were warnings against the churches associating too closely with secular interests.<sup>27</sup> Still, a distinction was drawn between a “fundamentally healthy” version of “nationality” and a “nationalism” linked with “egotism” or “fear and hatred of or indifference to other nations”.<sup>28</sup> The Nazi emphasis on the category of *Volk* – considered here as a form of “nationalism” – was given particular attention.<sup>29</sup> The regime was rarely explicitly named, but the critique would have been clear to any reader.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, the various totalitarianisms (Communism, Fascism, and National Socialism) were seen as to some degree understandable forms of “reconstruction” responding to the cultural “disintegration” caused by secularisation: “In Japan, China, India, Turkey, Egypt, Germany, Italy, Ireland, and in many other countries”, the report observes, “national patriotism is the dominant rallying and unifying force, which wins the passionate devotion especially of the young”.<sup>31</sup> The desire for accommodation is apparent in the report’s conclusion that it was “too early yet to pronounce on empirical grounds” whether “the reintegration effected [by nationalism] has been on too narrow a basis, and at the cost of disproportionate strains and stresses”.<sup>32</sup> The “true place of national or community or Volk loyalty in the life of the Christian” had been “mooted”, it said, but remained “unsettled”: “In this matter, Christians are not fully agreed.”<sup>33</sup>

While the report strongly emphasised Christianity as a “universal society” and the faith’s “inescapable universalism”, the failure to live up to such ideals was admitted.<sup>34</sup> A plenary address from the conference by

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the nations”), 58 (“we are drawn from many nations”), 59 (“the Church will call the nations to order their lives as members of the one family of God”), 84 (“a family of nations”). On race, see, *ibid.*, 58, 72–73. On nation and race at Oxford 1937, see Michael G. Thompson, *For God and Globe: Christian Internationalism in the United States between the Great War and the Cold War* (Ithaca, NY 2015), 120–144.

26 *Survey*, 70.

27 *Ibid.*, 30–31. The Marquess of Lothian warned against the “far-reaching and demonic effects” of “the almost universal acceptance of national sovereignty”: *World*, 3.

28 It was “necessary to distinguish between nationality and nationalism”: “Nationality has been fundamentally a healthy movement. It has encouraged self-respect and the desire for freedom from external oppression, and it has stimulated unity and public spirit as against individual selfishness and parochial narrowness. [...] But if nationality may be described as individuality, nationalism is egotism, the worship of the national self[,] carrying with it fear and hatred of or indifference to other nations.” *World*, 4.

29 *Survey*, 71–72. “Our membership in a distinct Community (Volk)” was a “divine gift” but did not mean “the subordination of the Church to the national life”: *ibid.*, 76.

30 On anti-Semitism, see *ibid.*, 33, 74. Nazism and Fascism were mentioned by name only a few times: e.g., *ibid.*, 63, 97, 193, 224.

31 *Ibid.*, 68, 192.

32 *Ibid.*, 194.

33 *Ibid.*, 225–226.

34 *Ibid.*, 31–32.

Oldham group participant T.S. Eliot was quoted in arguing that two factors divided Christians: first “that which may roughly be called nation or race or language, since it is impossible to dissociate these three elements” and, second, “that which may roughly be called class or social group”: “A sensible philosophy, Christian or secular”, Eliot had argued, “will neither exalt race or nation or class to an unnatural primacy, nor attempt on the other hand to eradicate these differences.”<sup>35</sup> The report observed that the Christian “accepts national communities as part of God’s purpose to enrich and diversify human life” but that “national egotism tending to the suppression of other nationalities or of minorities is [...] a sin against the Creator of all peoples and races”: “The deification of nation, race, or class, or of political or cultural ideals, is idolatry, and can only lead to increasing division and disaster.”<sup>36</sup>

Where, precisely, “idolatry” began remained a matter of debate. Britons tended to accept a relatively strong compatibility between nation and faith, perhaps unsurprisingly given both the long self-understanding of Britain as a “Protestant nation” and the “national” churches in both England and Scotland; moreover, British Christians, Philip Coupland has pointed out, “permitted the nation a definite place in their plans”, positing “the ideal of a universal community, enriched by national difference”.<sup>37</sup> Matthew Grimley has shown how an “imaginative identification between Englishness and a tolerant, undemonstrative form of Protestantism remained strong in the first half of the twentieth century”.<sup>38</sup> The Church of England had worked to establish itself – with substantial success – in the inter-war period as the bearer of a common Christianity on which the national “community” was founded.<sup>39</sup> Archbishop William Temple, for example, was an influential and archetypal figure for ecumenically minded, socially active British Christians in the 1930s and 1940s (and he was closely associated with members of the Oldham group): he favoured a national identity based upon “fellowship” over a rootless “internationalism”, arguing that nations existed “by God’s providential

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35 Ibid., 33; *The Times*, 17 July 1937, 18. Eliot later argued a new “Christendom” would not mean “the abolition of national, racial, local or cultural differences, but their transcendence in a unity and harmony of different elements”: Institute of Education (IOE), University College London, MOO/35, Notes on Mannheim’s paper by T.S. Eliot, 10 January 1941, 1.

36 *Survey*, 58.

37 Coupland, *Christendom*, 5. Between the seventeenth and early twentieth centuries, Britain was “essentially a Christian state, and more specifically a Protestant state”: Stewart J. Brown et al. (ed.), *Religion, Identity and Conflict in Britain: From the Restoration to the Twentieth Century* (Farnham 2013), 1.

38 Grimley, “Religion of Englishness”, 885. See also John Wolffe, *God and Greater Britain: Religion and National Life in Britain and Ireland 1843–1945* (London 1994), 5–19.

39 Matthew Grimley, *Citizenship, Community, and the Church of England: Liberal Anglican Theories of the State between the Wars* (Oxford 2004).

guidance”.<sup>40</sup> Prominent Anglicans such as V.A. Demant and Bishop George Bell argued for the legitimacy of nations as “God-given” repositories of a human diversity.<sup>41</sup>

From the Oxford Conference into the early days of the Second World War, the Oldham group’s discussions fit well in this mould: respecting the nation but warning against excessive, “nationalist” identification with it. The work of the CCFCL was described in terms of a “national” effort at renewal that would contribute not only to the life of the churches but also to the nation itself.<sup>42</sup> In the first regular issue of *The Christian News-Letter* in November 1939, Oldham said a “true peace” came not from an *absence* of nations but rather from “a concourse of nations, each with a native health of its own” and a willingness to “serve” others.<sup>43</sup> However, the dangers of chauvinistic nationalism were repeatedly invoked in the CNL.<sup>44</sup> The distinction between nationality and nationalism continued well into the war. In March 1941, Oldham called “the relation of Christianity to the national spirit” a “fundamental problem” for (and “fundamental challenge” to) faith, distinguishing between “the truth and priceless educational values of nationality” and “the deadly evil of national pride, exclusiveness and aggression”.<sup>45</sup> Two months later, Oldham argued that “the problem of the relation of Christianity and nationalism” was “one of the major problems that confront the Church in all countries”.<sup>46</sup> The “relation” in question had both positive and negative aspects.

Oldham and his companions thought British national traditions offered significant resources for resisting totalitarianism and building a new society. In a section titled “Identification with the Nation” in the CNL’s precursor issue in October 1939 (a mass mailing sent to likely subscribers), Oldham found fulsome words for “our island race”:

The bonds which unite those who speak the same speech, love the same countryside and city streets, share the same historical memories and the same ways of life are drawn closer in time of calamity. Suffused with a common feeling we know how dear is the land that gave us birth and how precious is the tradition of our island race with its

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40 Keith Robbins, “Avoiding the Challenge? British Churches, British Society and European Integration, 1947–1949”, in Heinz Duchhardt/Małgorzata Morawiec (ed.), *Die Europäische Integration und die Kirchen: Akteure und Rezipienten* (Göttingen 2010), 5–20, on p. 7.

41 Coupland, *Christendom*, 5.

42 E.g., Lambeth Palace, Lang 26, ff. 36–37, Oldham to Lang, 2 December 1938.

43 CNL 1S, 1 November 1939, J.H. Oldham, “What is God Doing?”, 2.

44 E.g., CNL 16S, 14 February 1940, Reinhold Niebuhr, “Wrong Answers to Unanswered Problems”, 2.

45 CNL 72L, 12 March 1941, 2.

46 CNL 83L, 28 May 1941, 2.

love of liberty and the reign of law, its struggles for justice, its adventures and creative achievements, its poetry and laughter, its tolerance and human kindness. All this must be an undertone that colours whatever is written in this News-Letter.<sup>47</sup>

There was much, Oldham later wrote, in “the whole way of life in which most of us in Britain believe” that “adherents of other systems” rejected,<sup>48</sup> over the life of the group, tolerance, the rule of law, self-initiative, willingness to compromise, parliamentarianism, and an enduring (if submerged) Christian faith were cited as especially well anchored in British or English life.<sup>49</sup> But the group aimed to undermine national complacency or self-aggrandisement by highlighting the corruption of positive traditions, emphasising similarities between democracy and totalitarianism, and relativising British identity within broader frameworks.

From the beginning, the commentaries in the CNL (by Oldham and others) emphasised the universal nature of the “western” crisis, although totalitarianism was seen as a particularly dramatic symptom of it. Even after the outbreak of war, Oldham used the first issue of the *Christian News-Letter* to argue that, no matter how terrible National Socialism was, the British were also a “sinful people, as individuals and as a nation”.<sup>50</sup> *Laissez-faire* capitalism and the “neutrality” of liberalism – i.e., the absence of a firm guiding concept of the purposes of social life – had fed modernity’s “disintegrative” tendencies. “Germany and Russia have had, during the past twenty years”, Oldham argued, “an idealism of a kind”, but the British had merely “talked vaguely of democracy, still more vaguely of Christianity, and we have been content to repose as comfortably as the times allowed on the sofa of national tradition”.<sup>51</sup> Without a definite “creed”, they had drifted, accepting mass unemployment, the vast increase of state power, the expansion of an empty “mass” culture, and the erosion of community. Reinhold Niebuhr wrote in the CNL that “the Nazi racial doctrines are vivid and exaggerated forms of the decay of modern civilisation”, suggesting a difference in degree rather than kind.<sup>52</sup> Oldham warned against the “devil of self-righteousness” which would cause Britons to forget “the elements of irresponsible power which corrupt every democracy” and the “sins of a dictated peace which drove the Germans to the madness of resentment out of which Hitler’s leadership

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47 CNL 0S, 18 October 1939, J.H. Oldham, “What is a Christian News-Letter?”, 2.

48 CNL 5S, 29 November 1939, J.H. Oldham, “Preliminaries to the Consideration of Peace Aims”, 3.

49 Oldham, “Christian News-Letter?”, 2. See also CNL 11L, 10 January 1940, 2; CNL 88S, 1 July 1941, J.H. Oldham “The Predicament of Society and the Way Out”, 4; CNL, 33S, 12 June 1940, G. Fedetov, “A Russian Voice”, 2.

50 Oldham “Christian News-Letter?”, 2.

51 CNL 13S, 24 January 1940, J.H. Oldham, “Our Members Contribute”, 2.

52 Niebuhr, “Wrong Answers”, 2.

emerged”.<sup>53</sup> A pseudonymous CNL essay argued: “We are blind to the fact that in our own private, social, public and national life we have the very same things in varying degree, though in a less spectacular way, which we so condemn in Germany”.<sup>54</sup> In April 1940, Oldham quoted a CNL reader’s claim that people were willing to accept whatever contradictory positions the mass media offered: Nazi propaganda was therefore “not the startling exception we should like to think”.<sup>55</sup> An anonymous historian who wrote a supplement on “The Nazi Creed” argued that Germany was not alone in being susceptible to “pseudo religions” and “not less Christian than any other European nation”: “The Hitler movement is suburban, and suburbia is everywhere practically out of touch with the traditions of Europe, including the religious traditions.”<sup>56</sup> In the Moot in September 1938, Walter Oakeshott condemned the omnipresence of the “material view of life”: “At present our ideas were fundamentally the same as Hitler’s.”<sup>57</sup> Anglican priest Gilbert Shaw warned against the “great danger of feeling ourselves the righteous nation. We were just as much guilty as others if you consider elements in recent history, such as the Black and Tans, Palestine, etc.”<sup>58</sup> Such downplaying of differences between totalitarian and democratic-capitalist societies did not entirely disappear after summer 1940; however, it became, as I will note, less common.<sup>59</sup>

From such an explicitly Christian group there came, unsurprisingly, an emphasis on embedding national identity in trans-national loyalties, such as the “universal” fellowship of Christianity. In the *News-Letter*, Oldham directly contrasted Christianity and the nation-state: “The Christian Church”, he declared, “transcends the bounds of nationality”, and loyalty to “the universal Church” was “prior to loyalty to a national Church”.<sup>60</sup> “Between the Christian witness to the unity of mankind as the object of God’s creative and redeeming love and the deification of a local human community”, he argued, “there is an irreconcilable opposition.”<sup>61</sup> “Christianity stands or falls”, Oldham stated in late November 1940, “with the recognition that the fundamental thing in an individual is not his nationality but his humanity.”<sup>62</sup> In warning against the “danger of a nationalist Christianity”, a CNL essay by

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53 CNL 11S, 10 January 1940, J.H. Oldham, “Christianity and Political Justice”, 3.

54 CNL 17S, 21 February 1940, “X”, “The Reality of the Christian Life”, 2.

55 CNL 24L, 10 April 1940, 1.

56 CNL 80S, 7 May 1941, Anonymous, “The Nazi Creed”, 3.

57 *Moot Papers*, 106.

58 *Ibid.*, 193.

59 The war was caused by a “common sin”, “not that of a nation, but of an age – our age”: Fedetov, “A Russian Voice”, 1. It resulted from “the economic, social and cultural *illness*” affecting “all Western society”: CNL 35S, 26 June 1940, Philip Mairet, “Man, Nature and War”, 1. Emphasis in original.

60 Oldham, “Christian News-Letter?”, 2.

61 *Ibid.*

62 CNL 57S, 27 November 1940, J.H. Oldham, “The Demand for a Christian Lead”, 4.

William Paton emphasised that despite Britons' "national loyalty and conviction and our desire to commend our cause to God", they belonged "to a single fellowship with the Christians of Germany, and [...] we must not behave as if the fact of war automatically ended that fellowship".<sup>63</sup> At times, it was suggested that European unity might be rebuilt either as a "Resurrection of Christendom" (the title of a 1940 book by Oldham) or some form of "Federal Union". However, "Christendom" concepts remained vague and there was a scepticism toward Federal Union (which was briefly popular in Britain) because of its "utopian" character. Ultimately, speculations about European political reorganisation were overtaken by events.

### Shifting Perspectives: Summer 1940

The issues of *The Christian News-Letter* that followed the retreat of British forces from the European continent at Dunkirk (between 27 May and 4 June 1940) and the fall of France in late June testify to a positive reevaluation of national heritage, a willingness to draw sharper distinctions between totalitarianism and liberal democracy, and a closer linkage of religious and national identities. The previous viewpoints, however, were *altered* not *abandoned*: the group's reconsiderations stayed anchored within the conceptual framework marked out by the Oxford conference. In the earliest issues of the CNL, in late 1939, Oldham had highlighted how the "actual achievement" of the British Empire had been "only a very partial embodiment of the ideas we profess", a shortcoming that had led many (correctly, he implied) to view the British as "hypocrites".<sup>64</sup> What Christians should pray for, he said then, was not "our victory, as though the British Empire were in any sense God's favourite" but rather "for the triumph in the life of society of certain values which we humbly hope that we have been called, in spite of our unworthiness and manifold shortcomings, to defend and to work for in days to come".<sup>65</sup> By the end of June 1940, however, Oldham emphasised the importance to the *world* of the "continued existence of the British Empire" and spoke in glowing terms of what Britons had achieved in their "island home": "a society animated by a love of freedom and justice, acknowledging the rights of the common man and cherishing the qualities of toleration, mercy and humanity" and a tradition they had "transplanted to other continents", thereby influencing "a large part of the earth".<sup>66</sup> He described the

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63 CNL 10S, 3 January 1940, William Paton, "The World-Wide Christian Society", 3.

64 Oldham, "Preliminaries", 2.

65 CNL 7L, 13 December 1939, 3.

66 CNL 35L, 26 June 1940, 1.

Commonwealth – a term he used synonymously with “Empire” – as a “federation” (“including the most diverse races and peoples at widely different stages of moral, intellectual and political development”) characterised by a “common spirit and purpose” and a “substantial, even if imperfect, harmony of interests, ideals and aspirations”.<sup>67</sup> It provided “a basis and example for the future order of the relations of nations and peoples”.<sup>68</sup> Oldham approvingly quoted another weekly publication – the *Sunfield Letter* – that had praised “mutual trust and confidence” as “one of the most precious of all our national characteristics”: the “inborn sense of freedom and respect for the individual” was “a national heritage of which we can be justly proud”.<sup>69</sup> In the CNL, Owen Barfield (solicitor, philosopher, and associate of C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien) argued that “the true form of the society which Britain ought to create already exists in the nation’s unconscious”: a latent British “impulse to individualism” (not in its “too sorry manifestations” but rather “its own true nature” with “deep, deep roots”) could help resist “collectivism abroad, erected into an idol and run mad”.<sup>70</sup>

As these comments suggest, the positive revaluation of national tradition was accompanied by the idea of a (divinely ordained) “national mission”. Oldham (echoing Winston Churchill) looked back from October 1940 to argue that the nation had experienced “a miraculous deliverance at Dunkirk”: “in the hour of crisis” the British had discovered “to a greater degree than we could have dared to hope we are a united people”.<sup>71</sup> (In June, Georgy Fedetov had suggested that “providence” had given Britain “the predominant part in this fateful war”: “It is not by mere chance that the totalitarian world has found its opposite pole in the British Commonwealth.”<sup>72</sup>) Talk of “mission” or “providence” aimed not to encourage complacency: Britain would have to *change*. “Merely to defend what we are and have will not suffice”, Oldham claimed: “we must *create* the good which, in virtue of its truth, will have power to shape the future”.<sup>73</sup> “We have a just cause,” Oldham stated unambiguously in July 1940, “let us address ourselves to making it juster and stronger”.<sup>74</sup> Prominent Anglican theologian V.A. Demant argued that “the fate of the civilised world [...] will be decided within the next few weeks in

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67 CNL 36L, 3 July 1940, 1.

68 *Ibid.*, 1–2.

69 CNL 39L, 24 July 1940, 2.

70 CNL 39S, 24 July 1940, Owen Barfield, “Effective Approach to Social Change”, 3–4.

71 CNL 49L, 2 October 1940, 1. Churchill had spoken of Dunkirk as a “miracle of deliverance”: HC Deb 04 June 1940, vol. 361, cc 787–798, at cc 790–791. See also “Deliverance at Dunkirk”, (Anglican) *Guardian*, 21 June 1940, 298, which emphasised the intervention of “forces above and beyond man’s agency”.

72 Fedetov, “A Russian Voice”, 2.

73 CNL 36L, 3 July 1940, 2. Emphasis in original. See also CNL 37L, 10 July 1940, 2.

74 CNL 39L, 24 July 1940, 2.

one place only, in the soul of the British people".<sup>75</sup> Oldham referred to Britain's "high mission" as creating "a living example of a nation successfully ordering its life in accordance with the standards and values which are denied and repudiated by the false systems now in the ascendant in Europe".<sup>76</sup>

National *mission* was paired with national *humility*. Praising – and quoting from – the *New English Weekly*, Oldham wrote (in a section headed "The Way of Penitence"):

the British spirit, torpid as it often is, may yet become "manifest once more as the human spirit which cannot deny the liberty of the individual, nor the covenant of social justice, nor even the reverence due to Nature, however it may neglect or sin against them." If that happens, it may yet be found that "the rock of human sanity stands in the sea where it always stood, in sinful, repentant but yet faithful Albion."<sup>77</sup>

"The vital word", Oldham insisted, "is 'repentant'": it was necessary to make a "costly break with what has been wrong" in order to reach "the gateway to a new life".<sup>78</sup> Repentance was a theme frequently emphasised in the CNL.<sup>79</sup> It also meant defending freedom at home even against public opinion: discrimination against conscientious objectors, Oldham argued, undermined "our cherished British tradition of toleration, good humour and fair play".<sup>80</sup> In autumn 1940, Oldham quoted the *New English Weekly*'s comment that "England still fights this war in a spirit of magnificent obstinacy", "as a defence of human right against a grandiose and inhuman heresy": "It is like a yokel who may not quite understand it, but he don't hold with it, it ain't right."<sup>81</sup>

Even if premised upon a commitment to "humility" and "repentance" – and suspicious of nationalism (Oldham observed that "a Christian's devotion to the nation can never be an unqualified one"<sup>82</sup>) – the CNL promoted a kind of "patriotism". Oldham referred to the commitment to "maintaining freedom of speech and discussion" as "a patriotic duty".<sup>83</sup> A "common spirit of patriotism, prudence and adventure" would create, he wrote, "the civilisation of the future".<sup>84</sup> As guest editor of the CNL in August 1940, Eliot observed that Britain's relative lack of violent political divisions "provided a more solid

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75 CNL 37S, 10 July 1940, V.A. Demant, "Our Justification", 1.

76 CNL 38L, 17 July 1940, 1–2.

77 CNL 40L, 31 July 1940, 3. The *New English Weekly* was edited by Philip Mairet, who participated in some Moot meetings as a visitor.

