INTIMATE STRANGERS: INTERMARRIAGE AMONG PROTESTANTS, CATHOLICS, AND JEWS IN GERMANY, 1875-1935

BY

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DISSEPTION

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Abstract

In this dissertation, I examine intermarriage in Germany from 1875, when the Second Reich implemented obligatory civil marriage, to 1935, the year the Third Reich implemented the Nuremberg Laws. At its core are common mixed marriages between Protestants and Catholics, as well as the relatively less common ones between Jews and non-Jews. Like Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish communities themselves, social boundaries shaped these unions and spurred the ways in which their meanings changed over time. One of the principal claims is that “confessional,” “religious,” and “racial” boundaries have to be understood as distinct, overlapping, and changing.

Most importantly, what it meant to be German in German history constituted the stakes of crossing these boundaries because the act determined the parameters of belonging and exclusion. The stakes for the historical actors constitute the stakes of this dissertation. I investigate what it meant to be German and who decided that meaning by analyzing the idea and practice of intermarriage over time. Individuals extract identity from boundaries because they create belonging. Acts of intermarriage and the reactions they generated were undertakings of boundary crossing that sparked changes to German identity. Over the course of six decades of boundary crossing examined in this dissertation, the confessional, religious, and racial boundaries themselves transformed, and sometimes overlapped. Intermarriage was central to the process of reducing Protestant and Catholic Germans into “Germans” and excluding Jews from that same category. It was not because the Nazis abolished the boundary between Protestants and Catholics, but because over the course of history individuals and German states established a language and a framework for the coexistence of Protestants and Catholics both intimately and socially.
Acknowledgments

It has to start this way: I have been married to this project for six years. Living with this dissertation has not always been easy, but it has been rewarding. As I write this, that union is not at an end. It is simply at a stage of transition. Here is something that will not change as the dissertation begins its transformation into a book: the chapters that follow show that marriage is a social construct that is always changing. While I have been occupied with non-normative marriage and what that has to do with the evolution of national identity in German history, that same issue has pervaded in the United States. When I began working on this project, same sex couples could marry in three states in the union. As I write this, that figure now stands at 37 (and Washington D.C.). On the one hand, that is incredible progress. On the other hand, it is 13 states short. I am comforted by my confidence that by the time this dissertation completes its metamorphosis into a book, that number will be 50.

This project could not have been completed without the help of my teachers. I owe the largest intellectual debt to my dissertation advisor, Peter Fritzsche, whose patience and encouragement shepherded this project from conception to completion. Eugene Avrutin, a second dissertation advisor in contribution if not in name, has also been there every step of the way. Both read and commented on more chapter drafts than one could reasonably expect. They shaped this project in countless ways, even if not every one of their excellent bits of feedback made it into the final draft. I want to thank Harry Liebersohn for his sharp insights when this project was at its early, critical, stages. Craig Koslofsky was a late-joining member of my dissertation committee. Yet, his feedback has been invaluable for conceptualizing what this project is going to look like next.
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distinguishing the two, I did as well on a rainy day in Germany in 2012. Yet the confusion still yielded valuable material.

I have been privileged to present my research and receive feedback from wonderful scholars both in the United States and in Germany. For this, I would like to recognize Stefanie Schüler-Springorum, Andreas Gotzmann, and the Arbeitergemeinschaft des Leo Baeck Institut for inviting me to a productive summer colloquium for graduate students; Columbia University’s Institute for Israeli and Jewish Studies Young Scholars Conference; and Ben Frommer and the Holocaust Educational Foundation’s summer institute, which was not technically a space to present my research, but nevertheless has proven to shape such pursuits in unexpected ways. Among the best aspects of being a Leo Baeck Fellow were the two group meetings held in Germany during the academic year 2011-2012. During these, I gained valuable insights from Daniel Wildmann, Raphel Gross, Josh Teplitzky, Anne Clara Schenderlein, Golan Gur, and Avi Siluk. I have also had the great fortune to sit on German Studies Association panels with Ari Joskowicz, Lisa Zwicker, and Gabriel Cooper, among others.

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Introduction

The interest of the Reich does not lie in overcoming ecclesiastical particularism but, rather, in maintaining and strengthening it.

