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Once again, Erich Przywara and the Jews: A response to John Betz with a brief look into the Nazi correspondences on Przywara and *Stimmen der Zeit*

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Abstract: In this article, I respond to John Betz (University of Notre Dame, USA) who has recently rejected claims that I have made about Erich Przywara's anti-Semitism and his relationship to Nazi era ideology. Although I admire much of Przywara's theology and have great sympathy for the teaching about the analogy of being, in this article I address some of the problems of Przywara's work. I address literature from Przywara on the Jews where he talks about the essence of "the Jew" as "restless" and "revolutionary," and where he brings up the "wandering Jew" theme or claims Judaism is an "insolent disturber" of the (German) "folkdom." Przywara's rejection of "Jewish messianism" and his claims about the "basic tension of the Jew" are also addressed. I analyze his conception of the essence of "the Jew" as, among other things, a "rising will of destruction" and his claim that "Christianity" ultimately becomes the "enemy" of Judaism. Beyond these things, Przywara's desire to "overcome" Judaism with the right "weapons" is addressed. I also draw attention to his rejection of "Jewish capitalism" and his justification of "the hatred towards the Jews in world history." In addition to this, his use of ideologically charged Nazi terminology, such as "host-peoples," and his support of Catholic integralism in Nazi Germany are addressed. Furthermore, Przywara's remarks (to a leading Nazi representative and ideologue, Hanns Johst) on "the positive sense" of the German "movements" (i. e. National Socialism) in the 1930s are presented. I also show that Przywara's work was praised by a leading representative and ideologue of National Socialism

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(Otto Dietrich). With this, I address the internal Nazi correspondences on the very influential German Catholic Jesuit journal titled *Stimmen der Zeit*.

John Betz and David Bentley Hart have done a great service in providing the first English translation of Erich Przywara's (1889–1972) *Analogia Entis: Metaphysics: Original Structure and Universal Rhythm* (2014). This translation opens a door into a world of philosophy, the philosophy of religion and philosophical theology. It also offers a glimpse into the mind of a German Jesuit theologian in the early 1930s who later described himself as of "Aryan descent" in the official documents that he submitted to the Nazi authorities in the Third Reich, in his application to become a member of the "Reich Literature Chamber" (*Reichsschrifttumskammer*). Many authors in Nazi Germany applied to become members of the Reich Literature Chamber. Every one of them had to provide the "proof of Aryan ancestry," as Przywara also did. Przywara cooperatively submitted extensive family records and genealogical information to the Nazi authorities to show that there was no "Jewish blood" in him. While Przywara was not a member of the NSDAP or any political party, many of his views on cultural, social and political matters from this time are relatively typical of Nazi Germany. For example, in a letter to the President (Hanns Johst) of the Reich Literature Chamber from the 11th of March, 1937, Przywara assured him, while reporting on his lecture trip to Protestant faculties in Holland, that they endeavored not to offend the Reich-Germans and that on many occasions he, Przywara, could observe how they endeavored to grasp "the positive sense of the German movements" ("den positiven Sinn der deutschen Bewegungen"). Here in this letter, "the positive sense" (not "a positive sense") seems to be presumed by Przywara.¹

The new translation was accompanied with an introduction in which John Betz rejects claims that I have made about Przywara's anti-Semitism.² Betz, Associate Professor at the University of Notre Dame (Indiana, USA), writes about my "recent attempt to discredit Przywara on the basis of his supposed national socialist and anti-Semitic sympathies."³ He continues:

1 Reference to the Nazi correspondences, which are identified here by their dates, are from the German Federal Archive.

2 John Betz, "Translator's Introduction." In Erich Przywara, *Analogia Entis: Metaphysics: Original Structure and Universal Rhythm*, transl. by John Betz and David Bentley Hart. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2014, 1–116. See Paul Silas Peterson, "Erich Przywara on *Sieg-Katholizismus*, bolshevism, the Jews, Volk, Reich and the *analogia entis* in the 1920s and 1930s." *Journal for the History of Modern Theology* 19 (2012): 104–140.

3 Betz, "Translator's Introduction", 25.

“[...] it is unfortunate (since it is far easier to put a label on something than remove one) that in his reading of an article by Przywara from 1926, entitled ‘Judentum und Christentum,’ which serves as the basis for his incrimination, Peterson takes Przywara’s statements about Judaism out of the context in which they occur, where one will find an intellectually rigorous and candid presentation of the differences between modern Judaism and Christianity.”⁴

Betz writes that “there is an element of supersessionism in Przywara’s account of Judaism”;⁵ he continues:

“But this hardly warrants the conclusion that he was anti-Semitic – any more than the candidly critical statements of Buber and Cohen about Christianity entail that they had a personal animus toward Christians. In fact, in the same article that Peterson cites to discredit him, Przywara not only shows admiration for the Jewish philosophers he criticizes – Leo Baeck, for one, is described as ‘masterful’ and ‘brilliant’ – but even uses the word ‘grotesque’ to describe the anti-Semitism of the time, concluding his article in a hopeful spirit with Paul’s theology of Israel from Romans 11:12, 26, 29.”⁶

