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Romano Guardini in the Weimar Republic and in National Socialist Germany: With a brief look into the National Socialist correspondences on Guardini in the early 1940s

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Abstract: Romano Guardini was one of the most important intellectuals of German Catholicism in the twentieth century. He influenced nearly an entire generation of German Catholic theologians and was the leading figure of the German Catholic youth movement as it grew exponentially in the 1920s. Yet there are many open questions about his early intellectual development and his academic contribution to religious, cultural, social and political questions in the Weimar Republic and in National Socialist Germany. This article draws upon Guardini's publications, the secondary literature on Guardini and on some archival material, seeking to outline his early development and his engagement with the ideological context following World War I and in National Socialist Germany. Here Guardini's criticisms of the modern age are presented. Besides this many other issues are addressed, such as his criticism of the women's movement, his understanding of the youth movement, reception of Carl Schmitt, views of race, interpretation of the controversial *Volk*-concept, contribution to a Jewish journal in 1933, and his basic positions on the issues of obedience, order and authority. While Guardini was viewed critically by some National Socialists in the Third Reich, the administrative correspondences on him in the 1940s actually show that there was an internal debate about him among the National Socialist officials. This involved different figures, including a diplomat who came to Guardini's defense. The internal disagreements were made more complicated because Guardini's brothers were apparently members of the Fascist Party in Italy at this time.

Keywords: Romano Guardini, German language Catholicism, Weimar Republic, National Socialism, Catholic youth movement

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“Volk is the living unity of blood, soil, destiny, tradition [...]”¹ Romano Guardini (1924)
 “The Castle [Burg Rothenfels] serves an intellectual and religious life which is nourished simultaneously from the roots of the German will-to-exist and the Catholic faith.”² Romano Guardini and Rolf Ammann addressing the Vereinigung der Freunde von Burg Rothenfels, Germany, September-October, 1933

1 Introduction

Romano Guardini (1885–1968) is a key figure in the history of 20th century German Catholic cultural and religious thought.³ A year after his birth in Verona, Italy, his family moved to Mainz, Germany, where he grew up. In the 1920s he became very popular in German Catholicism. In 1923 he accepted an offer to become a professor in Berlin, and in 1927 he was elected to be the leader of the influential Quickborn Catholic youth movement. Guardini was the leading intellectual figure of the Catholic youth movement and one of the most important theologians of the Catholic liturgical renewal in the 1920s. He also provided an innovative interpretation of his cultural situation which drew upon theology, literature and philosophy. He developed broad historical narratives of the modern period and sought to include life-philosophical interpretations of religion and sociopolitical topics. In this, he established a new strand of Catholic intellectuality for the post-World War I era. He crossed borders in his discipline by incorporating streams of literature that did not belong to the canon of Catholic intellectual life, such as Søren Kierkegaard, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and even Friedrich Nietzsche. Guardini found ways of reading this literature from a new perspective that went beyond denunciatory opposition, and he became very influential for this new approach of hermeneutical mediation.

The significance of Guardini’s intellectual legacy has been widely recognized. Hugo Lang, theologian and abbot of St. Boniface’s Abbey (Munich), has called him the *Praeceptor Germaniae*, while others hold him to be a modern church father. Indeed, even Pope John Paul II has named Guardini in one breath with others major theologians in the history of the church, such as Albertus Magnus

¹ Romano Guardini, “Rettung des Politischen.” *Schildgenossen* 4 (1924), 112–121, here 114: “Volk ist lebendige Einheit von Blut, Boden, Schicksal, Ueberlieferung [...]”

² Romano Guardini, Rolf Ammann, “Vereinigung der Freunde von Burg Rothenfels.” *Burgbrief* (1933), Brief 1 (Sept./Oct.), 7–8, here 7: “Die Burg dient einem geistigen und religiösen Leben, das aus den Wurzeln des deutschen Daseinswillens und des katholischen Glaubens zugleich gespeist wird.”

³ On his influence, see also my *The Early Hans Urs von Balthasar: Historical Contexts and Intellectual Formation*. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2015, 47–64.

and Nicholas of Cues. In 1962 he received the Erasmus-Prize and was praised as a *homo universalis* and “one of the greatest contemporary Europeans.”⁴ His influence among leading churchmen, intellectuals and politicians of the Bonn Republic era is attested to in the numerous condolences and obituaries (on the radio and in printed media) following his death, including a condolence letter from Pope Paul VI and telegrams from the President of Germany Heinrich Lübke and Chancellor Kurt Kiesinger.⁵ Very few theologians of the 20th century received such high recognitions, and even fewer had such a dedicated following of young people.⁶

Guardini’s writings from the 1920s were unique in terms of style, themes and content. Many German language Catholic theologians of the generation following Guardini, such as Hans Urs von Balthasar, were deeply influenced by Guardini’s work. The time seemed ripe for an intellectual opening of Catholicism, one that would lead it to engage some of the impulses of the modern age. Guardini was a master of this creative adoption and Catholic mediation of modern thought. Of course, he was also deeply critical of the modern age following the Enlightenment, and perhaps one of the most influential critics of modernization in the general sense of diagnosing the “end of the modern age”. Furthermore, he strongly challenged the liberalizing streams of 20th century Catholicism, and stood generally on the side of the “anti-modernist” against the “modernists”. Yet his engagement with the big issues of his time in the Weimar era and in National Socialism are in need of further research from a historical-critical perspective. While Guardini was not as radical as many other theologians of his generation, he seems to have embraced some of the ideological impulses of his context; and he seems to have promoted them in a uniquely Catholic way.

2 Guardini’s early background

In 1903/04 Guardini studied chemistry in Tübingen. In 1904 he then changed his studies to political sciences, which he studied in Munich and in Berlin. In Munich, he attended lectures on philosophy and psychology, and became

4 Hanna-Barbara Gerl, *Romano Guardini 1885–1968. Leben und Werk*. Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, 1985, here 30, see also 11, 16.

5 See Karl-Heinz Wieseemann, Peter Reifenberg (eds.), “*In allem tritt Gott uns entgegen*”. *Zum 50. Todestag von Romano Guardini*. Ostfildern: Matthias-Grünewald, 2018.

6 For a summary of his influence among the student in Munich in the mid-1950s, see Berthold Gerner, *Romano Guardini in München. Beiträge zu einer Sozialbiographie, 1: Lehrer an der Universität*. München: Katholische Akademie in Bayern, 1998, 5–8.

acquainted with literary circles. As a student, Guardini encountered the new streams of neo-Kantianism, but he rejected this thinking and the principle of autonomy. In the winter semester of 1905/06, Guardini moved to Berlin. Here, as well, he was exposed to modern German culture. He attended lectures from Georg Simmel and Heinrich Wölfflin, and took a seminar offered by Max Sering on national economics. At this time, he decided to become a priest. Already before this, from around 1903 to 1913, Guardini and a group of students came under the influence of Wilhelm and Josefine Schleußner in Mainz. Later during World War I, Wilhelm Schleußner published an edition of mystical German prayers from the Middle Ages, *Deutsche Gebete: Wie unsere Vorfahren Gott suchten* (1916). The Schleußners, who had no children, created something like a cultural Catholic intellectual group that met regularly to discuss literature and theology. Wilhelm Schleußner seems to have offered Guardini an example of a new form of Catholic intellectuality. Guardini later claimed, in the 1960s, that Wilhelm Schleußner was interested in the idea of a Catholic restoration and had no relationship to democracy. In the summer semester of 1906, Guardini started his theological studies in Freiburg. In the winter semester of 1906/1907, he then moved to Tübingen. In Tübingen he was exposed to the controversial theology of Wilhelm Koch.⁷

Koch, professor of dogmatics and apologetics at the Catholic Faculty of Theology from 1905 to 1919,⁸ developed a moderate approach to modernism. From 1907 onward conservative critics claimed that he was promoting false teachings in conflict with the Catholic Church. He was also accused of encouraging the students of theology to resist authority. In 1911 Koch's published lectures were then put on the index.⁹ Under pressure he was ultimately forced out of academia. In 1916 he voluntarily offered to give up his teaching responsibilities in dogmatics in the hopes that he could remain on the faculty and teach in a different subject area.¹⁰ He was then ultimately removed from his entire position in 1918 and transferred into the priestly ministry. His cooperative approach to his own exclusion spared the Catholic Faculty of Theology in Tübingen and the

⁷ This paragraph draws upon Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 40–56.

⁸ Max Seckler, *Theologie vor Gericht. Der Fall Wilhelm Koch. Ein Bericht*. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1972, 1. Seckler writes: "Die eigentlich dramatischen Ereignisse des Falles Koch liegen in den Jahren 1912 bis 1916. Die Zeit vorher stand unter dem Gesetz der Gewitterbildung." *Ibid.*, 4. While Guardini was in Tübingen, he would have seen the pre-history of the conflict, although he was, of course, deeply aware of the conflict about modernism at this time.

⁹ Wilhelm Koch, Otto Wecker, *Religiös-wissenschaftliche Vorträge für katholische Akademiker, 3: Katholizismus und Christentum*. Rottenburg a. N.: Bader, 1910, see Seckler, *Theologie vor Gericht*, 10 f.

¹⁰ Seckler, *Theologie vor Gericht*, 60.

Catholic Church a public scandal regarding the justification of its action.¹¹ Ecclesial authorities also accused him of “entirely Protestant” (“ganz protestantisch”) preaching.¹² Koch was one of the countless victims of the anti-modernist wave in Catholicism at this time.

Guardini later praised Koch because he was committed to the truth and because he was the first to inquire about the “Lebenswert der Dogmen”. Yet he also claimed that Koch did not have the “Kraft der Synthese”. Koch was “kein großer Theologe”. In Guardini’s assessment, Koch had “zu viel Respekt vor der ‘Wissenschaft’, wie sie damals aufgefaßt wurde; dafür zu wenig Bewußtsein vor der Offenbarung als gebender Tatsache und Kraft [...]” For this reason, his lectures were “unbefriedigend”. As these remarks suggest, Guardini was opposed to Koch and positioned himself on the side of the critics of modernism, yet he also saw something in his work that he embraced. While Koch lacked the “Blick ins Wesentliche”,¹³ Guardini seems to have gained a positive impulse in Tübingen: the relevance of doctrine for life. This turn to “life”, which he probably also encountered before this with Simmel (and also later with Engelbert Krebs, see below), is a very important concept that would be central to the Catholic youth movement and the liturgical movement. The journal *Die Schildgenossen* would later adopt, from 1924 onward, the subtitle *Zeitschrift aus der katholischen Lebensbewegung*.¹⁴ The emphasis on the concept of “life” counterbalanced the formalities of neo-Scholasticism and the inflexibility of the anti-modernist positions, even if the essential posture towards modernism was maintained. Guardini rejected the idea that the truth of doctrine is found in life alone.¹⁵ Nevertheless, the modern impulses seem to have left a lasting mark in his thought already from his early period of study.

11 Klaus Schreiner, *Disziplinierte Wissenschaftsfreiheit. Gedankliche Begründung und geschichtliche Praxis freien Forschens, Lehrens und Lernens an der Universität Tübingen (1477–1945)*. Stuttgart: Steiner, 2006, 129.

12 Seckler, *Theologie vor Gericht*, 65.

13 Romano Guardini, *Berichte über mein Leben. Autobiographische Aufzeichnungen*, aus dem Nachlass hg. von Franz Henrich, 2nd ed. Düsseldorf: Patmos-Verlag, 1985; 1st ed. 1984, 83 f.; these citations are drawn from Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 56 f.

14 See Katja Marmetschke, “‘Nicht mehr Jugendbewegung, sondern Kulturbewegung!’ Die Zeitschrift *Die Schildgenossen* in der Weimarer Republik.” In *Das katholische Intellektuellen-Milieu in Deutschland, seine Presse und seine Netzwerke (1871–1963)*, eds. Michel Grunewald, Uwe Puschner. Bern: Peter Lang, 2006, 281–318, here 295. Marmetschke holds that Guardini was responsible for the fact that the journal did not position itself in the debates about political and social issues. *Ibid.*, 308.

15 As demonstrated by Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 59.

2.1 The young priest's embrace of order and obedience

Guardini became a priest in 1910. In 1911, he also became a German citizen (Grand Duchy of Hesse). Later in the 1950s, Guardini saw his decision to become a priest as a decision to subject himself to true order in obedience. This was, as he thought, true freedom.¹⁶ These concepts of order and obedience were central to Guardini's work at this time, especially after he rejected the theories of autonomy in neo-Kantianism. Attempting to explain Guardini's fascination with these themes, Gerl writes: "Der Mensch wird wirklich er selbst nur im Gehorsam."¹⁷ The same themes are found with many others later in the 1920s and 1930s, such as the Jesuits Erich Przywara and Balthasar. The themes offered a clear correction to the culture of liberality and progressive notions of modernization.

Guardini studied for the priesthood at the priests' seminary in Mainz (*Seminarium ad Sanctum Augustinum*) from 1908 to 1910. On the 28th of May, 1910, Guardini was ordained in Mainz. From 1910 to 1912 he then worked as a chaplain (in Heppenheim, Darmstadt and in Worms). From 1912 to 1915 Guardini pursued doctoral studies in Freiburg with Engelbert Krebs, a friend of Martin Heidegger. Krebs supported the anti-modernist positions, yet he also sought to emphasize the life-significance of doctrine.¹⁸ Guardini's dissertation was titled *Die Lehre des heiligen Bonaventura von der Erlösung. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte und zum System der Erlösungslehre* (published later in 1921). The subject of his dissertation clearly fit in Krebs's research program at this time, and it shows that Guardini did not follow the trend of Thomistic studies. In Freiburg, he also came into contact with Heidegger. Heidegger and Guardini represent two paths of Catholic religious philosophy – two alternatives to neo-Thomism. Heidegger, who distanced himself strongly (in a letter to Krebs from Jan. 9, 1919) from his religious background in Roman Catholicism, chose the path of post-traditionalist system-theoretical existence-philosophy. Guardini, who joined the priesthood,

¹⁶ Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 60.

¹⁷ Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 61.

¹⁸ Michael Quisinsky, "Dogma 'und' Leben: der Freiburger Dogmatiker Engelbert Krebs (1881–1950) – ein Theologe des Übergangs?" *Rottenburger Jahrbuch für Kirchengeschichte* 32 (2013), 85–111, here 90. In Quisinsky's reading, Krebs's theology is characteristic of a transition from anti-modernism to Vatican II mediation. *Ibid.*, 111. At the outset of the Third Reich, Krebs's position was "zunächst alles andere als eine oppositionelle". Claus Arnold, "Die Katholisch-Theologische Fakultät Freiburg." In *Katholische Theologie im Nationalsozialismus, Band 1/1: Institutionen und Strukturen*, ed. Dominik Burkard, Wolfgang Weiß. Würzburg: Echter, 2007, 147–166, here 151, as cited in Quisinsky, "Dogma 'und' Leben", 95. On his contribution to *Stimmen der Zeit*, see also Peterson, *The Early Hans Urs von Balthasar*, 199 f.

chose the path of interpreted religious tradition fused with life-philosophy in a wholistic worldview.¹⁹

In 1915, following his doctoral promotion, Guardini returned to Mainz where he led the *Juventus* youth organization, a Catholic youth group (founded in 1890), while also working as a diocesan priest. Catholic youth from six high schools in Mainz participated in the *Juventus* youth organization. Guardini also participated in this group as a young person. As the leader of the *Juventus* group, Guardini brought new impulses into the traditional youth organization. Some conservative critics claimed that he was marginalizing traditional forms of religious life. In 1918, for example, the cathedral deacon resisted Guardini's plans for a three-day youth outing because it conflicted with the cathedral choir group. During World War I, from the fall of 1916 to the spring of 1918, Guardini served in the military as a hospital attendant. Guardini's father was critical of Italy's siding with the entente powers in 1915.²⁰

2.2 Guardini's *Vom Geist der Liturgie* (1918)

In the later 1910s Guardini became more popular.²¹ His *Vom Geist der Liturgie* (1918) was reviewed in many important theological journals and praised for its ingenuity. The Protestant theologian Erich Stange claimed that Guardini was situating the liturgy "völlig hinein in die Ideologie des modernen Menschen [...]".²² Guardini promoted a concept of collective identity in his philosophical, theological and liturgical reflections:

"Das Ich, welches die liturgische Gebetshandlung trägt, ist nicht die einfache Zusammenzählung aller gleichgläubigen Einzelnen. Es ist deren Gesamtheit, aber sofern die Einheit als solche etwas ist, abgesehen von der Menge derer, die sie bilden: *die Kirche*. Hier liegt etwas Ähnliches vor wie im Staatsleben. Der Staat ist mehr als die Gesamtzahl der Bürger, Behörden, Gesetze und Einrichtungen usw. Die Glieder des Staates fühlen sich nicht nur als

19 On this relationship, see George Pattison, "Why Heidegger Didn't Like Catholic Theology: The Case of Romano Guardini." In *Heidegger's Black Notebooks and the Future of Theology*, ed. Mårten Björk, Jayne Svenungsson. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017, 77–98.