– Martin Bormann, 1942

One hundred years separated the marriage of Flora Bodenstein and Edward Simmel, she a Protestant and he a Catholic, and the declaration at Nuremberg in 1935 that their grandson Hans could be considered “half-Jewish.” This designation was because Hans had two Jewish grandparents: Flora and Edward. Edward converted from Judaism to Christianity as an adult, while Flora was baptized as a child. The pen strokes that made the Nuremberg Laws created a taxonomy of difference in Germany that was based on the regulation of intimacy. In 1935, the boundaries were “racial,” but they relied on religious classifications that had a much longer history. By prohibiting marriage between “Jews” and “Aryans,” where the former category was unaffected by Christian baptism, the Nuremberg Laws changed the nature of the marriage between Flora and Edward. It also altered the marriage between Hans’s parents, the sociologist Georg Simmel (1858-1918) and the philosopher Getrud Kinel (1864-1938)—he baptized a Protestant, she a Catholic. But while negating the union of Hans’s parents as confessionally mixed, it re-made their union as a racial intermarriage—it did not matter that Georg died in 1918.

3 I use “Nuremberg Laws” as shorthand for the Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor. This was one of the three primary laws announced at the Nuremberg rally on September 15, 1935. The other two prohibited Jews from flying the German flag and took away citizenship rights.
4 I use scare quotes because these were constructions. However, I will omit them other than this first mention, unless appropriate. The reasons are for clarity, but also because the constructions had a very real effect on individuals living in Germany.
5 I say nominal because she was raised Protestant, but never converted to Protestantism. Helle, introduction, 12.
and his parents long before. Nineteen-thirty five represented the legislative culmination of the revision to the meaning of intermarriage not just between Jews and Christians, but also between Protestants and Catholics. From the late nineteenth century until 1935, intermarriage affected change to German identity. This dissertation analyzes that process.

In this dissertation, I examine intermarriage in Germany from 1875, when the Second Reich implemented obligatory civil marriage, to 1935, the year the Third Reich implemented the Nuremberg Laws. At its core are common mixed marriages between Protestants and Catholics, as well as the relatively less common ones between Jews and non-Jews. Like Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish communities themselves, social boundaries shaped these unions and spurred the ways in which their meanings changed over time. One of the principal claims I make is that “confessional,” “religious,” and “racial” boundaries have to be understood as distinct, overlapping, and changing. These boundaries were real and imagined—known and unknown—to the individuals who intermarried in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Germany.

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Most importantly, what it meant to be German in German history constituted the stakes of crossing these boundaries because the act determined the parameters of belonging and exclusion. The stakes for the historical actors constitute the stakes of this dissertation. In the pages that follow, I investigate what it meant to be German and who decided that meaning by analyzing the idea and practice of intermarriage over time. Individuals extract identity from boundaries because they create belonging. Acts of intermarriage and the reactions they generated were undertakings of boundary crossing that sparked changes to German identity.\(^{10}\)

Interruption did not take place in an intimate vacuum, but it involved religious institutions and the German state. Representative leaders of the Protestant and Catholic churches, as well as the leaders of the de-centralized Jewish communities throughout Germany, were most concerned with the creation and maintenance of confessional, religious, and racial boundaries. The sequence of German states, particularly those that existed during the Second Reich and the Third Reich, assumed the charge of regulating these boundaries. However, over the course of six decades of boundary crossing examined in this dissertation, the confessional, religious, and racial boundaries themselves transformed, and sometimes overlapped. In 1875, it was possible for Protestant Germans, Catholic Germans, and Jewish Germans to marry one another. In 1935, when this study concludes, the calculus was different. At that moment, “Protestant” and “Catholic” were lopped off the first two categories and “German” severed from the last. Intermarriage was central to the process of reducing Protestant and Catholic Germans into “Germans” and excluding Jews from that same category. It was not because the Nazis abolished the boundary between Protestants and Catholics, but because over the course of history

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individuals and German states established a language and a framework for the coexistence of Protestants and Catholics both intimately and socially.