Betz refers to my article “Erich Przywara on *Sieg-Katholizismus*.” The term “Sieg-Katholizismus” (“victory-Catholicism”) is from Przywara. In this article, Przywara and his work were presented in their historical context. Six issues were addressed: first, Przywara’s relation to the development from Catholic “cultural inferiority” to culture Catholicism in the early 20th century. Second, Przywara was introduced in the context of the political ideas of Carl Schmitt and Alois Dempf; all three were drawing upon the political ideas of Juan Donoso Cortés in the early 20th century, the intellectual predecessor of National Socialist ideology. Third, Przywara’s understanding of bolshevism as a religious and intellectual phenomenon was introduced. Fourth, Przywara’s popular *analogia entis* was analyzed in its cultural and political context. Fifth, his *Volk* theology and anti-Semitism were presented. Finally, Przywara’s remarks on the *Reich* were briefly addressed. Przywara’s anti-Semitism is found in other sources, and not only in “Judaism and Christianity” (“Judentum und Christentum”). These other sources are also addressed in my article. In the following brief response, a few issues will be clarified that Betz has addressed.

Betz writes: “by 1933 he [Przywara] publicly called Nazism ‘a distortion of the Christian *imperium* of the past.’”⁷ Here Betz cites Thomas F. O’Meara’s remarks.⁸ This is not a citation from Przywara but one from O’Meara. O’Meara

4 Ibid., 25 f.

5 Ibid., 26.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid., 25.

8 Thomas F. O’Meara, *Przywara, Erich, S. J. (1889–1972) – His Theology and His World*. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002, 8.

refers to Przywara's *Logos: Logos, Abendland, Reich, Commercium* from 1964.⁹ This is a collection of different shorter works which Przywara published with a brief afterword. In the afterword from 1964 Przywara explains that the first part of the essay on the "Reich" was the "immediate response" that he gave to Friedrich Hielscher at the *Singakademie* in Berlin on the 10th of Jan., 1933.¹⁰ It was, however, never published in 1933. Some of what Przywara wanted to publish about the *Reich* in the 1930s has been addressed in my article.¹¹ As that the response was not published in 1933, there is a question as to whether it is a faithful representation of the entire response that he gave on that day. Did Przywara have other opening or closing remarks on that day in Berlin that were never written down? The 10th of Jan., 1933, was 20 days before Hitler became Chancellor on the 30th of January. Przywara had full freedom to criticize Nazism if he wanted to in this speech. This is not what one finds in the response. It is rather a constructive call for a Christian *Reich*. Here Przywara does not criticize Hielscher for "confusing Christianity with pantheism of 'blood and soil.'" ¹² The response rather reflects the popular *Reich*-theme which was common to Przywara's thinking in the 1930s. Like many authors at this time, Przywara wanted the new nationalism to embrace Catholicism. Once the Nazis took power, he would later hope for a Catholic friendly and Catholic affirmative National Socialism, a Catholic integralism in Nazi Germany, a rebirth of the *Sacrum Imperium* which granted Catholicism and Christianity its rightful place at the councils of power. The *Reich*-theme was one of the places to address how Catholicism was a cooperative partner in the *Reich* as long as its rightful place was recognized. In the response, Przywara emphasizes how the "cross" and the "Reich" are both political and Christian ideas which are grounded in the mystery of God and man.¹³ Przywara would like to see this mystery recognized. He remarks that "Pope and Emperor are the unity of the visible head, of the spiritual and temporal head. But they are historically-really one in a sword that

9 Erich Przywara, *Logos: Logos, Abendland, Reich, Commercium*. Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1964, 105–118; 169 f.

10 Ibid., 169: "unmittelbare Antwort".

11 Peterson, "Erich Przywara on *Sieg-Katholizismus*", 135–138.

12 Betz, "Translator's Introduction", 25. Cf. Gustav Wilhelm (a pseudonym for Sigrid Müller), "Vita Erich Przywara." In *Erich Przywara 1889–1969: Eine Festgabe*. Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1969, 7–34, here: 19. See Manfred Lochbrunner, *Hans Urs von Balthasar und seine Theologenkollegen: sechs Beziehungsgeschichten*. Würzburg: Echter, 2009, 22: "Eine zufällige Entdeckung im Inventarverzeichnis des Nachlasses hat meinen Verdacht bestätigt, dass es sich bei Gustav Wilhelm um ein Pseudonym handelt, hinter dem Sigrid Müller steht."

13 Przywara, *Logos: Logos, Abendland, Reich, Commercium*, 105 f.

pierces them, with which they themselves pierce one another in the heart.”¹⁴ Like other integralists (such as Max Pribilla), Przywara sees *Reich* and religion in close connection.¹⁵ At the end of the response he remarks that “cross” and “Reich” stand in a “final concreteness”.¹⁶ He claims that the *Reich* “cannot be called back” but that the “cross is the way.”¹⁷ In January of 1933, in Germany, the *Reich* cannot be called back but there is hope for a cooperative Christian *Reich* on the way of the cross. As another example of his political theology from this time, he goes on to remark that in “suffering through” [“Durchleiden”] in “bleeding through” [“Durchbluten”], and in “dying through” [“Durchsterben”] the separation it will become “atonement” [“Sühne”].¹⁸ Przywara’s reflections about the *Reich* in the 1964 edition of the 1933 response are characteristic of the “vision of the *Reich*” in 1930s German Catholicism.¹⁹ Przywara also uses the expression “vision of the *Reich*.”²⁰ Many were hoping for a new Catholic *Reich* at the end of the Weimar democracy. This sense of longing for a Catholic infused religious *Reich* was one popular option among many *Reich*-options at this time. Others, of course, preferred the secular post-Darwinist ideology of the *Herrenrasse* (“master race”) or a new Germanic mythological religion of “the Aryan War-God” (a favorite theme of the neo-pagans). Przywara’s tastes were too refined for these kinds of raw expressions of the *Zeitgeist*. In his response, for example, Przywara laments the “north” (“Nord”), a reference to Germany and northern Europe, becoming “Odin-Tor-Loki”.²¹ His version of the *Zeitgeist* is slightly different. Rather than a neo-paganism, Przywara envisions an anti-Semitic religious *Reich*, a Catholic anti-liberal integralism. He praises the idea of a *Sacrum Imperium* as the New Testament inheritance of the Old Testament theocracy (“Theokratie”).²² In accordance with the trend, in his response he also