20 The above paragraphs draw upon Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 77–101. See Romano Guardini (ed.), *Aus einem Jugendreich*. Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald-Verlag, 1920; Idem, *Neue Jugend und katholischer Geist*. Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald-Verlag, 1920. On Guardini's father, see Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 18–22.

21 Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 107. Published in Freiburg: Herder, 1918.

22 Erich Stange, "Review of Guardini, *Vom Geist der Liturgie*. Freiburg: Herder, 1918." *Theologisches Literaturblatt* 40/1 (1919), 19–20. While Stange praised Guardini's book, he was critical of his view of Protestantism as individualistic.

Teile einer größeren Zahl, sondern irgendwie als Glieder eines übergreifenden, lebenden Einheitswesens. Etwas Entsprechendes, freilich in einer wesentlich anders garteten Ordnung, der übernatürlichen, stellt die Kirche dar.”²³

In this citation Guardini explicitly compares his own theology to political themes. He states that there is a fundamental analogy at work between political identity and religious identity. This interrelationship becomes problematic in his reflection on the place of the individual in the whole: “Das Einzelwesen muß darauf verzichten, seine eigenen Gedanken zu denken, seine eigenen Wege zu gehen. Es hat den Absichten und Wegen der Liturgie zu folgen. Es muß seine Selbstverfügung an sie abgeben; mitbeten, statt selbständig vorzugehen; gehorchen, statt frei über sich zu verfügen; in der Ordnung stehen, statt sich nach eigenem Willen zu bewegen.”²⁴ With use of these paradigms Guardini was wittingly or unwittingly linking into a broader intellectual discourse at this time, one which flowed into the various fascist ideologies of the early 20th century: negation of the individual and rejection of individual autonomy and independent thinking in service of the collective identity built upon order, obedience and authority.

Guardini’s *Vom Geist der Liturgie* from 1918 was equipped with a foreword from Ildefons Herwegen, abbot of the Benedictine monastery Maria Laach. In the foreword, Herwegen promoted an organic community concept.²⁵ He wrote: “Das Individuum, durch Renaissance und Liberalismus großgezogen, hat sich

23 Romano Guardini, *Vom Geist der Liturgie*, 18th ed. Freiburg: Herder, 1953; 1st ed. 1918, 20 f. For further commentary on this passage, and the following one, see Richard Faber, “‘Liturgische Bewegung’ im Allgemeinen und Odo Casels ‘Mysterientheologie’ im Besonderen. Ein Doppelter Rückblick auf katholische Religionsgeschichte, mit Seitenblicken auf Mircea Eliade und Stefan George.” In *The Study of Religion under the Impact of Fascism*, ed. Horst Junginger, Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2008, 421–242, here 429. See also Stefan Karl Langenbahn (ed.), *Vom Geist der Liturgie. 100 Jahre Romano Guardinis “Kultbuch” der Liturgischen Bewegung; Begleitpublikation zur Ausstellung in Maria Laach, Heiligenkreuz Hochschule Benedigt XVI., Burg Rothenfels, Trier, Köln und München*. Köln: Erzbischöfliche Diözesan- und Dombibliothek mit Bibliothek St. Albertus Magnus, 2017; Stefan Karl Langenbahn, “... Dass es auch heute solche gibt, die aus den Voraussetzungen heraus lesen, aus denen das Büchlein geschrieben ist”. Plädoyer für eine historisch-kritische Lektüre und Edition von Romano Guardinis ‘Vom Geist der Liturgie’.” *Liturgisches Jahrbuch* 67/2 (2017), 91–104. See also Berthold Gerner, *Romano Guardini in München. Beiträge zu einer Sozialbiographie*, 3. *Mann der Kirche, B: Förderer der Liturgie*. München: Katholische Akademie in Bayern, 2005, 6: “Immerhin wurden bis Kriegsbeginn 16 Auflagen mit insgesamt 34 000 Exemplaren gedruckt.”

24 Guardini, *Vom Geist der Liturgie*, 48.

25 Regarding Herwegen’s foreword, see Faber, “‘Liturgische Bewegung’”, 429; Marcel Albert, *Die Benediktinerabtei Maria Laach und der Nationalsozialismus*. Paderborn: Schöningh, 2004, 68 ff., 100 ff.

wirklich ausgelebt. Es sieht ein, daß es nur im Anschluß an eine ganz objektive Institution zur Persönlichkeit reifen kann. Es verlangt nach der *Gemeinschaft*. Das Zeitalter des Sozialismus kennt zwar Gemeinschaften, aber nur solche, die eine Anhäufung von Atomen, von Individuen bilden. Unser Verlangen aber geht nach dem *Organischen*, nach der *lebensvollen Gemeinschaft*. Eine solche organische Gemeinschaft im höchsten Sinn ist die Kirche.”²⁶ Herwegen clearly saw the ecclesial realities as directly related to the political realm. He argued that the rejection of the liberal age and individualism was essentially embraced in the theology of the liturgy which Guardini presented. Against the liberal age of individualism and “Rationalismus”,²⁷ which he saw as also overcome in the present time, he desired an organic community. His arguments here are very similar to the rhetoric at this time regarding the conceptions of an organic estate-state. Indeed, this organic community of a post-liberal age could find its guide in the church and in Guardini’s own presentation of the liturgy, as Herwegen explains: “Eine organische Gemeinschaft, die auf Gott gerichtet ist, muß einen öffentlichen gemeinsamen Kult haben.”²⁸ While Guardini tended to remain in the abstract and theoretical, those around him easily understood the social and political implications of Guardini’s writings. Figures like Herwegen also knew how the theory of the liturgy itself could take shape to accord with the new values of an organic community, a universal vision of society which embraced the political and religious orders.

Guardini rejected the calls for modernization within Catholicism, and this made him especially attractive for people like Herwegen. At the end of Guardini’s *Vom Geist der Liturgie* he addressed this rejection of modernization: “Die Geistesart ist wahrhaft katholisch. Und wenn es auch wahr ist, daß der Katholizismus in vieler Beziehung gegenüber den andern Bekenntnissen ‘rückständig’ ist – laßt sie! Er konnte die rasende Jagt des entfesselten, aus den ewigen Ordnungen gerissenen Willens nicht mitmachen. Er hat dafür etwas unersetzlich Kostbares bewahrt: den Primat des Logos über das Ethos und damit den Einklang mit den unabänderlichen Gesetzen alles Lebens.”²⁹ Guardini’s clear rejection of modern reforms here in the later 1910s is carried into the 1920s. This rejection of modernization undergoes a process of radicalization, especially as Guardini grew in popularity and became exposed to the broader and diverse intellectual movement that would later be called the Conservative Revolution.

²⁶ Ildefons Herwegen, “Zur Einführung.” In Romano Guardini, *Vom Geist der Liturgie*, 18th ed. Freiburg: Herder, 1953; 1st ed. 1918, vii–xii, here ix.

²⁷ Herwegen, “Zur Einführung”, viii.

²⁸ Herwegen, “Zur Einführung”, ix.

²⁹ Guardini, *Vom Geist der Liturgie*, 84.

3 Guardini in the Weimar Republic

A smaller academic group formed around Guardini within the Juvenus youth group. From the end of 1918 onward, Guardini started to offer lectures – “Evenings with the Leader” (“Abende beim Leiter”)³⁰ – addressing a range of contemporary issues. Some of the youth were also involved with the Quickborn movement at Burg Rothenfels. In 1919, some of the youth then wanted to transform the Juvenus group to the style of the Quickborn movement. There was some resistance to this from the parents and from ecclesial leadership. This led to a conflict and ultimately to Guardini’s departure. In this conflict, Guardini seems to have presented himself as the counselor and friend of the youth.³¹

The Quickborn movement was something of a Catholic version of one of the various German youth movements at this time (such as the *Wandervogel*). The Catholic version entailed a specific profile in its religious dimensions but it also reflected some of the classic features of the broader movement (abstinence from drinking and smoking, regular hiking trips in the countryside or in the mountains, singing, folk-dancing, a new interest in returning to nature or the natural, criticism of technology, etc.).³² The Quickborn lay movement of Burg Rothenfels started in 1909 in Upper Silesian Neisse and it grew quickly throughout Germany thereafter. It kept men and women separate but they were joined together for specific events.³³ While emphasizing themes such as “Ritterlichkeit”, the group used neither the “Du” nor the “Sie” form of address but rather “Ihr”. Alois von Löwenstein offered the growing movement his old Burg Rothenfels for the price of 70,000 Reichsmark. From the 10th to the 13th of August, 1919, the first Quickborn conference of all the “Quickborn-Gaue” was held in the castle. From this point on, the castle became the center of the Catholic youth movement in all of Germany. Guardini first stay at the Burg was at the August meeting of 1920. Although Bernhard Strehler was elected “König” of the castle, Guardini’s charisma soon drew many of the youth under his influence. Already by 1921, he was the “bestimmende Gestalt” at the Burg, and the “überragende geistige Führergestalt” of the Quickborn movement.³⁴ Some of the medieval nostalgia was just youthful enthusiasm or neo-romanticism. At the outset of the Weimar Republic, however, it also entailed a dimension of alterity towards ideals of

30 Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 98.

31 Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 102.

32 Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 155 f.

33 Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 157. Gerl explains that by 1913 the journal of the movement, *Quickborn*, already had 1 440 subscribers. *Ibid.*, 160.

34 Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 175.

equality and modernization. The Catholic youth presented themselves as an alternative community, one that explicitly embraced the link to the Middle Ages in both language and social order.

In various publications (such as “Vom Sinn des Gehorchens”, 1920) and lectures, Guardini advanced a decisive public challenge to Max Bondy and the “Meißner-Formel”. This was a manifest for the broader German youth movement that focused on, among other things, emancipation, individualism and autonomy. Against this, Guardini emphasized order, authority and obedience. Even though the Quickborn movement promoted this alternative version of the youth movement, it was still held to be problematic by many clergy. Important power centers within the church nevertheless recognized it for what it was: a lively embrace of traditional Catholicism in a new youthful style. For example, the bishops of Würzburg, Rottenburg and Breslau were open to the movement, as well as Cardinal Faulhaber of Munich.³⁵ While there were indeed modernizing elements in the movement, as a whole it was not viewed as supporting modernism or liberalism.

3.1 Habilitation in Bonn

Guardini left Mainz for Bonn in 1920 and wrote his Habilitationsschrift on Bonaventure. In January of 1922, he completed his Habilitation with a trial lecture on Anselm’s *credo ut intelligam* and a colloquium. As Gerl explains, this was Guardini’s “Leitsatz gegen den Erkenntnisrelativismus der Zeit”.³⁶ According to Guardini’s later reports, in his lecture he made “Offenbarung und Glauben zur Basis des Erkennens”.³⁷ One of the professors on the faculty, Fritz Tillmann, seems to have been critical of Guardini’s theology. As Guardini claims, Tillmann saw an “unwissenschaftlichen Dogmatismus”³⁸ in the theology. Yet Guardini claimed that Tillmann just wanted to support “Liberalismus”³⁹ against dogma. Tillmann’s viewpoint is confirmed by other evidence. In 1921, Guardini explicitly defended Pius X’s anti-modernist criticism of the modern academic ap-

³⁵ The above information is drawn from Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 161–174. See also Reinhard Richter’s treatment of the “Quickborner” in *Nationales Denken im Katholizismus der Weimarer Republik*. Münster: Lit, 2000, 183–194.

³⁶ Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 135, see *ibid.*, 111–123.

³⁷ Guardini, *Berichte über mein Leben*, 33 f., as cited in Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 135.

³⁸ Guardini, *Berichte über mein Leben*, 33 f., as cited in Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 136.

³⁹ Guardini, *Berichte über mein Leben*, 33 f., as cited in Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 135.

proaches to the Bible.⁴⁰ Guardini's anti-modernists thinking emerges strongly after World War I, for example in his review of Friedrich Heiler's book *Das Wesen des Katholizismus* (1920). Guardini claimed that Heiler's book stood in the "Zeichen einer sterbenden Zeit, einer Zeit, die relativistisch war im Denken [...]".⁴¹ While Guardini advocated anti-liberal and anti-modernist theological positions, his actual practice of ministry was somewhat modern in the assessment of many traditional Catholics.⁴²

3.2 Catholic youth movement

Guardini's intellectual work in the Weimar period was ambitious and creative. He sought to establish a new approach to Catholic intellectuality. Breaking ranks with many of the ultramontane intellectuals of the 19th century, and neo-Thomists,⁴³ Guardini charted out a new way of mediation and interpretation that was still essentially critical of the modern period. He dedicated himself to the formation of a Christian worldview. This took shape in his dialog with the intellectual streams of *Lebensphilosophie* and form-theory in the early 20th century. He was also influenced by Max Scheler and the new reception of phenomenology in the philosophy of religion.⁴⁴ Guardini seems to have come into constructive dialog with the new post-World War I rightwing Catholicism in Germany at this time.⁴⁵

In the 1920s, Guardini's philosophy of religion and cultural criticism grew in popularity. He represented a new form of religious reflection from the perspective of authority and order. This general pattern of thought had natural

40 Romano Guardini, "Anselm von Canterbury und das Wesen der Theologie" (1921). In Idem, *Auf dem Wege. Versuche*. Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald-Verlag, 1923, 53, as cited in Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 58.

41 Romano Guardini, "Universalität und Synkretismus." *Jahrbuch der Deutschen Katholiken* (1920/21; Augsburg 1921), 150–155, here 155, as cited in Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 58. Friedrich Heiler is the author of *Der Vater des katholischen Modernismus Alfred Loisy (1857–1940)*. München: Erasmus, 1947.

42 See Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 135–139.

43 On the background and development of neo-Thomism and the significance of the *Kulturkampf*, see my "Der autoritäre Thomas." *Zeitschrift für Ideengeschichte* 11/2 (2017), 45–52.

44 Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 144 f.

45 This is seen in his criticism of Friedrich Heiler. Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 149. Further to Heiler, and the strong rejections of his work among rightwing Catholic intellectuals, see my "Erich Przywara on *Sieg-Katholizismus*, bolshevism, the Jews, *Volk*, *Reich* and the *analogia entis* in the 1920s and 1930s." *Zeitschrift für Neuere Theologiegeschichte / Journal for the History of Modern Theology* 19 (2012), 104–140, here 122 f.

consequences for the evaluation of the social and political context in the Weimar Republic. An echo of Guardini's thought is heard in the Catholic youth movement journal, *Schildgenossen*. Reinhard Richter has pointed to the critical attitude towards the new German democracy in Guardini's youth organization: "Der nach außen offenen Orientierung bleibt als Pendant ein von Skepsis bis zur Ablehnung reichendes Mißtrauen in 'Quickborn' und den 'Schildgenossen' gegenüber dem Staat von Weimar auffällig."⁴⁶ He points to an article from August Heinrich Berning from 1923 in *Schildgenossen*. As the Catholic Center Party tried to make inroads to the youth movement, Berning offered a critical analysis of the situation: "Die Jugendbewegung kann sich an programmatisch fixierte Staatsbegriffe nicht innerlich gebunden fühlen, weder an Republik noch an Monarchie. Sie trägt ein Wesensbild vom organisch gegliederten Volksstaate in sich."⁴⁷ Indeed, Berning argues against the party system itself, claiming that it is the problem: "Nicht die Parteien an sich, sondern das heutige Parteiensystem."⁴⁸ He claimed that it was destroying the consciousness of the organism of the whole *Volk*.⁴⁹ This is an example of anti-parliamentarian thinking based on organic *Volk*-ideology. In contradistinction to freedom and liberalism, themes of authority, hierarchy and order were emphasized.⁵⁰ At this time (see below), Guardini was also promoting his concept of the *Volk* as the organic unity of national identity. In the early 1920s, as Guardini became more involved in the Catholic youth movement, the journal published some new rightwing criticisms of the Weimar political order and rejections of the party system. For example, W. Engel published in *Schildgenossen* in 1922: "Unsere geistig-seelische Haltung biegt sich heute mit keiner Linie dem geschichtlich überkommenen Gebilde zu, das man Partei nennt. Auch die Partei, die uns weltanschauungsgemäß am nächsten stehen soll, betrachten wir nicht als eine ewige Kategorie. [...] Wir glauben nicht an die völkische Heilkraft des vom liberalen Westen geerbten Parlamentarismus, selbst dann nicht, wenn er sich in den Flittermantel einer formal sauberen Demokratie hüllt."⁵¹ Guardini usually avoided these direct assaults; nevertheless,

46 Richter, *Nationales Denken im Katholizismus der Weimarer Republik*, 190.

47 August Heinrich Berning, "Die realpolitischen Zustände." *Schildgenossen* 3 (1923), 183–187, here 185.

48 Berning, "Die realpolitischen Zustände". He continues the criticism of the system in the following pages.

49 Berning, "Die realpolitischen Zustände".

50 Richter, *Nationales Denken im Katholizismus der Weimarer Republik*, 190.

51 W. Engel, "Godesberger Merkwürdigkeiten." *Schildgenossen* 2 (1922), 367–368. See Manfred Dahlheimer, *Carl Schmitt und der deutsche Katholizismus 1888–1936*. Paderborn: Schöningh, 1998, 447; Heinrich Lutz, *Demokratie im Zwielficht. Der Weg der deutschen Katholiken aus dem Kaiserreich in die Republik 1914–1925*. München: Kösel, 1963, 114; cf. Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 201.

he also cultivated the underlying framework of this intellectual tendency in the 1920s among the Catholic youth.