In the chapters that follow, I offer three primary arguments. First, I contend that intermarriage, writ large, represents a continuity of German history. This continuity reveals the groundwork that allowed National Socialist Germany in 1935 to break the link between Jews and Germany by legislating against acts of intimacy. Intermarriage between Protestants and Catholics, the church responses, and the intervention of the state into confessionally mixed families during Germany’s Second Reich was central to creating this foundation. In the words of historian Helmut Walser Smith, 1935 is this project’s “vanishing point.” Vanishing points structure historical narratives and prompt the historian to search for continuity by following the evolution of a site of analysis backward.¹¹ The ability to isolate and trace intermarriage over six decades reveals how it transformed from an issue between Protestants and Catholics to one between Jews and Aryans and what one has to do with the other. It does so by finding anomalies in the course intermarriage took from 1875 to 1935. It is with this foundation that I make the subsequent two arguments.

I claim that intermarriage was central to the reduction of Protestants and Catholics into Germans. It was a long-term process that involved interaction between families, institutions, and the state. Historians have characterized the time period covered here, 1875-1935, as one of confessional strife. But such a portrayal simultaneously places too much focus on the Christian institutions and understates a residual meaning of the conflict between Protestants and

Catholics. Intermarriage occupied a central part of confessional conflict because Protestants and Catholics frequently married one another. Moreover, it was not despite institutional conflict that parishioners set the foundation of turning Protestants and Catholics into Germans, but because of it. Church leaders exerted a great deal of effort trying to prevent mixed marriage by solidifying the boundary between the confessions. But the constant work of renewing the confessional boundary brought the institutions closer together. This meant that confession separated Protestants and Catholics, while religion separated Protestants and Catholics from Jews. Moreover, the religious boundary relied on Christianity’s relationship with race and the question of whether or not baptism could affect a change to one’s Jewishness. At the turn of the century, the relationship between race and religion was present but marginal. Confessional intermarriages were between two individuals, one baptized Protestant and the other Catholic. By the 1920s, the relationship between race and religion became a tenet of antisemitism. In the 1930s, National Socialists instrumentalized the diminishing, yet durable, difference between Protestants and Catholics for their own purposes. Significantly, they did not abolish the boundary between Protestants and Catholics. They did not even attempt to. Confessional difference was not a barrier to forming a “racial community” (Volksgemeinschaft) that superseded confessional boundaries. Instead, the stable confessional division was something that allowed for its realization.

12 See the articles in Konfessionen im Konflikt: Deutschland zwischen 1800 und 1970: eine zweites konfessionelles Zeitalter, Olaf Blaschke, ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002). Especially Olaf Blaschke, „Der Dämon des Konfessionalismus: Einführende Überlegungen.“
13 Margaret Lavina Anderson memorably asserts that the thing to keep in mind about the “cultural wars” of the late nineteenth century is that they “were not wars.” See Margaret Lavina Anderson, “Afterword: Living Apart and Together in Germany,” in Protestants, Catholics, and Jews in Germany, 1800-1914, ed. Helmut Walser Smith (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2001), 319-325.
14 On “conversions” into the Volksgemeinschaft, see Peter Fritzsche, Life and Death in the Third Reich (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 19-76.
Lastly, I argue that the history of intermarriage between Protestants and Catholics was fundamental to the process of differentiating the boundary between Jews and non-Jews in Germany. I treat all types of mixed marriage and the critical institutional responses to them as revealing instances of a larger development of boundary crossing in Germany that changed identities. Protestant and Catholic Germans were inured to confessional mixed marriage, but religious intermarriage between Jews and Christians was, for them, rarer and different. Most significantly, the meaning of these mixed marriages came from interaction between families, institutions, and the state. The activity of all three elements was critical. The Second Reich declared Jews not a different confession, but a different religion, while the Third Reich declared them a different race. The discursive blend of race with religion is how we can make sense of the Third Reich’s taxonomy of religiously based racial categories and the regulation of marriage that came with it with the advent of the Nuremberg Laws. It is also a way to make sense of the Protestant and Catholic churches’ and the majority of their parishioners’ tacit acceptance of the Third Reich’s anti-Jewish measures from 1933-1935. They were ready to accept the racial differentiation of Jews because of the small, and shrinking, difference between Protestants and Catholics, as well as the large, and growing, difference between Christians and Jews.