14 Ibid., 110: “Papst und Kaiser sind die Einheit des sichtbaren Hauptes, geistliches und weltliches Haupt. Aber sie sind geschichtlich real eins im einen Schwert, das sie durchstößt, das sie selbst sich gegenseitig ins Herz stoßen.”

15 Pribilla hoped that the church could contribute in controlling the press, art, science, education and other aspects of social and familial life. See Max Pribilla, “Benito Mussolini über Kirche und Staat.” *Stimmen der Zeit* 129 (1935): 59–62. Regarding integralism, see Franz Josef Stegmann, “Integralismus.” In *LThK³*, Bd. 5, 549 f.

16 Przywara, *Logos: Logos, Abendland, Reich, Commercium*, 111: “in letzter Konkretheit”.

17 Ibid., 111: “Reich ist ‘unrückrufbar’, aber das Kreuz ist der Weg.”

18 Ibid.

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

20 Przywara, *Logos: Logos, Abendland, Reich, Commercium*, 112: “Vision des Reiches.”

21 Ibid., 111.

22 Ibid.

mentions “Monney-Amerika” (sic)²³ and the “homeless Wandering Jew” (“heimatlosen Ahasver”).²⁴ Anti-Americanism and anti-Semitism often came together at this time in Germany, Austria and Germanophone Switzerland among Catholic (and Protestant) intellectuals envisioning the religious *Reich*.

Betz writes: “Nazi records from this time indicate that Przywara was under surveillance as ‘the most dangerous exponent of militant Catholicism.’”²⁵ Here he refers to remarks from Sigrid Müller from 1969. Müller claims that “the lexica of the NS-period” [“die Lexika der NS-Zeit”] had characterized Przywara as “the most dangerous exponent of battlesome Catholicism.”²⁶ To present Przywara in these heroic terms is, however, misleading. In *The Philosophical Foundations of National Socialism* from 1935, the arch Nazi Otto Dietrich (1897–1952), the Press Chief in Nazi Germany, State Secretary in the Ministry of Propaganda and Adolf Hitler’s unfailing companion, drew upon Przywara’s thought and praised his emphasis on the separation of philosophy and religion. Dietrich wrote that “it awakens a very special interest that at the Prague Philosophers’ Congress the Munich Jesuit priest Przywara, in his highly regarded lecture on the relationship between religion and philosophy, draws the same line of division. He answered the question to the effect that religion only aims to God, philosophy, however, to the world. This base is also ours.”²⁷

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid., 110. Further to this term, see below.

25 Betz, “Translator’s Introduction”, 25.

26 Wilhelmy (Müller), “Vita Erich Przywara”, 18: “Es folgten [...] 1934 der Internationale Philosophenkongreß in Prag, zu dem das Naziregime Przywara offiziell entsandte, obwohl die Lexika der NS-Zeit ihn bereits als den gefährlichsten Exponenten des kämpferischen Katholizismus charakterisieren!”

27 Otto Dietrich, *Die philosophischen Grundlagen des Nationalsozialismus. Ein Ruf zu den Waffen deutschen Geistes*. Breslau: Hirt, 1935, 38 f.: “Der Nationalsozialismus neigt nicht zu abstraktem, trockenem Denken. Seine volksverbundene Weltanschauung wird die Wissenschaft wieder dem flutenden Leben und die unendliche Fülle des Lebens wieder der Wissenschaft erschließen. Und dieses Leben ist für die nationalsozialistische Weltanschauung eine Erkenntnisebene, die sich auch gegenüber der religiösen Frage klar und entschieden abgrenzt. Diese Tatsache, deren man sich manchmal nicht überall bewußt ist, möchte ich noch einmal besonders betonen. Der Nationalsozialismus steht seinem ganzen Wesen nach der religiösen Fragestellung fern; er gewährt den Kirchen Raum zu freier religiöser Betätigung, ohne sich selbst auf dieses Gebiet zu begeben. Wie er die konfessionellen Einflüsse aus dem politischen Leben entfernt hat, und mit Entschiedenheit auch in Zukunft fernhalten will, so verwehrt er auch der Politik die Einmischung in die religiösen Fragen. Wer gegen diesen Grundsatz verstößt, verstößt gegen die Grundsätze des Nationalsozialismus. So haben wir es nach dem Willen des Führers in den Jahren des Kampfes um die Macht gehalten und so wollen wir es auch jetzt und in Zukunft halten. Und deshalb erweckt es auch ganz besonderes Interesse, daß auf dem Prager Philosophen-Kongreß der Münchener

While it is true that the Jesuit journal *Stimmen der Zeit* was temporarily closed in 1935, the journal and Przywara were not a significant threat to the Nazi order. If they had been such a threat, the journal would not have been reopened in 1936. Of course, the Jesuits were generally seen as a suspicious group by many Nazis. Alfred Rosenberg contributed to the anti-Jesuit attitude in the 1930s in Germany. Some of this goes back to the *Kulturkampf* in the *Kaiserreich*, and before this. Many countries had similar suspicions of the Jesuits in the 19th and 20th century. The anti-Jesuit law was first annulled in 1973 in Switzerland (two years after women's suffrage was fully adopted in 1971).

