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Anderson, ML

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CONFESSIONS OF A FELLOW TRAVELER

BY

MARGARET LAVINIA ANDERSON*

Margaret Anderson considers the interaction between scholarship and life, and the interventions of mentors and friends, in her continuing education as a teacher and scholar of European and Catholic history.

Keywords: anti-Catholicism; antisemitism; Kulturkampf; Leo XIII, Pope; Windthorst, Ludwig

The Accident of Choice

My husband is fond quoting a line he attributes to Kierkegaard: “Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards.”

Alas, that *bon mot* turns out to have originated not with the distinguished Danish theologian, but with the much-married Artie Shaw, one of the kings of swing.¹ Whatever its source, the insight describes a career whose central preoccupations, as I lived them, seemed to

*Dr. Anderson is professor emerita of history at the University of California– Berkeley, email: mlavinia@berkeley.edu. The author would like to dedicate this essay to Ruth and Josef Becker, Augsburg historians, with love and gratitude for the gift of their friendship.

¹Kierkegaard’s own dictum was: “It is quite true what philosophy says; that life must be understood backwards. But then one forgets the other principle: that it must be lived forwards. . . . [T]emporal life can never properly be understood precisely because I can at no instant find complete rest in which to adopt a position: backwards.” *Papers and Journals*, trans. Alastair Hannay (New York, 1996), pp. 63, 161.

have come by chance, but which—Looking Backward—appear embarrassingly predictable. These preoccupations—the Catholic struggle for respect and religious freedom in the German empire; its impact on the party system and thus on the course of German history; controversies over “clericalism” in politics and the limits of pluralism; the “secularization” narrative; the paradoxical relationship between ultramontanism and democracy—all have to do, in one way or another, with Religion and/or its “Cultured Despisers.” And all of these themes followed, ultimately, from my dissertation: a biography of Ludwig Windthorst.

Yet I did not choose that topic myself. When I applied to graduate school in 1963, I had designated German history as my field because I wanted to find the answer to the Shoah: that is, how a civilized country—in our century!—could have committed such horrors. In those days and even through the 1970s, historians gripped by the Shoah rarely studied death camps or *Einsatztruppen*. They often didn’t study the Third Reich at all. We sought the “deeper” causes that might have encouraged or enabled it. My own topic, when I went off to Germany in fall 1966 to begin research, was Weimar’s Left intellectuals, and my working hypothesis was that their relentless criticism of the Republic unintentionally “paved the way” for the Nazis who would imprison them.

But almost as soon as I got off the boat, I learned that a book had just appeared on that subject, and another was in the pipeline. No room for me. But my adviser, Klaus Epstein, who was also in Germany that year and broke the bad news, happened to be dining that evening with the historian Rudolf Morsey. Morsey was prominent for two important works on the (Catholic) Center Party, one on its central role in the founding of the Weimar Republic, another on its craven collapse at the end. Epstein himself had recently published a highly regarded biography of Matthias Erzberger, who had burst on the German political scene in 1903 as the youngest

member of the Center's Reichstag delegation and caused an uproar by exposing, through missionary reports, the destruction of the Herero in German Southwest Africa. By 1914 the most powerful man in the Reichstag, Erzberger had the thankless task of "negotiating" the armistice in November 1918, for which he was assassinated in 1921.

While I sat in my flat worrying about how I could ever make the "original contribution" requisite for entry into our profession, Epstein and Morsey decided that I could do worse than a study of the Center's first leader, during the Kulturkampf of the 1870s and 1880s: Ludwig Windthorst. True, Windthorst had burned his personal papers. Therefore, Morsey warned when we met the next day, the dissertation could never be a *real* biography. I should subtitle it, he said, "A Contribution to _____"), the blank to be filled in with whatever I found. (He gave me a leg up by handing me two articles of his own that demolished existing scholarship on the Kulturkampf. They have stood before my mind's eye as a kind of *memento mori* ever since.²) Epstein, characteristically more sanguine, promised that I would have printed contemporary sources aplenty—and all those parliamentary debates! Let's not make a fetish of archives!

Thus the inauspicious beginning of my own "Journey in Church History." Yet as I write these reflections, it occurs to me that my only substantial papers in graduate school—one on "Lord Acton and Moral Judgments in History," the other on the controversy over Madame Guyon and the struggle between her defender, Abbé Fénelon, and his nemesis, Bishop Bossuet—also had to do with "religion." Even my current research on the Armenian genocide, almost half a century later, is connected through the red thread of religion, for although the terrain is new, I

²Rudolf Morsey, "Bismarck und der Kulturkampf," *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte*, 39 (1957), 232–70; *idem*, "Probleme der Kulturkampf-Forschung," *Historisches Jahrbuch*, 83 (1963), 217–45.

entered it via missionaries and the stereotypes employed against them. An outsider might see a pattern here.

The Pope and I

When my revised dissertation was published, in 1981, I was surprised to find that most readers, especially in Germany, assumed I was Catholic—less from what I wrote than from the fact that I chose such a topic at all. German academia in the 1960s and 1970s was still highly confessionalized. Entries in most encyclopedias and biographical lexicons routinely included the identifying abbreviations, *ev.*, *kath.*, or *hebr.*, after each person's name. Matters touching on the churches, moreover, were usually the bailiwick of "Church History," a separate discipline housed in the respective seminaries or theology faculties of the two confessions, whose publications were rarely read by the rest of our guild. But I was reared an Episcopalian, with inherited prejudices about "Romans" of the sort that Sigmund Freud attributed to the "narcissism of small differences." And when I began the dissertation, I was in the midst of a brief, unsuccessful attempt to be an atheist.

The Catholic Church's response to National Socialism had recently begun to exercise historians and the public at large. Two works by Gordon Zahn, as well as Guenter Lewy's *The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany* (New York, 1964), presented a dismaying picture of the Church in Germany and Austria, while Rolf Hochhuth's controversial play *The Deputy* (1963) had brought media attention to the "silence" of Pius XII.³ Epstein had weighed in with a long,

³Gordon Zahn, *German Catholics and Hitler's War: A Study in Social Control* (New York, 1962); *idem*, *In Solitary Witness: The Life and Death of Franz Jägerstätter* (New York, 1964).

critical review of Lewy and Hochhuth. While stating that their accounts were “essentially right,” he held that historians must not only describe, but also explain; in this case, “why able and honorable men acted, however mistakenly, as they did in circumstances of unparalleled difficulty.” I thought his piece apologetic, and we argued, at length. In fact, Epstein had far more cause for indignation than I. His grandfather and father were Jewish, although his father had been baptized into the Lutheran church as an infant, as had he. That was still “Jewish” enough to bar Epstein *père* from a university career in 1933, when Klaus was six, and his parents scrambled to emigrate. The grandfather, dismissed from his chair in mathematics, would not go. Required to report to the Gestapo in 1939, he committed suicide.

Today I find it difficult to see why I had been so outraged, for Epstein’s own explanation for the Church’s sins of commission and omission constituted a devastating indictment.⁴ But the designation “honorable men” stuck in my craw, as did his appeal for “charity” in discussing these matters. “Are you one of those people who eat Catholics for breakfast?” he inquired politely. When I muttered something about people silly enough to believe the pope was infallible, he countered: “Can you be sure that he isn’t?” I could. Yet I hadn’t hesitated, a year later, when he and Morsey had come up with Windthorst as my dissertation topic. Fine! I had thought; I can expose the *long-term* role of the Church in the German catastrophe.

⁴Although it deplored Hochhuth’s “tactlessness” in making “a much revered and recently deceased Pope the villain of a stage drama,” the essay offered no comfort to apologists and paragraph after paragraph that must have caused ears to burn. Klaus Epstein, “The Pope, the Church, and the Nazis,” *Modern Age*, 9 (1964–65), 83–94.