78 *Ibid.*

79 Niebuhr, "Wrong Answers", 3; CNL 19L, 6 March 1940, 3.

80 CNL 41L, 7 August 1940, 3.

81 CNL 49L, 2 October 1940, 1–2.

82 CNL 37L, 10 July 1940, 1.

83 CNL 39L, 24 July 1940, 1.

84 CNL 42L, 14 August 1940, 1.



basis for unity in patriotism” than was the case in France.<sup>85</sup> The following year, Eliot described patriotism as a “natural virtue” and a “permanent feeling, which for better as well as worse cannot be exorcised: to ignore it, in our schemes for the federation of the world, as well as for our enemies to ignore it in their schemes of domination, is to risk eventual explosions”:

It includes the attachment to natural as well as to constructed surroundings, to place as well as to people, to the past as well as to the future; the attachment of a people to its own culture, and to its ability to make that specific and voluntary contribution to Christendom and to the world.<sup>86</sup>

Love of nation, however, could “easily pass into the vices of nationalism, imperialism in the bad sense, collective pride and collective cupidity: it can, furthermore, be a cloak for individual or sectional selfishness”.<sup>87</sup> Oldham quoted Archbishop Lang’s call for Britons to “strive so to be patriots as not to forget we are Christians”.<sup>88</sup> Eliot’s reference to patriotism as “a loyalty which requires to be balanced by other loyalties” struck a similar note.<sup>89</sup>

Adolf Löwe’s book *The Price of Liberty: An Essay on Contemporary Britain* (originally published in 1937) set much of the ground for the Oldham group’s reconsideration of national traditions and identity. Löwe saw the English (he tended to refer to “English” rather than “British”, despite using the label “Britain” in his title) facility for what he called “spontaneous conformity” – the ability to form a strong sense of social unity from below and without state direction – as distinct from “continental” culture and a potentially important “example for a new Western civilisation”.<sup>90</sup> This “conformity” consisted in a “social code” based upon “common decency and fairness”.<sup>91</sup> He suggested that elements of “secularized religious feeling” – derived from “English Protestantism” – had “nourished the collective mind” and helped to form the English social “agreement”.<sup>92</sup> The English case showed that freedom’s (necessary) limitation did not have to be imposed externally: “[The Englishman’s] dictator is installed in his heart”, he wrote, suggesting that such self-restraint was key to Britain’s distinctive balance between freedom and order.<sup>93</sup> “I do indeed believe”, he concluded, “that the clash between democracy and fascism will find its European decision in

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85 CNL 44L, 28 August 1940, 3.

86 CNL 97L, 3 September 1941, 4.

87 *Ibid.*

88 CNL 84L, 4 June 1941, 1.

89 CNL 97L, 3 September 1941, 4.

90 Adolf Löwe, *The Price of Liberty: An Essay on Contemporary Britain* (London 1948), 9–10.

91 *Ibid.*, 13–15.

92 *Ibid.*, 19.

93 *Ibid.*, 25.

England.”<sup>94</sup> Though not written from a Christian perspective, Löwe’s book was compatible with more religious contexts, and its themes featured in Moot discussions. Oldham warmly recommended it to CNL readers in one of its earliest issues.<sup>95</sup>

## Conclusion

The Oldham group’s engagement with nationalism was part of its broader effort to connect faith and social life. The nation, Oldham argued in October 1942, was a “great moulding force” that possessed a “long heritage” and an “encompassing web of tradition and custom”.<sup>96</sup> It belonged to the “natural rather than the specifically Christian sphere”; however, Christianity was not “indifferent to what is natural”: “To ignore, as Christians have often done, such realities as sex, the nation or economic activities, is to allow Christianity to become divorced from life, and the suppressed forces sooner or later reassert themselves with devastating consequences.” “True internationalism”, he argued, did not consist in the “the antithesis between, but the fulfilment of a true nationalism”.<sup>97</sup> Crucially, it was a “true” nationalism that was needed, not the disastrous variety then widespread.

The crisis of summer 1940 brought the Oldham group to differentiate liberal-democratic capitalism more clearly from totalitarianism, give less ambivalent support to the war, and revalue “national” traditions. In this way, the group participated in a broader patriotic discourse;<sup>98</sup> however, it also sought to remain *within* the intellectual framework defined in 1937 in Oxford: a genuinely Christian patriotism was argued to be *self-critical* (i.e. “repentant”), *humble*, and *committed to an ethic of service to other nations*. “True” British characteristics were defined as individuality, self-initiative, freedom, practicality, humility, and tolerance, making it possible, first, to assert nationality while avoiding “nationalism” and, second, to turn national characteristics into a resource for renewing not only Britain but also the world. Their efforts fit with what Keith Robbins has described as a widespread discursive “fusion” of past traditions and present concerns during war-time Britain through which freedom was seen to rest not on “a particular ideology but rather in the institutions and mores of the British people themselves”: “It

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94 *Ibid.*, 40.

95 CNL 5L, 29 November 1939, 3.

96 CNL 157L, 28 October 1942, 1.

97 *Ibid.*

98 Steve Ellis, *British Writers and the Approach of World War II* (Cambridge 2015), 172–174; Malcolm Smith, *Britain and 1940: History, Myth and Popular Memory* (Abingdon 2000), 43–46.

was a war, in a broad sense, for ‘Christian civilisation’ but particularly for the form that civilization took in Britain itself.”<sup>99</sup> There was a strong emphasis in political and educational contexts on linking Britishness to Christianity and emphasising a purportedly religious basis of freedom and democracy.<sup>100</sup> Images of Britain – or its national church – as a rock of “sanity”, “bastion of Christendom”, or “light” to the world became common.<sup>101</sup> As Stephen Parker notes, British clerics’ descriptions of the war as a “spiritual crisis” used Christian imagery that not only “evoked a climate of moral purpose” but also supported “a sense of national unity” by linking national character and faith.<sup>102</sup> For the Oldham group, a Christianised “patriotism” allowed avoiding the alternatives of absolute pacifism, complacent national self-regard, and vindictive nationalism.<sup>103</sup> There were affinities with non-British religious perspectives, such as the “theological defence of Christian patriotism” developed by Dietrich Bonhoeffer.<sup>104</sup> Like Bonhoeffer, the “patriotism” of which Oldham, Eliot, and the others approved centred on a love of tangible and real relationships, was distinguished from the “idolatry of nationalism”, and drew inspiration from purportedly distinctive aspects of national heritage.<sup>105</sup>

With the entry of the Soviet Union and the United States into the war on Britain’s side and the improving fortunes of the Allies from 1942, earlier concerns returned to the fore. In late 1943, Oldham asserted that Britons

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99 Keith Robbins, *Great Britain: Identities, Institutions and the Idea of Britishness* (London 1998), 235.

100 Keith Robbins, “Britain, 1940 and ‘Christian Civilization’”, in Keith Robbins (ed.), *History, Religion and Identity in Modern Britain* (London 1993), 195–213; A.J. Hoover, *God, Britain and Hitler in World War II: The View of the British Clergy, 1939–1945* (Westport, CT 1999), 97–120; Rob Freathy, “The Triumph of Religious Education for Citizenship in English Schools, 1935–1949”, in *History of Education: Journal of the History of Education Society* 37:2 (2008): 295–316.

101 See a pamphlet in the “Big Ben Silent Minute Series”: “A Lighthouse Set on an Island Rock”, an address given by W. Tudor Pole, 13 September 1942 at the Oddfellows Hall in Worthing. (Lambeth Palace, W. Temple 57, ff. 2–7). “The Bastion of Christendom” (leading article), *Church Times*, 28 June 1940, 462. Also: “It [the Church of England] is the citadel of the two great principles, respect for law and respect for individual liberty, which are the best things which we have to offer the world, and the only effective antidote to the virulent nationalism which has developed of late years.” The Dean of Wells, “A National Church”, (*Anglican Guardian*, 12 November 1948, 550.

102 Stephen G. Parker, “Reinvigorating Christian Britain: The Spiritual Issues of the War, National Identity and the Hope of Religious Education”, in Stephen G. Parker/Tom Lawson (ed.), *God and War: The Church of England and Armed Conflict in the Twentieth Century* (Farnham 2012), 61–79, on p. 62.

103 A group of “fully committed pacifists” included Charles Raven, George Macleod, and Donald Mackinnon: Hastings, “British Churches”, 7.

104 Stephen Backhouse, “Nationalism and Patriotism”, in Nicholas Adams/George Pattison/Graham Ward (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Theology and Modern European Thought* (Oxford 2013), 41–60, on 44.

105 Keith Clements, *A Patriotism for Today: Dialogue with Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (Bristol 1984), 87.

could not go on “blindly fighting on the strength of a national tradition”: they needed “to awaken the sense of a new England arising from the old”.<sup>106</sup> There was concern that the spirit of Dunkirk had receded and with it popular commitment to building a new society.<sup>107</sup> “We must rethink the entity which is ‘England’”, argued Moot member Daniel Jenkins, “and in what sense the Englishman was now supposed to be a ‘Christian’ before he could say anything about nationalism.”<sup>108</sup> Other members of the group continued to emphasise the need for “penitence”, the “acknowledgement of apostasy”, or “repentance”.<sup>109</sup> However, Mannheim thought the group was “concerned with nationalism which was a different thing from jingoism”, and, in a Moot paper on “National Re-equipment” from autumn 1943, Moot member Fred Clarke asserted that nationalism would not be defeated by counter-propaganda but only by “harnessing the national instinct” to tasks such as reforming education, local government, and race-relations.<sup>110</sup>

The Oldham group’s effort to renew the national social order through religious principles might be seen as a “religious nationalism”, defined by Rogers Brubaker as “a distinctively religious type of nationalist programme that represents a distinctive alternative to secular nationalism”; however, the Oldham group also sought to accommodate “secular” viewpoints, not least since they expected committed Christians to remain a small minority in British society. In Brubaker’s terminology, then, their aim was rather that religion would become “intertwined” with dominant understandings of national identity and the purposes of social, political, and economic activity.<sup>111</sup> National characteristics were not sacralised but were given a relevance *for religion*. Likewise, while opposed to lazy attributions of Britain being (or fighting for) a “Christian civilisation”, the group seemed to suggest that faith and national identity might work together to create a *new* society. Matthew Grimley may be correct that “the survival of a low-key, pluralistic, idea of providence between the wars meant that, when the Second World War came, a more assertive form of providentialism could come back to the fore”; however, some Christian intellectuals insisted upon such “assertiveness” being paired with national repentance and humility.<sup>112</sup> To be truly “patriotic”, Christianity had to tell uncomfortable truths to the nation, to inspire and invigorate it, but also to remain, ultimately, distinct from it.

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106 *Moot Papers*, 647–648.

107 *Ibid.*, 674–675.

108 *Ibid.*, 677–678.

109 *Ibid.*, 632–633.

110 *Ibid.*, 648, 653.

111 Rogers Brubaker, “Religion and Nationalism: Four Approaches”, in *Nations and Nationalism* 18:1 (2012), 2–20, on pp. 8–12.

112 Grimley, “Religion of Englishness”, 904.

Gregor Feindt

## “A Spirit that Revives”?

Reshaping Catholic Poland in Late Socialism, 1977–1981

“The Pole is a Catholic” (“*Polak – katolik*”). This notion, notoriously associated with Roman Dmowski and his nationalist movement *Endecja*,<sup>1</sup> is more than a political slogan dating back to the struggle for national independence. It claims a mutual and exclusive dependency between nation and religion, distinguishing Poland from her neighbours and Poles from Orthodox Russians, Protestant Germans, Jews, or any other ethnic group.<sup>2</sup> The concept of a “Catholic Poland” became the guiding episteme of right-wing and nationalist<sup>3</sup> national discourse throughout the twentieth century and, in return, also influenced Catholic intellectual thought. Nevertheless, this amalgamation of Catholicism and Polishness was and is contested. Leftist and liberal intellectuals have fiercely opposed making too strong a link between Poland’s people and her church – whether in terms of intellectual assumptions or social practices – and called instead for a secular understanding of Polish identity.

This essay examines one of the most thorough debates about the Catholic character of the Polish nation, considering the democratic opposition during late socialism, i.e. the period of destabilisation of socialist rule throughout the Soviet bloc. I argue that during this time, especially between 1977 and 1981, oppositional intellectuals of divergent political and religious beliefs radically reshaped the notion of Catholic Poland in discussions about Polish self-images. Drawing on underground literature and the performative discourse of the trade union movement *Solidarność*, I analyse controversies in which revisionist, nationalist and liberal oppositionists debated both the past and present of the Polish nation, thereby introducing the concepts of human rights and liberal pluralism into Polish national identity.

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1 The catchphrase was first uttered in Dmowski’s 1927 book *Church, Nation, and State*. For the origins of *Endecja* see, Pascal Trees, *Wahlen im Weichselland. Die Nationaldemokraten in Russisch-Polen und die Dumawahlen 1905–1912* (Stuttgart 2007), 50–86 and, for the inter-war period, Brian Porter-Szücs, *Faith and Fatherland: Catholicism, Modernity, and Poland* (Oxford 2011), 328–359.

2 Brian Porter, “The Catholic Nation. Religion, Identity, and the Narratives of Polish History”, in *Slavic and East European Journal* 45:2 (2001), 289–299, on pp. 289–291.

3 I use the term *nationalism* in an explicitly non-pejorative way to describe national movements. See Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, NY 1995), 1.

My examination of the relationship between nation and religion combines a history-of-ideas perspective with a pragmatic application of discourse analysis. Studying oppositional discourse on the nation helps to overcome two misconceptions in the historiography of the People's Republic of Poland: first, the narrative of a contested but essentially unchanging Catholic nation and, second, the assumption of a liberal, strictly post-national opposition. After briefly introducing the links between religion and nation and the misperception of “*Polak – katolik*” in Polish historiography, I will scrutinise four examples of oppositional discourse: the contesting of exclusivist national identity in Polish *samizdat* in 1977 and 1978, the establishment of a pluralist community in *samizdat*, the occupational strike at the Lenin shipyard in Gdańsk in August 1980, and Jan Józef Lipski's seminal essay “Two Fatherlands – Two Patriotisms”. I will conclude by arguing that oppositional intellectuals managed to introduce their liberal and pluralist views into the hegemonic understanding of the Catholic Polish nation and – during the “carnival”<sup>4</sup> of *Solidarność* – succeeded in transferring them into broader strata of Polish society.

### Imagining Nation and Opposition

Soon after the communist coup d'état in 1948<sup>5</sup> the Catholic Church remained the only intact social organisation beyond state control, and it subsequently became the primary opponent of communist rule. After repeated attempts to subordinate the Church, especially after Stalin's death in 1953, open confrontation relaxed significantly in the wake of the “Polish October” in 1956 – the Polish equivalent to the Soviet “thaw”.<sup>6</sup> In the spirit of a “small stabilisation”, the Catholic Church obtained a *de facto* autonomy and access to the public that was unique within the entire Soviet bloc. Church periodicals, such as the prominent weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny*, could be distributed legally; in larger cities, debating groups – the Clubs of Catholic Intellectuals (KIK) – emerged, and, in the form of the Znak-movement, the Catholic laity was granted representation in the *Sejm*.<sup>7</sup>

4 Timothy Garton Ash, *The Polish Revolution. Solidarity* (New Haven, CT 2002), xii.

5 Krystyna Kersten, *The Establishment of Communist Rule in Poland, 1943–1948* (Berkeley, CA 1991).

6 Antoni Dudek/Ryszard Gryz, *Komuniści i kościół w Polsce. 1945–1989* (Cracow 2003), 63–99.

7 Anthony Kemp-Welch, *Poland under Communism: A Cold War History* (Cambridge 2008), 118–123. For Znak see, Maciej Łętowski, *Ruch i koło poselskie Znak, 1957–1976* (Katowice 1998); Andrzej Friszke, *Koło posłów “Znak” w Sejmie PRL. 1957–1976* (Warsaw 2002).

However, much of the Church (especially its ecclesiastical hierarchy) maintained an affirmative self-image based on the claim that the Church was the exclusive and legitimate representative of the Polish nation.<sup>8</sup> Polish historiography provides a picture of the history of state socialism based on a clear antagonism between state and church or society. Mostly young and conservative Polish historians have put forward a “moralising”<sup>9</sup> and simplifying picture of communist rule. This has contributed to the misconception of a suppressed – but intact and resisting – Catholic nation that was strictly demarcated from the totalitarian regime. A similar misconception pervades the study of democratic opposition during late socialism. Much of the research tends to perceive dissidents merely as liberal thinkers opposing any radical ideology. When unorganised protest turned into opposition and went public in 1976, it was liberals, former socialists, and socially minded Catholics who stepped into the focus of international public concern and scholarship. For a long time these figures – often dubbed as advocates of an emerging “civil society”<sup>10</sup> – remained the only visible strand of opposition, and, until very recently, much of the literature has neglected nationalist tendencies in the democratic opposition.

These two historiographic postulates – quite different in focus but similar in their social construction of reality<sup>11</sup> – suggest clear distinctions in the field of nation and religion: the concept of a Catholic nation resides in the sphere of institutional religion, namely the Church and her hierarchy. In this antagonistic conception, other world-views such as liberal oppositional thought or revisionist socialism remain outside the nexus of nation and religion. Ultimately, however, this historiography fails to attend to the intellectual debate in the pages of Polish *samizdat* and to the crossing of ideological boundaries that took place within oppositional discourse.

In line with a new wave of historical research on Central European opposition movements,<sup>12</sup> I argue for a more refined understanding of socialist soci-

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8 Andrzej Friszke, *Polska. Losy państwa i narodu 1939–1989* (Warsaw 2003), 275–275. For a local case study see Michał Łuczewski, *Odwieczny naród: Polak i katolik w Żmiącej* (Toruń 2012), 365–462.

9 Rafał Stobiecki, “Die Zeitgeschichte in der Republik Polen seit 1989/90”, in Alexander Nützenadel/Wolfgang Schieder (ed.), *Zeitgeschichte als Problem: Nationale Traditionen und Perspektiven in Europa* (Göttingen 2004), 329–346, on p. 334.

10 See early accounts of Polish opposition such as Jacques Rupnik, “Dissent in Poland. 1968–78: The End of Revisionism and the Rebirth of Civil Society”, in Rudolf L. Tökés (ed.), *Opposition in Eastern Europe* (London 1979), 60–112 and, for a broader overview, Barbara J. Falk, *The Dilemmas of Dissidence in East-Central Europe. Citizen Intellectuals and Philosopher Kings* (Budapest 2003).

11 Peter L. Berger/Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City, NY 1966).

12 See Barbara J. Falk, “Resistance and Dissent in Central and Eastern Europe: An Emerging Historiography”, in *East European Politics and Societies* 25:2 (2011), 318–360; Robert Brier,

eties, carving out different layers of situational compromise and, ultimately, deconstructing the analytical categories used by contemporaries.<sup>13</sup> In this essay, I aim to demonstrate that oppositional discourse on the nation transcended the allegedly separate social spheres of protest and pointed toward the necessity of a renewed Catholic nation. Therefore the essay contributes both to the understanding of nation and religion in Poland and to the understanding of political opposition during late socialism.

### Contesting the Exclusive Catholic Nation

Early underground journals – called *samizdat* or “second circulation” in Poland – served as a laboratory for oppositional thinking and strategic programmes. The debates in which they engaged helped to integrate the different ideological strands of the new, public opposition movement. In this section, I enquire into such programmatic debates and stress the conflicting functions that were attributed to Catholicism in defining national identity.

In October 1977, the Jesuit Bronisław Sroka published an alarming article – “The Spirit that Revives” – on the state of Polish youth. Bemoaning the immoral state of society, he praised the virtues of previous generations of Poles and suggested that these qualities had stemmed exclusively from their individual faith.<sup>14</sup> Sroka’s pessimism about the current state of Polish society was typical of the early public opposition. The experience of societal “atomisation” and the seeming fragmentation of social bonds<sup>15</sup> alarmed many in the opposition and served as a shared starting point for a political strategy.<sup>16</sup> For Sroka, this Polish decline was directly connected with the communist regime and its ideology, which especially attracted young people. However, the author maintained some hope: “As a nation we are fortunate in having our

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“Entangled Protest. Dissent and the Transnational History of 1970s and 1980s”, in id. (ed.), *Entangled Protest. Transnational Approaches to the History of Dissent in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union* (Osnabrück 2013), 11–42.

13 Cf. the Polish debate about “totalitarianism”: Andrzej Walicki, “Czy PRL była państwem totalitarnym” [first published in *Polityka*, 21 July 1990], in Paweł Śpiewak (ed.), *Spór o Polskę, 1989–99. Wybór tekstów prasowych* (Warsaw 2000), 115–117 and Aleksander Smolar et al., “Diskussionsbeiträge: War die Volksrepublik Polen ein totalitärer Staat”, in *Inter Finitimos* 5 (2007), 26–59.

14 Bronisław Sroka, “The Spirit that Revives”, in Abraham Brumberg (ed.), *Poland: Genesis of a Revolution* (New York 1983), 219–221, on p. 220. Original: Bronisław Sroka, “Duch, który ożywia”, in *Bratniak* [Samizdat] 1 (1977), 6–8.

15 Stefan Nowak, “Values and Attitudes of the Polish People”, in *Scientific American* 245:1 (1981), 45–53.

16 See the socialist revisionist Jacek Kuroń, “Myśli o programie działania” [first published in *Aneks* 13/14 (1977)], in *ibid.*, *Opozycja. Pisma polityczne 1969–1989* (Warsaw 2010), 77–95.



own ideology. [...] Its existence eliminates the need for choosing among other competing doctrines [...]. There is only one ideology for us – our Christian faith.”<sup>17</sup>

Sroka published his article in the first issue of *Bratniak*, the leading national-conservative journal in the emerging context of Polish “second circulation”. Edited by a group of students around Aleksander Hall from Gdańsk, the “journal of young people” – as it would later call itself – was aimed at pupils and university students. Its first issues were distributed in quantities between 200–500 copies in the Gdańsk area before the journal expanded to other Polish cities in the following months and years.<sup>18</sup> Sroka was a well-known figure to this local and youthful readership, as he had worked as a university chaplain in Gdańsk and greatly influenced the editorial board of *Bratniak*, which was to become the “Movement of Young Poland” in 1979.<sup>19</sup>

Sroka employed an understanding of the Polish nation based on the essential identity of Polishness and Catholicism. Referring to Dmowski’s “*Polak – katolik*”, he argued that the Catholic faith was more than just an attribute of Polishness but also an “integral part of it. It is to a large extent Polishness itself.”<sup>20</sup> In consequence, this led the way for the assumption that the atomisation of Polish society, its secularisation and the decline of religious practice threatened Poland *as* a nation. Polish students who failed to attend mass on Sunday therefore not only neglected individual religious duties but also threatened Poland as a Catholic country.

A short time thereafter, two young Catholics from the Warsaw branch of KIK condemned Sroka’s theses and called for a more diverse understanding of Polish national identity. Their critique was printed in the third volume of *Bratniak*, as the journal was committed to oppositional “pluralism” and understood itself as a forum for different strains of oppositional thought.<sup>21</sup> The two authors, Jan Tomasz Lipski and Wojciech Ostrowski, shared Sroka’s pessimistic assessment of Polish society; however, they argued against an essentialist understanding of nation or Catholicism, stressing Catholic universalism. In their view, Sroka had left out important multicultural aspects within Polish history and culture, thereby offering a distorted vision of a homogenous and ethnic nation. Sroka’s intertwining of nation and state was,

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17 All quotes Sroka, “Spirit”, 220.