3.3 The *Volk*-paradigm contra Enlightenment thought

In 1922, Guardini gave a lecture in Bonn at the *Akademikerverband* in which he defined *Volk* in contrast to “liberalen, aufklärerischen, individualistischen Denken”.⁵² In this understanding, *Volk* is “der ursprüngliche Zusammenhang der Menschen, die nach Art, Land und geschichtlicher Entwicklung in Leben und Schicksal eins sind. Volk ist jenes Menschentum, das mit den Wurzelgründen und Wesensgesetzen von Natur und Leben in ungebrochenem Zusammenhang steht. [...] Menschentum in ursprünglicher Ganzheit – das ist ‘Volk’. Ein Mensch ist aber volkhaf, wenn er dieses Ganz in sich trägt.”⁵³ The church “erfaßt das Volk; sie erfaßt die Menschheit. Sie zieht auch die Dinge, die ganze Welt in sich hinein.”⁵⁴ At the Quickborn conference at Pentecost in 1923, Guardini also spoke on the subject of “Volk und Europa.” This was summarized by Josef Außem. According to Außem, who refers to Guardini: “Sein geistiges Wesen wurzele in der deutschen Kultur.” He also claimed that Guardini “habe sich für Deutschland entschieden. Er spreche also mit voller Befugnis und sittlicher Berechtigung über Volk. Ihm sei Volk nicht Problem, sondern Wirklichkeit.”⁵⁵ Guardini also spoke about people with “übevölkischem Zusammenhangsgefühl.” This idea did not have to do with socialist communism, capitalism, or “rankesüchtigen Politikern” but rather “das *lebendige Europa*”.⁵⁶ From the 10th to the 16th of August, 1923, Guardini attended the conference of the Catholic Academics in Ulm, with Przywara and Herwegen.⁵⁷ Przywara gave the three keynote lectures and referred to Guardini as a representative of the “neuen katholischen Geistes”.⁵⁸ He saw in him and in the liturgical movement a will to form and to community against

52 Romano Guardini, “Das Erwachen der Kirche in der Seele.” In Idem, *Vom Sinn der Kirche. Fünf Vorträge*, 4th ed. Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald-Verlag, 1955, first edition: 1922, 19–38, here 19, as cited in Richter, *Nationales Denken im Katholizismus der Weimarer Republik*, 187.

53 Romano Guardini, “Das Erwachen der Kirche in der Seele”, 27, as cited in Richter, *Nationales Denken im Katholizismus der Weimarer Republik*, 187.

54 Romano Guardini, “Das Erwachen der Kirche in der Seele”, 30 f., as cited in Richter, *Nationales Denken im Katholizismus der Weimarer Republik*, 187.

55 Josef Außem, “Grüssau.” *Schildgenossen* 3 (1923), 188–194, here 192.

56 Außem, “Grüssau”, 192.

57 Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 150.

58 See Erich Przywara, *Gottgeheimnis der Welt. Drei Vorträge über die geistige Krisis der Gegenwart*. München: Theatiner Verlag, 1923, 9; Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 150.

liberal individualism.⁵⁹ As Gerl explains, Przywara saw in the Catholic youth movement a remedy for the “Krankheit des deutschen Geistes”.⁶⁰ Other critical voices at this time were emphasizing the “sickness of the German spirit” in the middle of the new democratic republic. Christoph Hübner has drawn attention to Kurt Ziesché’s connection to the Quickborn movement in the mid-1920s. In fact, there seem to have been some provisional plans to form an “Arbeitsgemeinschaft Völkischer Quickborner”. Ziesché was the author of *Das Königtum Christi in Europa* (1926), one of the key anti-Semitic texts that was influential in German Catholicism in the 1920s.⁶¹

3.4 Permanent visiting professor in Berlin

In 1923, Carl Becker, the Minister of Culture in Prussia, helped to establish an academic post for Guardini at the Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität in Berlin.⁶² The traditionally Protestant university was critical of this suggestion. A solution was found by putting him on staff at Breslau’s Faculty of Catholic Theology, and then having him serve as a permanent visiting professor in Berlin. He taught philosophy of religion and Catholic worldview.⁶³ While teaching in Berlin, according to Gerl, Guardini promoted a concept of education as “Sein” rather than “Wissen”, thus, “Einwände, Wenn- und Aber-Fragen [waren] nicht beliebt [...]”⁶⁴ Guardini’s new position in Berlin seems to have granted him new freedoms in his work in the Catholic youth movement. This is reflected in the August 1924 conference at Burg Rothenfels, which was a critical event in the history of the Catholic youth movement. It entailed a general transition of the Quickborn program to a self-understanding as a broader cultural movement.⁶⁵ Guardini’s contribution to this shift of emphasis seems to reflect the same intellectual agenda as laid out in his *Briefe vom Comer See*. Katharina Kappes participated at the conference.

⁵⁹ See Przywara, *Gottgeheimnis der Welt*, 32; Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 150.

⁶⁰ Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 151. Cf. Przywara, *Gottgeheimnis der Welt*, 48 f.

⁶¹ Christoph Hübner, *Die Rechtskatholiken, die Zentrumspartei und die katholische Kirche in Deutschland bis zum Reichskonkordat von 1933. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Scheiterns der Weimarer Republik*. Münster: LIT, 2014, 592. Kurt Ziesché, *Das Königtum Christi in Europa*. München, Regensburg: Manz, 1926. Hübner draws these conclusions from his analysis of the correspondences between Fritz Exner and Martin Spahn in 1925. On Ziesché, see Hübner, *Die Rechtskatholiken*, 585 ff.

⁶² Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 140.

⁶³ Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 140 f.

⁶⁴ Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 283.

⁶⁵ Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 180–191.

At that time, she was 19 years old. She published her diary notes of the August meeting later in 1983. As she writes: “Er [Guardini] sagt ja zu der heutigen Welt, nennt sie aber nicht Kultur, sondern Barbarei.”⁶⁶ As he also argues in his *Briefe vom Comer See*, Guardini seems to have emphasized a loss of order in mass culture. Gerl summarizes Kappes: “Guardini setzt diese Entwicklung auf eine Ebene mit der Demokratisierung und Nivellierung alles Geistigen.”⁶⁷ As in his *Briefe vom Comer See* as well, Guardini seems to have called for a new man, and emphasized order and authority.⁶⁸ Kappes remarked that Guardini spoke “hart” and “unerbittlich” at the conference.⁶⁹ In the mid-1920s – in the middle of the liberal order of the Weimar Republic – the Catholic professor in Berlin now sought more fervently to emphasize order and authority against the “Barbarei”.⁷⁰ The Catholic youth movement was to become a cultural movement; it was to model true culture for an age that had lost its way. This also entailed a political dimension.

3.5 Guardini’s “Rettung des Politischen” (1924)

In 1924 Guardini became co-editor of the journal *Die Schildgenossen* which functioned as an intellectual platform for the Quickborn Catholic youth movement, especially as an outlet for its new self-understanding as a cultural movement.⁷¹ Many scholars published articles in this journal, including Peter Wust, Karl Adam and even Carl Schmitt.⁷² Guardini also engaged the cultural and political situation in his contributions to this journal.

Manfred Dahlheimer, referring to Guardini’s essay “Rettung des Politischen”, holds that “Seine [Guardini’s] politische Wunschvorstellung war der starke, autoritäre Staat, der die Ordnung garantiert. Es ist anzunehmen, daß der Einfluß Schmitts auf Vertreter der Jugendbewegung die dort herrschende Grundstimmung des Antiparlamentarismus und Antiliberalismus noch verstärkt hat.”⁷³

⁶⁶ Katharina Kappes, “Tagebuchnotizen einer Quickbornerin von der Werkwoche August 1924 auf Burg Rothenfels.” *Burgbrief* (1983), 2–22, here 8, as cited in Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 184.

⁶⁷ Katharina Kappes, “Tagebuchnotizen”, 15, as cited in Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 184.

⁶⁸ Katharina Kappes, “Tagebuchnotizen”, 15, as cited in Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 184.

⁶⁹ Katharina Kappes, “Tagebuchnotizen”, 7, as cited in Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 186.

⁷⁰ On the August conference, see also Berthold Gerner, *Romano Guardini in München. Beiträge zu einer Sozialbiographie*, 2: *Referent am Vortragspult*. München: Katholische Akademie in Bayern, 2000, 10 f.

⁷¹ Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 194.

⁷² From 1926/27 onward, the subtitle of the journal *Die Schildgenossen* became *Zeitschrift aus der katholischen Lebensbewegung*. See Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 194.

⁷³ Dahlheimer, *Carl Schmitt und der deutsche Katholizismus*, 447.

As Guardini writes in the essay, which was published in 1924: “In politischen Dingen vermag ich heute weithin nur Chaos zu sehen”. He claimed that “die Aussprache, zu der das Volk die Männer seines Vertrauens gesandt hat”, ended “in einem wüsten Lärm”.⁷⁴ These remarks were made in his relatively positive engagement with Carl Schmitt’s book *Römischer Katholizismus und politische Form* (1923). Schmitt believed that the “political” was threatened by the liberalism of the modern age. He thought that the Roman Catholic Church, with its conception of personal representation, especially in connection with the idea of the papacy, could “save” the political itself.⁷⁵ In the book, Schmitt argues that the Catholic Church is the fullest expression of the idea of representation and that it unified both political will and juristic form of inner-worldly power.⁷⁶ Guardini criticized Schmitt by claiming he united Roman Catholicism and the “Roman.” In a letter to Rudolf Smend from the 25th of May, 1924, Schmitt himself summarized

74 Romano Guardini, “Rettung des Politischen.” *Schildgenossen* 4 (1924), 112–121, here 112. Much of this sentiment poured into the later political crisis of the early 1930s. In his analysis of Catholic intellectual culture in 1933, Ernst-Wolfgang Böckenförde addressed deep-seated anti-liberalism, a rejection of democracy and modern society, a new emphasis on leadership and organic conceptions of the *Volk*, as well as a rejection of bolshevism and immorality. Ernst-Wolfgang Böckenförde, “Der deutsche Katholizismus im Jahre 1933. Eine kritische Betrachtung.” *Hochland* 53 (1960/61), 215–239. In Idem, *Schriften zu Staat – Gesellschaft – Kirche*, Band 1. Freiburg: Herder, 1988, 39–69, here 51 f.

75 See Henrique Ricardo Otten, “‘Rettung des Politischen’. Bemerkungen zum Verhältnis von Katholizismus und Antibürgerlichkeit in der Weimarer Republik.” In *Der Aufstand gegen den Bürger. Antibürgerliches Denken im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Günter Meuter, Henrique Ricardo Otten. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1999, 85–112, here 104 ff. Much of Otten’s essay goes back to Schmitt’s criticism of moderate democratic culture and *Bürgerlichkeit*, as Otten explains: “‘Bürgerlichkeit’ bedeutet für Schmitt vor allem, daß die Hierarchie der geistigen Werte und sozialen Funktionen in eine endlose Debatte aufgelöst wird.” *Ibid.*, 86. Schmitt thus embodies the “antibürgerliches Denken” in the Weimar period.

76 Carl Schmitt, *Römischer Katholizismus und politische Form*. Hellaue: Hegner, 1923. See Romano Guardini, “Rettung des Politischen.” *Schildgenossen* 4 (1924), 112–121. Emanuel Hirsch pointed out in his review of both Schmitt’s *Römischer Katholizismus und politische Form*. Hellaue: Hegner, 1923, and his *Die geistesgeschichtliche Lage des heutigen Parlamentarismus*. München: Duncker und Humblot, 1923, that Schmitt’s conception of the political employment of the will of the people in a democratic order, and here especially with view to his *Die geistesgeschichtliche Lage*, did not require elections necessarily, for, as Hirsch explains: “Die Ermittlung dieses Volkswillens durch Abstimmung oder Wahl ist nicht in jedem Augenblick unveräußerliches Stück der Demokratie; auch die Identifikation des Diktators mit dem künftigen Willen des zu erziehenden Volkes ist noch demokratisch gedacht.” Emanuel Hirsch, “Review of Carl Schmitt, *Die geistesgeschichtliche Lage des heutigen Parlamentarismus*. Munich: Duncker und Humblot, 1923, and Carl Schmitt, *Römischer Katholizismus und politische Form*. Hellaue: Hegner, 1923.” *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 49/9 (1924), 185–187, here 186. Hirsch called his engagement with Schmitt “lehrreich”. *Ibid.*, 186. Yet he was critical of the indirect arguments.

the critical point that Guardini made: “Guardini hat sich durch meinen Römischen Katholizismus zu einer ‘Rettung des Politischen’ anregen lassen [...], doch macht er mir den Vorwurf, ich begehe den ‘Fehler, katholisch und romanisch gleichzusetzen’. Vielleicht setze ich, im Politisch, katholisch und römisch nahe beieinander, aber den Fehler romanisch und römisch gleichzusetzten begehe ich nicht. Friedrich der Große ist doch eher ein Römer als es hunderttausend Portugiesen und Rumänen sind.”⁷⁷ Schmitt seems to have believed that Guardini’s essay, although it had this one critical point, was essentially a constructive engagement with his ideas.

Guardini begins his essay with a quote from Stefan George about “das Neue Reich”.⁷⁸ George’s poetry was embraced by many new rightwing Catholic intellectuals in the 1920s and 1930s. Guardini’s study of Schmitt seems to have reinforced a general authoritarian impulse in his intellectual development from the 1910s onward. In his essay, he emphasizes the concepts of “Hoheit” and “Majestät” in reference to the state, viewing it as a representative of divine majesty: “Der Staat hat Gottes Majestät zu vertreten in den Dingen des natürlichen Lebens.”⁷⁹ Yet in the political order of the democratically organized Weimar Republic, the state was to represent not God but the people, those who elected the political representatives (even if the vast majority of the populace belonged to the Catholic or Protestant churches at this time). Here Guardini does not endorse the democratic order that he was living in, but rather, like Schmitt, an idealized authoritarian conception of the state as an instance of virtually divine authority.

Guardini emphasizes that the church is responsible for moral and religious matters while the state represents divine majesty in its own realm of authority. It is “von Gottes Gnaden”.⁸⁰ While he does not address democracy as such, Guardini wanted the political order to be influenced “aus wirklich katholischem Geist.”⁸¹ For Guardini, the state was a divine representative, “Gottes Stellvertreter”, in the natural and legal spheres.⁸² Can a citizen then criticize the divine representative? Guardini certainly saw this as an option, especially if the state

77 Carl Schmitt to Rudolf Smend, 25 May, 1924. In *“Auf der gefahrenvollen Straße des öffentlichen Rechts”*. *Briefwechsel Carl Schmitt – Rudolf Smend 1921–1961*, ed. Reinhard Mehring. Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2010, 27 f. According to the editorial notes, some of Schmitt’s students were influenced by Guardini. *Ibid.*, 27. Schmitt had some contact with Guardini in Berlin.

78 Romano Guardini, “Rettung des Politischen.” *Schildgenossen* 4 (1924), 112–121, here 112. On the George-reception among Catholic theologians at this time, see my *The Early Hans Urs von Balthasar*, 87–99.