The Nazi correspondences say relatively little about Przywara. He was most certainly not a threat to the authoritarian regime. In a correspondence to the Nazi authorities from the 21st of Sept., 1939, Przywara listed out some of the dates and information regarding his relationship to the Reich Literature Chamber. On the 25th of Nov., 1933, he became a member of the chamber. On the 15th of April, 1935 (in the same year that *Stimmen der Zeit* was temporarily closed), his membership was limited to the area of belletristic literature. On the 7th of June, 1938, his membership was canceled, as the Nazi authorities claimed, because of the small amount of his publications. With this, however, came the condition that he could continue to publish his work by applying for permission in each individual case. Many of his letters to the authorities have to do with this application process. The Nazi officials clearly delayed approval and response. They often responded by asking him to send more information. In many cases, Przywara had to write back after months of waiting. The same treatment was used against him in his applications for permission to go on lecture trips outside of Germany. This tactic of discriminatory delay, the continual request for more information and the overall slowing down of the bureaucratic process was used to discourage and scare applicants. Przywara's application correspondences go up to Feb. of 1941. *Stimmen der Zeit* was closed a second time by the Nazis in June of 1941, the same year that other journals were closed.

The internal reports between the Nazi Secret Police, the NSDAP local group organization in Munich, and other Nazi offices on the Jesuit journal *Stimmen der Zeit* and the editorial staff fluctuate between a critical posture towards the Jesuits and procedural ambivalence. One highlight in the various letters is the negative remarks dated on the 1st of Sept., 1937, from an unnamed official of the NSDAP office in Munich addressed to the President of the Reich Literature Chamber about Jakob Overmans (a member of the editorial staff known for his criticism

Jesuitenpater Przywara in seinem stark beachteten Vortrag über das Verhältnis von Religion und Philosophie den gleichen Trennungsstrich zieht. Er beantwortet die Frage dahin, daß die Religion einzig auf Gott zielt, die Philosophie dagegen auf die Welt. Diese Basis ist auch die unsere."

of Judaism).²⁸ Here the Nazi official reports on Overmans's one-sided Catholic articles against the National Socialist worldview and the *Volksgemeinschaft*. It goes on to remark, however, in favor of Overmans, that he does not employ any "dishonest methods of battle" ("keiner unehrlichen Kampfmethoden"). This letter is, however, mixed in with many other reports among the Nazi officials, some of which declare no knowledge of the Jesuits' political posture, others of which remark on the Jesuit order by stating that it is unreliable in political matters. On the 16th of Aug., 1937, the Secret Police issued a report on Overmans. It states that Overmans reports on worldview issues and confessional matters from a Roman Catholic position, but does this "without maliciously distorting" ("böswillig zu entstellen"). It goes on to end the report by stating that: "Something disadvantageous/ unfavorable is up to this point not known about him. – Heil Hitler!"²⁹ As late as the 13th of Aug., 1938, remarks on Josef Kreitmaier (another member of the staff) among the Nazi officials in Munich show they did not expect him to be in full service for "state and movement" ("Staat und Bewegung") and that, at the most, "legal behavior" ("legales Verhalten") could be expected. After WWII the journal presented itself, in its account of its history in the Third Reich, as being a "thorn in the eye" of the Nazis.³⁰ The Nazi correspondences (and the essays and reviews in the journal itself from 1933 to 1941) do not confirm this claim.

Betz remarks that "by 1941 his [Przywara's] editorial office had been shut down by the Gestapo, which says something about how he and his fellow Jesuits were perceived by the Nazi party."³¹ The 1941 closure does say something. That the journal was kept up and running until 1941 (and not closed in 1933 or 1934) shows how it fit into the "New Germany." Other journals were also closed in 1941. The official reason given for the closure was the war, and its economic burden. To present Przywara or the journal *Stimmen der Zeit* as resisters to the NS state, or resisters of the ideology as a whole is inaccurate. They held a cooperative posture that was interested in presenting Catholicism as integral to Germany, as faithful to the German nation, true to the family and loyal to the fatherland in its time of need. Mussolini's fascism is praised in the journal while the Hitler-Youth's tastes for theater is welcomed. Reviews were regularly written

28 To Overmans, see Olaf Blaschke, *Katholizismus und Antisemitismus im Deutschen Kaiserreich*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997, 242; there Blaschke claims that Overmans, and other Jesuits, "haben ihrem Unmut über das moderne Judentum mehrfach Luft verschafft."

29 "Nachteiliges ist bisher über ihn nicht bekannt geworden. – Heil Hitler!"

30 See the "Geschichte der Zeitschrift," at stimmen-der-zeit.de: "Den Nationalsozialisten war die Zeitschrift ein Dorn im Auge." (8 April, 2014) Similar remarks are found elsewhere in the journal post-1945.