Windthorst and Leo XIII

To my surprise, I found in Windthorst the heroism that I had wanted from German Catholics in the 1930s and 1940s. Leading the fight against the Kulturkampf and drawing on reports from German priests driven by Otto von Bismarck into American exile, Windthorst advocated the separation of church and state. Discovering that his Center Party did well under the German empire's new democratic franchise, he pushed for the same suffrage for Germany's member states. He denounced the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine, stood up for the civil rights of Hanoverian legitimists (Protestants to a man), and defended Germany's other national minorities against harassment. For this, he and his party were branded "enemies of the empire" (*Reichsfeinde*). Windthorst worked to free rabbis from military service, demanded constitutional protection for kosher butchers against the attacks of anti-vivisectionists and antisemites, and threatened to resign if his party supported the antisemitic side in a debate on the Jewish "question." In 1886 he sponsored a motion to censure Bismarck's government for expelling almost overnight—on "national" (that is, ethnic) grounds—30,000 Poles and Jews, a "revolting" measure that he compared to the American campaign to "exterminate" the Indians. He pleaded with the Holy See to protest the expulsions—and met with silence from the pope.

On principle, Windthorst and his party condemned all bills that criminalized categories of persons or groups, rather than deeds (*Ausnahmegesetze*). The laws banishing the Jesuits and religious were examples. But Leo XIII, expecting handsome rewards if he could deliver the Center's Reichstag votes to Bismarck, ordered the party to pass the chancellor's Anti-Socialist Law, obviously an *Ausnahmegesetz*, as well as his seven-year military budget, which effectively

withdrew the army from parliamentary oversight.⁵ Windthorst refused. The pontiff made no secret of his displeasure, causing the Center enormous public embarrassment. Leo deliberately kept Windthorst uninformed while he negotiated a peace with Bismarck that left out not only the Jesuits, but also the three million Poles in Prussia's eastern dioceses. Thanks to the recently discovered correspondence of a priest who acted as intermediary between the Center leader and the curia, and to the magnificent edition of Vatican documents just published by Rudolf Lill, by the time I began revising my dissertation, I was able to follow the conflict between pontiff and politician "up close and personal."⁶ The ultimate explanation for the Church's failures during the Nazi period had been, in Epstein's words, that it "felt too little responsibility for the maintenance of general civilized political conditions in Germany, provided that its organizations were allowed to survive." It was precisely on behalf of such "civilized political conditions" that Windthorst took his stand; the Church could not prosper by making side-deals with bullies, but could flourish only under the rule of law. I have not changed my view of Leo's German diplomacy, but I suspect that it was Pius XII as much as Leo XIII who had been in my sights.

The Present in the Past: The Sixties

Present-mindedness was a term of opprobrium among our mentors, the mark of an

⁵I was not the first to treat Leo's diplomatic reputation skeptically. James E. Ward had already done so, although his assessment was more positive than mine. See Ward, "Leo XIII and Bismarck: The Kaiser's Vatican Visit of 1888," *Review of Politics*, 24 (1962), 392-414, and especially Ward, "Leo XIII: 'Diplomat Pope,'" *Review of Politics*, 28 (1966), 47-61.

⁶Rudolf Lill, ed., *Vatikanische Akten zur Geschichte des deutschen Kulturkampfes; Leo XIII. Teil I 1878-1880* (Tübingen, 1970).

unprofessional historian. But today I see wisdom in Ernst Troeltsch's observation about its inevitability—and utility:

The present continually hovers before the backward-looking glance,
because it is by the aid of analogies drawn from the life of to-day—
however little this may be consciously before the mind—that we
reach the causal explanations of the events of the past.⁷

Past and present concerns acted reciprocally upon my dissertation, shaping the way I understood Windthorst and the nineteenth-century, just as he and his world would shape the way I eventually saw my own. Not only Germany of 1933–45, but my own present, the 1960s, had hovered before my backward-looking glance as I wrote. Thus the euphoria excited by the Second Vatican Council and John XXIII (“the miracle of the 20th century,” declared Epstein) brought the anxieties surrounding the First Vatican Council into sharper relief, when I found Windthorst, representing a number of Catholic deputies, trying to dissuade the curia from bringing infallibility to a vote. A defeat of the measure would be a disaster, read as a disavowal of the beleaguered Pius IX; a victory, on the other hand, risked schism. But Windthorst and his colleagues, whom opponents would soon brand as “ultramontanes,” were rebuked, scolded as “liberal Catholics.” It taught me something about the relativity of such terms as *ultramontane* and *liberal*.

⁷Quoted in Thomas A. Brady Jr., “German Burghers and Peasants in the Reformation and the Peasants' War: Partners or Competitors?” in *Between the Middle Ages and Modernity: Individual and Community in the Early Modern World*, ed. Charles H. Parker and Jerry H. Bentley (Lanham, MD, 2007), pp. 33–51, here p. 46.

The present that hovered most brightly before my glance, however, belonged to the civil rights movement, whose analogies helped put a human face on the impersonal struggles of the past. Thus when liberals argued against Windthorst's motion that the government appoint *two* school consultants (one a Catholic), that this constituted an assault on nondenominational education, I delivered an editorial:

Only white men believe it is possible to be color-blind; every non-white in white society knows better. No Catholic could take seriously the liberal claim that two consultants were unnecessary because whatever faith a man might profess in private, as a civil servant he was without a confession. When a liberal added that in any case a single consultant accorded with the democratic doctrine of majority rule, he let the Protestant cat out of the bag, so far as Windthorst was concerned.⁸

I would warn any advisee of mine against such present-mindedness. My mentors let it pass.

"Civil disobedience" was another lens I owed to the sixties. The term was new to my lexicon, but thanks to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), the Berrigan brothers, and later Bernadette Devlin, it fell trippingly from my tongue as I recounted the response of Prussia's Catholics to the new Kulturkampf laws, a response that by 1876 had led to the incarceration of hundreds of clergy and Catholic editors, left more than 1000 parishes without a priest, and put all of Prussia's bishops either in custody or in exile. Ordinary Catholics expressed their solidarity through mass demonstrations and (sometimes) riots. As Germans were routinely depicted in the literature as "unconsciously docile" toward authority, I found it strange

⁸*Windthorst: A Political Biography* (Oxford, 1981), p. 62.

that historians seemed oblivious to this movement of mass disobedience.⁹ Without intending it, I was beginning to feel protective toward my subjects and didn't like to see them so neglected. (Had anyone told me then that one day "religion" would top the specialties listed by members of the American Historical Association (AHA), I would not have believed them.¹⁰) Nevertheless, when voices in the profession were demanding that we write "history from below," I also recognized that the defiance championed by Windthorst and exercised by Catholics of all strata gave me a way to diminish the obloquy now attaching to a book about yet another "great man."

The Past in the Present: Virginia

As Caroline Walker Bynum has so eloquently reminded us, "the past lay heavy on the American South."¹¹ I grew up in Virginia. A large oil portrait of Robert E. Lee dominated our small living room, and childhood holidays meant dutiful visits to the Old Dominion's stately homes—Mount Vernon, Gunston Hall, Arlington, Monticello—and to the *lieux de mémoire* that

⁹Fritz Stern, Introduction, in *The Failure of Illiberalism. Essays on the Political Culture of Modern Germany* (London, 1972), pp. xx–liii, here p. xxv. Soon, however, Jonathan Sperber would make good the deficit in *Popular Catholicism in Nineteenth Century Germany* (Princeton, 1984).

¹⁰Robert B. Townsend, "A New Found Religion? The Field Surges among AHA Members," *Perspectives on History*, 47 (2009), <http://www.historians.org/perspectives/issues/2009/0912/0912new3.cfm>, accessed August 28, 2013.