79 Guardini, “Rettung des Politischen”, 114.

80 Guardini, “Rettung des Politischen”, 114, see also *ibid.*, 115.

81 Guardini, “Rettung des Politischen”, 116.

82 Guardini, “Rettung des Politischen”, 116.

would become brutal and lose sight of human conscience. He actually called on Christians, here in the liberal Weimar Republic, to keep watch on the state to ensure that it does not overstep its bounds.⁸³ While Guardini saw the state as subjected to moral laws, he did not believe that it was possible to apply these directly to the political order without additional consideration. He thus warns of the potential danger of an “ethizistische Demagogie”.⁸⁴ Towards the end of his essay, Guardini turns to the question regarding the relationship between *Volk* and state:

“Wie steht also das politische Problem von Volk und Volksstaat zu dem übervölkischen Staate? Ist nicht z. B. Oesterreich daran zu Grunde gegangen, daß es dieses Problem nicht gelöst hat? Daß viele es überhaupt nicht sehen wollten? Wie steht das politische Problem von Volk und Volksstaat zu dem eines Kulturkreises mit seiner eigentümlichen Solidarität? Ist nicht der Krieg ausgebrochen, weil die europäischen Staaten dieses Problem nicht gesehen haben? Und der Friede heute noch nicht da, weil es immer noch nicht gesehen wird? Weil gar, es auch nur zu stellen, mit antinationaler Gesinnung verwechselt wird? Aber freilich; das fordert Weite des Blickes, Wirklichkeitssinn, Denkkraft; fordert auch politisches Schöpfertum, und selbst ein wenig Vornehmheit, was alles im üblichen nationalistischen Denken nicht vonnöten!”⁸⁵

After the formation of the League of Nations in 1920, Guardini is here theorizing about a politically unified Europe (the broader cultural area of solidarity). As he makes clear in the following pages, Guardini believed that the *Volk*, as an ethnic identity of blood, soil and tradition, was indeed the underlying foundation of the immediate political order, being the instance that bears the state. Yet he seems to have wanted to embrace this *völkisch* ideology, and, at the same time, the theoretical possibility of a larger political framework spanning a broader cultural area (such as Europe). He wanted to distance this idea from a view of the political order understood as a “Masse” (see below). In the 1920s, Guardini was promoting a new synthetic conception of cooperative nationalism, one that went beyond the usual frameworks. Guardini saw a new trend in the political culture of his time, a new development of “Persönlichkeitsbewußtsein”.⁸⁶ Regarding the contemporary situation, he writes:

“Zwei verhängnisvolle Verknüpfungen haben sich aber seither vollzogen: Einerseits wurden weithin der Begriff eigentätiger, verantwortungsbewußter Persönlichkeit mit der Vorstellung eines demokratischen Staates verbunden, der auf Hoheit verzichtet und sich bloß als Sicherheitseinrichtung, als Kulturwart und Wirtschaftsbehörde ansieht, also unpolitisch

83 Guardini, “Rettung des Politischen”, 117.

84 Guardini, “Rettung des Politischen”, 117.

85 Guardini, “Rettung des Politischen”, 119.

86 Guardini, “Rettung des Politischen”, 119.

ist im tiefsten Sinn des Wortes. Andererseits die Begriffe von Hoheit und staatlicher Ehre mit der Vorstellung des Obrigkeitsstaates und der Kabinettspolitik alten Stils, für welche die Persönlichkeit des Einzelnen politisch bedeutungslos und die Völker lediglich Objekte waren. Jetzt aber handelt es sich darum, mit dem Begriff des 'Staatsbürgers' Ernst zu machen. Um die mündige politische Persönlichkeit geht es; aber im wirklich politischen Staat."⁸⁷

In this argument, Guardini, for the first time in his essay, mentions democracy. He associates it with a loss of the essence of the political, a loss of "Hoheit". Using a synthetic method of argument, Guardini wants a political order, as he suggests, which embraces the "Persönlichkeitsbewußtsein", yet he also wants it to embrace what he sees as the true sense of the political, in the sense that Schmitt had expressed: an authoritarian conception of political order from above. In his view, the given cultural trend of "Persönlichkeitsbewußtsein" should recognize the need for authority from above. Guardini suggests that the ideal political order is one which embraces this Schmittian ideology: "Wird gerade sie [Persönlichkeit] ihm [dem Staat] Höchstleistung zumuten?"⁸⁸

Guardini also offered his reflections on the political discourse about war. He writes: "Das Recht, gegen den Krieg zu reden, billigt man einem Menschen nur zu, wenn man in ihm die politische Haltung spürt. Wenn man spürt, daß die politischen Ur-Werte, Wille zu Volk und Wille zu volk-staatlicher Freiheit und Ehre ihm im Blute glühen."⁸⁹ In 1924 Guardini endorsed *Blut und Boden* language regarding national identity and political order: "Staat wird getragen durch Volk. 'Volk' ist mehr als Masse. Volk ist lebendige Einheit von Blut, Boden, Schicksal, Ueberlieferung; von geistigen Wesensbildern, Werken ... [sic!] Ein Inbegriff also stärkster Kräfte."⁹⁰ He continues to affirm the "Blut" connection at the outset of the new political order in 1933, but moves away from the "Boden" term, seeming to prefer "Erde".

The "salvation of the political" in Guardini's argument in the Weimar Republic was to be found in the reestablishment of political authority with "Hoheit", following Schmitt's conception of authoritarian representation (as perfectly embodied in the papal order of Roman Catholicism). By contrast, the modern political culture of his own context in Germany at this time, the representative democracy of the party system, appeared to be "Chaos". The mid-1920s in Germany was actually a period of relatively stable political order in the history of the Weimar Republic.⁹¹ Yet in Guardini's analysis, which was highly influential

⁸⁷ Guardini, "Rettung des Politischen", 119.

⁸⁸ Guardini, "Rettung des Politischen", 119.

⁸⁹ Guardini, "Rettung des Politischen", 120.

⁹⁰ Guardini, "Rettung des Politischen", 114.

⁹¹ See Eberhard Kolb, *The Weimar Republic*, transl. by P. S. Falla and R. J. Park. London: Routledge, 2007, 53 ff.

for the Catholic youth, the cultural and sociopolitical situation was a form of modern chaos in need of authoritarian representation.

While Schmitt thought that Guardini was quickened to save the political because of his *Römischer Katholizismus und politische Form*, Guardini's political analysis in "Rettung des Politischen" actually followed quite naturally from his earlier developments and emphasis on authority. Nevertheless, the significance of Schmitt's work should not be underemphasized. It seems to have strongly reinforced this tendency in Guardini's intellectual development. With guides like Schmitt, Guardini became more prone to advance a deep skepticism of the cultural trends of a modern liberal democratic social and political order. In his view, the "political" itself was getting lost in a modern "Chaos".

3.6 Criticisms of parliamentarianism in the mid-1920s

Criticism of parliamentarianism and democracy became more prominent in the *Schildgenossen* journal in the 1920s. Schmitt contributed to this anti-liberal intellectual posture in the journal. Yet, as Gerl remarks, Schmitt would not have been able to promote his ideas in the journal "wenn er nicht auf ein analoges Denken in dieser neuen katholischen Jugend gestoßen wäre."⁹² Gerl describes this as an overemphasis on themes of order at the cost of themes such as freedom, indeed "Hiervon ist auch Guardini nicht ganz freizusprechen."⁹³ Heinrich Lutz points to Guardini's arguments from the mid-1920s regarding order and authority. He claimed that order and authority were not bound to the actual quality of the instance of authority, but rather dependent upon divine origin.⁹⁴

Guardini's *Briefe vom Comer See* (1923–1925)⁹⁵ express many of the sentiments of post-World War I Germany. Similar to Oswald Spengler, Guardini saw the *Abendland* threatened by the new situation that had come after the war, epitomized in trends of modernization, industrialization and new technologies. He saw culture in a phase of decline. He sought to challenge the decline with a special version of *Lebensphilosophie* that emphasized the interconnection of humanity with nature. In this, however, Guardini called for a strong man to

⁹² Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 201.

⁹³ Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 201.

⁹⁴ Guardini remarks in *Schildgenossen* 6 (1925/26), 149: "Ordnung, mithin auch Autorität, kann in ihrer Gültigkeit nicht an die konkreten Qualitäten des Trägers gebunden sein, sondern entstammt eigenem Bereich. Sie ist immer irgendwie 'von Gottes Gnaden.'" As cited in Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 201; see Lutz, *Demokratie im Zwielflicht*, 112.

⁹⁵ As a collection first published in Mainz, Matthias-Gruenewald-Verlag, 1927. On the letters, see my *The Early Hans Urs von Balthasar*, 51 ff.

take control. Themes of order, control and power all play a part in his cultural diagnosis. This leads ultimately to visions of the birth of a new humanity that include the idea of an integrated political order. The new order is to be based upon a new, free and strong humanity that is integrated with nature. In *Briefe vom Comer See* he also turns his attention to the pre-modern times and seems to find analogies in this context. He sees the historical emergence of the Germanic presence in European culture as bringing a new and deeper dimension to humanity.

3.7 *Der Gegensatz* (1925)

Guardini dedicated his book *Der Gegensatz. Versuche zu einer Philosophie des Lebendig-Konkreten*⁹⁶ to his “alten Weggenossen”⁹⁷ Karl Neundörfer, a scholar of canon law.⁹⁸ As Guardini explains in the introduction (which he completed in Potsdam in the fall of 1925), Neundörfer’s name should actually be in the title of the book.⁹⁹ He writes that the ideas of the book also belong to Neundörfer.¹⁰⁰ Guardini holds that the ideas for the book emerged already in the winter of 1905. In 1912, as he adds, he tried to form “das Ganze”.¹⁰¹ He then claims that in the winter semester of 1923/1924 he put the material together for a lecture in Berlin.¹⁰²

The book is a theological and religious-philosophical reception and correction of the modern philosophy of life, a kind of dogmatization of the theories with Thomistic categories buttressed with language of form and order. Guardini refers explicitly to Georg Simmel’s *Lebensanschauung* (1918) and his *Philosophische Kultur* (1923).¹⁰³ In Guardini’s reading, the Middle Ages and the antique world were essentially corrupted by the modern period. This is epitomized in the rise of rationalist thinking, the elimination of the organic whole, and the decline

96 Romano Guardini, *Der Gegensatz. Versuche zu einer Philosophie des Lebendig-Konkreten*. Mainz: Grünewald-Verlag, 1925; cf. Idem, *Gegensatz und Gegensätze. Entwurf eines Systems der Typenlehre*. Freiburg: Caritas-Druckerei, 1914.

97 Guardini, *Der Gegensatz*, XIII.

98 See for example his “Die Kirche als Rechtsgemeinschaft.” *Die Tat* 14 (1922/23), 38–44. See also Alexander Hollerbach, *Katholizismus und Jurisprudenz. Beiträge zur Katholizismusforschung und zur neueren Wissenschaftsgeschichte*. Paderborn: Schöningh, 2004, 193 f.

99 Guardini, *Der Gegensatz*, XI.

100 Guardini, *Der Gegensatz*, XI.

101 Guardini, *Der Gegensatz*, XI.

102 Guardini, *Der Gegensatz*, XI f.

103 Guardini, *Der Gegensatz*, 34.

of a dynamic unity. The “Sonderung” of the modern period led to this dissolution.¹⁰⁴ Against this modern method of intellectuality, Guardini holds: “das Lebendig-Konkrete als solches kann mit Begriffen nicht gefaßt werden.”¹⁰⁵ He also employs psychological arguments for his conception of the living-concrete, namely the experience of life as a “Strom”.¹⁰⁶ The movement and tension of human existence are not grasped in rational categories of isolation but as a dynamic development which reflects the “Zustände der Spannung.”¹⁰⁷ Guardini’s goal is not only to analyze the decline of the organic unity of thought but to move beyond it toward a new conception of unity. He was entirely aware of the fact that this dissolution of the unity entailed an economic and political dimension, to which he explicitly refers.¹⁰⁸ Yet he also shows some understanding for the dissolution itself. He explains that the old unity of the Middle Ages was a unity that was pre-critical and often un-critical.¹⁰⁹ Thus the “Scheidung mußte kommen. Aus Scheidung ist aber Auflösung geworden: der neuzeitliche Autonomismus der Geistesbereiche. Unsere Aufgabe ist nun darüber hinaus zu einer neuen, doch kritisch bewährten Einheit fortzuschreiten.”¹¹⁰ Here again lies the subtle modernizing impulse in Guardini’s basically anti-modern intellectual diagnosis. In this line of thinking, Guardini was even willing to positively embrace Nietzsche.¹¹¹ He addresses political and social matters in a literary style in his reflections on life. He claims: “Edles Leben verwechselt sich nicht, und duldet keine Verwechslung. Es hält die Rangordnung aufrecht, auch jenen Teil, der über ihm steht.”¹¹² Thus “Alle Monismen haben im Letzten etwas Charakterloses an sich.”¹¹³ According to Guardini, order, authority and hierarchy accord with the essence of life itself. This was, of course, a criticism of the liberal forms of the philosophy of life and in modern cultural in general. Guardini was very critical of what he called “Autonomismus” in the contemporary culture of 1920s Germany: “Der Autonomismus aber im kulturellen Leben, wie er in den letzten Jahren seinen Höhepunkt wohl überschritten hat, bedeutet die nämliche Tatsache auf dem Gebiet des menschlichen Schaffens: Eine Uebersteigerung der scheidenden Tendenz. Damit ist auch bereits gesagt, daß diese Richtung, ein-

104 Guardini, *Der Gegensatz*, 14.

105 Guardini, *Der Gegensatz*, 6.

106 Guardini, *Der Gegensatz*, 34.

107 Guardini, *Der Gegensatz*, 33.

108 Guardini, *Der Gegensatz*, 14.

109 Guardini, *Der Gegensatz*, 14.

110 Guardini, *Der Gegensatz*, 14.

111 Guardini, *Der Gegensatz*, 74.

112 Guardini, *Der Gegensatz*, 94.

113 Guardini, *Der Gegensatz*, 95.

seitig durchgesetzt, das Leben unmöglich macht: Statt gegliedert zu sein, zerfällt es.”¹¹⁴

The theme of race also plays into Guardini’s cultural analysis at this time. He affirms the concept but seems to warn against a radicalization of this paradigm of reflection. This is addressed in his discussion of “Typik” and the growing emphasis on “Lebendigkeit” itself.¹¹⁵ As Guardini writes: “Kraft, Umfassung, Deutlichkeit, Entschiedenheit, Sinnsättigung nehmen zu. Die Worte Seinswahrheit, Seinsechtheit, Rasse, Edelkeit mögen diesen Gewinn ausdrücken.”¹¹⁶ While Guardini clearly sees this new emphasis on, among other things, “Rasse” as a “Gewinn” he also warns that it has a negative dimension, for “Die reine Verwirklichung der betreffenden Sinngestalt wäre gleichbedeutend mit dem Untergang des Lebendigen. Annäherung an diese Verwirklichung ist Annäherung an den Untergang.”¹¹⁷ Guardini wanted to discourage a radicalization of racist thinking, although he also seems to affirm this essential paradigm as one part of the polarities. In this, Guardini exhibits a relatively moderate intellectual posture, one that undergoes a process of transformation in the later 1920s and 1930s as he reflected on the nature of racial paradigms and the significance of the *Volk*-concept. Yet, at the same time, Guardini also exhibited a radical position. He rejected a view of the state as serving the well-being of the citizens. As he writes: “Es ist eine rationalistische Fiktion, daß etwa der Staat zuerst und wesentlich ‘das Wohl der Bürger’ betriebe. In Wahrheit benimmt er sich ähnlich wie ein Organismus, der sich aufbaut, und die Zelle als Aufbaumoment behandelt.”¹¹⁸ Thus Guardini embraced the conception of the state as an organism. This theme was growing in popularity in political discourse in the 1920s in Germany.¹¹⁹

Guardini was nevertheless careful to reject a view of the individual as simply abolished by the organism of the whole. He wished to argue for a view of the individual and the whole as interdependent realities.¹²⁰ This being the case, Guardini nevertheless radically rejected individualism: “Die individualistische, gar solipsistische Person ist ein vorübergehendes Ergebnis neuzeitlicher Entwicklung. Genauer gesagt: Der Anspruch auf eine solche Person; denn in Wirklichkeit gibt

114 Guardini, *Der Gegensatz*, 99.

115 Guardini, *Der Gegensatz*, 119.

116 Guardini, *Der Gegensatz*, 119 f.

117 Guardini, *Der Gegensatz*, 120.

118 Guardini, *Der Gegensatz*, 162.

119 See Jörn Retterath, “Was ist das Volk?”. *Volks- und Gemeinschaftskonzepte der politischen Mitte in Deutschland 1917–1924*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016, 78–91, 158–168, 343–363, 411. A pluralistic conception of the term never acquired dominance in the intellectual discourses of the early 1920s in Germany. *Ibid.*, 414.

120 Guardini, *Der Gegensatz*, 165.

es sie nicht.”¹²¹ In order to legitimize his viewpoint, Guardini drew upon the example of the old Germanic tribe and its conception of the interrelationship of the individual and the group.¹²² These theoretical reflections about the individual and the group were both empirical and, as he argued, “trans-empirical”. Guardini’s view of the polarity concept made room for what he called “einen ‘transempirischen Punkt’”.¹²³ He saw this in the parents’ position above their children and in the government’s position above the governed. Here again he seems to draw upon an idea of authority inspired by Schmitt. Guardini returns to the theme of the individual and the group later when he addresses “der Kampf aller gegen alle” and “die Zeit des Glaubens an das ‘Spiel der Kräfte’ und seine anonyme Vernunft” as apparently passing in his present time.¹²⁴ This brought about, in his view, a new assignment for the political order.¹²⁵ These remarks seem to be suggestions that the democratic culture of the party system and the optimism of a parliamentary process of discursive reasoning were coming to their end. Both of the concepts that he addresses here were used in the wider discourse at this time to delegitimize the democratic order.

The same sense of critical distance to the emerging modern culture of the Weimar Period is also found in his rejection of the feminist or women’s movement at this time. The desire for equality between men and women and the calls to reform traditional society in order to include women fully in public life certainly entailed a potential conflict with the intellectual framework of order and authority that Guardini was developing at this time. He seems to have seen the women’s movement as a symptom of the dissolution of culture in the modern period, and as a correlate of the rise of insecurity with the loss of social cohesion, values, order and authority: “Heute stehen wir in einem eigentümlichen Durcheinander, in einer chaotischen Unsicherheit der Wertungsrichtungen – der ganze Komplex der Frauenbewegung ist dafür besonders aufschlußreich.”¹²⁶ As addressed below, in 1933 Guardini thought that women should build the state in the familial context of the home.