18 Grzegorz Waligóra, “Bratniak”, in *Encyklopedia Solidarności. Opozycja w PRL 1976–1989, vol. 1* (Warsaw 2010), 65.

19 Michał Paziewski, “O. Bronisław Sroka”, in Antoni Dudek et al. (ed.), *Opozycja w PRL. Słownik biograficzny 1956–1989, vol. 3* (Warsaw 2006), 251–253; Piotr Zaremba, *Młodopolicy. Historia Ruchu Młodej Polski* (Gdańsk 2000).

20 Sroka, “Spirit”, 221.

21 “Od redakcji” [published in *Bratniak* 1/1 (1977)], in Jakub Czulba (ed.), *Bratniak, pismo Ruchu Młodej Polski, lata 1977–81. Wybór publicystyki* (Warsaw 2009), 15–16.

in their view, even more dangerous, as it divided citizens into two categories: those “who can guide the destiny of the state [and] those who do not deserve this role”.<sup>22</sup> This divide between political rights and civic participation, however, contradicted the oppositional demand for democracy and equality. Lipski and Ostrowski felt reminded of communist violations of human rights and declared such an approach unfit for any oppositional programme. A future concept of nation should incorporate Poland’s multicultural and multi-ethnic heritage, he argued, in order to guarantee human rights for all her citizens.<sup>23</sup>

With their critique of nationalist and essentialist Catholic concepts, Lipski and Ostrowski contributed to a critical assessment of historical traditions and emphasised that negative traits of national history, such as xenophobia, could not be excluded from a national self-reflection.<sup>24</sup> The authors were inspired by Bohdan Cywiński’s *Genealogies of the Resilient*, a critical re-evaluation of the nineteenth-century Polish independence struggle that widely influenced Polish non-conformist thought in the 1970s.<sup>25</sup> Many of those who would later become active in the opposition had read Cywiński’s reflections on radical intellectuals, which were legally published by the Catholic publishing house *Więź* in 1973 and therefore easily available to everyone as a textbook for action against the socialist regime.<sup>26</sup>

While such lay Catholics openly expressed their distance to Marxism and the Communist Party, they were more open to socialism as a non-dogmatic intellectual tradition. For instance, the group around the journal *Więź* had been close to Catholic organisations loyal to the regime before 1956 and had advocated a Christian approach towards socialism mediated by French personalism.<sup>27</sup> Through the Second Vatican Council and the reform of Catholic teaching, this search for a dialogue between Catholicism and socialism was stimulated, with *Gaudium et Spes*, for example, explicitly advocating “acting in concert with other men of good will”.<sup>28</sup> Accordingly, in his seminal book Cywiński highlighted the shared traditions of lay Catholicism and the political

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22 Wojciech Ostrowski/Jan Tomasz Lipski, “A Reply to Father Sroka”, in Abraham Brumberg (ed.), *Poland: Genesis of a Revolution* (New York 1983), 222–225, on p. 224 [Original: Wojciech Ostrowski/Jan Tomasz Lipski, “Poglądy”, in *Bratniak* [Samizdat] 3 (1977), 14–16.

23 *Ibid.*, 225.

24 *Ibid.*, 224.

25 Bohdan Cywiński, *Rodowody niepokornych* (Warsaw 2010 [Original 1971]).

26 Andrzej Friszke, *Opozycja polityczna w PRL 1945–1980* (London 1994), 289–292; Michal Kopeček, “Human Rights Facing a National Past. Dissident ‘Civic Patriotism’ and the Return of History in East Central Europe, 1968–1989”, in *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 38:4 (2012), 573–602, on p. 578.

27 Piotr H. Kosicki, “L’avènement des intellectuels catholiques. Le mensuel *Więź* et les conséquences polonaises du personnalisme mounierien”, in *Vingtième Siècle* (2009), 31–47.

28 *Pastoral Constitution on The Church in the Modern World: Gaudium et Spes, Promulgated by His Holiness, Pope Paul VI on December 7, 1965*, in Norman P. Tanner (ed.), *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils: Vol. 2: Trent to Vatican II* (London 1990), 1069–1135, on p. 1105.

left and developed further the reformist inspiration.<sup>29</sup> At the same time, many socialist revisionists, such as Jacek Kuroń or Leszek Kołakowski, overcame their traditional aversion towards Christianity: individually studying the Bible, they brought common ideals to the fore and developed an understanding for lay Catholicism. Needless to say, these revisionists remained distant from religious practice.<sup>30</sup>

After the brutal suppression of reform communism in 1968 – marked by the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and the anti-Semitic campaign following student protest in Warsaw – utopian socialism lost its appeal. As many revisionist socialists became estranged from the Polish United Workers’ Party (PUWP) and discouraged about the prospects of internal party reform, they sought alternative forms of moral empowerment and contexts in which existing socialism could be critiqued.<sup>31</sup> Cooperating with lay Catholics who shared the revisionists’ demands for free speech and civic freedom provided such an opportunity and opened up new possibilities for moral argumentation.<sup>32</sup> For instance, Adam Michnik, the key thinker of the revisionist strand of the Polish opposition, answered Cywiński’s *Genealogies* with essays on the *Church – Left – Dialogue* and argued for an evolutionary change under the umbrella concept of human rights. In Michnik’s programme, the Catholic Church was a natural ally for any democratic opposition in Poland.<sup>33</sup>

### Establishing a Pluralist Opposition

The re-formulation of Catholic Poland offers insight into oppositional political thought, as Ostrowski and Lipski integrated liberal concepts of a pluralist opposition into the Catholic nation. However, this re-framing of political

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29 Cywiński, *Rodowody*, 401–402 and 425; Hella Dietz, “Opposition der Siebziger in Polen: Ein Beitrag zur Integration neuerer Theorien sozialer Bewegungen”, in *European Journal of Sociology* 49:2 (2008), 207–252, on p. 429.

30 The religious practice of party members has not yet been studied in detail. However, Agnes Arndt’s study of the Warsaw milieu of revisionist communists demonstrates that a pronounced distance to the Catholic Church and religious observance was integral to the identity of communist elites. Agnes Arndt, *Rote Bürger. Eine Milieu- und Beziehungsgeschichte linker Dissidenz in Polen, 1956–1976* (Göttingen 2013), 57 and 148; Tomasz Sylwiusz Ceran, *Świat idei Jacka Kuronia* (Warsaw 2010), 169–228.

31 Agnes Arndt detects the first signs of this alienation already in the early 1960s. Arndt, *Rote Bürger*. See also Dariusz Gawin, *Wielki zwrot. Ewolucja lewicy i odrodzenie idei społeczeństwa obywatelskiego 1956–1976* (Cracow 2013).

32 Tony Judt, *Postwar. A History of Europe since 1945* (New York 2005), 427.

33 Adam Michnik, “Le nouvel évolutionisme”, in Peter Kende/Krzysztof Pomian (ed.), *1956 Varsovie-Budapest. La deuxième révolution* (Paris 1977), 201–214; id., *The Church and the Left* (Chicago 1993).

community also shaped the very sphere of discourse in which it took place, i.e. the “second circulation”. The following section will consider internal community formation within the Polish opposition.

In contrast to Ostrowski and Lipski, Sroka and the *Bratniak* group had not participated in the evolving dialogue between lay Catholics and revisionists, and they remained critical of any form of socialism or even of socialists in person. This came to the fore when Jacek Bartyzel and Aleksander Hall, both editors of *Bratniak*, responded to Lipski and Ostrowski’s text in 1978. They situated the conflict between Church and state in Poland in the broader perspective of an eternal struggle between a “Christian-humanist civilisation” that offered tolerance and pluralism and other civilisations that strove for uniformity.<sup>34</sup> Accordingly, Hall assumed that Lipski and Ostrowski had lost contact with popular religious practice and had turned into overly intellectual and radically leftist Catholics, which undermined their legitimation to speak as Catholics more generally.<sup>35</sup> Even more bluntly, Bartyzel denied that there was any common ground between the *Bratniak* group and the young KIK intellectuals.<sup>36</sup>

The exclusion of opponents from any Catholic or even any oppositional community crossed a line in the debate about Polish national identity. Beyond the intellectual imagination of nation, this discourse helped to generate performatively oppositional community through both integration and exclusion. In this perspective, it is not merely the content of debate but its tone that reveals the mechanisms of oppositional community formation. Despite their strong criticism of Sroka, Lipski and Ostrowski had maintained a friendly, dialogical tone.<sup>37</sup> Sroka in return refrained from any attack, feeling deeply misunderstood but not striving to escalate the debate any further.<sup>38</sup>

Although *Bratniak* propagated pluralism as its core value – and both Hall and Bartyzel professed pluralism in their attacks on Lipski and Ostrowski – the debate over “The Spirit that Revives” demonstrated the existence of non-pluralist practices in this conservative strand of opposition. This essentialist image of the Catholic nation contradicted the acceptance of religious or ethnic difference within the national ideal. But, in the specific situation of an oppositional discourse characterised by a double liminality – state repression and social marginalisation – the role of Catholicism within the Polish nation

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34 Jacek Bartyzel, “Jeszcze jeden głos w dyskusji”, in *Bratniak* [Samizdat] 6–7 (1978), 18–21, on p. 18.

35 Aleksander Hall, [no title given], in *Bratniak* [Samizdat] 4–5 (1978), 1.

36 Bartyzel, “Jeszcze”, 19 and 21.

37 Ostrowski/Lipski, “Reply”, 225.

38 See a remark by Jan Tomasz Lipski’s father regarding a conversation with Sroka: Jan Józef Lipski, “Two Fatherlands – Two Patriotisms”, in *Survey* 4 (1982), 159–175, on p. 173.

was merely one layer of conflict. More importantly, when questioning the oppositional ideals of their opponents, Hall and Bartyzel also questioned the possibility of a heterogeneous opposition.

It is hardly surprising that this change of tone proved provocative. Jacek Kuroń, since his 1964 open letter to the party a doyen of revisionist non-conformity, had railed against nationalism in *samizdat* before and dubbed it a “totalitarian” threat.<sup>39</sup> However, in his “Open Letter to *Bratniak*” – also printed in *Bratniak* – Kuroń welcomed the journal’s effort to redefine nationalism for the sake of oppositional pluralism even if he himself was an “ideological opponent” of nationalism. With schoolmasterly precision, he differentiated between *nation* as the social group of people living together in Poland and *nationalism* as the essentialisation of such a group.<sup>40</sup> It was for reasons of argumentation and oppositional integration that Kuroń used the term “nation” instead of “society”, as he would have done in most other texts. Ultimately, the socialist revisionist proposed a compromise with conservatives: ideologically dilatory and pragmatically performative.<sup>41</sup>

These debates ebbed away with no clear result. Instead, two different positions coexisted in oppositional discourse, each of which was supported by certain sections of the opposition while being at least tolerated by the other factions: first, an essentialist concept of nation that revolved solely around Catholicism and, second, a pluralist concept of a heterogeneous nation that included Catholicism without granting it definitional superiority. However, this struggle was not to be expressed in words or concepts only, as all involved referred to human rights and oppositional pluralism. Instead, the difference between essentialism and liberal pluralism became visible in the ethics of discourse, i.e. the practice of dealing with difference in a debate; moreover, the performative strategies of mobilisation differed greatly, as Hall and others organised patriotic demonstrations in public, a method mistrusted by liberal intellectuals.<sup>42</sup>

But the oppositional compromise proved effective. Nationalist *samizdat* authors approached liberal thought even if they did not directly respond to post-revisionist or liberal dissidents. Similarly, liberal and leftist thinkers took up the nation as the most powerful signifier of political community and favoured it over (civil) society. This process of mutual approximation performed an unuttered dilatory compromise and contained the latent tension

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39 See Jacek Kuroń, [no title given], in *Krytyka* [Samizdat] 1 (1978), 19–21 and Aleksander Hall’s response, “Krytyka ‘Krytyki’”, in *Bratniak* [Samizdat] 14 (1978), 10.

40 Jacek Kuroń, “List otwarty do zespołu redakcyjnego ‘Pisma Młodych Bratniak’”, in *Bratniak* [Samizdat] 16 (1979), 16–30, on p. 21.

41 Hella Dietz stresses this pragmatic aspect of Kuroń political thought: id., “Opposition”.

42 Andrzej Anusz, *Kościół obywatelski: Formowanie społeczeństwa obywatelskiego w PRL* (Warsaw 2004), 455.

between religion and nation in late socialism on an intellectual level. The community of oppositional and dissident actors eventually became superimposed with a heterogeneous and pluralist nation comprising both essential and pluralist epistemes of nationalism. Therefore, in oppositional thought and practice the nation was not a shared concept but a shared space of possibilities in which differing, even contradictory concepts could evolve and coexist.

### Performing Catholic Poland in the Vernacular

In the summer of 1980 this heterogeneous oppositional thought about the nation was confronted with a new wave of protest and, subsequently, with new, populist forms of oppositional discourse. The following two brief examples illuminate *Solidarność's* contribution to national discourse in late socialist Poland: the strike at the Lenin Shipyard in Gdańsk that led to the formation of the union itself and its first National Congress, at which a thousand worker-delegates hammered out the union's programme. Analysing the impact of strikes and mass protest on the oppositional negotiation sheds new light on the role of vernacular piety for the understanding of Catholic Poland.

With the emergence of "*Solidarność*" in Gdańsk, and soon after across the entire country, opposition became a mass phenomenon, as the union assembled up to 9.5 million members, roughly a third of Poland's adult population including every third Party member. Instead of intellectual debate in the niches of underground journals, *Solidarność's* philosophy and programme was shaped performatively through a "reappropriation of language by the people".<sup>43</sup> For a period of sixteen months *samizdat* gave way to strikes and demonstrations, articles to slogans jointly chanted or painted on walls.

In July 1980 the Polish regime significantly raised consumer prices for meat and several other products, resulting in strikes. Similar strikes had occurred throughout the history of People's Poland, but in 1980 price cuts and concessions failed to assuage the workers. In Gdańsk – which had been a centre of strike activity in 1970 when 45 shipyard workers were shot dead – workers refused to resume work and occupied the shipyard for fourteen days until the regime allowed the first non-socialist trade union in the Soviet bloc.<sup>44</sup> Here, the strike formed an oppositional micro-universe.

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43 Elżbieta Matynia, *Performative Democracy* (Boulder, CO 2009), 3.

44 Hartmut Kühn, *Das Jahrzehnt der Solidarność: Die politische Geschichte Polens 1980–1990* (Berlin 1999), 20–64.

In the heated atmosphere of protracted and exhausting negotiations with state commissions the striking workers took up religious practice to create a feeling of community. Daily holy masses and frequent rosaries provided both a structure of everyday routines and inspiration for the protest. Many citizens of Gdańsk joined the workers and participated in the religious ceremonies inside the shipyard's gates.<sup>45</sup> Praying publicly at a shipyard that stood out as an emblematic project of socialist industry and was even named for Lenin fundamentally challenged the socialist and atheist political order.<sup>46</sup> Similarly, the workers expressed the diarchy that was developing between the – still emerging – trade union and the communist state by placing Catholic symbols, such as the crucifix or pictures of the Black Madonna of Częstochowa, next to the communist state's coat of arms.<sup>47</sup> At the same time, strictly communist symbols disappeared or were displaced.<sup>48</sup> Such a doubling or purification of symbolic representation created a vision of Poland that differed from the socialist state and questioned socialist rule.<sup>49</sup> The striking workers embraced topoi of popular piety that represented Polish national identity and thus created a specific experience of a Polish strike.<sup>50</sup> This came especially to the fore with the Black Madonna, a symbol of the successful and miraculous struggle against Swedish occupation in the seventeenth century.<sup>51</sup> At the shipyard, “the Madonna [was] on strike”<sup>52</sup> with the workers, as a mural slogan claimed. Shipyard workers grasped themselves as part of a community of Poles that reached far beyond the Gdańsk shipyard and integrated workers with sympathisers throughout the country, reflecting a transcendent network of support.

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45 Dionizy Smoleń, “Tłum czy społeczność zorganizowana? Strajkujący w stoczni gdańskiej w sierpniu 1980”, in Marcin Kula (ed.), *Solidarność w ruchu 1980–1981* (Warsaw 2000), 151–217, on pp. 195–198.

46 Berenika Szymanski, *Theatraler Protest und der Weg Polens zu 1989: Zum Aushandeln von Öffentlichkeit im Jahrzehnt der Solidarność* (Bielefeld 2012), 117–118.

47 The communist coat of arms consisted of the traditional white eagle but omitted its crown. Workers used the eagle with a crown as a provocation of the regime, and the strike organisers were therefore forced to ban its use at prominent spots. Jan Kubik, *The Power of Symbols against the Symbols of Power: The Rise of Solidarity and the Fall of State Socialism in Poland* (University Park, PA 1994), 190.

48 See Timothy Garton Ash, *The Polish Revolution: Solidarity* (New Haven, CT 2002), 121 for an episode from the occupational strike in Rzeszów in January 1981.

49 See Erazm Ciołek, *Solidarność. Sierpień 1980–sierpień 1989* (Warsaw 2010), 73 and 75.

50 Albert S. Kotowski, “Polen in Deutschland: Religiöse Symbolik als Mittel der nationalen Selbstbehauptung (1870–1918)”, in Heinz-Gerhard Haupt/Dieter Langewiesche (ed.), *Nation und Religion in Europa: Mehrkonfessionelle Gesellschaften im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt a.M. 2004), 253–279, on pp. 275–275; Dudek/Gryz, *Komuniści*, 238–239.

51 Barbara Törnquist Plewa, *The Wheel of Polish Fortune: Myths in Polish Collective Consciousness during the First Years of Solidarity* (Lund 1992), 31–63; Damien Tricoire, “Gottesmutter Königin von Polen: Die Sakralisierung der polnischen Monarchie im Vergleich mit Frankreich und Bayern (1630er–1650er Jahre)”, in Agnieszka Gąsior (ed.), *Maria in der Krise. Kulturpraxis zwischen Konfession und Politik in Ostmitteleuropa* (Cologne 2014), 93–116.

52 Törnquist Plewa, *Wheel*, 68.

In a way similar to religious icons, Romantic literature proved highly popular among the workers<sup>53</sup> and underlined the religious self-image of the strikers. In particular, the omnipresent works of Adam Mickiewicz expressed Polish messianism and supported the symbolic scope of the strike with a narrative of the revolutionary liberation of suppressed nations.<sup>54</sup> In this utopian moment, strikers experienced a sudden emancipation and hoped to design not only their own future but also that of their nation.<sup>55</sup>

This use of Christian and Romantic symbols blurred differentiations between politics and religion and integrated the heterogeneous people supporting the strike into a single community. However, this community reached beyond the protesters to situationally integrate representatives of the regime, for instance the state and party commissions negotiating with the strike leader. At moments when negotiations became particularly intense, strike leader Lech Wałęsa, an unemployed electrician who had initiated the occupational strike and was highly popular among the strikers, intoned the Polish national anthem and created a shared experience of catharsis. No one at the shipyard, neither protester nor party member, could refuse to join in the recital of the words “Poland has not yet perished”, therefore affirming a national community that transcended the conflict between workers and the workers’ party.<sup>56</sup> This performative expression of Polishness amalgamated Catholic, Romantic, and other national concepts of nation in ways that were similar to the intellectual discourse and the performance of plurality discussed earlier; however, given the working-class background of protest its tone was dominated by popular piety and a vernacular understanding of politics that omitted a conceptual reflection on pluralism.

Despite its rapid growth and the factual diarchy with the regime, *Solidarność* lacked a concise programme. In the months following the successful strike in Gdańsk the union relied on strikes as a mean of political communication and followed an ad hoc strategy that reflected its internal divisions. When the first draft of a future programme was issued in February 1981 it mainly addressed the deep crisis of the Polish economy. Nevertheless, in a passage on “fundamental values” authors praised the “best traditions of the nation, the ethical principles of Christianity, the political call of democracy and socialist social thought”<sup>57</sup> as *Solidarność*’s programmatic guideline. Reflecting that

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53 For instance, actors from the Coastal Theatre joined the workers and presented classical texts. Kubik, *Power*, 191.

54 Andrzej Walicki, *Filozofia a mesjanizm: Studia z dziejów filozofii i myśli społeczno-religijnej romantyzmu polskiego* (Warsaw 1970), 17–18.

55 Kubik, *Power*, 190.

56 Garton Ash, *Polish Revolution*, 69.

57 “Kierunki działania związku w obecnej sytuacji w kraju. Tezy do dyskusji” in Bronisław Pasierb (ed.), *NSZZ “Solidarność” 1980–1981. Podstawowe dokumenty – Kronika działalności – Bibliografia* (Wrocław 1990), 66–96, on p. 66.



the amalgamation of symbols witnessed at the shipyard proceeded with the “crucifix next to the [Polish White] eagle hanging on the wall of many union offices”,<sup>58</sup> the programme proclaimed that “amongst us, there is place for all, regardless of their world-view, their nationality, or their political opinions”.<sup>59</sup> Despite such an expressed commitment to pluralism, however, the programme was dominated by Catholic thought and symbolic references.

These dynamics of conceptual thought also shaped the proceedings at the union’s National Congress in October and November 1981, where delegates acclaimed corporative and independent local authorities as a means to limit the regime’s power.<sup>60</sup> Understanding the union as a “movement for the moral rebirth of the nation”,<sup>61</sup> its tone of protest turned more and more radical. Astonishingly, the union’s final charter avoided any references to socialist inspiration and replaced them with quotes from John Paul II’s 1981 encyclical *Laborem exercens*, which centred on the working human being as the inspiration of social order.<sup>62</sup>

In this contradictory set of beliefs and political strategies, both religious and national symbols provided a pragmatic bond among union members and helped to “mobilise emotions” and the masses.<sup>63</sup> In this sense, *Solidarność* reproduced the oppositional value of solidarity – the union’s name – and advocated a form of political participation that aimed to include everyone in deciding the nation’s future.<sup>64</sup> On a conceptual level, the union’s 1981 charter institutionalised the union’s performative heterogeneity as a specific “a-ideological”<sup>65</sup> syncretism.<sup>66</sup> Although the dominant signifier of political community – the nation – was strongly, but not exclusively, based on Catholicism and

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58 Ibid., 69.