¹¹Caroline Walker Bynum, "Curriculum Vitae: An Authorial Aside," *Common Knowledge*, 9 (2003), 1–12, here 8.

bled over our map. One might say, borrowing from Saki, that Virginians produced more history than they could consume locally, and I was sated. History was no interest of mine. But then came college. William and Mary in 1959 required freshmen to take a two-semester survey, “Europe from the Fall of Rome to the Present,” and it dazzled me. Although literature had been my first love, I was becoming uneasy about a discipline that seemed to allow one, with enough casuistry and close reading, to make a plausible argument for just about anything. On finishing my weekly English composition, I would turn to history with a mental shout: “*now*—Truth!” (It wasn’t until I was a junior, assigned the “Storm over the Gentry” raging among those giants R. W. Tawney, Lawrence Stone, and Hugh Trevor-Roper, that it occurred to me that history might also include interpretation.)

William and Mary turned me, not into an aspiring historian, but at least into someone hungry for the humanities. Nearby Bruton Parish Church, where in March 1960 the rector prayed aloud for the victims of the Sharpeville Massacre in South Africa, turned me into a believer in racial equality. If in Caroline Bynum’s Georgia “Southerners talk[ed] with silences” and “the issue of race lay like a gigantic fault line under family conversations,” among my noisy Virginia relatives the issue roared across conversations like a tornado.¹² All of them—my parents as well as our large extended family—applauded the “Massive Resistance” to *Brown v. Board of Education* demanded by their hero, Senator Harry T. Byrd: that is, the closing of Virginia’s public schools. My parents went so far as to contribute, from very slender resources, to the John S. Mosby Academy in my mother’s native Warren County, to enable white children to continue

¹²Bynum, “Curriculum Vitae,” p. 6.

to get an education.¹³ Although derogatory terms for people of color (with whom they had almost no contact) never crossed their lips, my parents' views were strong: segregation was inscribed in nature (wrens don't nest with robins), and it would take generations before colored people would reach the "level" of whites. I was initiated into such truths early, when I asked, in 1948, which was "our" candidate, Truman or Dewey? I was told that *our* candidate was a man who would not win, Senator Strom Thurmond—but one must vote one's conscience.

Many heated and tearful arguments followed my return from college—as they would, later on, about Vietnam. Similar conflicts were embroiling parents and children across the country. Although painful at the time, these battles taught me that good people can believe in terrible ideas: a useful lesson for an historian of Germany, and perhaps for anyone.

The war would always divide us ("We'll stop bombing the North when they stop bombing the South!" was Daddy's view), but on race, my parents eventually came round: influenced indirectly by the SCLC's years of struggle, but directly by the sudden efforts of the Episcopal church in Virginia to preach the irreconcilability between Christianity and racism. "Why didn't they tell us before?," my father wanted to know. He began inviting the few African Americans in his orbit to St. George's. It is unlikely that any took him up on it, since he felt compelled to warn that some of the congregation would probably walk out. More successfully, he doggedly set out to convince his board of directors to allow him to hire African Americans. By the time I began my dissertation, I didn't need convincing that churches make a difference.

But my parents' conversion came in the late sixties. In the meantime, I had transferred to and graduated from Swarthmore, where the reigning assumptions were Voltairian, at least among

¹³The courts soon forced Warren County's schools to reopen, but Prince Edward County's stayed closed from 1958 to 1964.

the red-diaper babies who set the tone. *Educated* people, it seemed, had left all that stuff behind. When I arrived at Brown University in fall 1963, I, too, had joined the ranks of religion's cultured despisers.

Anti-Catholicism at Brown: Theirs and Mine

But Brown, and perhaps in subtler ways, Rhode Island, reshuffled my deck of assumptions. Although graduate school had been the destination of most of my Swarthmore classmates, my own future, insofar as I thought of it at all, had focused on obtaining a teaching certificate. As my parents, who had never been to college, were anxious to remind me: it would be a resource "if your husband dies." When, in my senior year, my professors nominated me for a Wilson, I had no sense of how little prepared I was to do graduate work on Germany. I knew no German. Nor Russian—my second field. My inadequacies, however, complemented Brown's, whose history department had neither sufficient faculty nor enough linguistically qualified students to mount a real graduate program. The beneficiary of the new National Defense Education Act's largesse, Brown was already preparing to move up, which it did with a series of bright new hires in 1966–68. By then, however, I had completed my course work. During *my* time, only one research seminar in Europe was offered: seventeenth-century France. We Europeanists filled out the rest of our programs with designated undergraduate lecture courses, to which additional assignments were attached, along with "reading seminars" that required undergraduate bodies to be viable. I never learned of the *Annales* school, nor of the debates then engaging the profession at large. It would come as a shock, when I got out "in the world" and began teaching, to learn from my contemporaries that events were only "surface disturbances, crests of foam that the tides of history carry on their strong backs," as a much-quoted line put it, and that political

history, in the words of a distinguished French historian in a popular volume on the state of our discipline, was “a corpse that has to be made to lie down.”¹⁴ Such hostility would cause me considerable anxiety. But at Brown, at the unsophisticated tasks I was given, I worked very hard. And with no grounds for comparison, I was happy.

Living in the shadow of Harvard, Brown was a provincial place. Until the massive curricular reforms of 1969–70 that jumped it into national prominence, most of its undergraduates came from in-state. But Brown deprovincialized me. Most obviously, it threw me together with people who were both educated and identifiably religious. Among them was a rabbi’s son with four years of orthodox seminary under his belt, now finishing a dissertation on Milton’s debt to Hebraica. My jaw dropped when he told me that his marriage had been “arranged,” in the traditional way, to a rabbi’s daughter from another state.¹⁵ Our acquaintance was brief, but my eyes opened to the possibility that commitment to a specific community or set of beliefs need not conflict with “universalism”—tolerance, even benevolence, toward others and *their* “particularisms.”¹⁶ I could recognize the same combination when I came upon it in

¹⁴Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (New York, 1972), 1:21; Jacques Le Goff, “Is Politics Still the Backbone of History?” in *Historical Studies Today*, ed. Felix Gilbert and Stephan R. Graubard (New York, 1972), pp. 337–55, here p. 348.

¹⁵The author of a book about the influence of the Hebrew bible on Milton, he is now professor emeritus at Georgetown.

¹⁶*Cf.* Philip Gleason on discussions of pluralism versus Americanism within American historiography, in his “Working in a Tradition,” *The Catholic Historical Review*, 47 (2011), 435–60.

Windthorst: a man willing to defend, if necessary, the Syllabus of Errors (in a lawyerly way) and to brag that *his* Church did not preach “Christ the Lord in the morning and some-great-philosopher-who-once-lived-at-some-time-or-other in the afternoon”; but someone who also took for granted that the Church could not flourish where the rights of others—be they embarrassing Jesuits, obstreperous Poles, or atheist Socialists—went begging.

Two of my classmates were Jesuits—further examples that piety and education were not mutually exclusive. Sitting with them on the “graduate students’ bench” at the back of William F. Church’s big course on the Renaissance and Reformation, I couldn’t miss their giggles and eye-rolling at our professor’s many guileless solecisms, such as his statement that the Reformation eliminated most of “the sacraments and other trappings.” “Insensitivity,” we might call it today; but coming from the podium, it sounded like ignorance. When Church went around the room at the end of the year, asking us what we planned to do over the summer, another of the squirmers said that he was leaving for Manhattan College to begin his formation as a Christian Brother. I couldn’t have been more shocked if he had announced an intention to commit suicide—for what was the difference? Still, it made me wonder: was I narrow-minded?