31 Betz, "Translator's Introduction", 25.

on the new “research” on the history of the Jews and positive commentary was offered to the Nazi civil codes. There are many other themes which were regularly addressed, such as the ancient Germans, the ancient Germanic religions and many themes related to the nation. The major complaint that can be identified in the journal in the 1930s and early 1940s is a criticism of secularism and of the marginalization of the church. These authors were not, of course, leading ideologues of the Nazi regime. Nevertheless, they showed signs of a willingness to cooperate with the new order.³²

Coming up with a comprehensive definition of anti-Semitism is one of the “persisting questions” that haunts academic inquiries of anti-Semitism. Over systematization and categorization of the anti-Jew sentiment has been deconstructed in contemporary literature on the subject. In general, however, one might say that it is “an unusual kind of human hostility directed against Jews.”³³ Gavin I. Langmuir points to the foundational idea of racism as undergirding the original conception of the term in the 19th century. The racist theory

“proclaimed that humans were divided into clearly distinguishable races and that the intellectual, moral, and social conduct and potential of the members of these races was biologically determined. As elaborated in the Aryan myth it maintained that Jews were a race and that, not only were they, like other races, inferior to the Aryan race, but also that Jews were the most dangerous of those races.”³⁴

Some of this racist essentialism, blended together with religious ideas, comes out in Przywara’s use of the term “the Jew” and his descriptions of the essences of Jews as “Ahasvers [Wandering Jew],” “restless” or “revolutionary” (see below). His use of the *völkisch* terminology and terms such as “host-peoples” in his criticism of Zionism also attest to this (see below).

As the Catholic, Austrian born, German dictator Adolf Hitler (who was never excommunicated by the Catholic Church³⁵) was in full power in 1936, Przywara praised the ideology of the dictator (“Spitze des Staates”; “top of the state”) in

32 Further to the journal, see “Chapter Five: Nazi Germany and *Stimmen der Zeit*” in Paul Silas Peterson, *The Early Hans Urs von Balthasar: Historical Contexts and Intellectual Formation*. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2015, 184–227.

33 Gavin I. Langmuir, “Towards a Definition of Antisemitism”. In *The Persisting Question: Sociological Perspectives and Social Contexts of Modern Antisemitism*, ed. Helen Fein. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1987, 86–127, here: 127.

34 *Ibid.*, 86.

35 Hubert Wolf, *Papst und Teufel, Die Archive des Vatikan und das Dritte Reich*. München: C. H. Beck, 2008, 306: “Von der Einleitung eines Exkommunikations-Verfahrens gegen Adolf Hitler finden sich in den Vatikanischen Archiven keinerlei Spuren.” Apparently there was not even a process to consider his excommunication.

collaboration with Catholicism against “Republikanertum” (“republicandom”) and thus seems to have endorsed the Nazi dictatorship in collaboration with Catholicism.³⁶ A decade before this, in 1926, Przywara wrote that Judaism is “the enemy of all race-character”.³⁷ He also claimed that Judaism is an “insolent disturber” of the “folkdom” (“Volkstum”).³⁸

Betz claims that Przywara’s article “Nation, state, church” from 1933 “could be taken as a call to civil disobedience”.³⁹ While Przywara does not address civil disobedience in this article, he does mention Heb. 13:12f., and 2 Cor. 5:8 and claims that, in a sense, the Christian is “de-Volk-ed” (“entvolkt”) and “de-state-ed” (“entstaatlicht”) because of the Christian’s identity with Christ.⁴⁰ Przywara wanted to emphasize the universality of the Christian faith with these remarks. This is not Przywara’s whole argument, however. He goes on, following these remarks, to emphasize the nationalistic aspects of the faith because the Christian not only “dies with Christ” (in the sense of the identity with Christ as mentioned above) but also “rises again” with Christ – thus, as he emphasizes, it does not remain “in the negative sense.”⁴¹ Addressing the death and resurrection with Christ, Przywara sees the Christian rising again in national identities. The theme of rebirth, and especially in connection to the idea of a national identity, was common at this time among many fascists.⁴² Here he makes a case for a *völkisch* understanding of Christian identity in national identities as “members” (the national identities themselves) of the body of Christ.⁴³ He argues against “internationality” (“Internationalität”).⁴⁴ Far from calling for civil disobedience,

36 Peterson, “Erich Przywara on *Sieg-Katholizismus*”, 114. See Erich Przywara, *Heroisch*. Wien, Zürich, Paderborn: Schöningh, 1936, 8. He also promoted the work of Dietrich Eckart, drawing upon Alfred Rosenberg.

37 Erich Przywara, “Judentum und Christentum. Zwischen Orient und Okzident.” *Stimmen der Zeit* 110 (1926): 81–99, here 99: “Darum ist das Judentum auch praktisch der Feind aller Rassen-eigenart und der Freund aller Völkernivellierung”.

38 *Ibid.*, 99: “so muß jedes Volk dieses Judentum auf die Dauer als so etwas wie anmaßenden Störer seines Volkstums empfinden”.

39 Betz, “Translator’s Introduction”, 25. See Erich Przywara, “Nation, Staat, Kirche.” *Stimmen der Zeit* 125 (1933): 370–379; I have addressed the same article here: Peterson, “Erich Przywara on *Sieg-Katholizismus*”, 133, 137.

40 See Przywara, “Nation, Staat, Kirche”, 377.

41 *Ibid.*, 377: “im negativen Sinn.”