59 Ibid., 67.

60 Ryszard Kozioł, *Debata Samorządowa w czasach pierwszej Solidarności* (Cracow 2004); Paweł Stefan Załęski, “Self-governing Republic in the thought of the Solidarity movement in Poland: Why Solidarity was not a civil society”, in *Working Papers on the Solidarity Movement 7* (2013), <http://solidarnosc.collegium.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/WPSM-7.pdf>.

61 “Program NSZZ ‘Solidarność’: Uchwalony przez I Krajowy Zjazd Delegatów”, in Pasierb (ed.), “*Solidarność*”, 99–145, on p. 101.

62 Ibid.

63 Natali Stegmann, “‘Für Brot und Freiheit’: Zum Verhältnis von materiellen und ideellen Erwartungen im ‘Langen Sommer der Solidarność’”, in Jana Osterkamp/Joachim von Puttkamer (ed.), *Sozialistische Staatlichkeit* (München 2012), 161–174, on p. 162.

64 Magdalena Zolkos, “Human Rights and Polish Dissident Traditions: The Civic Republican Perspective”, in *Studies in Social and Political Thought* (2004), 57–78, on p. 62; Ciżewska, *Filozofia*, 122–125.

65 Elżbieta Ciżewska, *Filozofia publiczna Solidarności: 1980–1981 z perspektywy republikańskiej tradycji politycznej* (Warsaw 2010), 324–334; Paweł Rojek, *Semiotyka Solidarności: Analiza dyskursów PZPR i NSZZ Solidarność w 1981 roku* (Cracow 2009), 133–166.

66 Even core concepts central to the union’s self-understanding remained open, such as *dignity*, being derived both from Catholic social teaching and socialist convictions of “workers’ dignity”. Sergiusz Kowalski, *Krytyka solidarnościowego rozumu: Studium z socjologii myślenia potoczego* (Warsaw 2009), 103–111; Rojek, *Semiotyka Solidarności*, 135.

perceived the Church as the union's natural partner,<sup>67</sup> *Solidarność*'s nation remained open and, in the end, an empty and rather abstract symbolic notion. In the union's discourse, the nation as such – its history and symbols – were intended to promote a utopian project of a better Poland, and it was accompanied by concepts such as “society” or “labouring people”. The significant difference between *Solidarność* and elite *samizdat* discourse was the union's outreach: during the strike at the Lenin Shipyard and in the following sixteen months, millions of Poles brought this heterogeneous, liberal, and Catholic nation to life, in the vernacular.

### Reconceptualising Patriotism

This long summer of *Solidarność* saw more than workers hailing the nation and its liberating powers. In extreme cases, the trade union witnessed anti-Semitic outbursts that contradicted the pluralist consensus of both the democratic opposition and the union movement.<sup>68</sup> This section centres on the most pronounced intervention against such extremism:<sup>69</sup> Jan Józef Lipski's essay “Two Fatherlands – Two Patriotisms” which consistently reframed Polish nationalism in the spirit of Christian charity and received much attention both in the oppositional and official state-controlled public sphere.<sup>70</sup>

Lipski, a veteran oppositionist and a mediator among leftist, liberal, and Catholic forms of non-conformism in Warsaw,<sup>71</sup> took up the dichotomy between “us” and “them” that had pervaded *Solidarność* discourse since 1980.<sup>72</sup> His basic assumption was that the problem of nationalism was not the differentiation into social, ethnic, or national groups as such but rather the self-image of superiority towards other groups and the ensuing degradation of other nations.<sup>73</sup> From a pronounced Christian perspective, Lipski enquired into the possibility of a self-reflexive national identity guided by charity: “Patriotism issues from love and should lead to love; any other form is an ethical travesty.”<sup>74</sup> Turning to the Polish example, he argued that the popular

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67 Krzysztof Łabędź, *Koncepcje polityczne w prasie NSZZ “Solidarność” w latach 1980–1981* (Toruń 2004), 117.

68 Michel Wieviorka, *Les Juifs, la Pologne et Solidarnosc* (Paris 1984).

69 Kopeček, “Human Rights”, 580.

70 Gotthold Rohde, “Einführung”, in *Kontinent. Ost-West-Forum* 8:22 (1982), 3–6.

71 Andrzej Friszke, “Jan Józef Lipski”, in Antoni Dudek et al. (ed.), *Opozycja w PRL. Słownik biograficzny 1956–1989*, vol. 2 (Warsaw 2002), 200–205, on p. 202; Arndt, *Rote Bürger*, 42.

72 Rojek, *Semiotyka Solidarności*, 127–129.

73 Lipski, “Two Fatherlands”, 159; see, for the original, id., “Dwie ojczyzny – dwa patriotyzmy: Uwagi o megalomanii narodowej i ksenofobii Polaków”, in *Kultura* 10 (1981), 3–30.

74 Lipski, “Two Fatherlands”, 160.

phrase of “love for everything Polish”<sup>75</sup> – also popular among many oppositionists<sup>76</sup> – could not realise this norm, as the phrase ultimately omitted dark chapters of Polish history such as anti-Semitic pogroms and mass violence against Ukrainians during the Second World War. Charitable patriotism, however, must come to terms with this violent past and draw lessons from it.

Lipski transposed moral guidelines from an individual and interpersonal level to the level of societies and nations. This transfer explicitly referred to the Polish bishops’ letter of 1965 that had pleaded for mutual forgiveness between Poles and Germans as a path to reconciliation.<sup>77</sup> Here, Lipski called for just such a reconciliation with Ukrainians, Belarusians, and Lithuanians,<sup>78</sup> and eventually all neighbouring nations and ethnicities. In his *samizdat* essay Lipski was only able to sketch briefly the different ethnic conflicts, but, similar to many other authors who have delved into such topics before and since,<sup>79</sup> his call for reconciliation expressed a critical and self-reflexive national self-image.

In addition to the moral argument of reconciliation, Lipski took the political reality of his time into account and pointed to new political options opening up through improving mutual relations with neighbouring countries.<sup>80</sup> As a result, Poland could restore her sovereignty and independence only by working together with the small and oppressed nations in Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>81</sup> A moral and self-reflective patriotism was fundamental, in his view, for enabling effective international dialogue in Polish foreign policy.<sup>82</sup>

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75 Ibid.

76 Tadeusz Jastrzębiec, “Rzecz o patriotyzmie”, in *Bratniak* [Samizdat] 10–11 (1978), 7–10.

77 Lipski, “Two Fatherlands”, 162. See also Karolina Wigura, *Wina narodów. Przebaczenie jako strategia prowadzenia polityki* (Gdańsk 2011), 77; Piotr H. Kosicki, “Caritas across the Iron Curtain?: Polish-German Reconciliation and the Bishops’ Letter of 1965”, in *East European Politics and Societies* 23:2 (2009), 213–243, on pp. 219–221.

78 Lipski, “Two Fatherlands”, 167.

79 Andrzej Albert [Wojciech Roszkowski], “Co się stało z narodami bałtyckimi?”, in *Polskie Porozumienie Niepodległościowe. Wybór tekstów* (London 1989), 226–234; Antoni Macierewicz et al., “Sprawa polska – sprawa rosyjska”, in *Głos* [Samizdat] 1 (1977), 11–14; Kazimierz Podlaski [Bohdan Skaradziński], *Bracia nasi? Rzecz o Białorusinach, Litwinach i Ukraińcach* (Warsaw 1984 [Samizdat]).

Re-evaluating national history from a moral perspective was a cornerstone of oppositional discourse in Central Europe. See Michal Kopeček, “Citizen and Patriot in the Post-Totalitarian Era: Czech Dissidence in Search of the Nation and its Democratic Future”, in *Transit* 20 (2009), [http://www.iwm.at/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=168&Itemid=231](http://www.iwm.at/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=168&Itemid=231); Chad Bryant, “Whose Nation? Czech Dissidents and History Writing from a Post-1989 Perspective”, in *History and Memory* 12:1 (2000), 30–64.

80 Lipski, “Two Fatherlands”, 168.

81 Kopeček, “Human Rights”, 581.

82 Given this argumentative tradition, it is hardly surprising that dissidents such as Kuroń and Michnik supported the Baltic independence movements in 1989 and 1990 as diplomatic advisers. See Timothy Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations. Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, 1569–1999* (New Haven, CT 2003), 241–255.

Lipski's contribution to the oppositional debate on the Polish nation tackled radical Polish nationalism since the 1960s and synthesised the oppositional debate since Sroka's "Spirit that Revives". Here, Lipski took up the liberal position and developed an image of the pluralist nation via Catholic tradition, whereas the earlier contribution had instead portrayed Catholicism as only one legitimate strand within Polish liberal nationalism. However, Lipski by no means depicted the nation as having a specific transcendent basis for its identity but instead sought to define forms of moral or "enlightened"<sup>83</sup> patriotism that would prove fruitful for any given nation. Introducing Christian charity into patriotism, he inverted the understanding of Catholic Poland both regarding domestic and foreign relations: Catholicism was not an exclusive character trait nor the essence of Polishness but rather the foundation for recognising difference within the nation. If the Polish nation was Catholic – in Lipski's argumentation – this could not be expressed in a sheer affirmation of tradition or the reconstruction of an alleged past, but it still necessarily shaped the nation's future. Consequently, this charitable patriotism would not decide upon who is – and who is not – a Pole but rather bring together those who consider *themselves* Poles. Such a Catholic Poland could not mark herself off from "other" groups – whether neighbouring nations or Jews living within Poland – but would instead engage in a dialogue with them.

### Conclusion:

#### Catholic Poland as a Resource of Oppositional Discourse

During the crisis of late socialism, Polish oppositionists radically reformulated the concept of "Catholic Poland". In a period of societal atomisation, *samizdat* authors discussed the political community and integrated social pluralism under the term "nation". In fact, those active in the opposition succeeded in transposing this concept of community into social practice, first on a limited scale in the new political opposition after 1976 and, second, on a broader scale through the mass movement *Solidarność* after the summer of 1980.

The debates analysed in this essay identified tensions in oppositional national discourse between exclusivist and liberal nationalism; however, they also sought to find ways to transcend – or at least to contain – such tensions. Conservative and pro-nationalist Catholics, most notably a group

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83 Jan C. Behrends, "Jan Józef Lipski's europäischer Traum: Zur Geschichtskultur in Polen, Russland und Deutschland nach 1989", in *Themenportal Europäische Geschichte*, 29 August 2007, [http://www.europa.clio-online.de/Portals/\\_Europa/documents/B2007/E\\_Behrends\\_Lipski.pdf](http://www.europa.clio-online.de/Portals/_Europa/documents/B2007/E_Behrends_Lipski.pdf).

around the *samizdat*-journal *Bratniak*, reproduced largely traditional concepts of an indivisible and exclusive identity between Catholicism and the Polish nation. In response to this essentialist concept of nation, leftist and liberal intellectuals such as Jan Tomasz Lipski, Wojciech Ostrowski, Jacek Kuroń, and Jan Józef Lipski reconsidered the linkage between Catholicism and Polishness, reclaiming the national paradigm that the intellectual left had largely neglected before 1976.<sup>84</sup>

In the wake of an individualist reception of Christianity and the emerging dialogue between lay Catholics and revisionist socialists, *samizdat* authors located on this part of the political spectrum introduced an affirmative understanding of pluralism and Christian charity into national discourse. Raising questions about two common misperceptions in Polish history under communism – namely the assumption of an unchangingly “Catholic” nation and the depiction of a liberal and strictly “post-national” opposition – this essay has demonstrated, first, that the linkage between nation and religion evolved significantly during late socialism and, second, that this evolution was due to inner-Catholic reform and a dialogue with those outside the Church whom the Second Vatican Council had called “men of good will”. Such a dialogue across the lines of ideological confrontation also accompanied the early years of the Polish opposition after 1976 and helped to integrate nationalist strands of protest into the broader spectrum of public opposition.

With the rise of the *Solidarność* trade union, this discourse clashed with a dynamic mobilisation of vernacular piety and Romantic patriotism amongst millions of workers. Although the liberal intelligentsia, whether revisionist or Catholic, greatly influenced *Solidarność*,<sup>85</sup> it had limited success in promoting liberal nationalism within this mass movement. This suggests a second dimension of conceptual tension in national discourse, namely the incongruence between elite discourse in *samizdat* and popular mass culture, a factor that became particularly visible during the 1980 strike at the Lenin shipyard.<sup>86</sup> However, oppositional pluralism and the affirmative concept of solidarity situationally enforced by *Solidarność* provided a way to contain this tension and performatively allowed for a heterogeneous, liberal, and Catholic nation.

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84 Robert Zuzowski, “The Left and Nationalism in Eastern Europe”, in *East European Quarterly* 38:4 (2008), 453–466.

85 Research is divided about whether *Solidarność* resulted from intellectual inspiration or workers’ mobilisation; however, both dynamics are obvious. Jan Kubik, “Who Done It: Workers, Intellectuals, or Someone Else? Controversy over Solidarity’s Origins and Social Composition”, in *Theory and Society* 23:3 (1994), 441–466.

86 Michał Łuczewski/Michał Sokulski, “Integralna teoria Solidarności: Trzy patriotyzmy po trzech dekadach”, in *Working Papers on the Solidarity Movement* 2:16 (2013), <http://solidarnosc.collegium.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/WPSM-2.pdf>.

From a longer-term perspective on Polish national discourse, this liberal reformulation overcame the modern nationalisation of religion<sup>87</sup> and implied a desacralisation of the nation.<sup>88</sup> In doing so, liberal oppositionists overcame the dichotomist superstructure of national discourse that stemmed from the invention of the modern nation in the nineteenth century and had marked off Polish Catholics as true Poles from other faiths in Poland or from neighbouring polities. Instead of being built upon the distinction between friends and foes, the liberal nation developed in oppositional discourse was defined in terms of mutually positive relationships with other social groups, both within and outside Poland. At the same time, this process did not represent a radical secularisation of national identity, as it acknowledged and even endorsed Christian inspiration as an important – indeed, probably the most important – transcendent basis of the Polish nation.<sup>89</sup> In accordance with the moral tone of oppositional discourse, Catholicism ceased to serve as the exclusive marker of national identity and developed into an intellectual and more broadly cultural resource: it provided a fundamental motivation for mutual recognition and thus, subsequently, encouraged the acceptance of religious or ideological difference. This charitable patriotism was built upon the language, symbolism and rituals of Catholicism but also unfolded well beyond the traditional sphere of direct adherence to the Catholic Church. Given the renaissance of antagonistic and ethnic concepts of the Catholic Polish nation after 1989 and the prevalence of Catholic symbolism in it, the events described here might be seen as merely a brief episode in the development of Catholic nationalism. The project of a liberal Catholic nation scrutinised in this essay remains significant, however, because it not only reveals the complexities, contingencies, and ambiguities in the relationship between faith and national identity but also shows how this relationship can influence the developmental trajectory of liberal political thought.

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87 Porter-Szücs, *Faith*, 330–331.

88 Roger Brubaker, “Religion and Nationalism: Four Approaches”, in *Nations and Nationalism* 18 (2012), 2–20, on p. 11; Heinz-Gerhard Haupt/Dieter Langewiesche, “Einleitung”, in id. (ed.), *Nation und Religion*, 11–23, on pp. 12–14.

89 See Helmut König, “Lob der Dissidenz: Größe und Grenzen”, in *Merkur* 67:3 (2013), 216–228, on pp. 222–224 for the place of notions of transcendence in oppositional intellectual thought.

SECTION III:  
FAITH, NATION, AND “EUROPE”





## Patrick Pasture

### Between a Christian Fatherland and Euro-Christendom<sup>1</sup>

The relationship between churches and states in Europe altered fundamentally with the break-up of Christendom in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries – which led to new confessional links between both – and then after the French Revolution, which even more radically and forcefully introduced a secularist separation, effectively subduing the churches to the state. Most Protestant denominations accepted integration in (and largely subordination to) the state, focusing on ecclesiastical life and broader aspects of morality while also “respecting the autonomy of the temporal”, a position most clearly expressed by Lutherans and Anglicans. The Catholic Church responded to the state’s demands mainly through opposition: it rejected liberalism and nationalism (seen to be undermining the godly order and challenging the Church), strengthened its transnational organisation and the centrality of the papacy, rethought its relationship with the state, and invented new ways of motivating the faithful in a culture that valued individual choice and mass participation in social and political life.<sup>2</sup> The strategies of Reformed churches in Switzerland and the Netherlands, with the status of “public churches”, were similar if less centrally directed in the absence of a universal church authority. All Christian churches developed substantial transnational connections, offering an alternative source of collective identification, i.e. with the global community of the faithful.

Contemporary scholarship has rejected earlier views of nationalism as a form of secularised religion and emphasised the new state-church relationship, mainly in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>3</sup> There is much evidence that the churches established new links with states and national movements, “sacralising” the nation in various ways. Although the Catholic Church initially saw the nation as a “modern” invention of the French

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1 Parts of this essay have been presented in Leuven, Lublin, and Florence (EUI). I thank Camilla Macdonald, Piotr H. Kosicki, John Wood, and others for helpful comments on earlier presentations and drafts.

2 Victor Conzemius, “Kirchen und Nationalismen im Europa des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts”, in Albrecht Langner (ed.), *Katholizismus, nationaler Gedanke und Europa seit 1800* (Paderborn 1985), 11–50, esp. pp. 14–23.

3 Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, “Religion and Nation in Europe in the 19th Century: Some Comparative Notes”, in *Estudos Avançados* 22:62 (2008), 77–94; Heinz-Gerhard Haupt/Dieter Lange-wiesche (ed.), *Nation und Religion in Europa. Mehrkonfessionelle Gesellschaften im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt a.M. 2004).

Revolution – and thus to be condemned in principle – its official statements in the later nineteenth century, such as the encyclicals *Immortale dei* (1885) and *Rerum novarum* (1891), recognised nation-states as constituent parts of the social and international order. The Church's attitude towards nationalism remained ambivalent: it distinguished between a good nationalism, sometimes called patriotism, and an evil one that ignored the Catholic principles and precepts of the Church aimed at establishing a “peaceful and harmonious coexistence of nations” (*Rerum novarum* par. 32).<sup>4</sup> Moreover, Christian democratic movements, dominated by Catholics, rejected an “internationalism” they associated with socialism: nineteenth-century Christian democrats defined themselves as “anti-international”, emphasising their attachment to the nation-state, and they retained that dimension into the period after the Second World War. Some historians have described them outright as “patriotic-nationalistic” and even “parochial”, given the difficulties they faced in creating an international association in the inter-war years.<sup>5</sup> This observation seems to contradict the idea of Christianity as “universal”, especially as represented by the Roman Catholic Church, with the Pope as its spiritual and ecclesiastical leader. It also runs against the views of political scientists who consider Christian democracy's defining feature to be its *transnational* orientation. David Hanley, for example, has stated that “more than any other

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4 Ignacio Veca, “‘Le nazioni cattoliche non muoiono’. Intorno alle origine del nazionalismo cattolico (1808–1849)”, in Daniele Menozzi (ed.), *Cattolicesimo Nazione e Nazionalismo. Catholicism Nation and Nationalism* (Pisa 2015), 11–39 (see also the contribution of Jacopo Cellini in the same volume: “Beyond the Nation and Nationalism: Paul VI's New Universalism”, 185–203); Thies Schulze, “Nationalism and the Catholic Church: Papal Politics and ‘Nationalist’ Clergy in Border Regions (1918–1939)”, in Isabella Löhr/Roland Wenzlhuemer (ed.), *The Nation State and Beyond: Governing Globalization Processes in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (Berlin 2013), 235–255, on p. 240.

5 Andreas Kohl, “Die internationale Parteienzusammenarbeit: die Beziehungen der österreichischen Volkspartei zu ihren Schwesterparteien und ihre Mitarbeit in den transnationalen Parteienzusammenschlüssen”, in Robert Kriechbaumer/Franz Schausberger (ed.), *Volkspartei – Anspruch und Realität. Die Geschichte der ÖVP 1945–1995* (Vienna 1995), 359–369, on p. 367, quoted in Peter Van Kemseke, *Towards an Era of Development. The Globalization of Socialism and Christian Democracy 1945–1965* (Leuven 2006), on pp. 26–27; Alwin Hanschmidt, “Eine christlich-demokratische ‘Internationale’ zwischen den Weltkriegen. Das ‘Secrétariat International des Partis Démocratiques d’Inspiration Chrétienne’ in Paris”, in Winfried Becker/Rudolf Morsey (ed.), *Christliche Demokratie in Europa. Grundlagen und Entwicklungen seit dem 19. Jahrhundert* (Vienna 1988), 152–188. See also Peter Pulzer, “Nationalism and Internationalism in European Christian Democracy”, in Michael Gehler/Wolfram Kaiser (ed.), *Christian Democracy in Europe since 1945* (London 2004), vol. 2, 10–24; Patrick Pasture/Johan Verberckmoes, “Working-class Internationalism and the Appeal of National Identity: Historical Dilemmas and Current Debates on Western Europe”, in Patrick Pasture/Johan Verberckmoes (ed.), *Working-Class Internationalism and the Appeal of National Identity: Historical Dilemmas and Current Debates on Western Europe* (Oxford 1998), 1–42, on pp. 9–10.

political family, the [Christian Democratic] parties have striven explicitly for some kind of supranational identity [...]. Hence their longstanding attachment to European integration” and their strong opposition to “raw nationalism”.<sup>6</sup>

In this essay I will assess how the Catholic Church related to either the nation-state or the idea of a European federation (leaving aside attitudes towards larger forms of “internationalism”, including the League of Nations), from roughly the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century, into the period after the Second World War. I will mainly focus on Catholics, since Protestants, especially Lutherans, hardly expressed views on the nation and, even less, on Europe *as Christians*, as they accepted in principle the autonomy of the secular. I look at different societal actors, which for the Catholic world includes the Holy See as well as the clergy high and low, confessional and Christian democratic parties and movements, social and cultural associations, and individual thinkers.

