

## **Between Defiance and Compliance: Reconceptualising the *Kirchenkampf* 1933-1945**

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When attempting to uncover the multiple paradoxes that make up continental Europe, one need only look to the complex history of Germany - the country which was responsible for both World Wars in the twentieth century yet which, as a result, has also become the bedrock of modern European cooperation. To understand fully Germany's recent dual standing as a symbol of both war and peace, we are forced to bring together not only two overarching, contradictory concepts but also a wealth of underlying paradoxes in twentieth-century German history, which, even today, are still being overlooked in favour of simplifying this nation's tumultuous past. One such example from which the over-simplification of the "German paradox" can most clearly be seen, is that of the struggle for control of the Protestant Church during the Third Reich (1933-1945), which is known in German as the *Kirchenkampf*.

Its immediate historical context was the attempt by Adolf Hitler and his National Socialist German Workers Party (NSDAP), soon after assuming power on 30th January 1933, to forcibly assimilate all aspects of German society in line with their National Socialist (Nazi) ideals, through a policy of *Gleichschaltung*. It was by means of this 'forced coordination' that the NSDAP sought to establish control over the country, by eliminating any form of free thinking or individualism which threatened to undermine the will of the Nazi state.

As an organisation that could not be easily eliminated, the Protestant Church understandably did not escape these *Gleichschaltung* measures. Unlike the Catholic Church, whose independence from the Nazi state had been guaranteed via the *Reichskonkordat* of 20th July 1933, the Protestant Church in Germany remained a "truly German church",<sup>1</sup> whose state-centric nature not only left it at threat of complete suppression by the Nazi regime but whose internal divisions into the separate Reformed, Lutheran and United denominations meant that German Protestantism was in need of a powerful, uniting force and was thus vulnerable to pressure exerted by an external, authoritative hierarchy. It was also highly likely that this uniting force was to come from Germany's political scene because, whereas Catholicism already laid claim to a strong influence upon German politics - as demonstrated by the *Deutsche Zentrumspartei* (Catholic Centre Party), which existed during the days of the *Kaiserreich* (1871-1918) and the Weimar Republic (1918-1933) - German Protestantism obviously lacked an official Party affiliation. Although many Protestants continued to believe that their Church should remain politically neutral on confessional grounds, few could deny the gains that were to be had by aligning Protestant Christianity with National Socialism. Not only would such an alignment raise the profile of the Church within Germany but the NSDAP would also be able to draw on Protestant support to add apparent moral authority to its otherwise unethical policies whilst simultaneously increasing its hold on the Church's administrative structures. Nevertheless, as powerful as National Socialism was, the NSDAP knew that the German nation could not be easily torn away from a faith that had regulated national public life in the country for centuries. So, instead of

immediately suppressing the Protestant Church, the NSDAP had no choice but to bring the Church under its control incrementally.

To begin this process, the NSDAP adopted a policy of seeming indifference towards German Protestantism in particular and the Church in general. At the beginning of his dictatorship, Hitler publicly showed “ostensible non-involvement” with the Protestant Church question,<sup>2</sup> which undoubtedly strengthened the impression that Protestant “religious convictions were congruent with the Nazi world view”.<sup>3</sup> Even though the NSDAP began to promote Nazism as the best means of rejuvenating the ‘living nation’, its initial acceptance of the Church arguably implied that Christian doctrine did not conflict with Nazi principles, and thus formed two sides of the same coin: the former concerning itself with this world and the latter with the next. Despite the fact that, in reality, the *völkisch* ideology of the Third Reich was completely at odds with universal Christianity, the NSDAP created the illusion that Nazism and Protestantism were two intertwined national creeds, whereby German Christianity, particularly Lutheranism, implicitly endorsed Nazi policies through its shared Germanic origins. This mode of deception has been characterised by Paul Ricoeur as a “hermeneutic of suspicion,” as it conveniently concealed the state’s superficial tolerance towards religion behind its real intention to legitimise its own power over and above Christian claims.<sup>4</sup>