In the later 1920s, Guardini acquired even more influence in the Catholic youth movement. In October of 1926 at a “Thing des Bundesrat” of the Quickborn group at Burg Rothenfels it was decided that there would be an “einheitlich[e] geistig[e] Leitung der Burg”, as Gerl explains: “Für diese Aufgabe wurde Guardini,

¹²¹ Guardini, *Der Gegensatz*, 165.

¹²² Guardini, *Der Gegensatz*, 165.

¹²³ Guardini, *Der Gegensatz*, 166.

¹²⁴ Guardini, *Der Gegensatz*, 240.

¹²⁵ Guardini, *Der Gegensatz*, 240.

¹²⁶ Guardini, *Der Gegensatz*, 141.

und er allein, vorgeschlagen. Es mußte genügen, daß er nur zu bestimmten Zeiten seiner Ferien selbst auf der Burg anwesend sein konnte. Unter seiner Leitung sollten die Werkwochen den Mittelpunkt für die ganze Bewegung suchen und verbindlich bestimmen.”¹²⁷

At this time, Guardini continued to promote a relatively negative analysis of society. He thought it was in need of a strong man and a new deeper orientation beyond the formalities of the democratic political order. In his reflections about political education from 1926, Guardini expresses a clear sense of skepticism regarding the political order: “Wir spüren im politischen Leben eine eigentümliche innere Ratlosigkeit. [...] man fühlt: Auf der bisherigen Linie werden wir der Probleme nicht mehr Herr. [...] Mit bloß politischen Mitteln sind die politischen Probleme nicht zu lösen. Wir müssen tiefer greifen.”¹²⁸ Throughout the article on the political education of the youth, Guardini emphasizes the necessity of moving beyond the mere externalities and formalities of political life toward the realm of the essential, the whole. It is impossible to split the “homo politicus” from the “homo privatus”.¹²⁹ His approach is focused on the whole: “Was heißt Politik? Sie ist das Leben der Ganzheit als solcher – welche Ganzheit die spezifisch-politische Tatsache ist, und mit ‘Masse’, ‘Mehrheit’ u. dgl. natürlich nichts zu tun hat.”¹³⁰ The association of majority-politics with mass-politics, and the negative view of this democratic principle, was one of the core criticisms of the new liberal order in the 1920s in Germany. Guardini adopts this but he does not take the next step toward a full-frontal attack on democracy. He endorses the more careful approach of criticism while also calling for more cooperative thinking at the parliamentary level of political life.¹³¹ In the 1920s, Guardini seems to have been skeptical of the party system, the functional operation of democracy through parliamentary majorities and the view of the state as serving the citizens. Confirming his old suspicions, Guardini republished this essay in 1933.

Guardini’s Weimar period writings reflect much of the general sentiment that is usually associated with the term “Conservative Revolution.” Yet he was a relatively moderate voice within this diverse movement of intellectuals. After the emergence of the National Socialist order, Guardini seems to have gone

127 Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 192.

128 Romano Guardini, “Gedanken über politische Bildung.” *Schildgenossen* 13 (Dec. 1933), 177–182; this essay was republished in 1933, originally it was published in *Staatsbürgerliche Erziehung*, ed. Felix Lampe and Georg H. Franke. Breslau: Hirt, 1926, 505–514.

129 Guardini, “Gedanken über politische Bildung”, 180.

130 Guardini, “Gedanken über politische Bildung”, 180.

131 Guardini, “Gedanken über politische Bildung”, 181 f.

through a transitional period in which he wrestled with the right response to the changing situation.

4 Guardini in National Socialist Germany

In Guardini's immediate context of academic activity, such as the journal for the Catholic youth movement, he encountered a generally positive reception of the political transition of 1933. For example, according to Robert Grosche in *Schildgenossen* in 1933: "Als im Jahre 1870 die Unfehlbarkeit des Papstes definiert wurde, da nahm die Kirche auf der höheren Ebene jene geschichtliche Entscheidung voraus, die heute auf der politischen Ebene gefällt wird: für die Autorität gegen die Diskussion, für den Papst und gegen die Souveränität des Konzils, für den Führer und gegen das Parlament."¹³² While Guardini was more cautious than Grosche at the outset of the Third Reich, this positive embrace of authority and the deep skepticism of parliamentary thinking and the democratic system all fit with the general trajectory of his writings from the 1920s.

4.1 "Volk" (February 1933)

In 1933 Guardini published a short article on the subject of the "Volk". This was published in the *Bayerische Israelitische Gemeindezeitung*. In the previous issues of the journal, from the 15th of February, 1933, the deep concern about the "course of the German political tragedy" ("den Gang der deutschen politischen Tragödie") was addressed, including mention of the fact that the Jews were being excluded as citizens.¹³³ In the following issues, the political situation in Germany became one of the central subjects addressed in the publication. In the issue from the 1st of April (9/7, 1933), the editors published various statements from representatives of the Bavarian Jews on the injustice against the Jews in Germany. On the 1st of June, 1933, the editors published a summary of the various responses of German Jews to the developments in Germany. As is clear from the many reports offered here, leading Jewish intellectuals in Germany were responding to the developments in different ways. Some wanted to engage the situation with a fight for liberation and thus take the path of cooperation

¹³² Robert Grosche, "Grundlagen einer christlichen Politik der deutschen Katholiken." *Schildgenossen* 13 (1933), 46–52, here 48, as cited in Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 201 f.

¹³³ F. "Zwischen 30. Januar und 5. März." *Bayerische Israelitische Gemeindezeitung* 9/4 (15 Feb., 1933), 49–51, here 51.

and optimism, others thought that the time had come to leave Germany. Some National Socialists were also cited, such as Prof. Ernst Krieck, who said that Jewish professors no longer had a place in the German educational institutions. In his argument, the age of liberalism had finally come to an end and the German educational institutions would now be dedicated to national-political education. New legal issues were also addressed in this summary, including the German press and the German radio. As the editors suggest, it was now illusionary to believe that there would be a “return of the liberal-democratic state” (“Widerkehr des liberalen-demokratischen Staates”).¹³⁴ The editors remark that it would be an illusion to believe that anything could be done to shake up the new political ideology in Germany with a battle for emancipation. As they explain, the ideology was spreading across Europe and it was clearly in opposition to “democracy, liberalism and equal rights” (“gegen Demokratie, Liberalismus und Gleichberechtigung”).¹³⁵ The editors hold that the ideology was entirely incompatible with the democratic system. According to the ideology’s view of the world, the value of the nation and “of the pure folkdom” (“des reinen Volkstums”) is affirmed with such persuasiveness and with a force to transform all aspects of social life that has its example only “in the suggestive effect of the ecclesial-religious idea of the Middle Ages” (“in der suggestiven Wirkung der kirchlich-religiösen Idee des Mittelalters”).¹³⁶ Other perspectives from other intellectuals are also cited in the essay. They emphasized that the Jews were being excluded from the “Volksgemeinschaft” in the emphasis on “blood-belonging” (“Blutszugehörigkeit”).¹³⁷ In the final remarks, the editors state that the leaders of the German Jews hoped that they could get through this difficult phase of history, and that the German Jewish institutions would survive. In this, they suggest that the different groups would have to pull together for the greater good of supporting the communities.¹³⁸

This was the broader intellectual discourse that Guardini joined in May of 1933 as he wrote an essay on the term “Volk” for the oppressed group of German Jews. At this point in May, the situation was entirely clear: the Jews were being excluded from German culture, society and politics based upon the idea of a *Volksgemeinschaft* and radical racist ideas. Guardini was apparently asked by the editors to address the controversial term “Volk” in this context as an important

134 [Anonymous], “Jüdische Haltungen zur gegenwärtigen Situation in Deutschland.” *Bayerische Israelitische Gemeindezeitung* 9/11 (1 June, 1933), 161–165, here 163.

135 [Anonymous], “Jüdische Haltungen zur gegenwärtigen Situation in Deutschland”, 163.

136 [Anonymous], “Jüdische Haltungen zur gegenwärtigen Situation in Deutschland”, 163.

137 [Anonymous], “Jüdische Haltungen zur gegenwärtigen Situation in Deutschland”, 164.

138 [Anonymous], “Jüdische Haltungen zur gegenwärtigen Situation in Deutschland”, 165.

and influential theologian with authority to speak to the situation. Presumably, the German Jews had hoped that he would come to their defense or address the way that this idea was being misused in the political situation. This is not what Guardini does.

Guardini essentially affirms the concept as it was being used at this time. He claims: “Das Wort ‘Volk’ drückt den Inbegriff alles menschlich Echten, Tiefen, Tragenden aus. Volk ist die menschliche Ursphäre, wurzelhaft, stark und ehrwürdig.”¹³⁹ He goes on to connect it with the concept of “Schicksal” and even claims that it is “mit der Erde verwachsen.”¹⁴⁰ Indeed, “eingewoben in den Zusammenhang der Natur [...]”¹⁴¹ It is “der echte Mensch”, and “Der Mensch des Volkes steht im Kreislauf des Blutes, geöffnet dem Durchstrom des gemeinsamen Lebens in Familie, Gemeinde und Menschheit.”¹⁴² He embraces the language of immediacy and pre-intellectuality, for “Es denkt und fühlt nicht abstrakt, sondern in Gestalten und Geschehnissen.”¹⁴³ Indeed, “in ihm sind die Instinkte noch nicht beirrt; so besitzt es Richtung und Unterscheidungssinn.”¹⁴⁴ He does write: “Auch viel böses lebt im Volke.”¹⁴⁵ Yet, even though there is a “tierische Wut, erbarmungslose Grausamkeit”, etc., nevertheless, “ja, in alledem ist das Volk ‘kindlich gut’.”¹⁴⁶ Those are the last words he wrote for the Jews in Germany in his article on the “Volk.” He finds a way to address the phenomenon in its destructive aggression without, in any way, calling for the correction of the ideology behind the term. This was not a form of apolitical cultural analysis but rather an explanation and theological justification of the underlying rationality of the concept itself. In Guardini’s view, and in the National Socialist view, it all has to do with the “Kreislauf des Blutes”.

Guardini’s embrace of the language and concepts of his day is also found in his other publications from 1933. For example, in his reflections on Dante and the view of the “Leib” in the Middle Ages, he turns to the theme of “northern inwardness”. There he writes that it was “Von der nordischen Innerlichkeit durchwirkt; von der Seele und ihrer Tiefe; im letzten von der anima christiana.

139 Romano Guardini, “Volk.” *Bayerische Israelitische Gemeindezeitung* 9/9 (1 May, 1933), 129–130, here 129.

140 Guardini, “Volk”, 129.

141 Guardini, “Volk”, 129.

142 Guardini, “Volk”, 129.

143 Guardini, “Volk”, 129.

144 Guardini, “Volk”, 130.

145 Guardini, “Volk”, 130.

146 Guardini, “Volk”, 130.

Charaktervoll, strahlend, lieblich und schwingend von einer tiefen Musikalität; aber echte, zu allen Sinnen, zu Seele und Geist redende Leiblichkeit.”¹⁴⁷

4.2 “Vaterland” (September – October 1933)

In 1933, the Volunteer Service (Freiwilliger Arbeitsdienst, FAD) moved into Burg Rothenfels.¹⁴⁸ From this point on, all the activities on the Burg had to be discussed with the National Socialist leader of the Freiwilliger Arbeitsdienst. The National Socialist flag with the swastika was also displayed at the Burg at this time.¹⁴⁹ The work of the Quickborn group at the Burg nevertheless continued through the 1930s, until 1939. As Gerl writes: “Es war insbesondere der Verhandlungsfähigkeit von Hans und Lene Waltmann zu verdanken, daß die Burg bis 1939 überhaupt für die Benutzung freigegeben wurde.”¹⁵⁰ There appears to have been a somewhat complicated relationship between Guardini and those working with him at the Burg and the Freiwilliger Arbeitsdienst. Lene Merz (later Waltmann) was one of the people involved in the Quickborn group since the early 1920s and she was very familiar with Guardini and the youth work at Burg Rothenfels. As Gerl explains, Guardini wrote a “Gutachten” for the “Entnazifizierungsstelle” dated 11 May, 1946. As this letter shows, which is transcribed by Gerl, Guardini emphasized that Merz/Waltmann was actually opposed to National Socialism even though she was a member of the National Socialist Party, and even though she led the National Socialist “Frauenshaft” group of Burg Rothenfels.¹⁵¹

In the publication of the Burg, *Burgbrief 1* from September and October 1933, Guardini published the address he gave in the church service on Burg Rothenfels on the day the National Socialist *Freiwilliger Arbeitsdienst* took over Burg Rothenfels (June 11, 1933).¹⁵² He writes: “Am heutigen Tage wird hier ein

147 Romano Guardini, “Seinsordnung und Aufstiegsbewegung in Dantes Göttlicher Komödie.” *Historisches Jahrbuch der Görresgesellschaft* 53 (1933), 1–26, here 16.

148 Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 242.

149 Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 242.

150 Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 242–244.

151 Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 243.

152 Romano Guardini, “Vaterland. Ansprache in der Heiligen Messe am Tage der Hausübernahme des freiwilligen Arbeitsdienstes auf Burg Rothenfels.” *Burgbrief* (1933), Brief 1 (Sept./Oct.), 1–3. On the transition of the relationship between Catholic youth groups and the Freiwilliger Arbeitsdienst from the Weimar Republic to National Socialist Germany, see Manfred Göbel, *Katholische Jugendverbände und Freiwilliger Arbeitsdienst 1931 – 1933*. Paderborn: Schöningh, 2005, esp. 264 ff. See also Peter Dudek, *Erziehung durch Arbeit. Arbeitslagerbewegung und freiwilliger Arbeitsdienst 1920 – 1935*. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1988.

Haus übernommen und in den Dienst einer Sache gestellt, die Alle angeht.”¹⁵³ This “Sache” is described with reference to four words: “Vaterland, Heimat, Volk, Staat – und die doch ein Ganzes bedeuten!”¹⁵⁴ He defines “Volk” in the following way:

“Es [Volk] meint die Menschen, die durch gleiches Vaterland und gleiche Heimat zusammengehören. Es meint, was sie sind und was sie sich erarbeiten; ihr Wesen und was sie an sich tun; was sie freut und was sie bedrängt; ihre Liebe und ihr Leid. Meint die Menschen und ihr Schicksal. Auch ihre Eltern meint es, ihre Ureltern, ihre Ahnen, immer weiter zurück in die ferne Vergangenheit. Unendliches Geflecht von Leben; unendliche Kette von Schicksal.”¹⁵⁵

He goes on to define the term “Staat”: “Es nennt die Ordnung, die das Volk sich setzt; die Verfassung, die es sich gibt; das Recht, das es aufstellt, damit es in Ehren und unter den anderen Völkern der Erde dastehe. Staat ist die Weise, wie ein Volk in der Geschichte mündig wird, Verantwortung übernimmt und handelt.”¹⁵⁶ Here again, and in continuity with his writings from the mid-1920s, Guardini seems to endorse the claim that the foundational order of the state rests on an ethnic identity, not a political body of citizens from various ethnicities. Guardini continues his argument by claiming that human beings did not create the “Land” and “nicht die Menschen haben Volk werden lassen.”¹⁵⁷ At this point, he turns to anti-Enlightenment rhetoric: “Es gab eine Zeit, die das nicht so empfunden hat. Da glaubte man, Wissenschaft und Bildung müßten den Glauben an Gott auflösen; nur Unmündige und Abseitige könnten ihn noch haben.”¹⁵⁸ Yet after World War I, as he argues, this had changed: “Gerade die Wackersten und Tiefsten haben zu fühlen begonnen, daß hinter allem Gott steht.”¹⁵⁹ “Vaterland” was created by God, as Guardini argues. Furthermore, God had created the “blood” of human beings: “Er hat die Menschentiefe geschaffen, des Blutes, des Gemütes, des Geistes und hat ihr eine Hut und einen Wurzelgrund gegeben: Mutterschoß und ‘Heimat’.”¹⁶⁰ He sees this “Heimat” as only a reflection of the deeper religious mystery of the heavenly home. He also sees “Volk” as a “Geheimnis Gottes”.¹⁶¹ Guardini also addresses the idea of a natural “Volk”: “Es gibt auch das bloße naturhafte Volk. Das weiß nicht, woher es kommt und