42 See Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism*. London: Routledge, 2006, 26; *id.*, *Modernism and Fascism: The Sense of a Beginning under Mussolini and Hitler*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

43 Przywara, “Nation, Staat, Kirche”, 377; Peterson, “Erich Przywara on *Sieg-Katholizismus*”, 133.

44 Przywara, “Nation, Staat, Kirche”, 377 f., 378; Peterson, “Erich Przywara on *Sieg-Katholizismus*”, 133.

in this article from 1933 – written after Hitler became Chancellor of Germany – Przywara argues for an “interpenetration” (“Sichdurchdringen”) of the “nation,” “state” and “church.”⁴⁵ This is an example of his support of Catholic integralism in Nazi Germany.

Przywara also seems to draw upon ecclesial authority (Leo XIII) to affirm the political transition of 1933.⁴⁶ In my article, “Erich Przywara on *Sieg-Katholizismus*,” other sources are drawn upon to show Przywara’s cooperative posture in Nazi Germany. While supportive of nationalistic and *völkisch* ideas, he addressed the “blood and soil” theme critically. This idea, as it was articulated in near religious language, was a threat to the status of the Catholic Church in society and the universality of Christianity in the *Abendland* and beyond. Przywara challenges it by associating it with “Semitism.” As I have shown in my article, in Nazi Germany, Przywara promoted a position that was in many ways compatible and supportive of National Socialism. It was not identical, however, with the stereotypical form of this thinking, as promoted, for example, by Alfred Rosenberg. There were a variety of positions within the new ideological swing in the 1920 and 1930s. Like many other Catholic intellectuals at this time, and like many authors at *Stimmen der Zeit*, Przywara represented a position that had hoped for a Catholic friendly Nazism.⁴⁷

Betz states that Przywara praises Leo Baeck. Here Betz refers to remarks from Przywara where Przywara addresses Baeck’s description of Judaism as “polarity” (“Polarität”): “This tendency to Judaism as ‘polarity’ reaches its fulfillment then in Leo Baeck’s masterly expositions.”⁴⁸ But what does Przywara think of Baeck, Judaism and the Jews? He goes on to write:

“In other words, the final meaning of Baeck’s polarity-theory is only ‘another form’ of the fundamental theory of Cohen-Buber: God is essentially a moral ideal. So Baeck dissolves throughout all religious data with regards to content, such as the nature of God, sin, reconciliation, the hereafter, immortality, eternal life in the problem of the ‘infinite task’ of the moral.”⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Przywara, “Nation, Staat, Kirche”, 377; Peterson, “Erich Przywara on *Sieg-Katholizismus*”, 133.

⁴⁶ Przywara, “Nation, Staat, Kirche”, 378 f.; Peterson, “Erich Przywara on *Sieg-Katholizismus*”, 137.

⁴⁷ See also Hubert Gruber, *Katholische Kirche und Nationalsozialismus 1930–1945. Ein Bericht in Quellen*. Paderborn: Schöningh, 2006, esp. “Die Hoffnung auf Anteil am Dritten Reich”, 115–136.

⁴⁸ Przywara, “Judentum und Christentum. Zwischen Orient und Okzident”, 90: “Diese Tendenz zu Judentum als ‘Polarität’ erreicht dann in Leo Baecks meisterlichen Darlegungen ihre Erfüllung.”

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 91: “Mit anderen Worten: der letzte Sinn der Polaritätstheorie Baecks ist nur ‘andere

While Przywara also calls Baeck's lecture in Darmstadt "impressive" ("eindrucks-voll[]"),⁵⁰ he goes on to identify the essence of Judaism in Baeck, Cohen and Buber. He writes: "Judaism, in its final secret instincts, feels itself to be as the constantly chaos-creating and out of the chaos new-creating Creator-God in the world."⁵¹ Drawing upon Buber, Przywara goes on to connect Judaism to capitalism and socialism, the latter being "Jewish messianism."⁵² Przywara claims to identify the essence of Judaism. This was typical of the *Wesensschau* (beholding the essence) method of the early 20th century among many authors. Przywara uses this method when addressing Judaism. He claims to see the essence of modern Judaism realizing itself in capitalism, socialism and, as he goes on to address Nathan Birnbaum, Zionism.

When addressing the "basic tension of the Jew",⁵³ Przywara states that "his thinking [the Jew's] is finally the rhythm between the rising will of new-creation, and the rising will of destruction."⁵⁴ Przywara returns to Baeck and criticizes his work as exemplary of modern Judaism. Przywara sees modern Judaism as "the immanent closedness of human life in which 'God' is just the name for 'ideal-man'".⁵⁵ Thus "Christianity" becomes the "enemy" ("Feind") of Judaism; furthermore, the "Jew" ("Jude") "becomes with inner necessity the unremitting 'revolutionary' of the Christian world. It is ultimately his [the Jew's] innermost *religiosity* which drives and goads his unremitting activism."⁵⁶ Thus "the Jew" is essentially a "revolutionary" of the Christian world in Przywara's view.

Przywara goes on to write: "He [the Jew] is in truth the restless Ahasvers."⁵⁷ The term "Ahasvers" is a reference to the "Wandering Jew." As Richard I. Cohen explains, the legend of the "Wandering Jew" "fed into a broad array of nineteenth-century anti-semitic contexts and arguments, literary and visual.