Scholarly Interventions

This dissertation contributes to German and Jewish historiography. First, by arguing that intermarriage represents a continuity of German history that helps us understand the separation of Jews from Germany, I engage with and complement Sonderweg theses. These arguments attempt to locate trends in Germany’s pre-Third Reich past—“special paths”—that help our understanding of the dynamics of the Third Reich and its origins. After the Second World War and the mass murder of European Jews, Sonderweg theses have been anchored in continuity
from the Second to the Third Reich. The focus of the *Sonderweg* approach has been on Hitler and his inner circle,\textsuperscript{15} the particularity of German militarism with hegemonic aims,\textsuperscript{16} politics and German illiberalism,\textsuperscript{17} structural explanations of the development of illiberalism,\textsuperscript{18} the emergence of mass politics in the 1890s,\textsuperscript{19} and granular investigations that highlight the German Right’s authoritarian impulses and its wide appeal.\textsuperscript{20} Teleological implications caused the *Sonderweg* to go out of style in the 1990s and the early twenty-first century. One form of backlash against the teleology of the *Sonderweg* debate is to reject linear narration altogether and interpret German history in terms of, in the words of Michael Geyer and Konrad Jaurausch, its “shattered past.”\textsuperscript{21} What distinguishes this study from the *Sonderweg* theses and the responses to it is the focused investigation of a single phenomenon—intermarriage—that involved not just Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish Germans, but the interaction among them. In this way, I offer a history of continuity that also aligns with recent appeals to account for Germany’s diversity of religious practice.\textsuperscript{22}


By shifting back to German particularity and long-term explanation, I assert that the development of intermarriage and the changes it wrought represent something specific to Germany. The case for intermarriage as a site of German continuity whose endpoint in 1935 can only be explained by long-term trends that came before rests on the fact that Germany’s admixture of Protestants, Catholics, and Jews was particular in Europe. An extra layer of this peculiarity is found in the close relationship German states from the Second to Third Reich had with the Christian churches in Germany. The churches were institutions run autonomously but financially tied to the states. The state provided funds to the church, gave them authority to tax parishioners, and made religious education in one of the confessions obligatory in its public schools.\(^{23}\) The last point did not provide for Jewish education, however, which was a site of protest among Jewish organizations in the early twentieth century.\(^{24}\) While the Second Reich recognized Judaism, it was not treated equally to the Christian confessions. The Christian churches blanketed German society. Despite declining church service and a post-1918 trend toward releasing oneself from a religious community (and tax obligations), over 90 percent of Germans identified as members of the two largest religious institutions, the Protestant and Catholic churches, as late as 1939.\(^{25}\) The particular place of confession in German history is one of the reasons that historian George Williamson suggests that we can speak of a “religious Sonderweg” in Germany.\(^{26}\) The interaction of Protestants, Catholics, and Jews pushed German history in directions conditioned by a specifically German environment. This continuity is not


teleological. In the words of historian Helmut Walser Smith, “the Third Reich was not predetermined” by events such as the Reformation, the Thirty Years’ War, or, I will add, intimate boundary crossing of all sorts, “but [the Third Reich] is unthinkable without” these things. “Otherwise,” he suggests, “the Nazi period seems divorced from any connection to a longer view of German history and culture.”

The second contribution is to Jewish historiography. The prevailing paradigm of Jewish history in Germany focuses on Jewish integration. Scholars such as David Sorkin and Marion Kaplan have shown that by the end of the nineteenth century, Jewish Germans were citizens well versed in the cultural mores of bourgeois Germany. These and other studies aptly demonstrate that Jews in Germany were not only integrated into German society but that they integrated Germany into themselves and their homes over a long period of time. Moreover, at least for those that never converted to Christianity, they did so without losing Jewish particularity or discarding Jewish traditions. More recently, scholars have appealed for interpretations of Jewish history in Germany that, as opposed to integration histories, assume the dynamism of both Jews and non-Jews. Steven Aschheim argues that historians need to acknowledge the co-constitution of Jewish and non-Jewish identities in Germany. Most importantly, he claims that the joined development should emphasize the interactive dimension of creating identities. Intermarriage was one such site of contact. As Samuel Moyn puts it, historians “must conceive of the Jew not as a transhistorical constant but as a historical construct, always interactive with his or her contexts. . . . Deutschtum and Judentum . . . deserve to be seen as constantly evolving and