### Catholic Fatherlands?

France, which saw the sharpest secularist assault on the Catholic Church prior to the Communist regimes in Russia and in Central and Eastern Europe, illustrates particularly well the difficulties the Church faced in re-establishing a working relationship with the secular state and with the emerging nation in the modern era. It also exemplifies the diversity of viewpoints and efforts within the Church. The French ecclesiastical hierarchy primarily supported the Restoration, and after the Second Empire it opposed a reconciliation with the republican state and its anticlerical (secularist) legislation; in contrast, the Holy See – which especially under Pope Leo XIII appealed to the French Church to reach an understanding with the Republic (*Inter innumeras sollicitudines*, 1892) – adopted far more accommodating policies, though without fully recognising the state’s legitimacy from an ecclesiastical perspective. Ultimately, however, even in France a *ralliement* proved possible, perhaps most clearly through the French missions in Africa and Indochina, which demonstrated the engagement of Catholics in the French colonial enterprise and thus with the Republic as well.<sup>7</sup> The First World War rallied French

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6 David Hanley, “Christian Democracy as a Political Phenomenon”, in David Hanley (ed.), *Christian Democracy in Europe: A Comparative Perspective* (London 1994), 1–11, on p. 8; Tim Bale/Aleks Szczerbiak, “Why Is There No Christian Democracy in Poland – and Why Should We Care?”, in *Party Politics* 14:4 (2008), 479–500.

7 Pierre Brocheux/Daniel Hemery, *Indochina: An Ambiguous Colonization, 1858–1954* (Berkeley, CA 2011), 20. For a more theoretical perspective on the association of mission and national state formation, see Peter van der Veer, *Imperial Encounters: Religion and Modernity in India and Britain* (Princeton, NJ 2009).

Catholics behind the Republic, and the introduction of the annual “patriotic festival” of Jeanne d’Arc in 1920 – parallel to her beatification in Rome – further confirmed French Catholics’ association with the state. Their “patriotism” even pushed them beyond the boundaries set by the Church, and they engaged massively in the *Action Française* (AF), a French radical nationalist party created in 1898 in the wake of the Dreyfus affair. Although the AF was far from a Catholic party, it strongly appealed to Catholics because of its anti-Semitism, authoritarianism, anti-republicanism, and the opportunity to demonstrate support for the French nation. Nevertheless the AF’s “politics first” principle was opposed by the Holy See and the party was condemned by Pope Pius XI in 1926.<sup>8</sup> Still, a large faction of the Church, including much of the episcopacy, remained hostile to the Republic but strongly attached to the French nation. In 1940 this ambiguous position lured them into collaboration with the reactionary “nationalist” government of Marshal Pétain in Vichy France.

Vichy nevertheless illustrates that sometimes the relationship between state and church could be strengthened, albeit in various ways. In the Austrian Habsburg Monarchy, for example, the Catholic Church gained prestige, power, and autonomy especially after 1848, as it could legitimise the emperor and create a common culture within the empire. This policy was not entirely workable, however, since it undermined the Church’s legitimacy among critics of the state.<sup>9</sup> At times, Catholics, especially lower clergy, supported dissidents or regional nationalist movements, such as in Flanders, Ireland, and the Basque country, especially if the state was perceived as inimical to Church interests: Anglican in the Irish case, secularist (anticlerical) in the Flemish case.<sup>10</sup> It often proved a successful strategy, although the Holy See and the higher clergy only rarely supported it, preferring to reach an accommodation with the state.<sup>11</sup>

If the state pursued secularist policies, even those with a strong Protestant imprint such as in the German *Kulturkampf*, this provoked clashes and political struggles with lasting consequences. Yet, the German case shows more clearly than any other how strong the desire to identify with the nation-state

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8 Jacques Prévotat, *Les catholiques et l’Action française. Histoire d’une condamnation 1899–1939* (Paris 2001).

9 Martin Schulze Wessel, “Religion, Politics and the Limits of Imperial Integration – Comparing the Habsburg Monarchy and the Russian Empire”, in Ulrike von Hirschhausen/Jörn Leonhard (ed.), *Comparing Empires: Encounters and Transfers in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Göttingen 2011), 337–358.

10 Not always though, as in the Basque case.

11 For a recent insightful but empirically limited assessment see Schulze, “Nationalism”. A broader perspective is in Conzemius, “Kirchen”. See also Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Rise of Christian Democracy in Europe* (Ithaca, NY 1996) for a comparative assessment of nineteenth-century Catholic strategies towards politics.

could be, as even Catholics defined themselves as part of it. This is all the more remarkable since after the formation of the German Empire in 1870 the emperor was also head of the Lutheran Church and was considered protector of the faith: the Empire, moreover, was understood as fundamentally Protestant and marking a break with the Holy Roman Empire. Still, Catholics developed an alternative narrative, considering themselves bearers of the nation, with Saint Boniface, the “Apostle of the Germans”, as the national patron saint.<sup>12</sup> As the Church actually grew stronger through mass mobilisation and political innovation, it found a specific and paradoxical way to associate with the state through establishing a separate semi-political subculture or “milieu”, a process also known as “pillarisation”. Belgian and Dutch scholars have argued that although such subcultures, which existed widely in West and Central Europe, isolated the faithful from secularist policies, they also offered secure structures through which they gradually “integrated” into and identified with the state. What has been called the “emancipation” of Catholics in the Netherlands applies to Catholics in Protestant-dominated Germany as well; it even applies to Belgium, where the Catholic majority remained attached to a state that after the “school wars” of the 1880s – a struggle sparked by government efforts to promote secular primary education – was perceived as “anti-clerical”.<sup>13</sup> As in the French case, as noted above, colonial missions also contributed to rallying Catholics behind the (imperial) state or empire.<sup>14</sup>

### Rising from the Ashes: Europe as Neo-Christendom

While the Church sought accommodation with the new states, be they nation-states or “nation-empires”,<sup>15</sup> many Christians nevertheless longed for a different political structure. Since the French Revolution, if not the Wars

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12 Frank-Michael Kuhlemann, “Konfessionalisierung der Nation? Deutschland im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert”, in Haupt/Langewiesche (ed.), *Nation*, 27–63.

13 Staf Hellemans, *Strijd om de moderniteit. Sociale bewegingen en verzuiling in Europa sinds 1800* (Leuven 1990); Hans Righart, *De katholieke zuil in Europa. Een vergelijkend onderzoek naar het ontstaan van verzuiling onder katholieken in Oostenrijk, Zwitserland, België en Nederland* (Meppel 1986).

14 Kuhlemann, “Konfessionalisierung der Nation?”

15 The term “nation-empire” refers to modern empires such as the Napoleonic Empire or Germany after 1870 that applied uniformising policies, similar to those in nation-states, upon political entities largely exceeding the boundaries of a single “nation”, with the aim of creating a large nation-state rather than a loose multi-ethnic empire. See Patrick Pasture, *Imagining European Unity since 1000 AD* (Basingstoke 2015), 34, 43 and passim. A very similar approach is proposed (independently) by Stefan Berger/Alexei Miller, “Introduction: Building Nations in and with Empires – A Reassessment”, in Stefan Berger/Alexei Miller (ed.), *Nationalizing Empires* (Budapest/New York 2014), 1–30.

of Religion, many had cherished the ideal of a restored European “Christendom”. Romantic souls such as Novalis, Friedrich Schlegel, or Alphonse de Chateaubriand lamented the demise of the “beautiful, magnificent times, when Europe was a Christian land”, and “one sovereign governed and unified the great political forces”.<sup>16</sup> Russian Czar Alexander I saw such a role for the Holy Alliance established after the Congress of Vienna in 1815, but other monarchs did not share his messianic ambition. Still, the Holy Alliance partly responded to the ideal of an association of Christian states envisioned by intellectuals such as the Abbé de St-Pierre and the Duke of Sully in preceding centuries, even if it remained far from the Carolingian or Habsburg-like empire of which Schlegel or Chateaubriand dreamed.<sup>17</sup> Nineteenth-century Polish thinkers even imagined Poland as a redeeming nation uniting and leading (Slavic) European lands under Christianity’s banner.<sup>18</sup> Catholic ultramontanes also cultivated a nostalgic vision of a Catholic Europe, with the pope as Christendom’s spiritual and (even if only symbolically) political leader.<sup>19</sup>

Certainly, these European ideas remained vague and did not preclude the continuing existence of nation-states; moreover, their evocations of a common “European” culture did not inspire a level of identification comparable to that commonly granted to nations. Still, there were proclamations of a deeper European unity or even a European rebirth. Such notions rose to prominence after the First World War had plunged Europe into an existential crisis, not only setting nation against nation but also demonstrating their weakness and vulnerability, jeopardising their global dominance. Indeed, many feared the

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16 Novalis, “Christianity or Europe: A Fragment” (orig. “Die Christenheit oder Europa. Ein Fragment”, 1799) in Frederick C. Beiser, *The Early Political Writings of the German Romantics* (Cambridge 1992), 59–80. On Novalis see extensively Pauline Kleingeld, “Romantic Cosmopolitanism: Novalis’ Christianity or Europe”, in *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 46 (2008), 269–84; Jayne Svenungsson, “Christian Europe: Borders and Boundaries of a Mythological Conception”, in Susanna Lindberg et al. (ed.), *Transcending Europe: Beyond Universalism and Particularism* (Basingstoke 2014), 120–134.

17 Pasture, *Imagining*, 49–52. On Alexander I, see Marie-Pierre Rey, “L’engagement européen du tsar Alexandre Ier”, in Gérard Bossuat/Georges Saunier (ed.), *Inventer l’Europe. Histoire nouvelle des groupes d’influence et des acteurs de l’unité européenne* (Brussels 2003), 41–53; Mark Jarrett, *The Congress of Vienna and Its Legacy: War and Great Power Diplomacy After Napoleon* (New York 2013), 173–178; Michael Burleigh, *Earthly Powers: The Conflict between Religion and Politics from the French Revolution to the Great War* (New York 2009), 119–121.

18 Peter Oliver Loew, “Polen denkt Europa”, in id. (ed.), *Polen denkt Europa. Politische Texte aus zwei Jahrhunderten* (Frankfurt a.M. 2004), 11–56.

19 Winfried Becker, “L’idea europea dei cattolici ultramontani da Görres alla seconda democrazia tedesca”, in Alfredo Canavero/Jean-Dominique Durand (ed.), *Il fattore religioso nell’integrazione europea* (Milano 1999), 335–358; Emiel Lamberts, *The Struggle with Leviathan: Social Responses to the Omnipotence of the State, 1815–1965* (Leuven 2016), esp. pp. 180–193; id. (ed.), *The Black International: The Holy See and Militant Catholicism in Europe* (Leuven 2002).

“awakening” of the great civilisations of Asia and the competition of the United States, to which all European states, victors and vanquished alike, had become deeply indebted. The war had demonstrated a moral collapse, the loss of traditional values, and the rise of despair and nihilism. For many Catholics (among others!), a new start implied not only the unification of the continent in the image of the US, but also a true rebirth, a European *palingenesis*.<sup>20</sup>

Assertions of the need for a European rebirth were inextricably linked with the perception of the decline of the Occident, *der Untergang des Abendlandes* in Oswald Spengler’s memorable phrase. What this meant varied, and many considered it solely a crisis of culture and values. For others, however, the issue also had political dimensions. For example, the renowned Catholic Belgian medievalist Godefroid Kurth, author of a celebrated history of the origins of modern (European) civilisation (*Les origines de la civilisation moderne*, 1886), compared Europe’s state of decline with the dynamic development of the United States and Japan, fearing the rise of China and imagining the imminent independence of the European colonies in South and Southeast Asia (“Hindustan”). The answer, he wrote shortly before his death in January 1916, was the constitution of a European federation: the United States of Europe.<sup>21</sup>

In many ways the “Paneuropean” movement of Count Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi responded to this ideal, proposing a plan for a European union. “Paneuropa” particularly addressed socialists and Catholics, who were most interested in European unity; the Austrian chancellor and Catholic prelate Mgr. Ignaz Seipel, who was strongly opposed to the modern nation-state and a proponent of the idea of a Christian Commonwealth in the image of the former Habsburg Empire, played a key role in its establishment in Vienna in 1920.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, more conservative Catholics looked down on Coudenhove-Kalergi’s plans and considered them overly pragmatic. Indeed, the count adopted a relatively open-ended stance on the specific nature of his proposed European union, and even its political system and geographic boundaries

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20 The term palingenesis has recently been popularised by Roger Griffin (in *Modernism and Fascism* [Basingstoke 2007] and other works). I am not sure whether it is a useful concept to define Fascism, but it surely was a key feature in the thinking of many inter-war intellectuals about a new European culture, not only of Catholics, and beyond milieus usually understood as Fascist.

21 Godefroid Kurth, “Les Etats-Unis d’Europe”, handwritten note dated 1916, published in Geneviève Duchenne, *Visions et projets belges pour l’Europe. De la Belle Epoque aux Traités de Rome (1900–1957)* (Brussels 2001), 4.

22 Anita Ziegerhofer-Pretenthaler, “Europäische Christdemokraten und die Paneuropa-Bewegung von Richard Nikolaus Coudenhove-Kalergi”, in Michael Gehler et al. (ed.), *Christdemokraten in Europa im 20. Jahrhundert* (Wien 2001), 574–603, on p. 584. On Seipel’s views on nation see Klemens von Klemperer, *Ignaz Seipel: Christian Statesman in a Time of Crisis* (Princeton, NJ 1972), 56–62; Conzemius, “Kirchen und Nationalismen”, 28–31.

were open to debate. But undoubtedly his ideal was genuine and original. He foresaw not only an institutional framework for Europe but imagined a new European Fatherland that would even bring forth a new European man. Quite remarkably in a nationalistic Europe where anti-Semitism was endemic, his ideal European was a cosmopolitan hybrid – he even saw Jews as “a new race of nobility by the Grace of Spirit” (*eine neue Adelsrasse von Geistes Gnaden*).<sup>23</sup> Clearly, not all Catholics shared that view.

Quite a different perspective was taken by the so-called “*Abendland*” movement, a loose organisation of German Catholic intellectuals and academics around the journal *Abendland: Deutsche Monatshefte für europäische Kultur, Politik und Wirtschaft*, linked to the influential Association of German Catholic Academics (*Katholische Akademikerverband*) and the ultramontane *Görres-Gesellschaft*. (Although with some different, historically accumulated connotations, the term *Abendland* roughly corresponds to the English term “Occident” and is contrasted with the *Morgenland*, or “Orient”. It is exclusively used to denote Europe though, not “the West”.) The “*Abendlanders*” proposed the creation of a unified Europe, but they imagined it as an organic unity based on its shared Christian heritage, an association of “fatherlands”, reminiscent of the social order willed by God that was destroyed by the Reformation, the Enlightenment, the emergence of nation-states, and the nationalism that had resulted in the First World War. Their Europe was not merely a political and economic association but rather an “ordered society” giving way to “*eine neue Lebensform des europäischen Menschen*” (“a new way of life for European people”<sup>24</sup>) and the restoration, even a genuine rebirth, of Christendom: a deep unity “of Empire [*Reich*] and Church”.<sup>25</sup> The “*Abendlanders*” initially saw the ancient Carolingian empire or the Holy Roman Empire as their model, but they also imagined a connection with Classical Rome (Virgil) and early Christianity. As Heinz Hürten has observed, the latter emphasis (somewhat paradoxically) contributed to alienating the movement from the Holy See. This, in turn, led in Germany in the 1930s to a further narrowing down of the scope of the *Abendland*, emphasising the leading role that the German “nation” should play. The

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23 Richard N. Coudenhove-Kalergi, *Praktischer Idealismus: Adel – Technik – Pazifismus* (Vienna 1925), 23, 50. His view of Africans was, however, less enlightened.

24 Friedrich Schreyvogel, “Paneuropa oder Abendland”, in *Abendland* 1 (1925/26), 175–178, on p. 176, quoted in Vanessa Conze, *Das Europa der Deutschen. Ideen von Europa in Deutschland Zwischen Reichstradition und Westorientierung (1920–1970)* (Munich 2005), 37. An assessment of this discourse of the *Abendland* movement *ibid.*, 33–110 (esp. on pp. 33–56). See also Heinz Hürten, “Der Topos vom christlichen Abendland in Literatur und Publizistik nach den beiden Weltkriegen”, in Langner (ed.), *Katholizismus*, 131–154; Dagmar Pöpping, *Abendland: Christliche Akademiker und die Utopie der Antimoderne 1900–1945* (Berlin 2002).

25 Hermann Platz, “Abendland”, in *Staats-Lexicon der Görresgesellschaft*, vol. I (Freiburg i.Br. 1926), 2–5, quoted in Hürten, “Der Topos”, 140.



preoccupation with the German nation gradually eclipsed the movement's Catholic and European character and brought them close to Nazism. In Austria, in contrast, the ideal of the Christian *Abendland* was deployed by some to oppose Nazi claims for unification.<sup>26</sup>

The relationship between nation and Europe also preoccupied Prince Karl Anton Rohan, whose initiatives to promote a European cultural dialogue made him a key figure among those who were thinking about Europe in the inter-war decades: he established the *Europäische Kulturbund* in Vienna in 1922, with its French counterpart the *Fédération internationale des Unions intellectuelles* (Paris, 1923), and published the illustrious *Europäische Revue* (*Revue européenne*), one of the leading European cultural magazines of the time. Though the *Revue* avoided allying with any particular political party and published articles from various backgrounds, it consistently propagated a conservative vision of a common European culture. It was clear to many contributors that Europe had to unite against not only Soviet and "Anglo-Saxon" domination but also the looming "awakening" of the Islamic and East-Asian empires. However, the unification of Europe, the argument went, could not be achieved through political and economic policies and convergences, as Coudenhove-Kalergi proposed: instead, the continent needed to pull itself together, undergo a process of renewal and constitute itself as a "Third Way". The rejuvenated Europe should, in this view, be built upon a common consciousness or culture, which would be found in Christianity. Opposing the internationalism of the League of Nations, the disintegration of the Habsburg Empire, and the pragmatic and innovative ideas of Count Coudenhove-Kalergi's Paneuropa, however, Rohan emphasised the nation: for him, Europe could "only be organically built as a domed building that rests on the columns of national powers. Europe's unity presupposes the unity of its nation states".<sup>27</sup> Rather than the loose Holy Roman Empire or the post-war order based upon internationalism, "self-determination", and "revenge", Rohan's ideal – shared by many Catholic nobles of the time – was the Habsburg Empire as it had existed before the Great War. The Habsburg "Dual Monarchy", in his view, could inspire European politicians to construct

26 Hürten, "Der Topos", 144–145.

27 Karl Anton Rohan, "Die Utopie des Pazifismus", in id., *Umbruch der Zeit, 1923–1930* (Stilke 1930), 23 (quoted in Anita Ziegerhofer-Prettenthaler, "Eurotopias: Coudenhove-Kalergi's Pan-Europa and Rohan's Europäischer Kulturbund", in Vittorio Dini/Matthew D'Auria [ed.], *The Space of Crisis: Shifting Spaces and Ideas of Europe. 1914–1945* [New York 2013], 161–177, on p. 167). On Rohan and the *Europäische Kulturbund* see Guido Müller, *Europäische Gesellschaftsbeziehungen nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg. Das Deutsch-Französische Studienkomitee und der Europäische Kulturbund* (München, 2005), 309–456; Christian Bailey, *Between Yesterday and Tomorrow: German Visions of Europe in Germany, 1926–1950* (Oxford 2013), 3–42; Matthias Schulz, "Der Europäische Kulturbund", in *Europäische Geschichte Online* (EGO), <http://www.ieg-ego.eu/schulzm-2010c-de>.

a new Europe as a home for all nations. Against the arguments of the nationalists, such as the Czech Tomáš Masaryk, Rohan contended that the different peoples in Austria-Hungary had lived together in perfect harmony in a real *Vielvölkerstaat* (multi-ethnic state). The idea of the nation cultivated in these circles was essentially different from either the nationalist one or that of President Wilson's "self-determination", which, revealingly, they viewed as "un-European" because it failed to account for the organic nature of Europe's nations. They argued that the division of Europe into nation-states increased distinctions, competition, and hatred. Rohan's new Europe would also restore the role of the monarchy, a "stabilising" factor in his eyes, thereby cleansing Europe of "democratic corruption".<sup>28</sup>

Rohan's views, definitely already Fascist in the mid-1920s, showed a particular affinity with ideas cherished by Italian Catholic avant-garde intellectuals such as Giovanni Papini and Curzio Malaparte. Malaparte for example, who represented Fascism as a Catholic restoration movement, portrayed Catholic and Fascist Italy (or "national syndicalism") as the nucleus of *L'Europa vivente*, "Living Europe", opposed to the despised Europe of the "moderns", referring particularly to international socialism and liberalism.<sup>29</sup> Papini initially refrained from supporting Fascism but forcefully argued for the "palingenesis of the human type" and the Catholic rebirth of Italy, France, Belgium, Spain, and Portugal – each of which was seen as too weak in itself – in order to resist the new powers of *Mitteleuropa*, the British Empire, the US, and Japanese domination in East Asia. His idea of a "religious war", threatening to eradicate God from Europe, finally motivated him to accept Fascism as an ally in the 1930s.<sup>30</sup> In that decade, Rohan moved towards Nazi views on Europe, supporting "Greater-German" plans for a *Mitteleuropa* that would give Germans a role as the "leading cultural people in Central Europe" ("*führendes Kulturvolk in Mitteleuropa*"). (Significantly, he did not speak of Germans as a leading *nation*.) But, as happened with many "*Abendlanders*", the Catholic dimension slipped away. It was not, however, always so. In the 1930s, the publisher of the Catholic journal *Germania*, Richard Kreuzer,

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28 Karl Anton Rohan, *Europa* (Leipzig 1923), 21–30; Dina Gusejnova, "Noble Continent? German-Speaking Nobles as Theorists of European Identity in the Interwar Period", in Dini/D'Auria (ed.), *Space*, 111–133.

29 Curzio Malaparte, *L'Europa vivente* (Roma 1923). I consulted the French translation *L'Italie contre l'Europe* (Paris 1927).