It was deprovincializing to find that the educated world to which I aspired might have prejudices of its own. For several weeks in 1964 the Rhode Island gubernatorial campaign preoccupied the campus, and our neighborhoods were dotted with posters for the Republican John Chafee. The majority of undergraduates already identified with Chafee’s party; but even normally Democratic faculty and graduate students seemed to take it for granted that Chafee was the candidate of choice. Word was out that his opponent, Lt. Governor Edward P. Gallogly, was a “party hack.” I opined as much during a conversation with Professor Epstein, assuming that he

was on board. Wrong. He always voted the straight Democratic ticket, he said.¹⁷ The only reason his colleagues, who usually did the same, were dismissive of Gallogly was because “he’s an Irish Catholic with eleven children and went to Providence College.” (Chafee was an Episcopalian, with six children, and went to Yale.) To my raised eyebrow, he added, “Anti-Catholicism is the antisemitism of intellectuals.”

Epstein may have been wrong about his colleagues’ motives. But he was not wrong to see that confessional issues were on the table. Another of the undergraduate courses I was required to take was “Social and Intellectual History of the United States.” I didn’t mind, as it plugged innumerable gaps in my education, some of which, such as the Second Great Awakening and Maria Monk’s *Awful Disclosures* (1836), have since come in handy. The course was brilliantly taught by William G. McLoughlin, a respected historian of American religion whom I got to know better a few years later through the peace movement. A self-described “humanist,” McLoughlin was active in, and later chair of, Rhode Island’s American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). Imagine my surprise when I read in the *Brown Daily Herald* his letter objecting to its editorial against public aid to parochial schools, an issue then exercising this most Catholic state

¹⁷Because four of Epstein’s reviews appeared in Russell Kirk’s *Modern Age*, he has recently been described as a conservative. The exuberant Epstein, who reviewed thirty books between 1959 and 1967, welcomed *any* outlet for his views, but by normal counters, he was a liberal. When the German government rescinded its travel fellowship for Fritz Fischer because of his controversial book on German aims in World War I, Epstein and Fritz Stern of Columbia organized a campaign to bring him to the United States. Epstein also led the faculty contingent of Brown’s antiwar movement in teach-ins debating (woefully outclassed) political scientists. He died in 1967, at age forty, in a traffic accident.

in the union. McLoughlin was terse and categorical: such aid was *not* contrary to the First Amendment; parochial schools, which educated large numbers of the state's children, deserved aid—and would get it. He implied that to insist otherwise was bigotry.¹⁸

A Woman in History?

It was typical of Swarthmore, commented Epstein (a Harvard man), that I had managed to graduate without ever knowing there was a “woman problem.” Given the job my first semester of grading for his popular course in modern Germany, I had caused a brouhaha by flunking a significant number of midterm exams and allotting Ds and Cs to even more. Drove of angry students lined up outside his door, and an outraged editorial in the *Brown Daily Herald* excoriated the iniquity of graduate student graders.¹⁹ It sent the department chairman, Donald Rohr, storming into Epstein's office, in a stew about potential declines in enrollments and fuming about the wisdom of admitting women into the program.

In fact, I had only one female counterpart, who decamped at the end of the year. No women were on the history faculty. Natalie Zemon Davis, there briefly, had left at the end of

¹⁸Did the ACLU know of this letter when it established the William G. McLoughlin First Amendment Award? More cautious is McLoughlin's *Rhode Island: A History* (New York, 1986), pp. 224–25.

¹⁹The *Herald* was right. I had no idea what to expect of undergraduates. History repeated itself when I came to Berkeley in 1990, with the luxury of employing a graduate student grader myself. Another novice, he proved as ruthless as I. Sadder but wiser, I stayed up all night re-grading the midterms.

1962. It was 1978 before the department made a female appointment.²⁰ Nevertheless, unlike Caroline Bynum, then at Harvard, and many of our contemporaries, I never felt disadvantaged.²¹ Aside from Rohr (also from Harvard, and subsequently a friend), the only one to remark on my gender was Church (PhD, Harvard, 1939), whose critique of my first paper for his historiography seminar (the assignment: What Makes Great History?) noted that I concentrated on elements that “make for complexities and complications in the picture. Also, some of the illustrations you use merely serve to multiply the complexities,” which led him to wonder whether “this circular method of reasoning may be characteristic of the female mind (?)”—without deciding. But Church treated me kindly, as did they all. Brown wasn’t Harvard, and they knew it.

Bones to Pick

Windthorst: A Political Biography was published in 1981.²² Although for some reviewers its argument that the Center functioned as Imperial Germany’s liberal party was one bridge too

²⁰Martha Mitchell does not list Davis or Epstein in *Encyclopedia Brunoniana / History*, http://www.brown.edu/Administration/News_Bureau/Databases/Encyclopedia/search.php?serial=H0150http://www.brown.edu/Administration/News_Bureau/Databases/Encyclopedia/search.php?serial=H0150, accessed August 29, 2013.

²¹Caroline Walker Bynum, “Why Paradox? The Contradictions of My Life as a Scholar,” *The Catholic Historical Review*, 98 (2012), 439–40, 446, and *idem*, “Curriculum Vitae,” pp. 4–5, 10.

²²Readers of this journal may be gratified to learn that when Oxford’s editor demanded that the word *Roman* be inserted before every appearance of “Catholic” in my text, I was able to win my case by asking, “We don’t call it *The Roman Catholic Historical Review*, do we?”.

far, the reception was friendly. Almost immediately, however, I regretted my austere title.²³ It was increasingly clear that the day of European biography—always excepting the Big Three: Marx, Stalin, and Hitler—was over. More than one reviewer suggested gently that I could have more usefully brought out the same themes in another genre. In principle, they were right. I doubt, however, that I would have been up to that considerably more difficult task, conceptually and organizationally. More important, I can't overlook how much I owed those very themes to the *person*—and speeches—of Windthorst himself.

For the next decade and beyond, my scholarship was spurred by my increasing frustration with the grand narrative of modern German history that simply ignored what I was coming to think of as “my” Catholics. Although historians of Germany proudly dubbed themselves “critical” *vis à vis* their conservative predecessors, their own narratives were framed along traditional lines, as a struggle between Left and Right, only now with the protagonists reversed. A newly fashionable vocabulary of class easily mapped on to this Left-Right dichotomy, without challenging it. In this story, Catholics—more than a third of the German population, but too diverse for class analysis—hardly appeared; when they did, they were chopped and stretched into the procrustean categories of Left and Right (usually Right), leaving them unrecognizable, at least to me. Catholics were also absent from cultural and intellectual history. In 1973, Hans-Ulrich Wehler at the University of Bielefeld, the Young Turk of his generation and even today the most influential historian in Germany, edited a famous collection of essays entitled *German Historians*, billing it as representing not just the usual suspects, men like Heinrich Treitschke, Gustav Schmoller, and Max Weber, but also figures outside the mainstream: pacifists, Jews,

²³The subtitle of the translation, *Windthorst: Zentrumspolitiker und Gegenspieler Bismarcks* (Düsseldorf, 1988), to which I owe Josef Becker of Augsburg, is a bit more appealing.

Marxists, and Karl Marx himself.²⁴ German Catholics did not lack a tradition of historical writing, but not one had made the A-list, something no reviewer seemed to notice. A Catholic colleague in Germany shrugged: “*Catholicum est: non legitur.*” (It’s Catholic; therefore not to be read.) I identified with African Americans who felt marginalized in separate journals, courses, departments. Just as “American,” without a modifier, meant “white,” so too, in the historiography most important to me, did “German” mean “Protestant.”²⁵

Shortly after *Windthorst* came out, I sounded off about this state of affairs to Ken Barkin, a friend from Brown days. He shared my period and country, but as his own specialties were economic history and social thought, he had not noticed the confessional blind spot. So I gave him an example. We all knew about the massive purge of liberals and “re-feudalization” of the Prussian bureaucracy carried out by the interior minister, Robert von Puttkamer in the 1880s, didn’t we? A measure whose nefarious consequences extended into the Weimar Republic? Yes, he agreed. Well, when I wrote my chapter on the Kulturkampf and came upon the liberals’ demand that Bismarck purge “hecatombs” of Catholic officials, I looked up the work on the Puttkamer Purge in order to put the Catholic purge into a larger context. But I found nothing. At least ten well-known historians referred to the purge as a fact, and, as befitted a commonplace, it was also mentioned in the three most widely read textbooks on German history. But no one

²⁴Hans-Ulrich Wehler, ed., *Deutsche Historiker* (Göttingen, 1973).