28 Marion Kaplan The Making of the Jewish Middle Class: Women, Family, and Identity in Imperial Germany (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); David Sorkin, The Transformation of German Jewry, 1780-1840 (Detroit: Wayne State, 1987); See also Benjamin Maria Baader, Gender, Judaism, and Bourgeois Culture in Germany, 1800-1870 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006).
mutually implicated.”30 As Protestants and Catholics were becoming German, by virtue of religion, race, and a blend of both, Jews were becoming “Jews”—an invention of German history with real implications.31 While the narration of Jewish history that follows tends to the lachrymose because of the shadow cast by 1935, it is not about the failure of integration. Instead, I examine how the interactive dynamics of a phenomenon such as intermarriage across a long period of time relates to the undoing of Jewish integration in the German context.

**Chapter Organization**

The dissertation unfolds in six chapters. Chapter one analyzes the origin and evolution of confession and intermarriage in Germany from the Reformation until the mid-nineteenth century. By framing confession and mixed marriage in the longue durée, I argue that the issues at stake in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Germany were deeply rooted in Germany’s past. That does not mean, however, that the issues existed in the same way over time. On the contrary, the chapter claims that the meaning of confession was not static. Most significantly, the tri-confessional environment in Germany from the mid-sixteenth century until the early nineteenth involved not Catholics, Protestants, and Jews, but Catholics, Lutherans, and Calvinists.32 In the early nineteenth century, Friedrich Wilhelm III of Prussia reduced Calvinists and Lutherans to “Protestants” by unifying the institutions.33 This was an act of unity from above to an amenable population below. At the same time, the Jewish Reform movement worked to confessionalize Judaism in Germany, which created a new tri-confessional tapestry in Germany in the second half of the nineteenth century. A new arrangement of boundaries crystallized by the mid-

31 In this way, I suggest that it was not just Jewish Germans who had a “dual-identity,” but Protestants and Catholics did as well. Nevertheless, they evolved in different directions from the late nineteenth century to the 1930s. See Paul Mendes-Flohr, *German Jews: A Dual Identity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).
32 More precisely, Calvinists were identified as “Reformed.”
nineteenth century. The chapter establishes that on the eve of the introduction of obligatory civil marriage in 1875, unions between Protestants and Catholics were common and, from the institutional perspective, problematic, while mixed marriage between Jews and non-Jews was relatively rare and scarcely addressed.

The purpose of the second chapter is two-fold. First, I dissect intermarriage statistics between Protestants and Catholics from the 1870s until the 1930s to establish its commonality. For parishioners, I contend, confessional intermarriage had already normalized. The statistical analysis demonstrates that mixed marriage between Protestants and Catholics rose steadily, though not dramatically, over time. This change was due to the fact that mixed marriage was already a common practice. The data also reveals issues of gender, class, and secularism in boundary crossing, which embodied the modern anxieties of church leaders. The anxieties of church leaders provide the core of the chapter’s second purpose. The statistical trends and the institutional responses developed contrapuntally. I argue that the institutional response does not represent confessional conflict as it existed among parishioners. However, the responses were no less important for shaping the meaning of intermarriage in Germany into the twentieth century because it framed intimate boundary crossing as threatening and immoral. Importantly, for church leaders, children were sites at which the threat of intermarriage could be neutralized and the immorality of it remedied.

Chapter three analyzes the fundamental role the children of mixed marriage played in leading to the dynamic interaction of families, institutions, and the state. I argue that intimacy from below and intervention into the household from above resulted in the invention of German families as sites where confessions can co-exist. At the same time, the same admixture of grassroots intimacy and state intervention stigmatized religious intermarriages between Jews and
non-Jews by declaring them different from confessional intermarriages between Protestants and Catholics. The chapter is based on a set of well-publicized court cases from the 1880s to the early 1920s that contested the education of children from intermarriages. The chapter shows that mixed families practiced varying degrees of confessional fluidity in the home, which were highlighted with the presence of children. From below, intimacy was already making the confessional boundary between Protestants and Catholics less important. But this might have remained a private matter if institutions did not contest the confessional education in court—which, it is imperative to recognize, was also based on the legitimacy of confessional fluidity. Significantly, the state acknowledged, and sometimes even escalated, confessional difference within these households. The state deemed Jews not members of a different confession like Protestants and Catholics, but, because they were unbaptized, members of a different religion. Because the same rules did not apply, the cases represent a foundational moment for the exclusion of Jews from Germany, and it was based on the difference of intermarriage.