30 Giovanni Papini, *Un uomo finito* (Florence 1994 [1913]), 122. The importance of Papini is underscored by Walter L. Adamson's ground-breaking article "Giovanni Papini: Nietzsche, Secular Religion, and Catholic Fascism", in *Politics, Religion & Ideology* 14:11 (2013), 1–20. See also Walter L. Adamson, "Modernism and Fascism: The Politics of Culture in Italy, 1903–1922", in *The American Historical Review* 95:2 (1990), 359–390; Brett Colasacco, "From Men into Gods: American Pragmatism, Italian Proto-Fascism, and Secular Religion", in *Politics, Religion & Ideology* 15:4 (2014), 541–564.

similarly sought German-French understanding in a broader *Mitteleuropa*, paradoxically considering a form of patriotism – “national instinct” (*nationaler Instinkt*) – to be one of the most profound human qualities. His rather peculiar view of the “Mitteleuropean” construction implied that Catholics should proselytise Christianity and promote Christian values.<sup>31</sup> From this perspective, Jews certainly did not figure as an “ideal” European nation: in contrast to Paneuropa, such milieux opposed what they interpreted as “mixing” and adopted Nazi racist terminology and policies.<sup>32</sup>

The convergence of Fascist and Catholic views on Europe is illustrated in the active participation of prominent Catholics at the international Volta conferences in Rome. The conferences were organised by the Royal Academy of Science and ostensibly provided an academic venue for debating major issues, such as the future of Europe (in 1932) and the international situation (in 1938); obviously, however, they were intended as a forum to promote the Fascist regime and Mussolini’s ideas. Many Catholics, who predominated at the 1932 conference, emphasised the need for a new “Roman-Catholic” European order as a stable foundation for peace and Christian cultural rebirth, although that did not necessarily imply a united Europe. They emphasised the importance of “diversity”, even if the nature and implications of the latter diverged considerably, and they simultaneously recognised a fundamental Christian unity. The prominent Swiss Catholic historian Gonzague de Reynold, for example, under the banner of “the unity of Europe”, asserted the “urgent need” for a European order founded on the dual Roman legacy of human rationality and Christian conscience. However, he vehemently opposed a European federation since “the essential, constituent element of Europe are the nations (*patries*), and the nations need independence, sovereignty, borders”.<sup>33</sup> The British historian Christopher Dawson, who had just published a major book on *The Making of Europe* identifying Christianity as the source of European unity, likewise emphasised the value of diversity and interaction; however, he also saw the Roman heritage of Europe as “a bridge between East and West, and its achievement consisted not so much in its own independent contribution to culture as in its organisation of the alien

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31 Müller, *Europäische Gesellschaftsbeziehungen*, 59–65.

32 Karl Anton Rohan, “Zukunftfragen deutscher Außenpolitik”, in *Europäische Revue* 5:6 (1929), 369; “Westeuropa”, in *Europäische Revue* 5.5 (1929), 317; “Entwurf eines Minderheitenstatuts”, in *Europäische Revue* 6:6 (1930), 459–461. On Rohan and minorities – but not Jews – see Bailey, *Between Yesterday and Tomorrow*, 33–34, 36–40. Cf. Karl Anton Rohan, *Schicksalstunde Europas: Erkenntnisse und Bekenntnisse, Wirklichkeiten und Möglichkeiten* (Graz 1937), 338–365.

33 *Convegni di scienze morali e storiche*, 14–20 November 1932, Tema: *L’Europa*, vol. 1: *Atti Preliminari – Processi Verbali* (Rome 1933), 112–120, quotation on p. 119. See also Gonzague de Reynold, *L’Europe tragique* (Paris 1934) and Philippe Chenaux, *De la chrétienté à l’Europe. Les catholiques et l’idée européenne au XXe siècle* (Tours 2007), 54.

elements that it incorporated in a new unity". In the presence of Nazis such as Hermann Goering and Alfred Rosenberg, Dawson went on to denounce "the fanaticism of the modern pan-racial theorists who subordinate civilisation to skull measurements and who infuse an element of racial hatred into the political and economic rivalries of European peoples". In his comments on Dawson's lecture, the Catholic philosopher and president of the conference, Francesco Orestano, while defending the ethnic mix and plurality of European culture, introduced a distinction between "compatible" and "incompatible" races (referring to blacks and whites and, incidentally, not mentioning Jews).<sup>34</sup>

### Towards Federalism?

Pan-European collaboration was not the main subject of Catholic thinking in inter-war Europe, and some, indeed, were opposed the idea outright – the nationalist *Action Française*, discussed above, offers a case in point. While some also may have seen European unity as a means of further curtailing the power of the Catholic Church,<sup>35</sup> Catholics nevertheless engaged in initiatives to improve French-German relations, combat nationalism, and unify Europe (pacification and unification being quasi-automatically linked). Even if those efforts were not exclusively Catholic – or even Christian – such efforts are interesting in their own right. I already referred to the most important of these initiatives, Count Coudenhove-Kalergi's Paneuropa movement, but there were many more.<sup>36</sup> Notwithstanding the Ruhr crisis, journals close to the German Centre Party such as *Germania* and the *Kölnische Volkszeitung* spoke out in favour of a European union.<sup>37</sup> In France, the Catholic pacifist Marc Sangnier created the *Internationale démocratique* to further Franco-German reconciliation: it held several meetings in Bierville, Normandy, where Sangnier was mayor. Though the *Internationale démocratique* acted as a non-partisan pacifist movement of Catholics and liberals, it explicitly

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34 *Convegni*, 98–103 (Orestano's comments pp. 103–104). See also Simona Giustibelli, *Europa, paneuropa, antieuropa: Il dialogo tra Italia fascista e Francia democratica nell'epoca del memorandum Briand (1929–1934)* (Soveria Mannelli 2006), 111–118. On Dawson's views on Fascism see Bernhard Dietz, "Christliches Abendland gegen Pluralismus und Moderne. Die Europa-Konzeption von Christopher Dawson", in *Zeithistorische Forschungen* 9 (2012), 491–497; Stephen G. Carter, *Historian of the Spirit: An Introduction to the Life and Ideas of Christopher H. Dawson, 1889–1970* (Durham, NC 2006), 142–145; Luisa Passerini, *Europe in Love, Love in Europe: Imagination and Politics in Britain between the Wars* (New York 1998), 64–80; Tom Villis, *British Catholics and Fascism: Religious Identity and Political Extremism between the Wars* (Basingstoke 2013), 105–116.

35 Chenaux, *De la chrétienté*, 53–54 refers to the *Revue de Genève* in this respect.

36 See Pasture, *Imagining*.

37 Müller, *Europäische Gesellschaftsbeziehungen*, 28–80.

endorsed the concept of the United States of Europe as “a must” in 1930.<sup>38</sup> Also, the International Confederation of Christian Trade Unions (CISC) openly supported European unification.<sup>39</sup> The Holy See, too, favoured the *rapprochement* between France and Germany and opposed nationalism, and it discretely but effectively supported the Briand Plan for a European federation in 1932.<sup>40</sup>

Nevertheless, explicit Christian support for a European framework remained limited. Catholic and Christian democratic politicians – still a minority in Catholic political milieux dominated by conservatives – tended to reject the idea of a European union, whether a strong federation or a loose association. Some created a platform to exchange ideas, the International Secretariat of Democratic Parties of Christian Inspiration (SIPDIC), in 1925. The SIPDIC, however, was not really designed to formulate, let alone pursue, common transnational European policies, and the affiliated parties remained deeply divided about international politics. However, in the late 1920s and early 1930s things slowly started to change: this was partly because of the “spirit of Locarno” after the peaceful solution of the Ruhr crisis generated support for the European idea (culminating in the 1930 Briand Plan) and partly because the economic crisis and the success of Nazism in Germany stimulated new thinking beyond the nation-state. At its 1932 Congress – its last – under the leadership of the Mayor of Cologne, Konrad Adenauer, a motion was carried supporting the creation of a European Common Market with free movement of goods, capital, and people as the first steps towards “a full union, which is the final goal”.<sup>41</sup>

A Christian democratic federalist political theory would only develop in the 1930s and 1940s when several Catholic intellectuals and politicians connected neo-Thomism with personalist ideas and federalist principles. Personalism was one of the founding principles of Catholic social thought that gained further substance in the 1930s, but it became a separate lay political ideology, especially with the so-called “Non-Conformists of the 1930s” in France, who based their perspectives both on Catholic social thinking and

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38 Gearóid Barry, *The Disarmament of Hatred: Marc Sangnier, French Catholicism and the Legacy of the First World War, 1914–1945* (Basingstoke 2012), 164–166 (quote on p. 165, see also 128–152); see also Kaiser, *Christian Democracy*, 62–63.

39 Patrick Pasture, “Realità e concezioni europee nel movimento sindacale cristiano tra le due guerre”, in Canavero/Durand, *Il fattore religioso*, 373–386.

40 Chenaux, *De la chrétienté*, 35.

41 Quoted in Thomas Jansen/Steven Van Hecke, *At Europe’s Service: The Origins and Evolution of the European People’s Party* (Dordrecht 2011), 9–10. On the SIPDIC see Wolfram Kaiser, *Christian Democracy and the Origins of European Union* (Cambridge 2007), 86–118; Hanschmidt, “Eine christlich-demokratische ‘Internationale’”; Kohl, “Die internationale Parteienzusammenarbeit”.

secular thought.<sup>42</sup> Personalists emphasised the value of the human person in his relationship with the “community”. They were wary of the national (or “nationalistic” in the words of E. Mounier) state, considering it as one community among others and not necessarily the most important one (that was, absolutely, the family). However, they initially conceived of federalism mainly at the subnational level, referring to historical “regions”. Gradually, personalists such as Alexandre Marc and Denis de Rougemont saw the ultimate proof of the validity of their views in the centralising and totalitarian ambitions of nation-states such as the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany. Hence they believed in a Europe of the regions that gradually came to be interpreted in federalist terms and would emerge after the war as purportedly the most natural, “organic” constitution of Europe. Many though – including De Rougemont, Jacques Maritain, and the Italian Christian democrat Don Luigi Sturzo – only developed a more systematic vision of European federalism while in exile in the US, where the federalist movement blossomed, particularly in the circles in which they moved, and where they first became conscious of their Europeanness.<sup>43</sup> Exiled *Abendlanders* such as Otto von Habsburg experienced a similar awareness.<sup>44</sup> Nevertheless, as Wolfram Kaiser has pointed out, their experiences in the US also drove them into a more Atlanticist position and toward favouring regional alliances without Germany after 1941.<sup>45</sup> Switzerland offered a more direct source of inspiration, not only for De Rougemont but also for those who, like Alexandre Marc, found refuge there during the war. Some of the pre-war Non-Conformists later played key roles in the European Movement. Marc became, in 1946, the Secretary General of the Union of European Federalists and, in 1953, the chairman of the European Federalist Movement. But it was De Rougemont who would perhaps more than anyone embody the combination of Christian federalism and personalism after the war.<sup>46</sup>

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42 On the Non-Conformists see Jean-Louis Loubet del Bayle, *Les non-conformistes des années 30. Une tentative de renouvellement de la pensée politique française* (Paris 2001); see also Antonin Cohen, *De Vichy à la Communauté européenne* (Paris 2012), 127–200. On personalism see Johan De Tavernier, “The Historical Roots of Personalism”, in *Ethical Perspectives* 16:3 (2009), 361–392 and Jan Olof Bengtsson, *The Worldview of Personalism: Origins and Early Development* (Oxford 2006).

43 Alexandre Marc/René Dupuis, “Le fédéralisme révolutionnaire”, in *Esprit* 1:2 (Nov. 1932), 316–324. See Undine Ruge, *Die Erfindung des “Europa der Regionen”*. *Kritische Ideengeschichte eines konservativen Konzepts* (Frankfurt a.M. 2003), 99–105.

44 Conze, *Europa*, 107–110.

45 Kaiser, *Christian Democracy*, 119–162 (esp. on pp. 150–151, 155).

46 For more on De Rougemont see Bruno Ackermann, *Denis de Rougemont. Une biographie intellectuelle* (Genève 1996), 2 vol.; Bruno Ackerman, “Le cheminement des esprits”, in *Revue Suisse d’Histoire* 47 (1997), 171–191; Attilio Danace, “Un modèle théorique personnaliste pour le fédéralisme européen: unité – diversité”, in *Du personnalisme au fédéralisme européen. En hommage à Denis de Rougemont* (Genève 1989), 85–102.

On the continent, different roads towards a “Christian European federalism” were followed. Opposition to Fascism and, especially, Nazism reinforced among some, either in the resistance or detention, associations between Christianity and Europe. That was, for instance, the case of the (mostly Christian) conspirators against Hitler of the Kreisau Circle. There, a model for Europe was imagined, including a European constitution and Parliament, which was framed in an ecumenical discourse of “socialist personalism”, Christian social thinking, and “subsidiarity”.<sup>47</sup> The war also stimulated other Catholics and Protestants to consider a European federation: some of these resistance fighters or prisoners became prominent in federalist movements or occupied leading posts in cultural life, albeit less in politics as such.<sup>48</sup>

Another main current underpinning post-war Christian democratic European federalism brought the thinking of the Non-Conformist *Ordre Nouveau* together with the corporatism of Vichy. In Vichy France some “Non-Conformists”, among whom were the eminent jurists François Perroux and Georges Scelle, connected ideas of personalism, corporatism, and federalism. Their ideas survived the war and directly influenced the federalist movement, in part through the movement *La Fédération* which united former Non-Conformists who envisioned a new “integral federalism”. As in the case of the *Neue Abendland*, anti-Communism offered a common ground to appeal to people who had contributed to Vichy’s “integral nationalism” and those who had joined the Resistance.<sup>49</sup>

However, Christian intellectuals and politicians – whether Catholic or not – continued to hold different views on Europe. In many cases, the war had awakened the attachment to the nation and discredited the European idea, as the concept of a “New European Order” had been prominent in Nazi propaganda. It should also be emphasised that in the immediate post-war years those with federalist and personalist views did not hold political power and had little concrete impact on politics.<sup>50</sup> Christian democrats were far from unanimously enthusiastic about European unity after the war and were

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47 See extensively Ulrich Karpen (ed.), *Europas Zukunft: Vorstellungen des Kreisauer Kreises um Helmuth James Graf von Moltke* (Heidelberg 2005); Klaus Philippi, *Die Genese des “Kreisauer Kreises”* (PhD, Historisches Institut der Universität Stuttgart 2012); Ger van Roon, *Neuordnung im Widerstand. Der Kreisauer Kreis innerhalb der deutschen Widerstandsbewegung* (Munich 1967).

48 Patrick Pasture, “Rethinking Christian Democracy: A European Perspective”, *EUI Working Papers* forthcoming.

49 See, extensively, Cohen, *Vichy*.

50 Peter Pulzer, “Nationalism and Internationalism in European Christian Democracy”, in Michael Gehler/Wolfram Kaiser (eds.), *Christian Democracy in Europe since 1945* (London 2004), vol. 2, 10–24; Chenaux, *De la Chrétienté*, 90–91.

not among its main promoters even at the Congress of The Hague in 1948.<sup>51</sup> Some in Germany feared that a unified Europe implied their country's division; others, particularly in the Netherlands and among exiles, privileged an Atlantic association. For some in Italy, France, and Belgium, this was a reason to remain suspicious of plans for a united Europe under American auspices, as foreshadowed by the Marshall Plan. Fear of being absorbed into a bipolar, American-dominated Europe motivated those Christian democratic leaders who had unexpectedly (as nobody had anticipated the massive post-war success of Christian Democracy) been propelled to national (and European) leadership, such as Robert Schuman, Konrad Adenauer, and Alcide De Gasperi, to promote European integration. Their goals recalled pre-war motivations for seeking European unity, but they also aimed to maintain links with the US and considered American help essential to safeguarding European freedom and faith against Communism. The latter inspired the architects of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), including, prominently, the socialist Jean Monnet, a nominal Catholic. But they also realised that some collaboration, especially with regard to core industries, was necessary for the survival both of Europe and their own national economies: this implied the inclusion of (West) Germany within a European order but with sufficient guarantees that it could never again become a menace. The national-level view, incidentally, should not be viewed in opposition to a Europeanist one, as has sometimes been argued from an intergovernmental or Milwardian perspective:<sup>52</sup> what many, and not only Christians, had come to realise was that economies were intertwined and that protectionism had been a major factor leading to the continent's disaster. This made them advocate an open market and the European organisation of at least some economic sectors, such as agriculture and transport, which the SIPDIC had also proposed before the war. The principle of an organised economy, which Christian democrats all advocated to at least some extent, could then relatively easily be extended to a European level.<sup>53</sup>

Christian democratic ideology developed slowly after the Second World War.<sup>54</sup> One of its major features is certainly a nuanced, complex understanding

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51 Philippe Chenaux, "Les démocrates chrétiens au niveau de l'Union européenne", in Emiel Lamberts (ed.), *Christian Democracy in the European Union 1945–1995* (Leuven 1997), 449–458, on 451–453.

52 The British historian A. S. Milward revolutionised the historiography of European integration by arguing – for example in *The European Rescue of the Nation State* (London 1992) – that not European idealism but national interests underpinned European integration, an argument that was shared, on slightly different grounds, by "intergovernmentalist" political scientists like Andrew Moravcsik.

53 Kaiser, *Christian Democracy*, esp. 221–228.

54 Jan-Werner Müller, *Contesting Democracy: Political Ideas in Twentieth Century Europe* (New Haven, CT 2011), 132–143.



of the sovereign state, seen as a “community” among others, whether sub-state regions or “super-national” constructions. The ideals of a “Third Way” and “subsidiarity” may be catch-all terms that have been appropriated by several political ideologies, but they seem especially suited for Christian democracy, not least since they can underpin and legitimise very different policies. That gave Christian democrats a distinct advantage after the war, which, as Martin Conway has sharply observed, initially revived localism rather than national (let alone “European”) conceptualisations.<sup>55</sup> Nevertheless, Christian democrats’ policy thinking invariably transcended the nation-state for reasons of principle as well as international and domestic politics. Their rejection of nationalism largely preceded the war years and united personalist ideas with those of previous Catholic “Europeanists”, even if many who had argued for a European or “*abendländische*” rebirth gradually substituted a European for a Pan-German perspective.

### Final Reflections

In conclusion, we can ask whether, for Christians, Europe has functioned as an alternative “fatherland” or “motherland”? This seems to have been the case with nineteenth-century Catholic ultramontanes or inter-war “pal-ingenic” dreamers who imagined the restoration of a new Christendom without in any way eclipsing their identification with the nation: conservative Catholics were certainly eager to show their patriotism. Christians of all denominations often felt attracted by a Fascist supra-nationalism which appeared to transcend the nation. Catholics also effectively raised certain historical European figures to mythical status: Charlemagne – who would also be appropriated by the Nazis – and, in particular, Charles V. Europe’s role as a fatherland is far more doubtful in the more technocratic forms of European collaboration, in which many Christians were involved, that actually prevailed after 1945, despite the synecdochic rhetoric of post-war European integration that offered economic and institutional collaboration as a harbinger of greater ambitions.<sup>56</sup> Still, even in the latter case, Catholics cherished religious images of European unity – Saint Benedict for example – and there are many religious buildings among the European heritage sites. Moreover, the Vatican has started the process of “beatification” of Catholic “European Fathers” Schuman and De Gasperi – an initiative that may appear bizarre

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55 Martin Conway, “The Rise and Fall of Western Europe’s Democratic Age 1945–73”, in *Contemporary European History* 13 (2004), 67–88.

56 Kiran Klaus Patel, “Provincialising European Union: Co-operation and Integration in Europe in a Historical Perspective”, in *Contemporary European History* 22 (2013), 649–673.

from a secular western perspective but seems to be taken more seriously in a country such as Poland, where the annual Schuman Parade attracts thousands.<sup>57</sup> For many Catholics, Europe offered, and still offers, an attractive alternative source of identification: it is mostly complementary to the nation-state and seems to appeal most in its discourse of peace and values. It also enables forgetting the less appealing aspects of the drive towards European unity, such as the will to dominate and maintain a superior, even imperial position in the world, which also motivated many Christians in earlier days – a time no more distant than the late 1950s.<sup>58</sup>

Protestants were apparently more engaged with the nation-state and more wary of European institutional collaboration than Catholics, at least before the Second World War, and often opposed what they saw as attempts to restore a Catholic, pre-Reformation Christendom. Perhaps they have been more engaged in universal collaboration without focusing on Europe and without cultivating a dream of a new Christendom; nevertheless, a distinctly Protestant, mainly Reformed, federalist thinking developed that distanced itself from the traditional integration and identification with the nation-state: De Rougemont was arguably its most famous exponent in European politics alongside André Philip. The Cold War division of Europe, which left traditionally Protestant lands under Soviet domination, also incited Protestants to consider a Pan-European view of “Europe” that would encompass Scandinavia and Great Britain.<sup>59</sup> For Christian democratic European federalists after 1945, Protestantism certainly offered a major source of inspiration alongside personalism.

The Second World War and the establishment of European integrative structures changed the debate, albeit quite differently in East and West as a result of the continent’s Cold War division. Nationalism, anti-Semitism and autocratic nostalgia, which constituted core parts of much Christian thinking (Catholic and Protestant), were profoundly discredited. Theologies and practices adapted, as they had always done, maintaining more continuity than may at first be apparent but never in a completely uniform fashion: a single “Christian” view of Europe or the nation has never existed. That observation, of course, puts into perspective the impact of clerical hierarchies, even that of the papacy, for the Catholic Church; it also answers the question of the driving force behind the changes. Noting firstly that political views – even

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57 There are signs, however, that the process of beatification seems to have reached a cul-de-sac, while the parliamentary elections of October 2015 in Poland were won by the Eurosceptic Law and Justice Party (PiS), which obtained 37.6 per cent of the vote.

58 Cf. Pasture, *Imagining*, esp. chapter 9.

59 Lucian N. Leustean, “The Ecumenical Movement and the Schuman Plan, 1950–54”, in *Journal of Church and State* 53:3 (July 2011), 442–471.

in an allegedly “secular age” – remained far more influenced by religious discourses than typically assumed, these views nevertheless were those of individuals, clerical and lay, formulated in interaction with the specific challenges they faced and the ideas then circulating. And those ideas, as the foregoing has emphasised, often originated in quite diverse circles, often far removed from traditional ecclesiastical sources.



Lazaros Miliopoulos

## The Christian Churches between European and National Identities

Europeanisation via Constitutional Law?

The period since the 1992 Maastricht Treaty has seen the gradual development of European Union (EU) law. One consequence has been that legal issues related to the recognition of religions in the public arena have increasingly had to be adjudicated on the European level. Shifts in religious policymaking in the setting of the multilevel system of European Union law and governance have seen new conflicts about identity along what can be described as both horizontal and vertical axes (i.e., those between nation states or those between EU institutions and nation states, respectively); nonetheless, the changing modalities and contexts of European religious policy – and particularly their relationship to the issue of European identity – have been relatively neglected by political scientists. On the other hand, political science has established an institutional theory of an adaptive process of “Europeanisation”, defined as “an incremental process of re-orienting the direction and shape of politics to the extent that EC [European Community] political and economic dynamics become part of the organisational logic of national politics and policy making”.<sup>1</sup> It is deemed to be well established that Europeanisation has depended on a wide range of factors that have had, variously, organisational, national-specific, policy-related, or strategic characteristics.<sup>2</sup> But the questions of whether, how, and to what extent Europeanisation has influenced collective identities remains relatively unexplored and worthy of further analysis.