Yet, before we can even speak of a national German Protestant Church as a single entity, it must be recalled that at the time of the NSDAP’s rise to power, there was no single, united Protestant Church in Germany for the regime to simply take over. Ever since the Reformation, each ‘state’ (*Land*) within Germany had always boasted its own Protestant church, which was administered independently by its respective Land prince, who oversaw all ecclesiastical affairs and headed church committees within his region.<sup>5</sup> As a result of Germany’s major land losses in the aftermath of the First World War (1914-1918), a total of twenty-eight of these individual Protestant churches existed when the Nazis assumed power in 1933, only now they were without their princely leaders. The regional Protestant churches (*Landeskirchen*) in Germany had thus been left without their *summi episcopi*, which resulted in all twenty-eight *Landeskirchen* seeking a firmer union to get them through what many ministers regarded as the uncertain years of the Weimar Republic. Threatened by the rise of Bolshevism, together with a more liberal government, the individual *Landeskirchen* looked to strengthen their standing by uniting under the umbrella organisation of the *Deutscher Evangelischer Kirchenbund* (DEK) in 1922. Although the DEK did not establish a united German Protestant Church, because each of its constituent *Landeskirchen* still retained its own administrative freedom, it nevertheless conveyed Protestant willingness to centralise Church affairs and, more significantly, also prepared the ground for the Nazis to formalise this merger later in the shape of their envisaged, German national Church, or *Reichskirche*.

The *Reichskirche*, like all Nazi organisations, was to be based upon the *Führerprinzip*, in which the entire Protestant Church would be controlled in a top-down manner with all power emanating from a *Reichsbischof*, immediately answerable to the *Führer* himself. Yet, the Nazis could not simply deny the sanctity of Christian confessions and suddenly supplant Jesus with their own earthly idols. As such, the establishment of the office of *Reichsbischof* was seen as essential from all sides. As the *Reichsbischof* was to be a Church official willing to co-operate with the

Nazi state, for stalwart Protestants, this post appeared to maintain the spiritual leadership of the Church whilst, for National Socialists, it would allow them to exert an ever greater hold on the Church whilst creating the convenient illusion that German Protestantism was still autonomous. In theory, the introduction of a *Reichsbischof* should have pacified both those sceptical ministers who valued the Church's inviolability, as well as more nationalistic clergymen who wanted to see the Church brought into line with Nazi principles. Instead, however, the fiasco surrounding the election of a *Reichsbischof* only served to heighten tensions between Church and State and expose the incompatibility of the Nazi *Weltanschauung* with traditional Christian doctrine. This incongruity is best highlighted by the rise of two conflicting intra-Church movements, both of which began to stake their claim to the *Reichsbischof's* office as soon as the post arose.

Since 1932 the *Glaubensbewegung Deutscher Christen* (German Christian Movement) had existed, which committed itself to combining Nazism with Christianity. Although members advocated varying degrees of radicalism, the basic aim of the *Deutsche Christen* was to retain Christianity yet to stress those parts of it that could help to promote the National Socialist cause. For example, the *Deutsche Christen* frequently drew upon biblical anti-Semitism to legitimise the NSDAP's persecution of the Jews, and even manipulated Scripture to create a thoroughly 'Germanised' religion, which may have appeared to maintain traditional, Christian symbols but instead boasted a new Aryan emphasis to serve the state's racial agenda. Most notably, the *Deutsche Christen* strove to generate an image of an Aryan, anti-Jewish Jesus by discarding any biblical stories which in their view promoted a 'positive' image of Judaism, particularly those of the Old Testament, and fostered a more "manly" or "aggressive Christianity", which they believed complemented the authoritative, masculine image of the state. By bringing age-old *christliche Judenfeindschaft* in line with Nazi *Rassenantisemitismus*, the *Deutsche Christen* ultimately helped to blur the boundaries of religious and racial hatred and thereby assist the state in its *Gleichschaltung* efforts. It is for this reason that, when the issue arose as to who should head the new *Reichskirche*, Hitler publicly chose to break his policy of indifference towards the Church and support *Deutsche Christen* candidate Ludwig Müller, as, although he was not an obvious Church leader, his Nazi credentials and naive understanding of theological issues seemed to offer the perfect way in which the NSDAP could introduce its nationalistic and anti-Semitic ideals into the Church without undue force or coercion.