153 Guardini, “Vaterland”, 1.

154 Guardini, “Vaterland”, 1.

155 Guardini, “Vaterland”, 1.

156 Guardini, “Vaterland”, 1.

157 Guardini, “Vaterland”, 2.

158 Guardini, “Vaterland”, 2.

159 Guardini, “Vaterland”, 2.

160 Guardini, “Vaterland”, 2.

161 Guardini, “Vaterland”, 2.

wohin es geht. Im christlichen Sinn ist es ein Stück Vorsehung. In jedem Volk ist Geschichte; alle Geschichte aber hat seit Christus einen heiligen Kern bekommen. So ist in jedem Volk ein Geheimnis der heiligen Führung Gottes.”¹⁶² Guardini warns that every “Volk” will either be led by God or be “harten Nackens”.¹⁶³ The state as well may be a creation of human beings, yet “was zu innerst im Staate liegt, Hoheit, Recht, Autorität, das kommt von Gott und lebt nur, wenn der Staat Gott fürchtet.”¹⁶⁴ Here Guardini seems to draw upon his earlier work on Schmitt. The statement also reflects his hope at this time that the National Socialist state would respect the status of religion. He goes on to argue that it is essential that Christians serve this greater whole that he described with these four words: “Wenn das Schaffen von Heimat und Vaterland nicht bis zu mir kommt; wenn ich nicht auf die Frage, wer Volk und Staat schafft, unwillkürlich mich selbst nenne, dann stehe ich überhaupt noch nicht richtig drin!”¹⁶⁵ As he argues, “Ich schaffe jenes große Lebendige! Wodurch? Stehe ich im öffentlichen Dienst, dann durch ihn.”¹⁶⁶ He then continues to expand the options for service, addressing the farmers, those who work in factories, etc. He then comes to mothers: “Die Mutter bildet den Staat im Hause, und er wird wie Stube und Wirtschaftsraum, wie der Festtag und der Alltag darin.”¹⁶⁷ Guardini sees all the various members of society working together to support this great whole behind the four words: “Jeder an seiner Stelle.”¹⁶⁸ Guardini then addresses the long history of Burg Rothenfels: “Viel Geschichte, viel Kampf und Arbeit hat die Burg gesehen, Glorie und Untergang. Das ist Volk, und es lebt noch. . [sic!] Staat aber ist darin durch die Ordnung des Gesetzes, durch Befehl und Gehorsam, durch die Gerechtigkeit.”¹⁶⁹ In this way Guardini was trying to hold the various polarities of the day together, the new political emphasis on authority, submission and obedience, and the general ideal of justice and order. Yet the popular ideology of the day finds its home in Guardini’s remarks, for the “Volk” is a matter of the “Blut”, and this too, as well as the “Vaterland”, is created by God. In 1933, Guardini had harmonized the popular ideology of the day with a general Christian message. As the National Socialist order moved into Burg Rothenfels, Guardini essentially greeted it and called his colleagues and the youth to service. Indeed, even mothers are to build the state, now in 1933 Germany, through the

162 Guardini, “Vaterland”, 2.

163 Guardini, “Vaterland”, 2.

164 Guardini, “Vaterland”, 2.

165 Guardini, “Vaterland”, 2 f.

166 Guardini, “Vaterland”, 3.

167 Guardini, “Vaterland”, 3.

168 Guardini, “Vaterland”, 3.

169 Guardini, “Vaterland”, 3.

raising of children. This seems to reflect his earlier criticism of the feminist movement. In a highly ideological environment, Guardini was not yet slowing down the rhetorical impulses nor was he seeking to reject the language or the general political agenda. He took an entirely different approach in his integrative adoption of the language and ideology.

4.3 The essence of the *Vereinigung der Freunde von Burg Rothenfels* in 1933

As Gerl explains, in 1933 the “Verein der Quickbornfreunde e.V.” decided to dissolve itself in order to avoid the government’s *Gleichschaltung*. It then became the “Vereinigung der Freunde von Burg Rothenfels.”¹⁷⁰ Guardini and Rolf Ammann explain this transition in a *Burgbrief* from 1933. They write: “Aufgabe dieser Vereinigung soll die Erhaltung und der Aufbau der Burg, sowie die Förderung der religiösen und geistigen Zwecke sein, für die sie tätig ist. Die Burg dient einem geistigen und religiösen Leben, das aus den Wurzeln des deutschen Daseinswillens und des katholischen Glaubens zugleich gespeist wird. So steht die ‘Vereinigung der Freunde von Burg Rothenfels’, indem sie dieses Werk hütet und trägt, mitten im deutschen Schaffen der Gegenwart.”¹⁷¹ In the same explanation regarding the work of the Burg, they explain: “*Der Geist muß lebendig bleiben. Er will an der deutschen Neuwerdung mitschaffen.*”¹⁷² Guardini’s strategic approach at this time in National Socialist Germany was characterized by cooperation and integration of the new impulses from a Catholic perspective. The older approach of the *Kulturkampf* was clearly rejected in this strategy. Guardini called for embrace and collaboration.

4.4 Anti-Individualism in 1933

While Guardini was calling for collaboration in 1933, he was also advancing a fundamental criticism of liberal individualism: “Dem ethischen Individualismus liegt wirklich eine Unmenschlichkeit zu Grunde.”¹⁷³ He goes on to address the “grauenhaft” differentiation of the conception of subjectivity in the develop-

¹⁷⁰ Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 245.

¹⁷¹ Romano Guardini, Rolf Ammann, “Vereinigung der Freunde von Burg Rothenfels.” *Burgbrief* (1933), Brief 1 (Sept./Oct.), 7–8, here 7.

¹⁷² Guardini, Ammann, “Vereinigung der Freunde von Burg Rothenfelsbid”, 8.

¹⁷³ Romano Guardini, “Der Glaube an die Gnade und das Bewußtsein der Schuld.” *Schildgenossen* 13 (1933), 128–145, here 142.

ments of the “Neuzeit”.¹⁷⁴ This led to a “kalte Einsamkeit” which is “nicht mehr menschlich”.¹⁷⁵ Indeed, this development of modern subjectivity is a “Usurpation des Göttlichen”.¹⁷⁶ In this sense, in 1933, Erich Przywara claimed that Guardini was one of the leading voices of the new intellectual mood after World War I. He saw him as a part of the larger shift to “nature” as humanism, liberalism and individualism were finally unmasked as errors in the post-war era. Przywara praised Guardini with the highest praise and compared him to Stefan George.¹⁷⁷ However, Guardini was more active in the social and political sphere than the elitist George (in this sense, Guardini was actually closer to the third generation of the *George-Kreis*).¹⁷⁸

As addressed above, in 1926 Guardini published “Gedanken über politische Bildung”. In December of 1933, he republished this with a brief foreword in *Schildgenossen*.¹⁷⁹ In the foreword, which was presumably written by Guardini (and undersigned with “Die Schriftleitung”), it is explained that the political situation was different in the context of the first publication. Yet he explains that the republication is now justified, as that the matter (“Sache”) with which it deals is important for the new political situation:

“Wenn wir ihn heute wieder abdrucken, so geschieht das, weil er von einer Sache handelt, die auch für die neue politische Wirklichkeit bedeutungsvoll ist: von der Erziehung zum ganzheitlichen Denken, zur Verantwortung für das Leben der Ganzheit, die uns einschließt, kurz von der *politischen Bildung*. Der Staat kann nicht von oben her verwirklicht werden, – mag man das völkisch-staatliche Leben noch so gründlich durchorganisieren, mag man das Leben des Einzelnen in allen seinen Bereichen noch so restlos erfassen –, wenn dem Anspruch des Staates nicht das auf die Ganzheit gerichtete Denken und Wollen des Menschen, wenn ihm nicht sein politisches Sein entspricht. Der neue Staat betont seine erzieherische Aufgabe stärker, als es vorher geschehen ist; so fallen die Gedanken dieses kleinen Aufsatzes jetzt vielleicht auf fruchtbareren Grund als zur Zeit seiner Abfassung. Mit seiner Beziehung auf politische Formen aber, die heute überwunden sind, ist er zugleich so etwas wie ein geschichtliches Dokument.”¹⁸⁰

174 Guardini, “Der Glaube an die Gnade und das Bewußtsein der Schuld”, 142 f.

175 Guardini, “Der Glaube an die Gnade und das Bewußtsein der Schuld”, 143.

176 Guardini, “Der Glaube an die Gnade und das Bewußtsein der Schuld”, 143.

177 Erich Przywara, “Die Hauptrichtungen der katholischen Theologie und Philosophie.” In *Volk im Glauben. Ein Buch vom katholischen Deutschen* [Imprimatur: 20 June, 1933], ed. Max Horst and Richard Hebing, Berlin: Schmid, 1933, 181–192, here 187.

178 On the *George-Kreis* and George’s significance among Catholic intellectuals at this time, see my *The Early Hans Urs von Balthasar*, 87–99, with reference to secondary literature.

179 Romano Guardini, “Gedanken über politische Bildung.” *Schildgenossen* 13 (Dec. 1933), 177–182; see the same article in *Staatsbürgerliche Erziehung*, ed. Felix Lampe and Georg H. Franke. Breslau: Hirt, 1926, 505–514.

180 Editorial remarks, in Guardini, “Gedanken über politische Bildung”, 177.

In the middle of the Weimar Republic, Guardini developed ideas regarding a political education that emphasizes a sense of wholeness. Now, in 1933, he suggests that these ideas will perhaps fall on “more fertile soil” than they could have in the 1920s. In these remarks, Guardini seems to suggest that the new political situation is more amiable to his ideal political concept, at least with regard to a stronger emphasis on the state’s responsibility in matters of education to the vision of wholeness. Here at the end of 1933, Guardini was clearly expressing a collaborative posture of optimism. He offers the conditions for the realization of the new political ideals in 1933: the thinking and willing of man, his political being, must accord with the claim of the state. Otherwise the state cannot be realized. This is a call for a deep identification with the political ideals of wholeness that go beyond the surface level. The ideology of “Ganzheit” must be established on the substratum. Guardini makes it clear that the older political “Formen” of the Weimar Republic have now been overcome in 1933. It is likely that he was referring to the democratic parliamentary culture of the Weimar Republic. There is a sense here that Guardini’s ideas fit better in post-1933 Germany than they did in the Weimar Republic. Indeed, the very principle of human freedom was often drawn into a negative light in Guardini’s work in the early 1930s. He clearly saw it as a danger and often postulated God’s work in contradistinction to the corruptions of human freedom. As he wrote for a December 1933 issue of *Die Christliche Frau*, “Gott ist allmächtig und reich ohne Grenzen und Enden. Sein Reichtum und seine Allmacht sind selbst seine Geduld. Wie ist das gut! Daß Gottes Geduld groß ist wie seine Allmacht! Darum kann er immer aufs Neue verzeihen. Immer aufs Neue sein Weltwerk aus dem Chaos der Menschenfreiheit beginnen lassen.”¹⁸¹

The Gestapo monitored the Quickborn group from 1934 onward.¹⁸² According to Elisabeth Wilmes-Merz, the participants at the Burg chose not to vote at the same polling station in the plebiscite of the 19th of August, 1934, regarding the fusion of the offices of the Reich-president and the Reich-chancellor. According to Wilmes-Merz, there would have been so many no-votes from the Quickborn group of Burg Rothenfels that the authorities would have been alerted.¹⁸³ As Gerl writes, drawing upon archival material from Burg Rothenfels: “200 Rothenfelser, die meist davon keine Ahnung hatten, wurden darin nach Weltanschauung und politischer (Un-)Zuverlässigkeit aufgelistet und in die Zentrale im Würzburger Gestapoquartier gemeldet.”¹⁸⁴ Yet this may have been a relatively normal monit-

181 Romano Guardini, “Gottes Geduld.” *Die Christliche Frau. Mitgliederzeitschrift des Katholischen Deutschen Frauenbundes* 31 (1933), 321–325, here 324.

182 Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 246.

183 Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 246.

184 Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 246.

oring level for a group of this size at this time in Germany. Before World War II the National Socialist state had at its service at least two million block leaders across Germany (who monitored neighborhood sized units),¹⁸⁵ and the cooperative monitoring network beyond this extended into virtually every realm of social life. In the NSDAP administrative district of Stuttgart alone there were around 15,000 NSDAP operatives (either volunteers or officials), who would have been expected to report on their neighbors.¹⁸⁶ The National Socialist officials and volunteers were clearly concerned about a potential danger emerging from the Catholic youth movement. Yet Guardini seems to have ensured them that he was in no way interested in encouraging resistance. On the contrary, Guardini explicitly called upon the Catholic youth to cooperate.

4.5 Guardini's remarks to Max Müller (1933)

The philosopher Max Müller had contact with Guardini while he was a student in Berlin. He was also involved with the Catholic youth movement at Burg Rothenfels. He also studied in France, and there came into contact there with the “Renouveau'-Exponenten”, according to Christian Tilitzki.¹⁸⁷ Before this, in the 1920s, he was also involved with the Jesuit academic group “Neudeutschland.” Later he became a member of the NSDAP in 1940.¹⁸⁸ Much later, after World War II, he claimed that Guardini told him:

“Sehen Sie, damals – 1933 – hat der von mir so hoch verehrte Romano Guardini als geistiger und geistlicher Führer des ‘Quickborn’ die Meinung gehabt und ist für sie eingetreten: Wir dürften kein unbedingtes ‘Nein’ zu Hitler in diesem geschichtlichen Augenblick sagen, denn ohne ihn siege der Bolschewismus in Deutschland. Für mich war dies schon damals ein Fehlurteil. Und dem damaligen Leiter der Quickborn-Jungenschaft Hans-Jörg Oeschger legte er, wie ich aus dessen Mund es persönlich zuverlässig erfahren habe, die Auflösung und Überführung dieser Quickborn-Jungenschaft in die Hitler-Jugend nahe. Ja, er drängte sogar darauf, ‘daß wir auch dort präsent seien und wirken könnten’, was in der Isolierung nicht möglich sei. Oeschger hat dem widersprochen. Dem Ansehen Guardinis in meinen Augen und seiner für mich bleibenden Größe hat dies nicht geschadet, aber er hatte kein konkretes politisches Urteil, keinen ‘sensus politicus practicus’. Ich aber meinte, im Gegensatz zu Guardini,

185 Carsten Dams and Michael Stolle, *Die Gestapo. Herrschaft und Terror im Dritten Reich*. München: C. H. Beck, 2012, 99.

186 Detlef Schmiechen-Ackermann, “Der ‘Blockwart’. Die unteren Parteifunktionäre im nationalsozialistischen Terror- und Überwachungsapparat.” *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 48/4 (2000), 575–602, here 586.

187 Christian Tilitzki, *Die deutsche Universitätsphilosophie in der Weimarer Republik und im Dritten Reich*, Teil 1. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2002, 736.

188 Tilitzki, *Die deutsche Universitätsphilosophie*, Teil 1, 737.

‘wir’ müßten auf jeden Fall anders handeln und auch organisatorisch zusammenbleiben. Als Einzelne und Isolierte würden wir aufgesogen, wären gerade im äußeren wirkungslos und würden vielleicht sogar im inneren uns selbst entfremdet.”¹⁸⁹

It is questionable whether Müller’s claim that Guardini was essentially apolitical is correct. Given Guardini’s political reflections in the 1920s, and especially his reception of Schmitt and writings on the *Volk* concept in the full breadth of its political significance, it is more likely that he was simply careful about sharing his political views, and this all the more in and following 1933. Richter holds: “Die Angst vor dem Bolschewismus ist bei Guardini ein entschiedenes Motiv. Dazu kommt bei einer Fronthaltung gegenüber dem Nationalsozialismus die Angst vor der Isolierung und dem Abgedrängtwerden ins katholische Ghetto, was doch für überwunden gehalten wurde.”¹⁹⁰

In 1933, Guardini had apparently considered integrating the Quickborn youth organization into the Hitler Youth.¹⁹¹ Gerl claims that Guardini thought that this might change the National Socialists’ intellectual foundation: “Guardini scheint zeitweise den Gedanken verfolgt zu haben, die Jungenschaft möge sich auflösen und in die Hitlerjugend eintreten. Dieser Gedanke ist allerdings nur für 1933 bezeugt und läßt vermuten, daß Guardini zu dieser Zeit noch von der Hoffnung beseelt war – wie manche andere –, die neuen Machthaber könnten durch solche Angliederungen zu einer gewissen Änderung ihrer geistigen Grundlegung veranlaßt werden. Wenig später war ihm aber die Unmöglichkeit dieser Hoffnung deutlich bewußt.”¹⁹² At latest, by the 20th of January, 1934, Guardini had realized that this would not be possible.¹⁹³ While Guardini’s earlier views have been explained with reference to strategic arguments about influencing the “Machthaber”, his own remarks from 1933 do not suggest the same level of reserve or distance (nor do *Schildgenossen* or the *Burgbrief* publications). His writings

189 Max Müller, *Auseinandersetzung als Versöhnung. Ein Gespräch über ein Leben mit der Philosophie*, ed. Wilhelm Vossenkuhl. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1994, 68. Ingeborg Klimmer holds that things were “notgedrungen unpolitisch” on the Burg, see Ingeborg Klimmer, “Die Bedeutung Guardinis für die jungen Menschen auf der Burg in den dreißiger Jahren.” in *Burgbrief* 3/85 (21.07.1985), 11–14, here 11.

190 Richter, *Nationales Denken im Katholizismus der Weimarer Republik*, 194. Guardini was also clearly aware of the nature of the ideology and its use of art. According to Gerner, Guardini visited the “Entartete Kunst” exhibit in Munich in 1937, as well as the Haus der Kunst. Gerner, *Romano Guardini in München*, Volume. 1, 55.

191 Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 245. See Johannes Binkowski, *Jugend als Wegbereiter. Der Quickborn von 1909 bis 1945*. Stuttgart: Theiss, 1981, 229, with reference to Kurt Döbler. Gerl also points to a publication from Hans Jörg Oeschger, from 1982.

192 Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 245.