The present article takes up these questions of policy and identity with regard to the Christian churches. It considers whether a “Europeanisation” of the churches can be identified, what relevance it has had for a specifically European secularisation process, and the impact of the negotiation of national-level religious rights on the European level. Has the process of organisational Europeanisation also brought with it a convergence of church identities? If so, has this meant a transformation of the churches from

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1 Robert Ladrech, “Europeanization of Domestic Politics and Institutions: The Case of France”, in *Journal of Common Market Studies* 32 (1994), 69–88, on p. 69.

2 See Michèle Knodt/Barbara Finke, “Einleitung: Zivilgesellschaft und zivilgesellschaftliche Akteure in der Europäischen Union”, in Michèle Knodt et al. (ed.), *Europäische Zivilgesellschaft. Konzepte, Akteure, Strategien* (Wiesbaden 2005), 22–25.

nationally distinct state-level actors to more “European” non-governmental actors, perhaps in line with José Casanova’s theory of “public religions”<sup>3</sup> based on an “American model”? Answering these questions requires, first, considering the extent to which European law, on the one hand, and the churches’ advocacy, on the other, have actually led to a Europeanisation of religious policy. Second, the impact of this process on the political demands of the churches and their identities will be examined. Finally, commonalities and differences among the churches on the question of European and national identity will be explained.

### The Processes of Europeanisation: Church-State Relations, the Churches’ Advocacy, and EU Identity Politics

Even if the EU lacks central or direct competencies in questions of church-state relations, the development of European Union law since the Maastricht Treaty has had an increasing impact on regulatory frameworks within the national European member states, for example in the field of ecclesiastical labour law. The jurisdictions of, on the one hand, the European Courts of Justice and of Human Rights (ECJ and ECtHR, respectively) and, on the other, the legal acts of the European Union bodies have also influenced national legal systems. The logic of European Union law impacts national regulations by taking the *activities* of the churches into account without considering them as legal “bodies” or “subjects”, as is the case in the member states.<sup>4</sup> The most important regulations in this context are those granting explicit legal exceptions to churches or religious communities. Against the background of a commonly accepted triple typology of European church-state relations in the juridical bibliography (i.e., state-church systems, mixed systems, separated systems), most scholars conclude that something like a “European model” of church-state relations is emerging: it is clearly distinct either from state-church systems or those that radically separate church and state, moving instead toward a “structured cooperation” characteristic of “mixed” systems.<sup>5</sup>

However, judging the extent of the churches’ “Europeanisation” means going beyond their involvement with European Union law. Building on the general political-science approach to “Europeanisation”, considering the

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3 See José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago 1994).

4 Stefan Mückl, *Europäisierung des Staatskirchenrechtes* (Baden-Baden 2005), 993–994.

5 Ibid.

extent to which a specific *identity* is offered by European institutions themselves offers another criteria of judgement. The years immediately following the millennium presented a new situation for the development of a positive “European” identity: from 2000 to 2004 there was a heated debate around the inclusion in the preamble to the proposed EU “constitution” of a *nominatio dei* (a “naming of God”) and a reference to Christianity as a constitutive part of European identity. This debate brought an observable Europeanisation of the churches’ advocacy efforts and political demands. In the debate about the preamble, the churches stood up *unisono* for the codification of a *nominatio dei*. Moreover, with regard to legal policy the churches reached an agreement to support the lowest possible degree of *regulation* on the European level and the highest possible legal *protection* of the different varieties of church-state relations on the national level. On this basis the churches advocated something like what has been called a “friendly” or “limping” separation of churches and European institutions: modelled on national-level relations, this approach has sought to enable the churches – despite the official separation of church and state – to be incorporated into European law as independent legal entities.

The churches were also engaged on other points, achieving three key aims in the European treaties: firstly a protection clause for the national bodies of law on religions that shielded national regulations from any kind of direct European intervention (art. 17 TFEU [Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union]); secondly a specific codification or characterisation of the “churches” that distinguished them from other non-governmental organisations (art. 11 TEU); and thirdly the warranty of a regular dialogue with the European institutions (art. 17 TFEU again). In the discussion about a *nominatio dei* and a constitutional reference to Christianity, the arduously attained compromise solution was to use the formula “religious inheritance” in the case of the Christian-monotheistic heritage and “cultural and humanistic inheritance” with reference to Greco-Roman and modern traditions.

Since 1992 the European-level agencies of the churches have developed a greater degree of professionalism. With regard to the Roman Catholic Church, for example, the Commission of the Bishops’ Conferences of the European Community (COMECE, founded in 1980) and the Council of the Bishops’ Conferences of Europe (CCEE, founded in 1971) became far more active. Growing professionalism can be also seen in Protestant, Anglican, and Orthodox contexts, most notably through the Conference of the European Churches (CEC, founded in 1959), with representatives from all three denominations. An analogous development can be seen with the European Evangelical Alliance (EEA), with origins dating to 1952. The Lutheran, Continental Reformed, United and Uniting Churches as well as the Waldensians

and members of the Unity of the Brethren developed the so-called Leuenberg Community which in 2003 was renamed the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE).

The Orthodox churches (beyond their participation in the CEC) also increased their European-level commitments and activities. Until 1992 they had tended to take a relatively passive role in European politics. This changed after Maastricht: from 1994 to 2009 a range of new Orthodox agencies on the European level were created. They formed the basis for the Committee of Representatives of the Orthodox Churches to the European Union (CROCEU), founded in 2010. Among the Orthodox agencies in Brussels are, for example, representations of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople (founded in 1995), the Autocephalous Church of Greece (founded in 1998), and the Russian-Orthodox Patriarchy (founded in 2002).<sup>6</sup>

The networking among the organisations has also increased, partly on the basis of a clearly developing ecumenical process among the churches in Europe (signalled by such efforts and milestones as the Charta Oecumenica 2001; the European Ecumenical Assemblies of 1989, 1997, and 2003; the Leuenberg Agreement 1973; and the development of a Catholic-Orthodox dialogue). Since the 1990s, such interfaith networking has been increasingly marked by a European political component, with the annual meetings of CEC and COMECE offering a particular illustration of this process.

Thus, the post-Maastricht development of European law and the intense discussions shortly after the new millennium about the relationship between Christianity and the proposed European constitution have been key drivers of growing European-level advocacy efforts by churches across Europe's national borders and main Christian denominations. These efforts have taken on an increased institutional reality through the creation of new organisations or the increasing activity of already established advocacy groups; moreover, there has been an increasing professionalism on the part of church lobbying efforts with regard to European-level religious policy. However, can this form of institutional "Europeanisation" be related to a concomitant trend toward "denationalisation"?

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6 See Lazaros Miliopoulos, "Das Europaverständnis der orthodoxen Kirchen im Zuge der Europäisierung", in Ines-Jacqueline Werkner et al. (ed.), *Europäische Religionspolitik. Religiöse Identitätsbezüge, rechtliche Regelungen und politische Ausgestaltung* (Wiesbaden 2013), 265–294.



## Europeanisation = De-nationalisation?

It is an interesting question whether the new professionalism of the churches' advocacy in Europe corresponds to the broader global trend of "public religiousness" and whether there has been a concurrent process of denationalisation of the European churches. The "public religions" approach re-evaluates the theory of secularisation in light of the global resurgence of religion during the last four decades, focusing on the phenomenon of "de-privatisation", or religious re-engagement in the public sphere.<sup>7</sup> Following from this perspective, the differentiation of secular spheres truly remains the core of what can still be called a process of secularisation; however, "religious decline" in the more strict sense that is generally implied by this term is rejected as being both normatively questionable and unsupported by empirical evidence. Viewing the European churches from the perspective of the theory of "public religions" requires, however, taking into account how they have generally been prevented from acting as free-market religious players, as churches can do, for example, in the USA. Two European factors stand out: first, national states have strongly influenced the development and structure of the churches; second, European churches tend to be more state-like, traditional and milieu-based organisations based on collective ties. In the context of secularisation theory it could be said that – compared with the USA – the social acceptance of the churches in Europe is based much more on nationally centred affective connections instead of abstract statements of belief.<sup>8</sup>

On the other hand, there have been many opportunities for European churches to reorganise themselves after striding through the classic age of nations.<sup>9</sup> The European churches represent a kind of accumulated and dormant cultural capital which can be used<sup>10</sup> to oppose nationalist fundamentalisms rooted in their own nations' pasts or other kinds of revolutionary fundamentalisms, especially those of a religious variety. The reason for these new possibilities is that, today, European churches and European hermeneutic and pluralistic traditions have come to complement each other. The churches have in the past opposed radical forms of technocratic-instrumental or atheist-secular thinking; today they can also construct barriers against

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7 See Casanova, *Public Religions*.

8 Antonius Liedhegener, *Macht, Moral und Mehrheiten. Der politische Katholizismus in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und den USA seit 1960* (Baden-Baden 2006), 441–442.

9 Hans Maier, "Wechselwirkungen von Kirche und Politik in der Geschichte des Christentums", in Irene Dingel et al. (ed.), *Die politische Aufgabe von Religion. Perspektiven der drei monotheistischen Religionen* (Göttingen 2011), 413–425, on p. 421.

10 Philip Jenkins, *Gottes Kontinent? Über die religiöse Krise Europas und die Zukunft von Islam und Christentum* (Freiburg i.Br. 2008), 81.

reinvented forms of nationalist and religious extremism opposed to globalisation.<sup>11</sup> Europeanisation has given them the capability to move beyond stagnant, overly traditional perspectives, to cope with new realities and to revitalise their own institutional structures. Together, these trends have enabled them not only to be free of statism and nationalism but also independent of new mainstream state and media discourses which have tended to share a left-libertarian, anti-traditional, and anti-Christian character.

Denationalisation offers particular opportunities to the Orthodox churches.<sup>12</sup> Their long-standing fixation on national conservatism and nationalism has led to several conflicts<sup>13</sup> that may be eased through a process of denationalisation. An enumeration of these conflicts gives an impression of the problem's urgency:<sup>14</sup>

- After Ukraine gained national independence, three Orthodox churches were founded: the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchy, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kiev Patriarchy, and the church of the "autonomists" (Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church). The issue of establishing a common Orthodox Church in Ukraine has led to various tensions.
- Antagonisms between the patriarchies in Constantinople and Moscow have been intensified by arguments about the belligerent Ukrainian-Russian relationship and the relationship of Orthodoxy to the Eastern Catholic Churches.
- In Estonia and partially also in Latvia and Finland the question of the canonical primacy has arisen between the patriarchies of Constantinople and Moscow. In this context, the honorary primacy of the Ecumenical Patriarchate has been occasionally questioned by the Russian side.
- The question of jurisdictional primacy has arisen in Moldavia between the Russian and Romanian Patriarchates.

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11 Heinrich Wilhelm Schäfer, *Kampf der Fundamentalismen. Radikales Christentum, radikaler Islam und Europas Moderne* (Leipzig 2008), 201–231.

12 Richard Potz/Eva Synek, *Orthodoxes Kirchenrecht. Eine Einführung* (Wiesbaden 2007), 143–145 and 331–335.

13 Thomas Bremer, "Geistliche Würdenträger und politische Macht. Orthodoxie in Russland", in Bernd Oberdorfer et. al. (ed.), *Die Ambivalenz des Religiösen. Religionen als Friedensstifter und Gewalterzeuger* (Freiburg i.Br. 2008), 247–265.

14 Natal'ja Kočan, "Kirchenkampf. Politik und Religion in der Ukraine", in *Osteuropa* 59:6 (2009), 161–170; Richard Potz, "Europäische Einigung als Herausforderung an die europäische Orthodoxie", in *Theologisch-Praktische Quartalsschrift* 154:1 (2006), 42–54, on pp. 48–49; Potz/Synek, *Orthodoxes Kirchenrecht*, 324.

- In the case of the “Macedonian” churches and the (minority) “Montenegrin” churches the acknowledgment of autocephaly is a problem. Both churches have broken with the Serbian church but the autocephalous status they claim is refused by all other Orthodox churches. There are also national conflicts within Montenegro.
- The controversy over the jurisdiction in northern Greece between the Church of Greece and the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople has flared up repeatedly. It concerns the question of canonical jurisdiction in the North-Greek eparchies which remained with the Ecumenical Patriarch despite the fact that the analogous territory has belonged to Greece since 1913.
- In Bulgaria the controversy over the collaboration of the Bulgarian Church with communism under Maxim (born 1914, Patriarch since 1971) resulted in the anti-Maxim faction forming a new church (the “Bulgarian Orthodox Church – Alternative Synod”, 1996–1999).
- Within the canonical territory of the Greek Churches minorities have attacked the abandonment of the traditional Julian calendar in Greece. The Greek Church voted in 1924 to accept an altered form of the Gregorian calendar that both maintained the traditional Julian calendar “Paschalion” (for calculating the date of Easter and all of the moveable feasts dependent on it); it also adopted a system of dates which will agree with the Gregorian Calendar (“New Calendar”) dates until 2800, when the two will start slowly to diverge as a result of their different methods of calculating leap years. The Greek “Old Calendarists” are guided strictly by the Julian calendar, which is also usual in the Russian and the Serbian churches.

One can say that the Christian churches in Europe have not denationalised themselves in a “conventional” sense through modernisation and pluralisation but have nonetheless gone through a denationalising process of institutionalisation, professionalisation, and specialisation of their structures on the level of the European Union’s political system. This process can be referred to as a “Europeanisation” of the churches’ advocacy. It corresponds to the global trend toward “public religions”, which also has a clear denationalising logic. However, an aspect of this issue is overlooked if the political demands of the churches on the European level are not given detailed consideration: in the course of undergoing Europeanisation with regard to religious policy, the churches in Europe have considered themselves simultaneously as protectors of *national* identities, though these understandings have varied strongly according to specific denominational or national traditions.

## The Persistence of the National Identities in the Churches' Advocacy in Europe

When examining the churches' political demands, one argument stands out: the national and cultural diversity of European church-state relationships should play a greater role in European Union law. More specifically, they urge that the distinctiveness of specific forms of church-state relationship in individual nations should be better protected than under the conditions of the Lisbon Treaty. The danger they see in the European trend towards a common cooperative model or a "Europeanised" form of church-state relationship involves the "germs of polytheism"<sup>15</sup> that result from the participation of *all* religious communities in the dialogue between the churches and EU institutions. Some fear that there will be little place left for the special cultural roles of certain churches in certain regions, since the dialogue is (deliberately) culturally "blind". The paradox is that the churches had favoured the possibility of a "structured" dialogue given them by the Lisbon Treaty precisely because it was thought to ward off rather than encourage relativism; however, recent European developments reflect a value-relativism that has been particularly criticised by Christian traditionalists.

Those within the churches who are aware of this problem have considered how European law could better account for the fact that there are countries or regions in Europe characterised by a broad religious unity, where religious belief is alive in the absence of doctrinal conflicts,<sup>16</sup> and where a predominant religion is constitutionally considered part of national identity (e.g. under art. 2 I of the Maltese constitution, according to which "the religion of Malta" is "the Roman Catholic Apostolic Religion").

A greater consideration of national religious-cultural traditions within European constitutional debates was particularly demanded by Orthodox and Roman Catholic actors. In April 2004 Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger wrote in a letter to Ernst-Wolfgang Böckenförde, one of the most important constitutionalists in Germany, that states "have their own cultural and religious roots which also remain constitutive if the state has obliged itself to neutrality to the religions".<sup>17</sup> "Otherwise", he wrote, "[...] the privileges of the Sundays would have to disappear and the legislation in the matter of matrimony and

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15 Gian Enrico Rusconi, "Einführung", in id. (ed.), *Der säkularisierte Staat im postsäkularen Zeitalter* (Berlin 2010), 7–26, on p. 20.

16 Nikitas Aliprantis, "Orthodoxer Glaube: Kirche und Rechtsordnung", in Horst Dreier et. al. (ed.), *Kulturelle Identität als Grund und Grenze des Rechts. Akten der IVR-Tagung vom 28.–30. September 2006 in Würzburg* (Stuttgart 2008), 163–168, on pp. 167–168.

17 Ernst-Wolfgang Böckenförde, "Der säkularisierte Staat, seine Rechtfertigung und seine Probleme im 21. Jahrhundert", in Rusconi (ed.), *Der säkularisierte Staat*, 27–45, on p. 40.

family would have to take account of the Muslim and the Christian tradition equally.”<sup>18</sup>

So European legislation has concerned not only symbols but also concrete, constitutionally codified social functions like the institution of marriage or the Sunday rest. These functions are of Christian *and national* importance. Admittedly, religio-geographical homogeneities within Europe are becoming less important, but they have not disappeared: unquestioned national-denominational identities can still be found in several regions.

In two EU member states such identities are not only expressed socially but also codified constitutionally, giving them a particular relevance for national identity. Firstly, art. 2 II of the Maltese constitution states: “The authorities of the Roman Catholic Apostolic Church have the duty and the right to teach which principles are right and which are wrong.” Religious schooling is taken to be of national importance. Secondly, there is Greece: while the other constitutions of south-eastern Europe – where Byzantine and Western church-state traditions were distinctively conjoined – did not survive twentieth-century communism, the Greek one did, including in its handling of the church-state relationship.<sup>19</sup> The wording of art. 3 I of the current Greek constitution is distinctive and worth quoting at length:

The prevailing religion in Greece is that of the Eastern Orthodox Church of Christ. The Orthodox Church of Greece, acknowledging our Lord Jesus Christ as its head, is inseparably united in doctrine with the Great Church of Christ in Constantinople and with every other Church of Christ of the same doctrine, observing unwaveringly, as they do, the holy apostolic and synodal canons and sacred traditions. It is autocephalous and is administered by the Holy Synod of serving Bishops and the Permanent Holy Synod originating thereof and assembled as specified by the Statutory Charter of the Church in compliance with the provisions of the Patriarchal Tome of June 29, 1850 and the Synodal Act of September 4, 1928.

A further element in the constitution is the fixing of the autonomous status of the “Holy Mountain” of Athos with a prohibition on entry for women. Finally, art. 16 II of the Greek constitution is noteworthy: “Education constitutes a basic mission for the State and shall aim at the moral, intellectual, professional and physical training of Greeks, the development of national and religious consciousness and at their formation as free and responsible citizens.”

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Potz/Synek, *Orthodoxes Kirchenrecht*, 157.

Greece and Malta aside, there are many individual constitutional articles in other EU member states relevant to religio-national self-understandings. These include, for example, the protection of Sunday in art. 140 of the German constitution. Further examples are art. L of the new Hungarian, art. 110 of the Latvian, art. 38 of the Lithuanian, and art. 18 of the Polish constitutions, which define marriage explicitly and exclusively as a bond between a man and a woman. More weakly pronounced variants of this sort of religious-national assertion are art. 6 I of the German, art. 29 I of the Italian, art. 21 I of the Greek, art. 41 III of the Irish, art. 44 I of the Romanian, art. 41 I of the Slovak, and art. 22 I of the Cypriot constitutions, which grant monogamous marriage a special importance. These examples show how national self-understandings with religious backgrounds are contained in constitutional texts. Distinctions between religious and national understandings cannot be defined clearly. While Roman Catholic agencies in Brussels are playing it close to the vest about their concrete ideas for better protecting these structures of “codified national identities” on the European level, their Orthodox counterparts and the CEC have made definite proposals:

- to insert defence clauses in European legislation especially for the protection of national bodies of law in questions of the state-church-relationship to the church article and, additionally, the article for the protection of the national identity (art. 4 TEU);
- to implement general protection clauses for the competencies of nation states (today generally specified in art. 4 I TEU), concretely in the field of culture, language, and national-religious self-understandings;<sup>20</sup> and,
- to realise a concrete *mechanism* to protect specifically national cultural, religious, or philosophical self-understandings.<sup>21</sup>

The churches have not only sought action through legal policy, they have also called for political and judicial actors at the EU level to show more sensitivity toward cultural and religious identities (or their related moral conceptions) when they predominate in member states. From the churches’ perspective, the EU should leave national “ligatures” (to use Ralf Dahrendorf’s term

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20 Holy Synod Of The Church Of Greece, “Announcement of the Conference on Values and Principles for the building of Europe, Athens, 4–6 May 2003”, in *Europaica Bulletin* 17 (19 May 2003), <http://orthodoxeurope.org/page/14/6.aspx#4>.

21 Kyrill (Metropolitan of Smolensk and Kaliningrad), “Letter from the Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate to the Chairman of the Presidium of the Convention on the Future of Europe, Valéry Giscard d’Estaing, of 14 February 2003”, in *Europaica Bulletin* 9 (16 February 2003), <http://orthodoxeurope.org/page/14/14.aspx>.

for “deep cultural ties”<sup>22</sup>) unaffected on some issues and take national particularities seriously. They argue it would damage EU legitimacy if forms of national cultural autonomy were unable to shape or limit EU-level executive or legislative decisions, especially with regard to policies such as genetic research, abortion, euthanasia, gender, family, education, culture, or “anti-discrimination” laws.<sup>23</sup>

EU institutions have been willing to ignore the churches’ wishes. Prominent examples are the affronts against Italy in the rejection of Rocco Buttiglione as an EU commissioner because of his expressed Roman Catholic beliefs and the first-instance judgement of the First Chamber of the ECtHR in November 2009 holding that displaying a crucifix in school classrooms violated religious freedom. A further episode on 14 January 2003 concerned the Eastern Orthodox Churches: the European Parliament adopted a resolution, by a narrow majority, demanding that the prohibition on entry for women at Mount Athos be removed.<sup>24</sup>

Particularly at the lower legal-institutional level, European integration has contributed to a levelling of national and cultural-religious differences, with several examples relating to Greece. In the course of implementing the Schengen agreement, for example, it was decided – against the protest of the Greek Church and a large part of the population – that data on religious confession would not be included on identity cards. In addition, the obligation of witnesses in court to indicate their religious affiliation (without which they are not allowed to give statements under oath) has had to be revised after a judgement of the ECtHR (*Dimitras vs. Greece*, 3 June 2010). Other Greek regulations have come under European political pressure: the prohibition on cremations, the impossibility for Greek citizens to opt out of Christian burial, or the tax exemption for religious communities’ incomes. Furthermore, European and national “humanitarian” organisations have evoked heated arguments in Greece with their critique of national religious education, advocacy of gay marriage, or calls to temporarily limit the salaries of church functionaries.<sup>25</sup>

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22 Ralf Dahrendorf, *Der moderne soziale Konflikt. Essay zur Politik der Freiheit* (Stuttgart 1994), 41.