The *Deutsche Christen*-controlled *Reichskirche* was, however, never to come to fruition in the way the Nazis had hoped. At the same time as the *Deutsche Christen* became ever more vehement in their politicisation of Christianity, a counter-movement known as the *Bekennende Kirche* (Confessing Church) grew in strength and number. Having signed their first Confession in Altona as early as 11th January 1933 - a full 17 months before signing their founding Declaration of Barmen - Confessing pastors throughout Germany recognised the threat posed to the sanctity of the Word of God and thus sought to reaffirm the right of the Church to speak this Word freely, even going as far as to create a new perception of the Church which stood above the command of politics. And the 'Confessors' were influential: indeed, their own *Reichsbischof* candidate, Pastor Friedrich von Bodelschwingh, was elected to the post on 27th May 1933 by a large majority of the Council of the DEK but was forced to resign a month later following interception from the disgruntled Nazi

government, which had appointed August Jäger, otherwise known as the ruthless *Kirchenjäger*, 10 *Kommissar* of the Church of the Old Prussian Union, on 24th June 1933 specifically to make life impossible for Bodelschwingh. Following Bodelschwingh's resignation, the Nazis ensured *Deutsche Christen* votes by passing through a change to the Church constitution which stipulated that Church bodies were to be appointed via an election of the people scheduled for 23rd July 1933. Yet, despite the state's obvious intervention in Church affairs, it is here that we encounter the overarching paradox in the complex history of the *Kirchenkampf*. Although the Protestant Church's positioning within the nation-state can be seen to have allowed its submission to the Third Reich, the fact that the Nazis were unable to completely subsume the Church from the very beginning meant that the ecclesiastical arena had instead become "a kind of free space, a place where things could be said that could be uttered publicly nowhere else", 11 which, of course, paradoxically also attributed to the Church a unique right to question and, more importantly, to resist.

It was as a result of this loophole in the Nazi dictatorship that the *Deutsche Christen* did not achieve complete domination of the Protestant *Landeskirchen* in those public elections of 23rd July 1933. Despite electing Müller as *Reichsbischof* and having gained as much as seventy-five per cent of the vote in the Church of the Old Prussian Union, where the NSDAP itself was the strongest, the *Deutsche Christen* most notably failed to win the three Lutheran *Landeskirchen* of Hanover, Bavaria and Württemberg. Led by *Landesbischofe* August Marahrens, Hans Meiser and Theophil Wurm respectively, these *Landeskirchen* remained 'intact', as their individual ruling committees continued to remain free of *Deutsche Christen* influence and, as such, successfully avoided incorporation into the Nazi-led *Reichskirche*. Yet, in historiographies, the individual stories of these three 'intact' bishoprics get lost in the plight of the remaining, 'destroyed' *Landeskirchen*, which, from this point on, had to tackle the ever-tightening grip that Nazism now had upon their governance. Having come under *Deutsche Christen* control, the policies of the 'destroyed' *Landeskirchen* inevitably began to fall in line with the Nazi state, thus facilitating the infamous *Gleichschaltung* attack on German Protestantism. The more National Socialism suffocated Christianity in these *Landeskirchen*, the more dramatic the attempts at resistance became, and the most pronounced members of the 'destroyed' church resistance movement came to be known as 'Dahlemites', after the Berlin-Dahlem parish of their leader, Pastor Martin Niemöller. 12

In short, many early *Kirchenkampf* historiographies depict the remainder of the Protestant Church Struggle along the same lines as it began, namely as a 'black-and-white' battle between the radical *Deutsche Christen* on the one hand and the 'Dahlemitic' core of *Bekennende Kirche* on the other. 13 Due to the extreme bravery of Confessing Church martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who was involved in the July 1944 assassination attempt on Hitler, any other form of resistance offered by Church members is often disregarded or downplayed, creating a "misleading impression" of the dynamics of Protestant resistance. 14 Yet, if it is to be proven that there were indeed other important 'players' in the *Kirchenkampf*, its narrative paradigm must be reconceptualised, and the curiously neglected efforts of the leaders of the 'intact' *Landeskirchen*, who are often scorned for their relative inaction against the Nazi state or, at best, referred to as 'neutrals' for avoiding direct involvement in the conflict, 15 demonstrate why.