193 Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 245, in a conversation with Erich Görner.

from 1933 suggest that he had a generally positive attitude towards the development, that he wanted to encourage the Catholic youth to cooperate, and that he essentially affirmed the shift to authority and the *Volk* themes.

4.6 *Burgbrief* statement on the church's situation in Germany in 1935

Guardini's views of the situation of the church in Germany in the mid-1930s were probably quite similar to those of Ludwig A. Winterswyl. Winterswyl was a member of Guardini's inner circle at the Burg.¹⁹⁴ In the January/February 1935 issue of the *Burgbrief*, Winterswyl published remarks on the contemporary challenges. There he writes:

"Ist doch unsere Gegenwart gekennzeichnet durch ein neues Erlebnis unserer deutschen Art, durch eine neue Bejahung des Ahnenerbes, das unser Schicksal ist. Darüber hinaus ist uns tiefer die Erkenntnis zuteil geworden, daß die großen überpersönlichen Vorgegebenheiten von Sippe, Stamm, Volk und Rasse, weil sie aus der Schöpfung Gottes und durch seine Führung wurden, nicht rein profan sind, sondern in sich die Spuren Gottes tragen, erfüllt sind vom Gottgeheimnis der Welt und geadelt durch sein Weltinnesein."¹⁹⁵

He also argues that there is a parallel to be drawn between our understanding of individual human beings and *Völker*: "Wie bei den einzelnen Menschen ist es auch bei den einzelnen Völkern. Wenn sie zu Christus kommen, soll die Kirche sie mit ihren Namen, das bedeutet: in ihrem tiefsten völkischen Wesen anrufen."¹⁹⁶ He also addresses the German Christian Movement in Protestantism: "Was wir heute in der Deutschen Glaubensbewegung an numinoser Verabsolutierung deutscher Art sehen, ist im Grunde nichts anderes als das leidenschaftliche Sichwehren der Deutschen gegen die reformatorische Versündlichung alles Natürlichen bis in den tiefsten Wesenskern."¹⁹⁷ This seems to be a relatively positive

¹⁹⁴ Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 317 f.

¹⁹⁵ Ludwig A. Winterswyl, "Zur Situation der Kirche in Deutschland." *Burgbrief* (1935), Brief 16/17 (Jan./Feb.), 84–87, here 84. In 1935 the editors of *Burgbrief* published an excerpt from Gerhard Gesemann's "Die historische Kurzgeschichte der Montenegriener". The editors published it under the title "Rasse." It is a story about a potential conflict between thousands of dogs and wolves. The dogs number 10,000 and the wolves only 1,000. The general of the dogs had sent spies to the wolves. They return to counsel against an attack on the wolves. The dog-general asked why, as the dogs are 10,000 in number and the wolves are only 1,000. The spies then claim that it is not possible because the wolves are all the same in kind, and in color, "sie sind alle von gleicher Art, bei uns aber gibt es Scheckige, Schwarze, Blässige, Kurzschwänzige, Gelbliche und Konsorten." See "Rasse." *Burgbrief* (1935), Brief 16/17 (Jan./Feb.), 94.

¹⁹⁶ Winterswyl, "Zur Situation der Kirche in Deutschland", 84.

¹⁹⁷ Winterswyl, "Zur Situation der Kirche in Deutschland", 84.

analysis of the German Christians, although it is not an affirmation of them. The rise of the new nationalistic Christianity is essentially presented as a rejection of an error in Protestantism, an overemphasis on the sinfulness of nature. Catholics know, he argues, that the “Natürliches” needs to go through the “Gericht der Glaubensentscheidung”.¹⁹⁸ There is thus a shared sense of emphasis on transcendence with reformed theology, in the rejection of a pure divine imminence. Nevertheless, he argues that there needs to be a reflection regarding the new encounter “des deutschen Wesens mit Christus”.¹⁹⁹ His appeal is clearly formulated: “Wir möchten, daß die Catholica das deutsche Anliegen ganz aufnehme, wir möchten aber auch, daß das Christentum von Deutschland ganz aufgenommen wird, d.h. als die Kirche Christi mit ihrem Glauben, ihren Sakramenten und ihrer bischöflichen Verfassung. Wir möchten, daß die Begegnung nicht nur im Gewissen des deutschen Einzelnen erfolge, sondern von Kirche zu Volk.”²⁰⁰ Yet there is a moment of moderation to be emphasized, as he argues, for Catholics are in agreement with Protestants regarding the fact that “kein völkischer Wert gegen das schlechthin Neue des Evangeliums bestehen kann [...]”.²⁰¹ Nevertheless, the “beste Art eines Volkes aus seiner Schöpfungsmittigkeit”²⁰² is not eliminated in Christianity. In this approach, there is a desire to affirm “das deutsche Anliegen” without losing sight of the Christian message. It rejects the most radical interpretation of the *völkisch* ideology while affirming a specific version of it. In this way, the ideology was being integrated into German Catholicism.

4.7 Guardini’s “Der Heiland” (1935)

Much literature on Guardini claims that his work, such as “Der Heiland”, or *Der Herr* or his work at the *Schildgenossen* journal, was somehow critical of National Socialism. Further research is needed to demonstrate these claims. In Guardini’s “Der Heiland” (1935) he embraces a *Lebensphilosophie*. He argues: “In seinem ganzen Wesen fühlt der Mensch die aufsteigende Lebenswelle. Das ist wiederum ‘Heil’; des wiederkehrenden Lebens, des Frühlings.”²⁰³ This also applies to human life: “Die Ordnung des Gemeinschaftslebens; Gesetz, Herkommen, Regel der Erziehung mit ihren Weihungen und Initiationen. Der Kult; die Kunst und

198 Winterswyl, “Zur Situation der Kirche in Deutschland”, 85.

199 Winterswyl, “Zur Situation der Kirche in Deutschland”, 85.

200 Winterswyl, “Zur Situation der Kirche in Deutschland”, 85.

201 Winterswyl, “Zur Situation der Kirche in Deutschland”, 86.

202 Winterswyl, “Zur Situation der Kirche in Deutschland”, 86.

203 Romano Guardini, “Der Heiland.” *Die Schildgenossen* 14/2 (1935), 97–116, here 100.

Ordnung der Beschwörungen und Besänftigungen, von höheren Wesen gelehrt, von Ahnen und Weisen empfangen. Die Kultur als Wissen und Können im weitesten Sinne ist Heil.”²⁰⁴ The phenomenon of “Heil” is thus found in the order of the “Gemeinschaftsleben”, yet the deeper essence is embodied the “Heilbringer.” Guardini writes: “Der Heilbringer ist Sohn. Der neu Erstehende, Junge, der sich neben dem Alternden, Absinkenden aufrichtet. Der kommt, während dieser geht.”²⁰⁵ There is thus a primal phenomenon of “Heil” and the primal form in the vitality of the son. Guardini offered his readers a religious-philosophical template for a Christian concept of Jesus Christ as “Sohn” and “Junge”. Yet it nevertheless rests upon a broader intellectual construct, one which makes room for the vitality-discourse of the time, as well as the general interest in the concept of a “Heil” and “Heilbringer” (as youthful renewers who overcome the older generation). Guardini writes that the one is “voll schaffender, kämpfender, siegender Kraft” while the other is becoming “schwach und unfruchtbar”.²⁰⁶ This emphasis on the power of youth was very common in mid-1930s Germany and it was very familiar to his readers. Guardini is exploring the boundaries of these concepts. He does not want to abandon the themes but seeks to articulate them in a careful way. He continues in his definition: “Er ist jener, der Gaben bringt: das Feuer, den Weinstock, die Ordnung des Staates [...]”²⁰⁷ Again, he writes: “Sein Leben gipfelt in der heilbringenden Tat. Oft ist er ein Kämpfer [...]”²⁰⁸ Guardini has identified the primal phenomenon of the “Heilbringer”. Christ is clearly the ultimate fulfilment of this “Kernphänomen”,²⁰⁹ as he calls it, yet the primal phenomenon is a given of reality that he seems to be affirming. It is also found in kings, as he explains: “Der König ist Träger heiliger Macht. Er ist nicht nur Träger der politischen Autorität, oder Spitze der Organisation des Staates, sondern Verkörperung heiliger Macht; jener, die im Gemeinwesen, in seiner lebensordnenden und sichernden Kraft, in der Sinnfülle der Hoheit, in der bindenden Energie des Gesetzes usw. waltet. Der König ist die Verkörperung des Heilig-Herrschenden, des Göttlich-Gegenbringenden.”²¹⁰

Guardini’s life-philosophy in the mid-1930s showed how Christianity could be understood in harmony with the broader interest in the mysterious dynamics of life and the power of youthfulness. The broader contextual usage of the youthful vitality concept was clearly ideological at this time, and it was central to the

204 Guardini, “Der Heiland”, 101.

205 Guardini, “Der Heiland”, 101.

206 Guardini, “Der Heiland”, 102.

207 Guardini, “Der Heiland”, 102.

208 Guardini, “Der Heiland”, 102.

209 Guardini, “Der Heiland”, 105.

210 Guardini, “Der Heiland”, 103.

ideology of the Hitler Youth.²¹¹ Indeed, the National Socialist understood themselves to a large degree as a movement of the youth. This followed in part from the vitality of authority and order in contrast to the liberality and disorder of the Weimar Republic, but it also entailed a more fundamental mythos of rebirth, something essential to all post-War War I fascist movements in Europe. Guardini was riding this wave of ideologically charged interest in youthfulness and vitality. He essentially provided a Christian religious-philosophical account of this phenomenon. In the mid-1930s Guardini was working synthetically in his context, and doing this with an apologetic interest. He showed how Christian intellectuality uniquely approached this discourse, and how it made sense of kings who embodied the “Heilig-Herrschenden”. He argued that the “Heilandsgestalten” are not purely negative ideas, but indeed positive ones.²¹² They give expression to this sense of a desire for *Heil*. They simply have to accept Christ as the ultimate fulfilment: “So kann die Winter-Sonnenwende mit der kosmischen, atmosphärischen, volkischen [sic!] Fülle ihrer Bedeutung zur Grundlage für das Weihnachtsfest werden.”²¹³

4.8 The elimination of the guest professorship in Berlin

The elimination of Guardini’s position in Berlin in 1939 has received a lot of attention in the secondary literature. It is often presented as evidence of the fact that Guardini was somehow a danger to National Socialism or a secret enemy of the state. In fact, Guardini was not forced into retirement and he was not forced out of academia. The guest professorship position from Breslau was eliminated and Guardini was offered various alternative academic positions in Germany.²¹⁴ Guardini provided a variety of reasons for his rejection of the offer. He claimed that it would have been too much work for him to transition to the new positions in dogmatics. He also claimed that he would have been more open to a position in fundamental theology or apologetics. Furthermore, he wanted to focus on writing his own books.²¹⁵ Guardini could have continued to hold a professorship in National Socialist Germany. He freely rejected this offer. The position was probably eliminated in connection with the larger reform of the

²¹¹ See Kathrin Kollmeier, *Ordnung und Ausgrenzung. Die Disziplinarpolitik der Hitler-Jugend*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007, 41.

²¹² Guardini, “Der Heiland”, 114.

²¹³ Guardini, “Der Heiland”, 115.

²¹⁴ Guardini, *Berichte über mein Leben*, 52.

²¹⁵ See Guardini, *Berichte über mein Leben*, 53.

Catholic theological faculties in the later 1930s. Other chairs of theology were eliminated at this time. On the whole, however, most of the theological faculties fared relatively well.²¹⁶ For most of the 1930s, Guardini was essentially left in peace, as Gerl remarks: “Bis zum Ende des Wintersemesters 1938/39 erlebte er keine Störung durch sie [Überwachung der Geisteswissenschaften durch die Nationalsozialisten], obwohl der Inhalt seiner Vorlesungen und seine Person selbst dies jederzeit erwarten ließen.”²¹⁷ Later this changed, as Robert A. Krieg argues: “In 1941 the Reich banned *Die Schildgenossen* and forbade Guardini to give public addresses.”²¹⁸ While he no longer taught at the university, Guardini did continue to publish literature in Germany through the 1940s.

5 Guardini in the National Socialist correspondences in the early 1940s

The Reich Literature Chamber (*Reichsschrifttumskammer*) seems to have had concerns about the republication of Guardini’s *In Spiegel und Gleichnis: Bilder und Gedanken, neubearbeitete Auflage* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, 1940). The Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag sent a letter to the Chamber on the 30th of January, 1941, in which it responded to an inquiry from the Chamber (from the 11th of January, 1941). It states in this letter – which is signed with “Heil Hitler!” – that Guardini himself prepared the new-edition of his *In Spiegel und Gleichnis*. Following this, on the 22nd of February, 1941, the office of the President (Hanns Johst) of the Chamber wrote a letter to Guardini and requested that he submit an application to become a member of the Chamber. He was required to fill out a questionnaire and provide a list of publications, as well as information on personal and professional history, proof of Aryan ancestry and other details about religious confession and past political party memberships. The letter states that it had come to the attention of the officer that Guardini was active as an author under the Chamber’s area of oversight or jurisdiction (“Zuständigkeitsbereich”). On the 5th of March, 1941, Guardini responded to the Chamber. He wrote that he was under the presumption that he did not have to become a member of the Chamber. In this context, he refers to a letter from the Werkbund-Verlag

²¹⁶ See Dominik Burkard, “Stärker durchdrungen als angenommen? Theologische Fakultäten in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus.” *Herder Korrespondenz* 65/10 (2011), 526–531, here 529.

²¹⁷ Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 279. On the 7th of Aug., 1939, Burg Rothenfels was taken over by the National Socialists. *Ibid.*, 247.

²¹⁸ Robert A. Krieg, *Romano Guardini: A Precursor of Vatican II*. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997, 9. See also Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 317 f.

(Würzburg) which had already raised this issue and which received no response. He then states that some of his work is academic in nature while his other writings have a more general character. He then asks if he should indeed become a member of the Chamber. On the 17th of March, 1941, he then responded to the Chamber and indicated that he intended to submit the necessary information as soon as he had the time, as that he was in the process of moving. As Guardini explains in his letter to the Chamber on the 29th of March, 1941, he already submitted this proof of Aryan ancestry to the University of Breslau and he was going to request that the university confirm this on his behalf. In another letter to the Chamber from the 18th of April, 1941, Guardini explains that he was having his proof of Aryan ancestry translated into German and planned to submit this to the Chamber as soon as it was completed. On the 6th of May, 1941, he finally submitted the documents. The Reich Literature Chamber presumably initiated an investigation into Guardini at this time, which including many different offices within the National Socialist administrative apparatus. On the 3rd of June, 1941, the Ministry for Ecclesiastical Affairs (Reichsministerium für die Kirchlichen Angelegenheiten) responded to the Reich Literature Chamber and the Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda (Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda) with a statement that indicated it was in the process of investigating Guardini.

Dated on the 26th of March, 1941, in Guardini's *Lebenslauf* (Curriculum Vitae), which he submitted to the Reich Literature Chamber in his application to become a member of the Chamber, Guardini wrote that in 1939 his teaching appointment (as a guest in Berlin on assignment from the University of Breslau) was annulled.²¹⁹ At this time, as Guardini writes, he requested ("Meine Bitte") that rather than being sent to another university he should be put into retirement ("pensioniert"), in order to focus on his academic work. Following the Reich Literature Chamber's request to Guardini to apply to become a member of the Chamber, and following Guardini's application, on the 30th of April, 1941, the Reich Literature Chamber requested from the District Administration of the NSDAP (*Gauleitung der NSDAP*) a report on Guardini. A few months later, on the 19th of June, 1941, the Chamber sent a letter to Guardini in which it stated that his application to become a member was invalid or redundant because of the lack of paper. On the 17th of September, 1941, the Werkbund-Verlag (Würzburg) wrote a letter to the Reich Literature Chamber in which it defended Romano Guardini and requested that this decision to make Guardini's application redundant be reconsidered. The statement indicated that the first two parts of Guardini's *Jesus*

²¹⁹ The following information is taken from the files on Romano Guardini in the German *Bundesarchiv* (Berlin).

Christus were already published and that the paper for the third part had already been ordered and delivered. The statement also indicates that Guardini's work that they wanted to publish was academic in nature. Furthermore, they request that the Chamber consider if Guardini is even required to become a member of the Chamber. At this point in the letter of defense, the Werkbund-Verlag states that Guardini was, "on his own request", given emeritus status, or retired. It adds that a copy of his certificate of retirement was included. ("Prof. Guardini war, wie aus seinem bei Ihnen eingereichten Lebenslauf hervorgeht, Professor an der Universität Breslau mit Lehrauftrag für Berlin. Er ist auf seinen eigenen Antrag hin am 11. März 1939 emeritiert worden. Eine Photokopie seiner Emeritierungsurkunde liegt diesem Brief bei.") It also states that Guardini was "retired with all honors" ("in allen Ehren emeritiert wurde"). For this reason, the letter adds that Guardini was receiving the "retirement pension of an ordinary professor" ("Ruhegehalt eines ordentlichen Professors"). All of this proves the fact that Guardini was an "academic" ("Wissenschaftler"). For this reason, the Werkbund-Verlag requested that Guardini receive a statement from the Chamber that would indicate that he is not required to become a member. The letter ends with "Heil Hitler!" The official certificate of retirement that Guardini received from Adolf Hitler stated explicitly that Guardini requested to be put into retirement ("Im Namen des Deutschen Volkes versetze ich den ordentlichen Professor Dr. Romano Guardini auf seinen Antrag in den Ruhestand. Ich spreche ihm für seine akademische Wirksamkeit und die dem Deutschen Volke gelisteten treuen Dienste meinen Dank aus. Berlin, den 11. März 1939 Der Führer und Reichskanzler [signatures of Adolf Hitler and Hermann Göring].") In the months following this letter, this issue was discussed in the internal correspondences. It seems to have convinced some of the officials (as is indicated by some of the September correspondences in 1941). However, an official letter from the *Wirtschaftsstelle des deutschen Buchhandels* dated with the 17th of October, 1941, indicated that the third part of Guardini's work required official permission to get access to the paper. Furthermore, it stated that such an application, in the current situation, had little chance of success.