²⁵Examples can be found in Margaret Lavinia Anderson, “Interdenominationalism, Clericalism, Pluralism: The *Zentrumsstreit* and the Dilemma of Catholicism in Wilhelmine Germany,” *Central European History*, 21 (1988), 350–78, here 377–78. A piece of revisionism, it defends those Center deputies labeled “integralists,” arguing that German hostility to pluralism made interdenominational initiatives futile.

offered anything specific, and all cited a single source, an article by a Weimar historian who had died young: Eckart Kehr. So I read Kehr. His “classic essay,” published in 1929 (the year he finished his dissertation), turned out to be a book review. And it gave only one name of any victim of the purge: an actor banned, after making an oppositional speech, from appearing in the royal theater. So! I concluded, there’s a well-documented purge of Catholics—from *Landräte* down to letter-carriers—which is mentioned by no one! And there’s an entirely notional purge of liberals, asserted by everyone! What do you say about *that*?

I was only “venting” my sense of isolation. But Ken had been reviewing books on German historiography and saw that here swam bigger fish than the profession’s blindness to Catholics. Puttkamer’s alleged purge had become so prominent because Kehr had tied it to legislation outlawing the Socialists in 1878 and Bismarck’s first tariff in 1879. These three developments together had forged a new antiparliamentary bloc in the Reichstag, ushering in a “refeudalization” of society. Subsequent historians, elaborating on Kehr’s thesis, referred to 1878–79 as an axial shift in German politics, the “conservative re-founding of the Reich.” But did no one notice that it was the *Center*, I interjected, representing small farmers, not the “feudal” Junkers with their latifundia, who had championed the (rather modest) tariffs of 1879; the very Center that voted unanimously *against* the 1878 law against the Socialists? Nothing connected these two measures other than Kehr’s *ipse dixit*! Ken noted that the “feudalization” thesis had been the liberals’ before it was Kehr’s. And the refugee historians whose experiences had stamped so much of postwar historiography were themselves, like Kehr, shaped by the speeches and writings of late-nineteenth-century liberals. Let’s write an article on this!, he suggested.

In a white heat we wrote up what turned out to be a very long article, establishing a purge

of the Prussian bureaucracy in every decade *but* the 1880s and going so far as to hypothesize that what had most angered liberals about Puttkamer was his desire to end the Kulturkampf (Canossa!) and his reinstatement of some of the Catholics his predecessor had purged. Ken sent a copy of our manuscript to Hans Rosenberg, one of the refugees mentioned in our argument. Rosenberg, whose scholarship was renowned, had been a formidable, even forbidding, presence at Berkeley; legend had it that a group of his students, on completing their dissertations, debated among themselves whether they might now address this giant by his first name, when one of them intervened: “Guys! It’s OK to call him Hans. *He* knows he’s Professor Rosenberg.”

The reader for the first journal to which we sent it recommended publication, but added, “not everyone will like this piece.” To which I can only say: And how! It’s unclear why Ken had thought Rosenberg would be pleased. He and Kehr had studied together in the same Berlin seminar, and got their PhDs the same year under the same *Doktorvater*. He was also one of the godfathers of the very “Bielefeld School” (sometimes called “Kehrites”) that then reigned supreme in Germany’s historical firmament. Seventy-eight and in ill health, Rosenberg clearly found the obligation burdensome, but he dutifully read our article through—twice. “I . . . shall not play around the bush,” he began:

Frankly, except for some informative or suggestive scattered bits I find this study a rather deplorable performance. It is, I submit . . . ill-conceived and ill-balanced; thematically a contrived, queerly structured muddle with narrow historical perspectives conceptually confused; terminologically imprecise and often careless and crude; consequently, analytically shallow, excessively simplistic and fuzzy; as for interpretation, pretentious and with regard to the central thesis unoriginal . . . Moreover, save for certain

aspects of the Kulturkampf and of the history of political Catholicism, I noticed glaring gaps in highly pertinent basic historic knowledge. . . .

Let me say in conclusion that I am greatly surprised and disappointed to find Kenneth Barkin as the co-author of such an ill-digested intellectual mish-mash. And if you permit me a word of personal advice: Don't publish *this* article, as it stands, unless you want to seriously damage your good reputation as a serious scholar in the field of modern German history

He ended by implying that Ken had been led astray by “alas, Mrs. Anderson. . . .”²⁶

It is fair to say that Ken was traumatized by the letter. When, much later, I read it to my husband, a Rosenberg student, he laughed aloud. He could just *hear* Rosenberg's voice, he said; the professor would have been furious at him for marrying me. Then he looked up at the ceiling and said, “Don't be mad, Hans!”

“The Myth of the Puttkamer Purge and the Reality of the Kulturkampf” is probably cited more often than anything else either of us has written. Wehler, a main target, generously offered to publish it in his *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* if American journals turned it down. That (eventually) proved unnecessary.²⁷ In 1984 it won the biannual prize of the Conference Group

²⁶Hans Rosenberg to Kenneth Barkin, Freiburg im Breisgau, March 21, 1982, photocopy in the author's possession. <Minnich comment: Copyrighted and trademarked terms must not be used in a generic context, as such a practice can open up the journal and CUA Press to legal action.>

²⁷Margaret Lavinia Anderson and Kenneth Barkin, “The Myth of the Puttkamer Purge and the Reality of the Kulturkampf: Some Reflections on the Historiography of Imperial Germany,” *The Journal of Modern History*, 54 (1982), 447–86; in Germany: “Der Mythos der

for Central European History for best article. In 1997, the Conference Group decided to name this award the Hans Rosenberg Prize.

Catholics in Germany's Grand Narrative? Quantification

It was one thing to show that Catholics were being excluded. More important, however, was to show that including them would make any difference.

During my first decade of teaching the profession was bubbling over with programmatic statements to the effect that History must catch up with the social sciences, must stop being satisfied with sloppy conclusions about “many” of this and “most” of that. Rigor demanded precision, which meant quantification.²⁸ It is difficult today, after the linguistic turn, the postmodern turn, the cultural turn, and other turns too numerous to mention, to remember how intimidating such pronouncements could be, especially for one like myself, whose score for the quantitative GRE did not break into two digits. I signed up for the Newberry Library’s one-week crash course in “Quantitative Methods for Historians,” taught by Richard Jensen, whose own work, along with that of other U.S. “ethno-cultural” historians, by bringing both religion and politics back into our conversations, had been a light in my darkness. Jensen told us about amazing possibilities, of which regression analysis seemed the most useful; he warned us of pitfalls, of which the “ecological fallacy” was the most dangerous. I would soon waste a whole

Puttkamer-‘Säuberung’ und die Realität des Kulturkampfes: Einige Überlegungen

Geschichtsschreibung über das kaiserliche Deutschland,” *Historisches Jahrbuch*, 109 (1989), 452–98.

²⁸With “mad-scientist bravado,” admits Paul E. Johnson, in “Reflections: Looking Back at Social History,” *Reviews in American History*, 39 (2011), 379–88, here 380.

semester trying to turn a collection of popular protests, material that was essentially narrative, into a “data set” via the miracle of codification. I should have heeded Jensen’s parting message to the class: When all was said and done, for most historians plain old percentages are still the most useful kind of quantification.²⁹ It was that primitive form that I grabbed when offered a spot on an AHA panel on “Catholics and Politics in the 19th Century.”