Bishops Marahrens, Meiser and Wurm were in fact far from removed from the *Kirchenkampf*. They were undoubtedly involved in the Church resistance effort, hence their infamous meeting with Hitler and Niemöller on 30th October 1933 regarding Müller's incompetence, <sup>16</sup> their founding of the *Bekennende Kirche* in Ulm Cathedral on 22nd April 1934 and Wurm's eventual protests to the state on behalf of the Jews. <sup>17</sup> Yet, in many ways, the bishops could also be seen to have supported the state, hence their frequent proclamations of loyalty to the *Führer*, anti-Semitic utterances, <sup>18</sup> and willingness to co-operate with the state's *Reichskirchenausschüsse* of 1937. <sup>19</sup> The problem of the bishops' historiographical representation can thus be seen to lie in the fact that their contradictory behaviour does not fit neatly into the conventional *Kirchenkampf* paradigm.

Without insinuating that existing histories consist of distorted half-truths, or indeed to question the heroic efforts of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, it is important not to underestimate the contribution of the *Landesbischöfe* of Hanover, Bavaria and Württemberg to the *Kirchenkampf* merely because they fall outside of the conventional 'Good vs. Evil' paradigm of resistance, or that which Northrop Frye typifies as the narrative structure of 'the romance.' In its quest to portray a dialectical conflict in which the hero is frequently pitted against the enemy until the final exaltation of the hero, the romance "presents a story that is neither subtle nor complex in its characterisation of the struggle between protagonist and antagonist", <sup>20</sup> thereby working to explain the wealth of simplified, dualistic accounts of the *Kirchenkampf* that are still being produced to this day. <sup>21</sup> The very fact that this mode of narrative still dominates tales of resistance in and around the Third Reich can primarily be attributed to its ability to conform to the populist desire for spectacular resistance, which not only sells stories but, particularly in the case of Germany, strategically promotes a specific perception of its national history.

Historians in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War can perhaps be excused for their insistence on following this narrative paradigm. In such a 'broken' society, it comes as no surprise that German historians, armed with their concern to defend and rebuild the morality of their shattered nation, became inherently nationalist and thus sought to underscore the actions of Germany's heroic few by propagating a particular and idealised version of their country's past. <sup>22</sup> With regard to the *Kirchenkampf*, it is unsurprising that historians chose to privilege a portrayal of a unified, righteous Protestant Church resisting the evils of Nazism and, moreover, that the Church itself did nothing to dispel such post-war myths. <sup>23</sup> As individuals wishing to show that not all Germans were Nazis and, as an institution, which itself admitted that it should have done more in the name of God, <sup>24</sup> it is only logical that the post-war Church and its historians should choose to hide its less-than-glorious past behind such generalised yet dominant narratives. Yet, despite the fact that we now know it is impossible to speak of a common German history and a shared Germanic past, particularly in light of the ongoing trauma induced by the Holocaust, <sup>25</sup> the romantic mode of conceptualisation has nevertheless remained the blueprint for most historiographical works on the *Kirchenkampf*, aiding to remove the notion that other, perhaps less militant Church groups ever contributed to the conflict. <sup>26</sup>

This is indeed true for the bishops of the 'intact' *Landeskirchen* who, although failing to display spectacular resistance, undoubtedly assumed leading roles within the various *Kirchenkampf* factions. <sup>27</sup> Admittedly, they were never card-carrying



members of the *Bekennende Kirche*, the *Deutsche Christen* or the NSDAP but, to ensure autonomy, they were paradoxically forced to work with all sides, and not display neutrality as is commonly believed. Being leaders of ‘intact’ churches, *Landesbischöfe* Marahrens, Meiser and Wurm were in a complex position, placed precariously between defiance and compliance, since they obviously had to offer *just enough* resistance to maintain the independence of their respective *Landeskirchen* but they also had to comply *just enough* so as not to endanger this autonomy. Or, to put it another way, they were perversely forced to co-operate with the Nazi regime to the extent that they appeared no threat to its totality; yet they simultaneously had to oppose many of its demands for the sake of the status quo ante of their *Landeskirchen*. As such, the bishops had no choice but to become actively involved in the *Kirchenkampf*, yet could neither offer full support nor opposition to the state. This is best shown by *Landesbischöfe* Meiser and Wurm who voted for Ludwig Müller in the 1933 *Reichsbischof* elections, yet later voted for the *Bekennende Kirche*’s Declaration of Barmen “primarily to register their protest against the German Christians”;<sup>28</sup> or by their founding of the *Bekennende Kirche* only to leave the movement after its fourth synod in Bad Oeynhausen in February 1936. It is the evident inability, and perhaps also reluctance, of modern-day historians to narrate such seemingly conflicting actions within existing analytical frameworks, which not only explains why the bishops’ stories are generally ignored, so as not to inconvenience an otherwise coherent projection of the past, but also highlights the need to adjust the conventional *Kirchenkampf* paradigm to allow for their inclusion in future works.