The fourth chapter takes up the theme of Jewish intermarriage and Jewish difference in the twentieth century. I note that mixed marriage between Jews and non-Jews was relatively rare, but that the introduction of the racial boundary changed the stakes of mixed marriage and reformed the way Jewish difference was measured in Germany. It begins with a statistical overview of intermarriage trends in Germany and shows that intermarriage rate between Jews and non-Jews fit the Jewish population in Germany. That is, it was tiny. However, the rate at which Jewish Germans intermarried relative to the Jewish Germans who did not was substantial. It resembled the rate at which Protestants and Catholics intermarried in places where they were the minority confession. The Jewish intermarriage rate vis-à-vis Jewish marriage in general is why Jewish Germans paid so much attention to mixed marriage. At the turn of the century, social
scientists and antisemites integrated the racial boundary into the religious boundary that separated Jews and Christians. Race sent the matter of Jewish difference and intermarriage in different directions. The chapter analyzes representatives of two groups that used race as a signifier of Jewish difference from about 1900 until 1933. The first group was German Zionists, who instrumentalized race science as way to address intermarriage and Jewish decline. The second group was German anti-Semites, who installed a racial boundary based on superiority and inferiority between Jews and non-Jews as way to condemn not just intermarriage, but contact in general. In particular, I interpret the meaning of confessional boundaries through the lens of “positive Christianity” and “redemptive antisemitism” as fundamentals to the formation of Nazi ideology prior to 1933.34

I contend that the form of racial antisemitism that concludes chapter four was foundational for the ways in which the primary subjects of chapter five, the Nazis, practiced antisemitism. Namely, the Nazis used religion—and Christianity in particular—for racial aims. In this chapter, I interpret the legal prohibition of mixed marriage and sexual contact—pronounced at the National Socialist Party rally at Nuremberg in September, 1935—through the lens of boundary crossing in German history. Specifically, the “Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor” was a result of the dialectical matrix of families, institutions, and the

state that remade German families and made Jewish families in twentieth century Germany. The process leading up to the implementation of the law, and the law itself, was based on the isolation of the Jewish intermarriage problem and the nullification of the one between Protestants and Catholics. The chapter first analyzes the relationship the Catholic and Protestant churches had with the Nazi state in 1933 and 1934 in order to demonstrate that both institutions were already conditioned and willing to accept the claim that Jews were not different in the same way that Protestants and Catholics were. The chapter then analyzes the contact the Nazi state had with the institutions in preparation for the Blood Law, and it interprets the Blood Law as an act designed to accomplish its exclusionary goal by revising the family histories of individuals in Germany.

The sixth and final chapter tells the stories of the individuals, marriages, and families whose histories and futures the Nazis revised with the Blood Law of 1935. Based on firsthand accounts written in the 1920s to memoirs written in the 1990s, this chapter argues that the act of writing after 1935 should be read as reclamations to family histories the Nazis attempted to rewrite based on the decrees from Nuremberg. It analyzes the representation of boundary negotiation, family responses to marital choice, intergenerational connections, and the webs of mixed intimacy that existed in Germany before 1935. Because of the nature of the way the Nazis revised individual pasts, it focuses mostly on marriages between Jews and non-Jews. Thus, the reclamations of the past were not just about individuals and families, but they should be understood as claims to German history itself. The voices in this chapter push back at the imposed revision of individual and family histories, even as they were written under the pall of 1935.