With my title, “The Kulturkampf and the Course of German History,” I had committed myself to putting Catholics into Germany’s grand narrative. With little time to waste, I turned to the only accessible data set I had: votes in parliament and election results. I started with a central issue of the nineteenth century, the “Constitutional Conflict” in the 1860s between Bismarck and Prussia’s then-liberal parliament, and showed, via a graph, that Catholic districts had overwhelmingly voted for Bismarck’s liberal opponents in the three “conflict” elections. In 1866, however, after Prussia’s military victory over Austria, most liberal deputies pivoted, and voted three to one to “forgive” Bismarck for governing unconstitutionally, an event long considered a symbolic turning-point of German history, when liberalism capitulated to state power. I discovered, however, that deputies from districts in Prussia’s western provinces, home to a large Catholic population, voted *against* the “indemnity” bill; in majority-Catholic districts, by a margin of two to one—and I produced a pie chart to show it. Another graph tracked Prussian Catholic voting behavior from 1852 to 1918. It showed that they had never supported the Conservatives in significant numbers, but as, after 1870, their liberal favorites became increasingly associated with anti-Catholicism, they turned to the Center Party. This was not

²⁹What I learned at Jensen’s knee left a permanent impression, however, evident in critiques of statistics in my reviews. See, for example, Margaret Lavinia Anderson, “From Syllabus to Shoah?” *Central European History*, 34 (2001), 231–38, here 233–35.

histoire événementielle, for the realignment of Catholic voters into their “own” party would persist, with astonishingly little erosion, for the next sixty years, surviving the shocks of industrialization, World War I, the hyper-inflation of 1923, and the depression of 1930–32. Since there were more Catholics than liberals in Germany, the subtraction of Catholic support from the liberal camp meant a permanent weakening of the liberal position in parliament—a loss of entire regions and “demographics” that they would never recover. Thus the *real* turning point in Germany’s grand narrative was not parliament’s acceptance of the indemnity bill in 1866, from which liberalism might have rebounded, but the Kulturkampf in the 1870s. To my surprise, it too was awarded the Conference Group for Central European History’s biannual article prize—clearly a fluke.³⁰ Having sat on a few prize committees myself, I now know that such honors mean only that you have at least one fan—and no one actively opposed. But still, I was chuffed.

I was not alone in noticing the *longue durée* of Catholic voting. And subsequent statistical research by others has strengthened and lengthened the picture. Karl Rohe showed that not only did the Kulturkampf change Catholic voters, it reversed the progress of Social Democrats among Protestants, as identity issues trumped economic ones.³¹ And sophisticated regression analyses of the “Hitler” elections of 1930–32, when the Nazis suddenly moved from the fringes to become Germany’s largest party, found that none of the variables traditionally associated with voting Nazi—age, class, gender, region, occupation, unemployment—actually made much difference, as Nazis drew from all parts of society. The only variable of significance was religion: “Protestants were on average twice as vulnerable to the NSDAP as Catholics;”

³⁰*Idem*, “The Kulturkampf and the Course of German History,” *Central European History*, 19 (1986), 82–115.

³¹Karl Rohe, *Wahlen und Wählertraditionen in Deutschland* (Frankfurt a.M., 1992).

even Social Democrats were twice as likely as Catholics of *any* party to switch their votes to Hitler.³² I confess that I was pleased to read these results. But I heard my 1965-self saying to my 1991-self: all the more dismaying that the episcopate—supported by the cardinal secretary of state—chose to deal.

My pilgrimage to the realm of quantification was brief. Statistics and graphs were a small part of “The Kulturkampf and the Course of German History,” included only to establish a point. My head had already been turned by quantification’s methodological rival, after a colleague in anthropology had steered me to Clifford Geertz’s famous essay on the Balinese cockfight and his more programmatic statement on “thick description.”³³ Reading these pieces and, a bit later, the work of Caroline Bynum, was stimulating and liberating beyond measure: stimulating, because they seemed to offer ways of getting “inside” a story; liberating, because, while quantification promised a precarious certainty, the ethnographic turn embraced uncertainty. Bynum, dubbing it “the comic mode,” described the approach as “aware of contrivance, of risk. It always admits that we may be wrong. . . . that doing history is, for the historian, telling a story that could be told in another way.”³⁴ This kind of history made room for imagination, but its “method,” it seemed to me, was simply *paying strenuous attention*, especially to what was said and unsaid, and to

³²Jürgen W. Falter, *Hitlers Wähler* (Munich, 1991), pp. 116–17, 177, 187–88.

³³Clifford Geertz, “Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight,” *Daedalus*, 101 (1972), 1–37; *idem*, “Thick Description: Toward an Interpretative Theory of Culture,” in *idem*, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York, 1973), pp. 3–30.

³⁴Caroline Walker Bynum, “In Praise of Fragments: History in the Comic Mode,” in *idem*, *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York, 1991), pp. 11–26, here p. 25.

what one thought one already knew: the kind of “close reading” that I had loved in my literature seminars (even as my undergraduate self had mistrusted a method so apparently subjective).³⁵ My own close readings never discovered anything as startling as “Jesus as Mother,” but beginning with “The Kulturkampf and the Course of German History,” I was certainly on the lookout.

Close Reading, and a Turn of the Screw

For example, I examined a spectacular upset in Germany’s first general election, one that prompted the first piece of Kulturkampf legislation and occupied the Reichstag longer than any contest in Germany’s history. The losing candidate was a nobleman, prominent locally as well as nationally, backed by the fourth richest man in Prussia, who for all intents and purposes owned the election district and had not hesitated to use these advantages. The district itself, the most populous in Germany, possessed only a primitive communications infrastructure. Yet the winner, a Berlin chaplain named Müller, had never even campaigned there. How had this humble outsider, with not a penny to his name, been able to prevail? In Müller’s victory, and the controversy surrounding it, I saw *my* cockfight. Müller’s Center Party colleagues were quick to interpret the contest as one between the region’s magnates and dependent populations striving to emancipate themselves. Their opponents, on the other hand, were convinced that preposterous religious appeals, in a district 90 percent Catholic, had done the trick. They took particular umbrage in reports that Müller’s clerical supporters had lauded him as an anchorite, subsisting in an unheated room, barely eating, giving what he had to the poor. Although the investigation

³⁵Geertz acknowledged that this might look like “long-distance mind reading” in “Thick Description,” p. 14.

found only three pastors, in a district of more than 150,000, who had publically supported Müller, the Reichstag majority, describing Catholic voters generally as dumb, semi-illiterate, and thus incapable of choosing a candidate not foisted on them by their priests, threw out the election, citing clerical influence. It then voted to criminalize political speech by the clergy. It seemed to me that the incident revealed an overlooked cause of the Kulturkampf: fear of democracy.³⁶ The case was so fascinating, and its documentation so rich, that I kept coming back to it, folding it and Müller even into essays with other foci.³⁷

Working on Windthorst, I had been fortunate in having a genuine hero as my subject. In Müller, my luck ran out. To the Berlin faithful, the man was indeed a folk hero. A sociable priest, practicing a convivial “Club-and-Pub, Wee-Small-Hours, around-the-Beertable cure of souls,” Müller was also a “social” priest, founding more than a score of organizations for workers and artisans.³⁸ In 1869, when Berlin mobs, egged on by liberal city fathers, did their best to demolish a Dominican orphanage, Müller gained local notoriety by subsequently mobilizing his various associations to disrupt liberal rallies campaigning to expel the Catholic orders. After his death, a church was built in Müller’s honor, annual memorials were held at his grave, and “the people” talked of canonization. In January 1990, when I visited (then-East) Berlin, I was surprised but

³⁶Anderson, “The Kulturkampf.”

³⁷See, for example, Margaret Lavinia Anderson, “Voter, Junker, *Landrat*, Priest: The Old Authorities and the New Franchise in Imperial Germany, 1871–1914,” *American Historical Review*, 98 (1993), 1448–74, here 1464–67.