To reconceptualise the *Kirchenkampf*, we must therefore break with the simplistic ‘*Deutsche Christen* vs. *Bekennende Kirche*’ narrative-mould and instead draw upon Kenneth C. Barnes’ recognition that the Protestant Church’s struggle with the Nazi regime was “marked by paradox” from the very beginning, with courageous battles alongside more cowardly ones, and declarations of Christian solidarity with the Jews alongside racist denunciations.<sup>29</sup> In this respect, Bishops Marahrens, Meiser and Wurm undeniably epitomise the paradoxical centre of the *Kirchenkampf* and thus offer an insight into previously ignored crises of conscience. When the paradoxical mechanics of totalitarian dictatorships are considered, the existence of which relies not only upon the might of the state but also, perversely, upon the willingness of those within it to cooperate with its oppression, the *Landesbischöfe* of Hanover, Bavaria and Württemberg can be seen to fit, to a certain extent, into Shelly Baranowski’s recognition of ‘conservative elites’ as “a class whose objections to National Socialism were too deeply interwoven with consent to provide an effective alternative to the regime”.<sup>30</sup> As such, total resistance did indeed become impossible for the bishops but that which differentiates them from others in this class is that their association with this group was not purely down to personal choice but, in fact, a necessary consequence of their churches’ *Intaktheit*. It is for this reason that, instead of only offering “a series of occasional, partial and circumscribed acts directed toward limited ends”<sup>31</sup> characteristic of other conservative elites, Bishops Marahrens, Meiser and Wurm continually played a game of strategy, which, although restrained, ensured the continuation of the *Kirchenkampf* and saved the sanctity of the German Protestant Church.

To add weight to this rationale, we need only look to the findings of Martin Broszat, the pioneer of *Alltagsgeschichte*,<sup>32</sup> who demonstrated that the concept of

‘oppositonality’ does not necessarily equate to outright resistance in the conventional sense of absolute activism. Through his retrospective studies into daily life in Bavaria between 1933 and 1945, Broszat realised that it was necessary to differentiate between *Resistenz*, literally meaning ‘immunity’, and *Widerstand*, which is the form of direct confrontation most commonly associated with militancy against an oppressive regime. <sup>33</sup> Although it has become common to measure ecclesiastical resistance against conventional forms of *Widerstand*, using Broszat’s reasoning, this does not mean that other forms of *Resistenz* were insignificant. On the contrary, Broszat’s association of *relativ unabhängige Institutionen* - such as the ‘intact’ churches - with *Resistenz*, due to their partial ‘immunity’ from Nazi domination, can be seen to provide the ideal analytical framework in which the bishops’ efforts can be justly evaluated.

Once seen through the lens of *Resistenz*, the bishops’ actions no longer appear insufficient but are instead relative to the specific window of opportunity available to them. Although the Dahlemites were undoubtedly brave in their *Widerstand*, it must be acknowledged that, in many cases, those who chose to act had no choice but to employ violence because all other ‘softer’ forms of resistance had already been taken away from them, such as the right to preach freely or to write private letters without interception. The bishops of the ‘intact’ churches however, although comparatively freer, having retained their basic rights to free speech, leadership and action, could only really protest through these ‘softer’ means for fear of jeopardising the autonomy of their churches. It is only when the bishops’ uniquely ‘restricted freedom’ is acknowledged that their actions finally become admirable.

A further conceptual framework to be included, if the bishops’ actions are to be fully appreciated, is that of Confessional Lutheranism, which was quite distinct from the theology practised by the Dahlemites and strictly adhered to by all three bishops. Most *Kirchenkampf* accounts undeniably endorse Karl Barth’s ‘unionistic’ theology and ethics, which rationalise an attack on the Nazi state <sup>34</sup> but, what is less frequently mentioned, is how the Lutheran confession puts emphasis on the dual revelation of God through both the law and the gospel, to the extent that Lutherans are inclined to interpret any new laws emanating from the state as ongoing revelations of God. Not only does this mean that Lutherans were more likely to strictly adhere to the dictates of earthly law, even in the Third Reich, but the fact that their confession further calls for unconditional obedience to the state under the *Zwei-Reiche-Lehre* (Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms) automatically distances them from “any truly Christian critique of Nazi political extremism”. <sup>35</sup> In light of the low expectation this creates, any *Resistenz* displayed by the three *Landesbischofe* can now be viewed with newfound respect, since it goes against the principles of their confession.