23 Cec, *Churches in the Process of European Integration* (Brussels 2001), 16.

24 Cf. the indignant reactions in Holy Synod Of The Church Of Greece, “Announcement of the Conference on Values and Principles”; Kyrill, “Letter to Valéry Giscard d’Estaing”.

25 Theodora Antoniou, “Das Verhältnis zwischen Staat und Kirche in Griechenland”, in *Essener Gespräche zum Thema Staat und Kirche* 40 (2007), 157–188, on p. 169.

### Has Europeanisation Led to a Common “European Identity” among the Churches?

Despite all the defensive tendencies described in the preceding section – especially those of the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches – it can be observed that the emergence of a European-level religious policy (with the deepening of EU integration and secularisation processes) has changed the churches’ institutional self-image.<sup>26</sup> The general tendency has involved a move from a more state-affiliated and national self-perception toward a more “civil” and non-governmental one. To this extent, the Europeanisation of religious policy can be seen as an opportunity for the churches and denationalisation, in the narrow sense of the word, as a promising perspective, especially for the Eastern Orthodox churches. But have images and understandings of “Europe” been *converging* among the churches? Have they seen the emergence of a significant common “European identity”?

It must be stressed that the defensive and national tendencies described above should not be seen as automatically preventing the evolution of common European understandings. The “prohibitive” approach of the churches to shaping European religious policy has not only concerned the protection of national identities or sensitivities but have also been relevant to deciding whether a historical-cultural and intergovernmental understanding of “Europe” – rather than a technocratic, federal, and supranational one – can (and should) be encouraged. This issue can be considered as a core component of the churches’ “European identity” and cannot be separated from the issue of a decades-long European secularisation process (signalled by decreasing church attendance or belief in a personal God or increasing calls for a stronger separation of church and state). European secularisation means that *Christian* European identities in future will compete with more *secularist* variants.

Against this background it is always necessary to translate the European understandings formulated by the churches into a concept of “European pluralism”, whereby it can be assumed that all churches accept the so-called “secular option” of the modern age (i.e. the acknowledgment of an individual freedom of religion). All the churches, the Russian included, treat dissenters and people of other religions with enough tolerance to comply with the standards of EU law. Building upon the definitions of pluralism provided by Christof Mandry<sup>27</sup>, the following “pluralism identities” can be defined:

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26 Fritz Erich Anhelm, “Rolle und Funktion von Kirchen und Religionsgemeinschaften im Gemeinwesen”, in Peter-Christian Müller-Graff et. al. (ed.), *Kirchen und Religionsgemeinschaften in der Europäischen Union* (Baden-Baden 2003), 15–23, on pp. 20–21.

27 Christof Mandry, “Pluralismus als Problem und Pluralismus als Wert – theologisch-ethische



- *Universal-ethical pluralism*: a pluralistic position that sees those typical “European” values which the Christian believers profess to be something that can also be grounded in other traditions and worldviews.<sup>28</sup> In this context, even strictly secular, laicist, and atheist positions are accepted as co-equal.
- *(Soft or hard) mainstream integralism*: a position in which a stance is taken in favour of more-or-less distinctive “European values based (only) on our (the Christian) tradition”.<sup>29</sup> “Dissenters” (i.e. believers in independent “secular spheres” for social life) are rejected in terms of their principles but not as persons. Mainstream integralists opt for non-discrimination toward dissenters: the *soft* variant for “higher” (Christian) motives and the *hard* variant for “pragmatic” reasons.
- *Culture-war integralism*: a type of hard integralism based on an instrumental understanding of pluralism and merged with the conception of Europe as “self-forgotten” (because secularised) community. Culture-war integralists feel committed to Europe as a “Christian idea” and the re-evangelisation of the continent. Re-evangelisation, they argue, should be voluntary and based on individual conviction, so a minimum of pluralism (as an independent principle) is not questioned. Certainly, pluralism also serves as an instrument to fight a putative “alienation process” in Europe, and it is held that the church must fight off every attempt to limit pluralism to the disadvantage of religious actors. The culture-war integralists, however, also make active use of “pluralism” to fight against all forms of social secularisation.
- *Defensive religious particularism*: religious conservatism of this type is combined with a national-religious Euroscepticism according to which European integration is viewed neither as a “Christian idea” nor a process capable of Christianisation but purely as a “secular project” inherently opposed to Christianity. Nonetheless, Europe is regarded as political and cultural arena too important to be ignored, meaning that differences of opinion on ecclesio-political and moral questions must be negotiated and decided openly on the European level. The concept of “value” is understood thereby as an argumentative placeholder with polemical potentiality that must be occupied time and again. From this position, “cultural pluralism” requires the protection of national, cultural, and traditional conservative identities and must be always defended against “secularism”.

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Überlegungen”, in Christoph Bultmann et. al. (ed.), *Religionen in Nachbarschaft. Pluralismus als Markenzeichen der europäischen Religionsgeschichte* (Münster 2012), 29–46, on pp. 43–44.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

Where do different churches' approaches to Europe fall on this spectrum? There are three broad alternatives: Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox, Protestant, and Russian Orthodox.

Integralism is a central component of the *Roman Catholic* and *Greek Orthodox* understandings of "Europe", which they define as a Hellenic-Roman-Christian culture. This tradition is viewed as having been formative for the continent in cultural, ethical, and philosophical terms, and it is argued that this should continue to be the case. But Europe is seen as losing its distinctive consciousness, with integralism coming under attack by relativists and secularists. The Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Church of Greece have come closest to the Roman Catholic understanding of Europe.<sup>30</sup> As head of the Greek Church (1998–2008), Christodoulos went beyond the scope of what had been the usual Orthodox rhetoric, making use of a language of "Christian Europe" idealism reminiscent of the Roman Catholic tradition.<sup>31</sup> The speech of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomaios before the European Parliament in 1994 was similar.<sup>32</sup> For the first time, the Greek part of Orthodoxy no longer saw itself as merely on the fringes of Europe: it felt – despite all the setbacks during the Balkan wars of the 1990s – the desire to "return" to the old continent together with the Orthodox Churches from central, south-eastern, and east-central Europe, contributing its own spiritual power to an entire continent in the process of integration. Earlier, Orthodoxy had tended to argue more defensively, emphasising its displeasure that Orthodox contributions to European culture were denied or at least ignored. Now, however, the Christian-accented images of Europe have become very similar between the Greek and Roman Catholic churches, highlighting a general threat posed by increasingly secularised and socially atomised European societies. Cardinal

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30 CCEE, "Verantwortung der Christen für das Europa von heute und morgen, Erklärung der europäischen Bischofskonferenzen (Subiaco, 28.09.1980)", in Sekretariat Der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz et. al. (ed.), *Die europäischen Bischöfe und die Neu-Evangelisierung Europas. Rat der europäischen Bischofskonferenzen (CCEE)* (Bonn/St. Gallen 1991), 73–83; Benedict XVI, "Address of his Holiness to the Members of the European People's Party on the Occasion of the Study Days on Europe, Hall of Blessing, 30 March 2006", [http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2006/march/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_spe\\_20060330\\_eu-parliamentarians.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2006/march/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060330_eu-parliamentarians.html); John Paul II, "Ansprache anlässlich der Verleihung des Karlspreises 2004", [http://www.aachen.de/de/stadt\\_buerger/pdfs\\_stadtbuerger/pdf\\_karlspreis/karlspreis\\_04/rede\\_papst\\_kpp.pdf](http://www.aachen.de/de/stadt_buerger/pdfs_stadtbuerger/pdf_karlspreis/karlspreis_04/rede_papst_kpp.pdf); Cardinal Paul Poupard, "Kirche und Kultur im neuen Europa", in Bernhard Vogel (ed.), *Europa – vereint oder entzweit? Die Rolle der Katholischen Kirche im Prozess der europäischen Integration* (St. Augustin 2004), 31–42; Comece, *Ein Europa der Werte. Die ethische Dimension der Europäischen Union* (Brussels 2007).

31 Archbishop of Athens and All Greece Christodoulos, "Address to the Eurodeputies, Brussels, October 8, 2003", in *Europaica Bulletin* 26 (3 November 2003), <http://orthodoxeurope.org/page/14/26.aspx>.

32 Bartholomaios I, "Die Einigung Europas. Die Rede Seiner Allheiligkeit des Ökumenischen Patriarchen Bartholomaios I. im Plenum des Europäischen Parlaments (Strasbourg, 19 April 1994)", in *Orthodoxes Forum* 8:2 (1994), 239–244.

Poupard has spoken, for example, of an increasing “carelessness, ignorance and apathy”.<sup>33</sup> Among the typical Catholic imagery one finds terms such as “godforsakenness”, “the dictatorship of relativism”, “culture of death” or “cultural anemia”. Such negative perceptions of threats should not, however, distract from their articulation (especially in the Catholic case) as part of a “critical solidarity” with European integration as such. The Catholic Church supports this integration process not only for political-ethical but also for historical reasons.<sup>34</sup>

The integral position confronts an ethical-pluralistic *Protestant* understanding of Europe. The CPCE, for example, connects an ethical understanding of Europe with the mission of “reconciled difference”. The EEA, in turn, has combined its global pluralism with the conception of a society in which religious freedom is lived, actively facilitating Protestant faith, prayer, and missionary work as well as Christian moral conceptions of freedom. Ultimately, two Protestant positions can be roughly differentiated: Europe as an “area of preaching” among many<sup>35</sup> – i.e. a Europe without distinct relevance within the universal order of creation<sup>36</sup> – or Europe as a special socio-political and ethical project.<sup>37</sup> The Protestant Churches do not seek a “romantic return to the unity of Christianity and Europe”, nor do they tend to understand Christianity as a component of a European “core culture” or see themselves as contributing to a European civil religion.<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless the political and socio-ethical mission of the European Protestant churches lies in defining Europe as a community of values rather than as a purely economic entity. This aim, however, has had to coexist with the political aim of “demythologising Europe”: i.e., distancing discourse about Europe from the formula of “giving Europe a soul”, which is rejected as an idealistic misunderstanding, a type of “functionalization of religion” and a misguided element of a European “civil religion”.<sup>39</sup>

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33 Poupard, “Kirche und Kultur im neuen Europa”, 36–39.

34 See Heinrich Schneider, “Die Europäische Einigung als Thema der Katholischen Kirche”, in Müller-Graff et. al. (eds.), *Kirchen und Religionsgemeinschaften in der Europäischen Union* (Baden-Baden 2003), 73–102; Andreas Martin Rauch, *Katholische Kirche und europäische Einigung. Grundlagen, Entwicklungen und Probleme des katholischen Beitrags für ein geeintes Europa 1946–1986* (Bonn 1986); Jürgen Schwarz (ed.), *Die katholische Kirche und das neue Europa. Dokumente 1980–1995* (Mainz 1986).

35 Wolfgang Vögele, “...wie jede andere Weltgegend auch’? Die europäische Einigung als Thema der evangelischen Kirchen: Verkündigungsraum oder sozialetisches Projekt?”, in Müller-Graff et. al. (eds.), *Kirchen und Religionsgemeinschaften in der Europäischen Union* (Baden-Baden 2003), 59–72, on p. 60.

36 Eberhard Jüngel, “Das Evangelium und die evangelischen Kirchen Europas”, in *epd-Dokumentation* 17 (1992), 43–66, on p. 47.

37 Vögele, “...wie jede andere Weltgegend auch’?”, 60.

38 *Ibid.*, 66.

39 *Ibid.*, 67.

This is not to say that European identity has not been seized upon by Protestants since the political deepening of EU integration in the 1990s. “Identity” was certainly understood in ways compatible with cultural and religious pluralism and a sensibility for context. European Protestants wanted to achieve something like a European political identity not via a pre-modern ideal of unity but rather through the cooperation of those involved, as formulated at the Fifth Plenary Assembly of the Leuenberger Church Community in Belfast in 2001.<sup>40</sup> To this extent it may be consistent that positions can be found time and again among Protestants suggesting the cultivation of a kind of “identity suspicion”, according to which Europe should not be elevated in a mythical sense without a clear-eyed historical criticism.

Protestant concepts of pluralism differ from the idea of the “European cultural multipolarity” represented by the *Russian Orthodox Church*. Initially, the Russian Orthodox Church started from a position of historical-cultural integralism. The Russian church tried to stabilise something like a “Christian Europe” via an offensive culture-war of words against an arising European secularism (2003–2006). In their efforts, the Russians aspired to a political alliance with the Roman Catholic Church while distancing themselves from Protestants, who are regarded as too liberal.<sup>41</sup> The Russian Orthodox Church drew comparisons between European secularism and the Soviet Union’s militant atheism. The danger was seen less in the peoples of Europe themselves – majorities of whom (despite declining memberships) belong to one or another of the Christian denominations – but rather to certain elites, particularly “politicians” and “journalists”. It was claimed that they treated the Christian religions in a way that contributed to an unjustified marginalisation of the churches in the public sphere.<sup>42</sup>

The European discourse of the Russian Church has also been characterised by a historical-cultural integralism that included a strongly Eurosceptic element: committed to the existence of Europe as a “Christian continent”, the Russians have referred regularly to the historical-cultural and moral “foundations of Europe” against tendencies toward a “radical secularism”. In

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40 See Wilhelm Hüffmeier et. al. (ed.), *Versöhnte Verschiedenheit – der Auftrag der evangelischen Kirchen in Europa (Reconciled Diversity – the Mission of the Protestant Churches in Europe)*. Texte der 5. Vollversammlung der Leuenberger Kirchengemeinschaft in Belfast, 19.– 25. April 2001 (Frankfurt a.M. 2001).

41 Bishop Hilarion Alfeyev, “Le christianisme face au sécularisme militant”, in *Europaica Bulletin* 43 (21 June 2004), <http://orthodoxeurope.org/page/14/43.aspx#3>; id., “Die Orthodoxie im Neuen Europa: Probleme und Perspektiven. Vortrag des Bischofs von Wien und Österreich Hilarion im Stift St. Peter in Salzburg am 11. Dezember 2003”, in *Europaica Bulletin* 29 (15 December 2003), <http://orthodoxeurope.org/page/14/29.aspx#4>.

42 Bishop Hilarion Alfeyev, “Christliches Leben im Europa von heute”, in *Europaica Bulletin* 18 (18 June 2003), <http://orthodoxeurope.org/page/14/5.aspx>.

doing so, the clerics of Moscow have tended increasingly to accuse elites in Western Europe of a moral failure and to depict Europe as something like an “alienated other” that must return to a harmonious and healthy relationship with Christianity. In 2004 and 2005 the Russian church moved rapidly toward a type of “culture-war integralism”. This assisted the emergence of the old idea of a Russian sense of mission according to which Russia was called upon to revolt against secularism and nihilism in Europe (and *for* Europe).

However, between 2006 and 2007 there was a moderation of this stance.<sup>43</sup> Since then the Russian Orthodox Church’s approach has oscillated among “hard integralism”, “defensive religious particularism”, and “culture-war integralism”, with their use of a concept of “cultural pluralism” increasingly masking their integralist views. The Russian Church has cultivated an ever more nationalist rhetoric while at the same time presenting itself as the “protector” of those Europeans who wish to uphold traditional moral values but have been supposedly marginalised by the forces of political correctness and secular liberalism. In response, the Russian Orthodox Church has demanded the acceptance of “cultural pluralism”, though this is clearly aimed at defending only one kind of perspective (i.e., conservative traditionalism).

Although the Russian Orthodox Church has taken a stance on pluralism and human dignity that is completely different from that of the CPCE<sup>44</sup>, it has nevertheless reached an understanding with the Protestant view that, while it would be unrealistic for Christianity to become the basis of European cultural unity, Christian culture could be brought to Europe in the context of a lived pluralism with which the secular forces could also agree so long as they do not assert a radical secularism and “political correctness”. Since the Russian Orthodox Church has joined the CPCE and the CEC to largely abandon an understanding of Europe as an overarching cultural “unity”, it can be argued that the integral idea of a “Christian Europe” – envisioned as a kind of Hellenic-Roman-Christian oneness – is now only represented by the churches in Rome, Constantinople and Athens. The Russian Orthodox Church has departed from this view, even if it joins these three sister churches in criticising secularism.

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43 See Patr. Alexi II, “Address to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (Strasbourg, 2 Oct. 2007)”, in *Europaica Bulletin* 128 (7 October 2007), <http://orthodoxeurope.org/page/14/128.aspx#1>.

44 Frank Mathwig, “The Human Rights Debate in the Ecumenical Field of Tension. Comments on the Constructive Potential of the Current Controversy between the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE) and the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC)”, in *CPCE focus* 7 (2009), 5.

## The Inconsistency of Europeanisation: A Theological Approach

In summary, it can be said that, despite the Greek Orthodox approach to the Roman Catholic understanding of Europe and the Russian church's discovery of commonalities with the Protestants, it is not possible to speak of a process of "Europeanisation" in the sense of a universal convergence. This is not all that remarkable with regard to such fundamental questions like the meaning of "Europe" and views of "secularisation": the differences among the churches arise from *theology*, and it should not be forgotten that the churches are millennia-old institutions which have undergone significant changes over far longer periods than the quarter century since the Maastricht Treaty.

In her dissertation on "Church and Europe", Monica Schreiber, a theologian and pastor in Aachen, explains the pluralistic understanding of Europe held by the Protestant churches by emphasising the Protestant doctrine of justification for the *individual* and claim that that the individual's relationship to God can be located both within and outside the church, according to Luther's dictum that humans' *mundane* existence is also a "calling". As a result, pluralist and even secular values can be recognised both in their own terms and as demonstrations of the creative presence of the Holy Spirit.<sup>45</sup> With regard to politics, this Protestant position hinders the development of consistent and effective collective identities.<sup>46</sup> The Catholic position is different, extending the Holy Truth to the mundane world *aesthetically*: God is recognisable for humans in the order and beauty of the world. Unlike the Orthodox view, the Fall of Man does not efface that which is due to the grace of the Almighty. Finally, the Orthodox churches – if they actively apply their teachings of *theosis* (the sharing of humans in divine life through participation in the "energies" of God by means of imitation of the divinisation in the liturgy) to society – tend to subsume the empirical (and political) world within the truth of the church, leading the "world" to be viewed as relatively insignificant.<sup>47</sup>

### Conclusion

It is clear that from the late twentieth century – and especially since the Maastricht Treaty – European churches not only across the EU but also outside it (e.g., in Ukraine or Russia) have undergone a process of "Europeanisation"

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<sup>45</sup> Monica Schreiber, *Kirche und Europa. Protestantische Ekklesiologie im Horizont europäischer Zivilgesellschaft* (Berlin/Boston 2012), 185.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 188.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 141–156 and 165.

signalled by a much greater institutionalisation on the European level and an increasing professionalisation of their efforts to influence religious policymaking. However, this Europeanised institutional network has often been made use of in order to defend what are perceived as specifically *national* interests, differences and cultural-religious traditions. Nonetheless, beyond the detailed work of religious policy advocacy, the churches have also participated in debates around defining a “European” identity, which was given a new impetus in the first decade of the twenty-first century with the (ultimately unsuccessful) attempt to give the EU a new constitution. While all the mainstream churches have accepted the basic principles of individual freedom regarding religious belief and denominational belonging, different churches have been characterised by distinct attitudes toward the relationship between religion and culture, spanning a spectrum from marked pluralism to strong integralism.

Taking a theological perspective brings into view general cultural hurdles confronting each form of the “Europeanisation” of the Christian churches, an analysis that, with regard to the religious-cultural field of contemporary Europe, is more valid than ever. On the other hand, Christian traditions and cultures have shaped European culture far more than Europeans tend to realise. Jürgen Habermas has emphasised the “persistence of religious communities in a continually secularizing environment” and the need to include them in the discourses of the normative self-definition of free societies, pleading for what he calls “post-secular” societies.

But confessional traditions have influenced European nations in different ways, leading to the contemporary situation that there are sometimes deep and often underestimated contrasts within Europe. This came to light most recently with the outbreak of the European financial crisis and the consequent eruption of old cultural conflicts between the continent’s north and south. The religious-cultural field of Europe is a unique patchwork rug. However, it is important to keep in mind, in the religious policy context, that – up to the present day – the European patchwork rug is marked here and there by high rates of belief in God, churchgoing, and practiced religiousness, especially in Catholic and Orthodox regions.<sup>48</sup> East-central Europe even saw remarkable growth rates in religious faith after the fall of communism.<sup>49</sup> In

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48 See David Martin, “Integration and Fragmentation. Patterns of Religion in Europe”, in Krzysztof Michalski (ed.), *Religion in the New Europe* (Budapest/New York 2006), 64–84.

49 Gert Pickel, “Religionen und Religiosität in Europa zu Beginn des 21. Jahrhunderts – Unumkehrbare Säkularisierung?”, in Matthias Petzold (ed.), *Europas religiöse Kultur(en). Zur Rolle christlicher Theologie im weltanschaulichen Pluralismus* (Leipzig 2012), 39–75, on p. 42; Inna Naletova, *Jenseitiges Europa? “Religion und Kirche im orthodoxen Raum Osteuropas”*, in Hans-Joachim Veen et. al. (ed.), *Kirche und Revolution. Das Christentum in Ostmitteleuropa vor und nach 1989* (Cologne 2009), 163–189; in general see Gert Pickel/Olaf Müller, *Church*

this context, not only has there been an increase of “public religiousness” *parallel* to increasing tendencies toward European-wide secularisation of social and religious structures, there has also been what might be described – primarily in east-central and south-eastern Europe – as a rebirth of European Christianity and (in the case of Russia) as the rebirth of Christian political theology. This has also affected the different understandings of Europe in east and west. A universal “European” development in this context cannot be identified. A common European manifestation of something like a “New European Christianity” is not identifiable; moreover, where Christian identities are flourishing again, they often coincide with a resurgence of national identities and perspectives.



## Contributor Biographies

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