³⁸“*Vereins-Spätabend-und Nacht- und-Wirtshaus- und-Biertisch-Seelsorge*” in Ernst Thrasolt, *Eduard Müller. Der Berliner Missionsvikar. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Katholizismus in Berlin, der Mark Brandenburg und Pommern* (Berlin, 1953), p. 67.

pleased to see Müller's portrait displayed prominently among diocesan greats at the entrance hall of St. Hedwig's, the Catholic cathedral.

There were signs, however, that should have given me pause. Even after he became the most senior priest in the city, Müller remained at the lowest rank, never entrusted with a parish. At St. Hedwig's, to which he was attached, he was allowed to preach only when other clergy were sick. The Center's front bench kept him at arm's length, their memoirs mentioning him only to say that he was "unpolitical." Years after publishing my piece, when I stumbled on his publications—a regional church paper and a kind of almanac, published annually—I saw why. Pages and pages were dominated by apocalyptic diatribes, blaming all of Germany's confessional afflictions on secret societies, Freemasons, and Jews, who together formed a single nefarious network.

Here was the very issue, Catholic antisemitism, that I had once assumed would dominate my dissertation. And with this new turn of the screw, Müller's election suddenly looked quite different. I was nonplussed. The liberal who had initiated the attack in the Reichstag on his victory was indeed a prominent Jew, but he never mentioned antisemitism, nor had any of the priest's many other detractors. Church historians, when they treated the man at all, also did not mention antisemitism, and the hagiographies of Müller's admirers led me to think that he was actually friendly to Jews. I felt a debt of honor to set straight a record that I had unintentionally muddled, and I began looking for whatever I could find on the man and on the district that chose him. In 2001, I mentioned the problem in a review article in which I said everything I had to say about Catholic antisemitism in the German empire.³⁹ A Festschrift invitation finally gave me the space to report all I knew on both the election upset and the priest's career. A dual crisis—in the

³⁹Anderson, "From Syllabus to Shoah?"

Church, in the wake of the infallibility definition, and in financial markets, in the wake of the Franco-Prussian war—had played a significant role in both diocese and constituency, I found. But what Müller’s upset victory may have owed to his antisemitism, and whether that antisemitism was itself triggered by the era’s virulent anti-Catholicism, were matters for which I had no final answer.⁴⁰

Swarthmore and Britain

Although the Müller puzzle gnawed at me over the years, most of that time my attention lay elsewhere. Nearly half of my working life was spent at Swarthmore, in a department of ten. As is the way at small colleges with big curricula, I was perforce stretched into areas for which I had no training. One was Britain, and British historiography opened new worlds to me. Most notably, the Church—Anglican, Catholic, and the nonconformist “chapels”—was ever-present in the British literature, not compartmentalized, as in Germany, on the margins of whatever else was happening. Religious ideas—the Oxford movement, evangelicalism, the reception of German biblical criticism, for example—were also very much “in” the national story, as were the everyday activities and *mentalité* of the people as believers.⁴¹ Even E. P. Thompson, for all his

⁴⁰Margaret Lavinia Anderson, “Anatomy of an Election: Anti-Catholicism, Antisemitism, and Social Conflict in the Era of *Reichsgründung* and *Kulturkampf*,” in *Von Freiheit, Solidarität und Subsidiarität – Staat und Gesellschaft der Moderne in Theorie und Praxis. Festschrift für Karsten Ruppert zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Markus Raasch and Tobias Hirschmüller (Berlin, 2013), pp. 39–95.

⁴¹Among German historians, only Josef Becker then offered the kind of integration of religion into “everything else” that I was looking for. See Becker, *Liberaler Staat und Kirche in*

caricatures of Methodism, his misogynist readings of feminine imagery for Christ and snide reference to “the pious sisterhood,” took it for granted that religion was a significant subject.⁴² The British literature helped me think about parallel developments that were occurring (or not occurring) in Germany.

Not the least of the gifts that teaching courses in Victorian England and an honors seminar in Britain on 1815–1914 brought me was the subject of my next book. Norman Gash’s *Politics in the Age of Peel*, which examined from various angles the ways the House of Commons was chosen, bowled me over. Gash took as his theme not election outcomes, the stuff of narrative and statistics, but “the medium . . . in which the major political events take place”—a whole messy world of patronage and pressure, bribery and boycott, deference and violence, and all the other frailties to which flesh is prone. Well before the dawn of the ethnographic turn, Gash teased out the assumptions and expectations—the “political culture,” although that was not a term he employed—that these forces revealed.⁴³ I resolved to take Gash to Germany. There, voters turned out in phenomenal numbers (among Catholics, the most enthusiastic participants, in excess in some areas of those participating in Easter Communion), yet all that considerable effort went into electing a Reichstag that, in common opinion, had little power. Thus German

der Ära von Reichsgründung und Kulturkampf. Geschichte und Strukturen ihres Verhältnisses in Baden 1860–1876 (Mainz, 1973).

⁴²E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London, 1963), pp. 26–54, 350–400, and *passim*; here esp. 371–73.

⁴³Subtitled *A Study in the Technique of Parliamentary Representation, 1830–1850* (London, 1953), p. ix. Gash initiated a whole a genre of stimulating and imaginative British election studies rooted in social history.

elections seemed to offer just the kind of “seemingly incomprehensible rite” that ethnographers sought in order to gain “entry into another culture.”⁴⁴

Although I only dimly perceived it when I began, Gash’s book also suggested a story line on which to hang this rich material. By showing that the 1832 Reform Bill had effected little change in either Britain’s power structure or its political practices, Gash had undermined one of the pillars of the story of progress that was long the English (if not the Scottish and Irish) master narrative. Although outdated in Britain, this “Whig” history supplied the ghostly backdrop for much “critical” German writing, whose own dark teleology was Whig history’s evil twin.⁴⁵ Dubbed the “*Sonderweg*,” one version had recently come under attack—not accidentally, in Britain.⁴⁶ Although Germany’s pessimist narrative was not initially a target of my own research, as time went on, and I became a magpie raiding even the nests of French and American historiography to feather my own, my view of what nineteenth and early-twentieth-century contemporaries considered “democratic” politics became considerably more complicated. The result was a less gloomy trajectory for Germany, reflected in the title I gave my final product:

⁴⁴This description of the anthropological method is from Roger Chartier, “Text, Symbols, and Frenchness,” *Journal of Modern History*, 57 (1985), 682–695, here 683.

⁴⁵German historians and social scientists, including (perhaps especially) émigrés, tended to compare the worst aspects of German history with the best of the rest. Thus they saw Britain without the class system; the United States without slavery and Jim Crow; France without the Terror, the coups, and the nullifications of elections disliked by the majority.

⁴⁶David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, *Mythen deutscher Geschichtsschreibung. Die gescheiterte bürgerliche Revolution von 1848* (Frankfurt a.M., 1980), revised as *The Peculiarities of German History* (Oxford, 1984).

Practicing Democracy.⁴⁷ The story of Germany between 1871 and 1914 moving in a more democratic direction, even if only “for practice,” was difficult for some to swallow, especially historians who attributed Germany’s decision for war in 1914 to her parlous domestic development. I was pleased, therefore, that *Central European History* made *Practicing Democracy* the subject of a debate between one of our leading pessimists, Volker Berghahn, and me, which allowed us to bring the main issues of contention into sharper relief.⁴⁸

Gash considered it obvious that “religion was a species of politics,” but stopped there.⁴⁹ For me, although I wrote about many other elements of society and the law, the Church was the starting point. I devoted two early chapters to the clergy and found that the story of the clergy in politics, the intertwining of religious with political issues, was in many ways a universal feature of electoral politics during the period in which democratic institutions were developing. Clerical politicking, as journalists, as organizers, as candidates themselves, rose and fell in direct proportion to the extensions (and retractions) of the franchise; and the hostility it generated was the same in France, Ireland, and even the United States. But only in Germany did a well-organized Catholic *party* control so many votes in parliament and—after the fall of the monarchy in 1918—become the indispensable partner of every coalition government. The political clout of the Catholic clergy in Germany had some paradoxical consequences. Involving themselves in elections in order to protect the Church against very real attacks, the clergy soon became

⁴⁷Margaret Lavinia Anderson, *Practicing Democracy: Elections and Political Culture in Imperial Germany* (Princeton, 2000).