It is only now that the fundamental flaw of traditional *Kirchenkampf* historiography is exposed: namely that that which we retrospectively expect the bishops to have done far outweighs that which the bishops were actually capable of doing. The case of the *Landesbischofe* of Hanover, Bavaria and Württemberg thus proves a reconceptualisation of *Kirchenkampf* historiography to be essential, not only to uncover the intricate stories of three influential men, which are not usually a part of the *Kirchenkampf* tale we prefer to tell but, more importantly, to bridge this glaring ‘capabilities-expectations’ gap and expose the considerable defiance behind that which might otherwise be dismissed as insignificant compliance.

1. Theodore S Hamerow, *On the Road to the Wolf's Lair: German Resistance to Hitler* (Cambridge, MA and London, Harvard University Press, 1997), p.147.
2. Ibid., p.148.
3. Victoria Barnett, *For the Soul of the People: Protestant Protest Against Hitler* (New York, Oxford: OUP, 1992), p.32.
4. Cf. Anthony C. Thistelton, 'Biblical Theology and Hermeneutics', in David Ford (ed.), *The Modern Theologians* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), pp. 520-537 (pp. 525-526).
5. For further details on the administration of the Protestant churches in Germany prior to 1933, see Ernst Christian Helmreich, *The German Churches Under Hitler: Background, Struggle and Epilogue* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1979), Chapters 1, 3 & 4.
6. The term 'Aryan' is highly controversial but its usage is necessary here to convey the National Socialist viewpoint and the anti-Semitic belief in Germanic racial purity. For the Nazis, Aryanism denoted 'White' supremism, whereby the Aryans - i.e. the non-Jewish - were believed to be the highest representatives of mankind.
7. For a full account of their methods, see Doris L. Bergen, *Twisted Cross: The German Christian Movement in the Third Reich* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Richard Steigmann-Gall, *The Holy Reich: Nazi Conceptions of Christianity, 1919-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); or Susannah Heschel, *The Aryan Jesus: Christian Theologians and The Bible in Nazi Germany* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2008).
8. Hence the *Deutsche Christen's* Berlin *Sportpalast* rally on 13th November 1933 when Dr. Reinhold Krause, leader of the Greater Berlin faction of the movement, announced the Church "should free itself from all things not German in its services and confession, especially from the Old Testament." (Quoted in English in Helmreich; 1979, p. 150.)
9. Bergen, 1996, pp.65-66.
10. Shelly Baranowski, 'The Confessing Church and Anti-Semitism - Protestant Identity, German Nationhood, and the Exclusion of the Jews', in Robert P. Erickson and Susannah Heschel (eds.), *The German Churches and the Holocaust: Betrayal* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), pp.90-109, (p. 98).
11. Klaus Scholder, *The Churches and the Third Reich. Volume One: Preliminary History and the Time of Illusions 1918-1934* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1977), p. 566.