Form' der Grundtheorie Cohen-Bubers: Gott ist wesenhaft sittliches Ideal. So löst denn auch Baeck durchgehend alle inhaltlich religiösen Daten, wie Wesen Gottes, Sünde, Versöhnung, Jenseits, Unsterblichkeit, Ewiges Leben in das Problem der 'unendlichen Aufgabe' des Sittlichen auf."

50 Ibid.

51 Ibid., 92: "Judentum, in seinen letzten geheimen Instinkten, fühlt sich als den beständig chaosschaffenden und aus dem Chaos neuschaffenden Schöpfer-Gott in der Welt."

52 Ibid., 93: "jüdischer Messianismus."

53 Ibid.: "Grundspannung des Juden".

54 Ibid., 94: "der Rhythmus zwischen anhebendem Wollen des Neuschaffens und anhebendem Wollen der Zerstörung." Here he also addresses Ernst Mueller.

55 Ibid., 98: "die immanente Geschlossenheit des Menschenlebens, in der 'Gott' nur der Name für 'Menschideal' ist".

56 Ibid., 98: "wird mit innerer Notwendigkeit zum unermüdlichen 'Revolutionär' der christlichen Welt. Es ist letztlich seine innerste *Religiosität* die seinen unermüdlichen Aktivismus trieb und stachelt." Emphasis his.

57 Ibid.: "Er ist in Wahrheit der ruhelose Ahasvers."

In these incarnations, Ahasuerus took on the malicious attributes commonly ascribed to Jews and Judaism.”⁵⁸ After mentioning the “revolutionary” and “restless” “Wandering Jew” (Ahasvers), Przywara goes on to write: “Herewith becomes visible how all the usual ‘anti-Semitism’ with all of its grotesque futilities is actually an admission of its own defection from or loss of Christianity. Judaism can only be overcome from the Christianity of the consequent unconditional surrender of faith in the super-creaturely God.”⁵⁹ The issue of anti-Semitism was already a part of the public discourse in the 1920s in Germany. The term was usually used when addressing *the problem* of anti-Semitism, and not in a positive or neutral sense. Of course, there were some who argued for a “healthy anti-Semitism,” such as the Vatican’s newspaper *L’Osservatore Romano*, or even “permissible anti-Semitism,” such as the German Jesuit, Gustav Gundlach.⁶⁰ Robert Michael, Professor Emeritus of European History at the University of Massachusetts, has addressed this. As Michael shows, Pope Pius XII reminded Catholics that the Jews curse Christ.⁶¹ Michael remarks that in 1943, while the Nazis were slaughtering the Jews, in his encyclical *Mystici Corporis Christi*, Pius XII reminded Catholics that these had to be baptized. He summarizes: “Pius seem to have little objection to a limited and ‘humane’ anti-Jewish policy, and he did nothing to object when Church officials like Archbishop Andrea Cassulo, nuncio to Romania, argued that God was employing the horrors of the Holocaust to gain new converts for the Church.”⁶² Michael continues: “Pius XII said and did nothing when the *Catholic* regime in Croatia was slaughtering Jews and he said nothing *after* Jews were deported to their deaths.”⁶³ Before this, in 1923, Pope Pius XI “praised Monsignor Ernst Jouin for ‘combatting our mortal [Jewish] enemy.’ Then the pope raised him to apostolic prothonotary.”⁶⁴ For Przywara, it is “the usual ‘anti-Semitism’ with all of its grotesque futilities”. Przywara does not call anti-Semitism “grotesque,” as Betz claims; Przywara calls it “usual.”

58 Richard I. Cohen, “Wandering Jew.” In *Antisemitism: A Historical Encyclopedia of Prejudice and Persecution*, vol. 1, ed. Richard S. Levy. Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2005, 753–755, here: 755.

59 Przywara, “Judentum und Christentum. Zwischen Orient und Okzident”, 98: “Damit wird aber sichtbar, wie aller übliche ‘Antisemitismus’ mit allen seinen grotesken Vergeblichkeiten eigentlich Eingeständnis des eigenen Abfalls vom oder Verlustes an Christentum ist. Judentum kann allein überwunden werden vom Christentum der folgerichtigen bedingungslosen Glaubenshingabe an den übergeschöpflichen Gott.”

60 See Robert Michael, *A History of Catholic Antisemitism: The Dark Side of the Church*. New York, N.Y.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, 178.

61 *Ibid.*, 179.

62 *Ibid.*, 184.

63 *Ibid.*, 184. Emphasis his.

64 *Ibid.*, 201.

The “futilities” are “grotesque.” They are “grotesque futilities” because they do not deal with the real problem of the Jews which Przywara claims to see: the underlying religious problem of the Jews. Judaism can only be ultimately “overcome” on this basis, all other attempts at “overcoming” it are futile. He believes that the Jews must be converted, this is the solution that is not futile. He presents anti-Semitism as a “loss of Christianity” in that it is an attempt to fight the battle against the Jews (to use his analogy) with the wrong “weapons.” He goes on to remark that all other “weapons” (“Waffen”) will not be able to fulfill the task and that these only lead to, referencing Buber, “Jewish capitalism” (“der jüdische Kapitalismus”).⁶⁵ Capitalism, communism, the Jews and Zionism were often lumped together at this time in fascist critiques.