⁴⁸Volker Berghahn and Margaret Lavinia Anderson, “An Exchange on the Kaiserreich,” *Central European History*, 35 (2002), 75–91.

⁴⁹Gash, *Politics in the Age of Peel*, p. 175.

champions of the ordinary voter and his democratic franchise in *practice* (if not quite in theory), something for which little in their theological formation could have prepared them. But since the Church could be defended only in parliament, the result was to privilege the decisions of the Catholic party over those of its prelates and to habituate not only the laity but even the bishops to looking to the party for direction; this in turn gave the clergy even greater incentives to involve themselves in party politics. But the hostile topoi that clung to them and to Catholics more generally also helped galvanize Protestant voters, whose election appeals sometimes sounded as if Jan Huss, Giordano Bruno, and Galileo, rather than taxes, tariffs, and the navy, were the burning issues of the day. To the degree that clerical engagement recruited Catholics and their party to the cause of democracy, it discredited democracy among many of the non-Catholic Germans whose support was necessary if democracy in Germany were ever to “work.”

Berkeley, Ultramontanism, and the Orient

The book was long in the making. In the meantime, I moved to University of California–Berkeley in 1990. That ended my sojourn in British history and, eventually, in fascist Europe, but I began one-semester excursions through “Europe from 1453 to the Present.” Keeping me up many a long night, it was the hardest thing I’ve ever done, although after a rocky beginning, the most rewarding. In 2007 and 2008 it was webcast and podcast for iTunes U, and I began to get encouraging emails from listeners who had never had the opportunity to take history. And I kept thinking about “religion and society,” compiling a massive bibliography for a graduate seminar that remained stillborn.

A conference on “Secularization, Dechristianization, and Rechristianization in Europe” led me to reflect on how little even broad terms like these captured developments in Germany in

my period, where vocations were high and growing, and in at least one diocese did not peak until 1935—when the Nazis shut down the seminaries. Women’s orders thrived, but I found no sign of the “feminization” of religion that French and American historiography led me to expect. There were miracles in Germany as in France, but they resisted the label *popular* piety, as some devotees occupied the highest rungs of the social-political ladder. Indeed, inclusiveness seemed characteristic of German Catholicism, as was a kind of cosmopolitanism, features I was inclined to attribute to “ultramontanism.” Used by critics more than friends, the term was, admittedly, anything but stable, and in Germany was often nothing more than an epithet for the Center Party and its affiliates.⁵⁰ As an ideology, it has been convicted by church historians of fundamentalism, obscuratism, and psychopathology.⁵¹ But I was struck by a kind of *popular* strength encouraged by ultramontanism as a culture.⁵² Whatever it was, it put starch in the laity and a brake on the hyper-nationalism that was increasingly affecting “reform” (anti-ultramontane) Catholics.

The paradoxical connections between ultramontanism (= authority) and democracy (= power to the people) were puzzling, and in a keynote address at a conference of Latin

⁵⁰Such was its usage among so-called “Reform” Catholics. See Derek Hastings, *Catholicism and the Roots of Nazism: Religious Identity and National Socialism* (Oxford, 2010).

⁵¹For example, see Otto Weiss, *Die Redemptoristen in Bayern (1790–1909). Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Ultramontanismus* (Munich, 1983), esp. pp. 552–671, an extraordinary work covering all aspects of the order, from demography to spirituality. See Margaret Lavinia Anderson, “Piety and Politics: Recent Work in German Catholicism,” *Journal of Modern History*, (1991), 681–716, here 698–705.

⁵²*Idem*, “The Limits of Secularization: On the Problem of the Catholic Revival in Nineteenth-Century Germany,” *Historical Journal*, 38 (1995), 647–670; esp. 655–56, 661–66.

Americanists, I went out on a limb. Drawing on some very abstract concepts of political scientists (who certainly never thought their ideas might be used to demonstrate the utility of Pio Nono's Church), I argued that precisely the ultramontane mode of Catholicism that accompanied its Europe-wide revival helped midwife the transition to democratic forms at the birth of mass politics.⁵³ I meant it, but the ironies ("complexities and complications") for which Professor Church had once so gently rebuked me would have left him shaking his head.

With *Practicing Democracy* in press, I feared getting stale if I spent my remaining years on parties, parliaments, and Church. What to do? My colleague Richard Webster, an historian of Italy with an interest in Turkey, suggested a study of Johannes Lepsius, whom he knew as a hero of *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh* (New York, 1934), Franz Werfel's epic on the Armenian genocide. In a famous scene, Lepsius, a former Lutheran pastor then running a relief agency in the Near East, confronts Enver Pasha in 1915 and urges him to cease the mass deportations. I had never heard of Lepsius, knew nothing of the Ottoman empire, and associated the Armenians only with my parents' admonition, when urging me to clean up my plate: "Remember the starving Armenians!" Webster's topic fit all my criteria for a new direction.

A German colleague, I soon found, had been working on a Lepsius biography for years, so I widened my lens to include Germany's involvement in the Armenian people's terrible fate more generally. It's taught me a lot, even if I've published less than I hoped. One article explores what the German public knew about the lot of the Armenians during World War I, when Turkey was their ally. A more recent piece challenges the heroic reputations of three Westerners who

⁵³*Idem*, "The Divisions of the Pope. The Catholic Revival and Europe's Transition to Democracy," in *The Politics of Religion in an Age of Revival*, ed. Austen Ivereigh (London, 2000), pp. 22–42.

claimed they aided the Armenians.⁵⁴ My most substantial article grew out of a request to address a conference on German orientalism. I was then examining the Armenian massacres of the 1890s and took as my *explanandum* the failure of the German public—unique in Europe—to press for intervention on behalf of this Christian people. In addition to obvious geopolitical considerations, I found two surprises. First, Armenian human rights found steadfast support in Germany not from the Left or Catholics, but only from theologically conservative, “awakened” Protestants connected with the international missionary movement—an association that hurt Armenians among those of other persuasions. Second, Eduard Said had posited the resemblance of “orientalism” to Western antisemitism, describing it as antisemitism’s “Islamic branch.” But the same ugly tropes that we associate with antisemitism were often applied among Germans to Armenians, while positive qualities, moral and cultural, were ascribed to Turks, with occasional kind words even spilling over to Islam.⁵⁵

At the beginning of this new journey, a colleague asked what my next project would be. When I told him “Germany and the Armenian genocide,” he smiled. “It figures,” he said. “Why’s that?” I asked, truly puzzled. “The religion thing” was the astute reply.

⁵⁴*Idem*, “Who Still Talked about the Extermination of the Armenians? German Talk and German Silences,” in *A Question of Genocide*, ed. Norman Naimark, Ronald Grigor Suny, and Fatma Müge Göçek (New York, 2011), pp. 199–220, 372–79, and “Helden in Zeiten eines Völkermords? Armin T. Wegner, Ernst Jäckh, Henry Morgenthau,” in *Johannes Lepsius – Eine deutsche Ausnahme. Der Völkermord an den Armeniern, Humanitarismus und Menschenrechte*, ed. Rolf Hosfeld (Göttingen, 2013), pp. 126–71.

⁵⁵*Idem*, “‘Down in Turkey Far Away’: Human Rights, the Armenian Massacres, and Orientalism in Wilhelmine Germany,” *Journal of Modern History*, 79 (2007), 80–113.

Church history, which I thought I'd left behind, is following me onto the killing fields of Eastern Anatolia.