12. Niemöller arguably became the figurehead of the resistance movement in the German Protestant Church, having assumed leadership of the first official protest group, the Pastors' Emergency League (*Pfarrernotbund*), in September 1933.
13. Confirmed in the 'Introduction' to J.S. Conway, *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches 1933-1945* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968), pp.xiii-xxxi (pp.xvi-xviii), which cites Heinrich Hermelink's *Kirche in Kampf - Dokumente des Widerstands und des Aufbaus in der Evangelischen Kirche Deutschlands von 1933 bis 1945* (Tübingen: R. Wunderlich, 1950) as an example of such an informative, yet simplistic, core text.
14. Hans Tiefel, 'The German Lutheran Church and the Rise of National Socialism', *Church History*, Vol. 41, No. 3. (Sept., 1972), 326-336, (p.326).
15. These bishops have most recently been referred to as "neutrals" in Heschel, 2008, p. 83 & p. 140.
16. Documented in Barnett, 1992, p.64.
17. See Gerhard Schäfer, *Landesbischof D. Wurm und der nationalsozialistische Staat 1940-1945: eine Dokumentation* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1968).
18. Hence *Gebete und Fürbitte für den Führer 1939-1944*, Bestand 1978, Landeskirchliche Archiv Bayerns, and Meiser's controversial *Judenfrage* essay, in the *Evangelischer Gemeindeblatt*, Nr.33/34, von 22. bis 29. August 1926.
19. These 'church committees' comprised 'moderate' churchmen and were headed by Hans Kerrl (Minister of Church Affairs), designed to ease Church-State negotiations.
20. Northrop Frye, *The Anatomy of Criticism*, pp.186-203, paraphrased in Laura Mayhall, 'Creating the "Suffragette Spirit": British Feminism and the Historical Imagination', in Antoinette Burton (ed.), *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions and the Writing of History* (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 2005) pp.232-250 (p.239).
21. Even works such as Lowell C. Green's *Lutherans Against Hitler: The Untold Story* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2007), which attempt to retell the *Kirchenkampf* from an unconventional perspective can still be seen to adhere to the 'romantic' narrative structure. In Green's case, he not only praises all staunch adherents to Lutheranism but even goes as far as to vilify Karl Barth alongside the Nazi enemy, hence his proclamation that there were "uncomfortable similarities between Hitler and Barth" (p. 236).
22. Theodore N. Thomas not only confirms the "understandable need to find heroes during a period like the Third Reich" but also the potential of the

*Bekennende Kirche* to provide “stories of bravery, courage, and martyrdom”, in *Women Against Hitler: Christian Resistance in the Third Reich* (Westport, Connecticut and London: Praeger, 1995), p.22.

23. The Church can in fact even be seen to have actively promoted a positive portrayal of itself by emphasising the work of Martin Niemöller and Dietrich Bonhoeffer and electing Bishop Wurm (pioneer of the ecumenical *Einigungswerk* and eventual campaigner against Nazi policies) to head the post-war Church.
24. Hence, *Die Stuttgarter Schulderklärung*, 19 October 1945, accessible at [http://www.markusgemeinde-stuttgart.de/1\\_schuldbek.htm](http://www.markusgemeinde-stuttgart.de/1_schuldbek.htm) (last accessed 12/5/08).
25. Peter Fritzsche outlines Germany’s fragmentary past and speaks of “the separate strands of German history” in his article, ‘The Archive and the Case of the German Nation’, in Burton (ed.), 2005, pp. 184-208 (p.188).
26. Shelley Baranowski confirms that other perspectives on the *Kirchenkampf* such as “analyses of ‘resistance’ viewed through the social relationships of the Third Reich have only recently begun to emerge” in Shelley Baranowski, *The Confessing Church, Conservative Elites, and the Nazi State* (Lewiston/Queenston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1986), pp. 124-5.
27. Hence, Marahrens’ leadership of the Provisional Church Administration, Meiser’s leadership of the Lutheran Pact and Wurm’s pioneering protests against the Holocaust and euthanasia.
28. Matthew D. Hockenos, *A Church Divided: German Protestants Confront the Nazi Past* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), p. 23.
29. Kenneth C. Barnes, ‘Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Hitler’s Persecution of the Jews’ in Ericksen and Heschel (eds.), 1999, (pp.110-128), p. 120.
30. Shelly Baranowski, 1986, p.3.
31. Ibid., p.2.
32. This is a form of historical studies which looks at the relationship of the ‘everyday history’ of the ordinary people and their institutions to the broader changes in political and social history.
33. Facts from Gerhard Botz, “Resistenz” als Widerstand gegen Diktatur? Referat auf dem Symposium der Landesverteidigungsakademie Wien, 30. Nov 2004, p.10-13. Available at: <http://www.lbihs.at/GBResistenz.pdf> (accessed 28/4/08).
34. Lowell C. Green confirms “previous histories generally presented Reformed

Protestant thinking” in *Lutherans Against Hitler: The Untold Story* (Saint Louis: Cordordia Publishing House, 2007), p.25 and 32, based on Scholder, 1977; or Arthur C. Cochrane, *The Church’s Confession Under Hitler* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962).

35. Kyle Jantzen, *Faith and Fatherland: Parish Politics in Hitler’s Germany* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), p. 28.

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