Addressing capitalism and communism, Przywara goes on to address how “bolshevist” and “capitalist Jews,” both the “West-Jews of America” and the “East-Jews of Russia” have welcomed Zionism.⁶⁶ He sees Zionism, or as he also calls it, the “program of contemporary Judaism,”⁶⁷ in two ways. He sees it as the Zionism of a Jewish State and also in a much broader sense, as the “Judaism of the ‘host peoples’ as internally directed and connected to Palestine”.⁶⁸ Here Przywara uses the term “Wirtsvölker” (“host-peoples”). This was a popular anti-Semitic term that was used by Hitler and other Nazi ideologues to refer to the peoples who were the “victims” of the Jews. It went together with the idea of the “Wandering Jew” who comes to the “host-people” and manipulates them and takes their wealth and power, slowly killing off the “host.” The “Jew” in this way of thinking is a “parasite” that “feeds” on the “host.”⁶⁹ Przywara’s sees Zionism in these terms of a “revolutionary” “restless” “Wandering Jew” and the “host peoples.”

Przywara also condemns “internationalism” and Cohen’s “general-humanization”.⁷⁰ As addressed above, Przywara goes on to claim that Judaism is

65 Przywara, “Judentum und Christentum. Zwischen Orient und Okzident”, 98.

66 Ibid., 98: “Gewalt des Kapitalismus und Gewalt des Kommunismus sind beide letztlich religiöse Gewalt. Nur daraus wird es verständlich, wie sehr ‘Jerusalem’ von bolschewistischen wie kapitalistischen Juden, Westjuden Amerikas wie Ostjuden Rußlands als die Erfüllung begrüßt wird.” Before this he also addresses “assimilated West-Judaism”: “assimilierten Westjudentum”, *ibid.*, 86.

67 Ibid., 98: “Programm des heutigen Judentums”.

68 Ibid.: “Judentum der ‘Wirtsvölker’ als innerlich gerichtet und verbunden mit Palästina”.

69 See Cornelia Schmitz-Berning, *Vokabular des Nationalsozialismus*. 2nd ed. Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007, 68, 462; Wolfgang Benz, *Was ist Antisemitismus?*. München: C. H. Beck, 2004, 86.

70 Przywara, “Judentum und Christentum. Zwischen Orient und Okzident”, 99: “Allgemeinmenschlichung”.

an “enemy of all race-character” and “insolent disturber” of the “Volkstum”. He claims that “The hatred towards the Jews in world history is basically necessary Ahasver [Wandering Jew]-destiny/fate of the people [Volkes, the Jews] which has set itself in the place of the super-creaturely God.”⁷¹ Przywara remarks that as long as the Jews do not become Christians, Judaism will remain “the eternal, tragic, revolutionary Ahasvers [Wandering Jew] of world history”.⁷²

For these reasons, and others that have been addressed in my first article on Przywara, it is difficult to see how Przywara could be understood to have offered an “intellectually rigorous and candid presentation of the differences between modern Judaism and Christianity”,⁷³ as Betz remarks, or to have shown “admiration for the Jewish philosophers he criticizes”.⁷⁴ Przywara’s presentation of the Jewish authors is inseparable from his anti-Semitic agenda. His general frame of thought, which one might call Catholic fascism, was not the same, however, as secular neo-pagan fascism. Catholic fascism was captivated with the theme of the *Reich* and the religious *Abendland*, it was skeptical of neo-paganism, anti-Semitic, anti-liberal, anti-American, anti-Enlightenment, anti-French Revolution, anti-cosmopolitan, anti-Zionist, anti-rationalistic, *völkisch*, authoritarian, integralistic, Nietzschean and nationalistic. Something similar is also found in Germanophone Protestantism in the 1920s and 1930s. This is the broader intellectual context of his essay “Judaism and Christianity” and it is also the broader intellectual context of his rejection of “Jewish messianism” in his *Analogia Entis* (1932).⁷⁵

Przywara was not, however, a mere passive agent who unconsciously absorbed the cultural norms of his context. He creatively adopted them, re-conceptualized them as expressions of faithful Christianity and then disseminated them in the 1920s and 1930s. He did this with personal contacts (such as Hans Urs von Balthasar), with publications (at the second most popular Catholic culture journal in Germany at the time) and even with the help of radio

71 Ibid., 99: “Der Judenhaß der Weltgeschichte ist im Grunde notwendiges Ahasverschicksal des Volkes, das sich an die Stelle des übergeschöpflichen Gottes gesetzt hat.”

72 Ibid., 99: “Judentum aber wird solange der ewig tragische, revolutionäre Ahasvers der Weltgeschichte bleiben, als es im Christentum sich nicht erfüllt”. The basic arguments that Przywara presents in this article are taken up later by Hans Urs von Balthasar, see “Chapter Seven: The anti-modern anti-Semitic complex” in my *The Early Hans Urs von Balthasar* (see above), 250–287.

73 Betz, “Translator’s Introduction”, 25 f.

74 Ibid., 26.

75 Przywara, *Analogia Entis*, 166. The “language of the *analogia entis* comes into play in his defense of *völkisch* categories”, see Peterson, “Erich Przywara on *Sieg-Katholizismus*”, 133. As I have argued in that article, the teaching about the analogy of being is a valuable doctrine which, when untangled from Przywara’s ideology, deserves a second evaluation.

broadcasts. As a Christian theologian, Przywara would have been familiar with these words from the Sermon on the Mount: “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.” (Matt. 5:43–44) Przywara, a mature member of the Society of Jesus in the 1920s and 1930s, should have known better.