Months later, on the 20th April, 1942, the office of the Chief of the Security Police and the Security Service (*Der Chef der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD [Sicherheitsdienstes]*) issued a three-page review of various works from Guardini to the Reich Literature Chamber. The interpretations of Guardini's work in this review are so eisegetical and outlandish that the National Socialist officials that read it must have found it entertaining. For this reason, it is entirely understandable that Dr. Karl Thielke of the Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, which was led by Joseph Goebbels and which oversaw the Reich Literature Chamber, could challenge the Chamber's treatment of Guardini which

relied upon this review. In the review, Guardini is presented as offering hidden attacks on the National Socialist worldview while, “in a Catholic manner, watering down the burning questions of the present on worldview or cultural issues.” The citations that he offers to demonstrate this are unconvincing. For this reason, the reviewer emphasizes that Guardini was offering hidden attacks. Nevertheless, even if the attacks were hidden, the reviewer claims that Guardini’s work does not correspond with “sound German thinking” (“gesunden deutschen Denken”) and that it is essentially a “danger to our *Volk*.” The real reason for his criticism of Guardini seems to have been Guardini’s influence among the Catholic youth, which he mentions in the opening remarks of the review. At the end of the review, he also addresses this issue. The reviewer states that he has serious concerns regarding the acceptance of Guardini into the Reich Literature Chamber because of the “strong confessional connection” and because of the “hidden attacks on the National Socialist worldview”. The review of the National Socialist official, who is identified as a *SS-Sturmabteilungsführer* (“Protection Squadron Storm Unit Leader”), seems to be an example of anti-Catholic discrimination. Marginal notes (which may have been from Thielke or his assistants) were added to this review. The scribbles were added as a commentary to these final sentences about Guardini’s “strong confessional connection” and the “hidden attacks on the National Socialist worldview.” The marginal commentary states: “The Ecclesiastical Ministry came to a different conclusion” (“Das Kirchenministerium gelangte zu einem anderen Ergebnis.”) This marginal remark seems to refer to another document which was issued by the Reich Minister for Ecclesiastical Affairs (*Reichsminister für die kirchlichen Angelegenheiten* of the *Reichsministerium für die kirchlichen Angelegenheiten*). This was issued on the 12th of November, 1941, as a response to the request of the Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda (*Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda*) from the 17th of May, 1941. The statement from the Ministry for Ecclesiastical Affairs was one sentence, short and clear: “There are no concerns regarding Guardini’s application.” (“Gegen den Antrag Guardini’s (sic) bestehen keine Bedenken.”) The National Socialist Ministry for Ecclesiastical Affairs – which was trying to phase-in the churches and suppress all oppositional ecclesial movements at this time – had no problem whatsoever with Guardini becoming a member of the Reich Literature Chamber. In other words, they did not view him as a threat to National Socialist ideology. In light of this conflict of interpretation regarding Guardini’s relationship to the ideological world of National Socialist Germany, it is no wonder that Guardini did not feel like he was being treated fairly by the National Socialist officials as they excluded him from entry into the Reich Literature Chamber.

On the 3rd of July, 1942, Thielke of the Reich Ministry of Public Enlighten-

ment and Propaganda (*Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda*) wrote a letter to the President (Hanns Johst) of the Reich Literature Chamber (*Reichsschrifttumskammer*). This letter followed a long dispute with various correspondences regarding Guardini's publications and his right to publish in Germany. His application to become a member of the Reich Literature Chamber was rejected in this process. In Thielke's letter he came to the defense of Guardini. He states that the Italian diplomat in Berlin had taken up Guardini's cause in order for Guardini to be permitted to publish his work. The diplomat communicated, as Thielke summarizes, that Guardini was a well-known personality in Italy and that his publications in German and in Italian are followed with great interest.²²⁰ In Thielke's praising remarks about Guardini, he then turns to the political situation. He states that he was informed that Guardini's brothers were members of the Fascist Party in Italy. This may have been a reference to all the brothers, or to only two of them. Guardini had three brothers: Gino, Mario and Aleardo.²²¹ For these reasons, Thielke argued that the whole matter regarding Guardini's right to publish be reconsidered. In this, he was referring to the Chamber's request to Guardini that he submit an application to become a member of the Chamber, and Guardini's subsequent application with the proof of Aryan ancestry and all the related information about publications and the fields of writing (which was rejected by the Chamber on the 1st of July, 1941). Following other suggestions in the internal correspondences, Thielke suggests that Guardini should not be required to become a member of the Reich Literature Chamber, in part because most of his work is academic in nature. After this, in the remaining years of World War II, Guardini was permitted to publish various works in Germany.²²²

6 Conclusion and Outlook

Guardini enlivened a generation of youth with a new enthusiasm for Catholicism while helping Catholic theologians to see the deeper Christian worldview in

220 On Guardini's three younger brothers, to whom Guardini dedicated some of his books, see Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 24f. Gerl does not address their political activities.

221 Gerl, *Romano Guardini*, 24.

222 Such as *Der Tod des Sokrates. Eine Interpretation der platonischen Schriften Euthyphron, Apologie, Kriton und Phaidon*. Berlin: Küpper, 1943; *Form und Sinn der Landschaft in den Dichtungen Hölderlins*. Tübingen: Wunderlich, 1944; *Theologische Gebete*. Frankfurt am Main: Knecht, 1944. See the extensive list of publications for the time period from 1933 to 1945 in *Bibliographie Romano Guardini (1885–1968). Guardinis Werke. Veröffentlichungen über Guardini. Rezensionen*, erarbeitet von Hans Mercker, hg. von der Katholischen Akademie in Bayern. Paderborn: Schöningh, 1978, 35–56.

popular literature and philosophy from non-Catholic authors. While Guardini's work of reform in this area has been praised, his legacy and influence in other areas requires further research. Klaus Breuning holds that Guardini's influence on the German youth of the Catholic youth movement worked to prevent them from engaging in political issues: "Der große Einfluß Romano Guardinis, der dem *Quickborn* seine geistige und religiöse Gestalt gab, das mehr philosophisch-anthropologische als politisch-ideologische Verhältnis Guardinis zum Staat und die Intensität des vom *Quickborn* mitgetragenen Aufbruchs der *Liturgischen Bewegung* verhinderten weithin ein Engagement dieses Bundes in politischen Tagesfragen, aber auch eine mögliche Frontstellung gegenüber der sich anbahnenden katholischen Reichsideologie."²²³ Yet a closer analysis of Guardini's work from the 1920s and 1930s suggests that he did indeed promote a political ideology, and that this also influenced the Catholic youth. Guardini shed a negative light on democratic culture and he promoted anti-liberal themes while seeking to retrieve authoritarian thinking in the 1920s. This general sentiment is found in the *Quickborn* youth movement.

As neo-Thomism lost momentum, the stage was set for Guardini's new style. His approach of literature-theology and his philosophy of religion easily grew in popularity in this context. Guardini seems to have been one of the anomalies in the complicated history of the Third Reich. His brothers' apparent membership in the Italian Fascist Party (a claim which requires further research) and the endorsement of the Ministry for Ecclesiastical Affairs in National Socialist Germany supported his position in the Third Reich. His authoritarian cultural and political philosophy, which was built on collectivist destiny-thinking and a negation of liberal individualism and a promotion of the blood and soil *Volk* idea, could have done even more to strengthen his position. Of course, many of the National Socialist officials probably did not know about these writings. Furthermore, Guardini's views about the Germans' unique role in the development of humanity would have surely been music to the ears of the National Socialist ideologues in the offices of Berlin. Nevertheless, his "strong confessional connection" ultimately damaged his standings in post-1933 Germany, and especially his high position in the Catholic youth movement. The most radical National Socialist ideologues saw him as a clear and present danger to "sound German thinking." As the internal review of his work shows, however, the National Socialist Protection Squadron Storm Unit Leader did not read all of Guardini's literature. If he did, and if he did not harbor more fundamental anti-Catholic resentments, he may have come to an entirely different conclusion. Thielke, the

²²³ Klaus Breuning, *Die Vision des Reiches. Deutscher Katholizismus zwischen Demokratie und Diktatur (1929–1934)*. München: Hueber, 1969, 89 f.

Italian diplomat in Berlin and the National Socialist Ministry for Ecclesiastical Affairs, for example, attest to the fact that a different reading of Guardini's work was possible in the Third Reich. Indeed, Guardini did quite well in Germany from 1933 onward until his resignation in 1939; and he could have continued to hold a professorial position if he wanted.

When it comes to the broad spectrum of Catholic fascism in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s, Guardini seems to be an example of a borderline case.²²⁴ He was more cautious than many of his academic colleagues at this time (such as Karl Adam, Karl Eschweiler, Hans Barion, Michael Schmaus, Joseph Lortz, Joseph Mayer and Przywara). Yet, like many others, Guardini built upon the intellectual trends of post-WWI anti-liberalism in a way that supported the turn to authoritarianism. Especially after the rise of fascism in Italy, he developed an intellectual interpretation of the times that harnessed the sense of transition. He emphasized the themes of order, authority and anti-individualism. He also emphasized the sense of the emergence of a new post-modern era, precisely as fascism was on the rise in Europe. With a broad historical narrative about the decline of modernity, he tried to steer these moods of post-liberalism into the broader Catholic worldview, and identify the points of convergence.

In contemporary research on Guardini in German and English, he is often presented as inspiring resistance to National Socialism.²²⁵ Yet there seems to be little evidence that he encouraged resistance to the ideological swing in the 1920s and 1930s. Indeed, he seems to have actually supported some aspects of it. His view of the *Volk*, his advancement of blood and soil themes, his fundamental rejection of liberalism, critical stance toward democratic culture and advancement of authoritarian paradigms are the primary examples of this interrelationship. Guardini also supported many of the themes that were being advanced by fascist intellectuals, such as Schmitt. On the whole, however, he was more cautious than the radical wing of fascist ideologues at this time.

224 Further to this concept, see my "Is the term 'Catholic fascism' necessary? On the historiographical classifications of post-World War I religious-fascist ideology." *Zeitschrift für Neuere Theologiegeschichte / Journal for the History of Modern Theology* 25/1–2 (2018), 104–128. Some biographers of clerical fascists, such as Domenico Sorrentino, have used the term "Catholic fascism" to describe clerical fascists' agenda. See Domenico Sorrentino, *La conciliazione e il "fascismo cattolico": I tempi e la figura di Egilberto Martire*. Brescia: Morcelliana, 1980; John Pollard, "Fascism and Religion." In *Rethinking the Nature of Fascism: Comparative Perspectives*, ed. António Costa Pinto. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, 141–164, here 155.

225 Robert A. Krieg, *Catholic theologians in Nazi Germany*. New York, N. Y.: Continuum, 2004, 206. Krieg refers to Jay P. Corrin, *Catholic Intellectuals and the Challenge of Democracy*. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002, 238–273.

There are many open questions regarding Guardini's relationship to the political developments in Italy, and his communication with his brothers. Krieg holds that there is an "anti-Jewish prejudice" in some of Guardini's early writings, which he later corrected.²²⁶ The emergence and development of this issue has not been studied systematically in Guardini's early work. Much of the research on Guardini has simply followed his own interpretations of his own intellectual development. Guardini kept his academic position in National Socialist Germany until 1939. In order to do this, one had to fit in relatively well, and he seems to have done this. His writings on the *Volk* and on the fatherland and other themes discussed above are also evidence of an intellectual working in a collaborative way. He sought to build bridges to contemporary ideological discourses from a Catholic perspective. This reflected his desire to influence these discourses, but he also seems to have believed that they were a necessary correction of the liberal age. In this sense, Guardini seems to have undergone a unique development following World War I in the 1920s, leading up to the mid-1930s. This development ran parallel to the rise of fascism in Italy and across Europe, but it also built upon his earlier anti-liberal writings from the 1910s. A new orientation is seen in his reception of Schmitt in the 1920s. Schmitt seems to have influenced Guardini's social and political thought from this period onward. Later, in the mid- and later 1930s, Guardini became more reserved about his earlier social and political views. He then became silent about blood and soil and seems to have moved away from the *Volk* concept, at least as he had advanced the

226 Robert A. Krieg, "German Catholic views of Jesus and Judaism, 1918–1945." In *Antisemitism, Christian Ambivalence, and the Holocaust*, ed. Kevin P. Spicer. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2007, 50–75, here 67. Cf. Romano Guardini, *Der Herr. Betrachtungen über die Person und das Leben Jesu Christi*. Burg Rothenfels am Main: Werkbund-Verlag, Abteilung Die Burg, 1937; Romano Guardini, *Verantwortung. Gedanken zur jüdischen Frage. Eine Universitätsrede*. München: Kösel-Verlag, 1952. Krieg holds that later, after World War II, Guardini did a great deal to help repair the relationship between Christianity and Judaism and he encouraged Germany to seek reconciliation with Jewish people. Guardini also contributed to this work personally in his relationship with Martin Buber. See Krieg, "German Catholic views of Jesus and Judaism, 1918–1945", 67 f. Cf. Idem, "Martin Buber and Romano Guardini" In *Humanity at the Limits*, ed. Michael A. Signer. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000, 138–147; Robert A. Krieg, *Romano Guardini: A Precursor of Vatican II*. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press 1997, 34 f. Yet more research is needed on the early period, and on the 1940s and 1950s. Regarding Guardini's *Verantwortung. Gedanken zur jüdischen Frage* from 1952, Rainer Kampling argues: "An der einzigen Stelle der Rede, an der Juden Subjekt sind, werden sie von Guardini negativ besetzt und in Opposition zum deutschen Volk dargestellt." Rainer Kampling, "'Da hilft es nicht, zu vergessen oder zu tun, als ob nichts wäre ...'. Anmerkungen zu Romano Guardinis 'Verantwortung. Gedanken zur jüdischen Frage'." In *Theologie und Vergangenheitsbewältigung. Eine kritische Bestandsaufnahme im interdisziplinären Vergleich*, ed. Lucia Scherzberg. Paderborn: Schöningh, 2005, 153–162, here 160.

theme in the 1920s and early 1930s. Others who were deeply influenced by him, however, continued to promote many of these ideological positions through the 1930s and early 1940s.²²⁷ There is a need for further historical-critical research on Guardini's early period, his writings and his influence of the Catholic youth movement and the liturgical movement. While there are numerous monographs on Guardini, relatively little work has been done on his engagement with the major ideological questions of the first half of the 20th century.

227 Balthasar, for example, was deeply influenced by him. Important new research on Balthasar has been published by Markus Thureau. He shows how Balthasar's anti-Semitism and anti-modern approaches derailed his possible candidacy for a position in Catholic Theology at the Free University in Berlin in the 1950s. The search committee was considering Balthasar as a possible candidate for the position. At this time, Michael Landmann wrote a letter to Wilhelm Weischedel in Berlin, one of the people leading the search committee in Berlin. In this letter, which is now published for the first time in Thureau's critical edition, Landmann claims that Balthasar promoted anti-Semitic attitudes in Basel and that he had a negative impact on the young people in his ministry there. In the 1950s, Landmann claimed that the students under his influence in Basel were "welded together as a sworn and fanatical combat community" ("verschwoerenen und fanatisierten Kampfgemeinschaft zusammengeschweisst"). Landmann to Weischedel, 30 Dec. 1955. In Markus Thureau, "Nach eingehender Diskussion wird der Name Hans Urs von Balthasar fallengelassen." Michael Landmann über das wissenschaftliche Ethos der Freien Universität und ihrer Theologie." In *Bibel – Israel – Kirche. Studien zur jüdisch-christlichen Begegnung*, eds. Sara Han, Anja Middelbeck-Varwick and Markus Thureau. Münster: Aschendorff, 2018, 285–301, here 298. Landmann also cited letters from students in Basel that Balthasar wrote. In one letter, Balthasar apparently wrote about Americanism being more dangerous to Christianity than Adolf Hitler (ibid., 299). Landmann also addressed Balthasar's criticism of the Jews in Balthasar's essay "Mysterium Judaicum" from 1943, and in Balthasar's criticism of Bergson (in 1943 Balthasar asked whether the "ressentiment" in Bergson's thinking had to do with him being a Jewish philosopher).