35 Hereafter referred to as “Blood Law.”
Chapter 1: Confessional Relations and Intermarriage in German History

In an 1886 state document about intermarriage published by the Prussian Statistical Bureau, the author alluded to three distinct “intermarriage problems” in German history: one had been solved, the other was in the midst of conflict, and the third was just emerging.¹ The first intermarriage problem the document referenced, the one that had been settled, was between Protestant sects in Germany. From the Reformation to the early nineteenth century, Lutherans and Calvinists constituted two distinct confessions in Germany.² By the mid-1880s, in texts such as this state sponsored inventory of intermarriage in Germany, Lutherans and Calvinists were simplified into “Protestants.”³ The Lutheran-Calvinist intermarriage problem only existed in the past tense. Yet, the text indicated that “confessional relations among the population has recently assumed greater meaning than it had before.”⁴ The pronounced and new meaning of confessional relations was centered on Protestantism and Catholicism, and especially the problem of intermarriage. Finally, the third intermarriage problem was about race, and it was based on what was at the time a scientifically grounded way of interpreting society. Marriages between Jews and non-Jews were one of the two problematic “racial intermarriages” the text identified.⁵ The text linked the racial intermarriage problem to confession and the deeply rooted theme of

² The more precise term for Calvinists in Germany is „Reformed“ (Reform, reformiert) but that term has less resonance in English than it does in German. I opt to use the more comprehensible “Calvinist.” See Kurt Nowak, Schleiermacher: Leben, Werk, und Wirkung (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002), 363-365; Rebecca Ayako Bennette, “Confessional Mixing and Religious Differentiation in Nineteenth Century Germany” (PhD diss, Harvard, 2002), 21.
³ In German, they were unified as “Evangelische.” I translate the term as “Protestant” so as to avoid confusion with American Evangelicalism. See the glossary of terms in Klaus Scholder, The Churches and the Third Reich. Volume One: Preliminary History and the Time of Illusions, 1918-1934 (Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1988), vii.
⁴ EZA, 7, 3319. “Die Konfessionallen Mischehen.”
⁵ The other was between Germans and Poles, which was mostly confined to eastern Prussia.
confessional difference in Germany. “Confession,” the document noted, “partially signifies racial differences; specifically, it does so in areas where . . . Jews live.”

This chapter traces the changing nature of confessional relations and the intermarriage problem in Germany from the early modern period to about 1875. I argue that intermarriage was an issue rooted in Germany’s history of confessionalization, but that the stakes of intermarriage were contingent upon the environment. From 1555 to the conclusion of the Thirty Years’ War in 1648, intermarriage between members of the Christian confessions—Lutherans, Calvinists, and Catholics—was a novel product of a fractured Christianity. While uncommon, when it did take place, it challenged political authority just as much as confessional integrity. From 1648 until the Napoleonic Wars, the three confessions acknowledged the political necessity of tolerance because the Thirty Years’ War was viewed as a product of intolerance among the groups. As such, intermarriages, while frowned upon, were generally accepted. Tolerance between individuals was seen as a micro-product of tolerance between confessions. Moreover, intermarriages were easy to accept because they were rare. Mixed marriages between Calvinists and Lutherans were far more common than between either and Catholics, but even Catholic clerics in German lands provided allowances for the few intermarriages that took place. By the middle of the nineteenth century, however, mixed marriage between Protestants and Catholics became less acceptable in the eyes of the churches, especially the Catholic Church, even though they did not become more frequent until the last quarter of the nineteenth century. At the same time, such unions became more acceptable from the perspective of the state, especially the Protestant dominated Prussian state. Intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews was scarcely addressed. Nevertheless, the nineteenth-century did witness the Jewish Reform movement, which made marriage between Jews and non-Jews acceptable to Jewish leaders as long as it

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6 EZA, 7, 3319. “Die Konfessionallen Mischehen.” The omitted text includes Poles as well as Jews.
fulfilled certain conditions. This change can be read as the confessionalization of Judaism in Germany, and it made an “intermarriage problem” between Jews and non-Jews possible.\(^7\)

**Confessional Relations and Intermarriage in Early Modern Germany**

In order to understand the particularities of change that took place in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it is critical to recognize the emergence and growth of confessional difference in the early modern period. Without this context, intermarriage either would not have posed a problem, or it would not have been the same. Over the course of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, the meaning of confessional belonging and coexistence shifted. The demographic, political, and religious consequences of events that began with the Protestant Reformation (ca. 1517) and concluded with the end of the Thirty Years’ War (1618-1648) propelled the changes. Moreover, confessional relations continued to evolve as the Reformation and the Thirty Years’ War transformed from event to legacy in the eighteenth century. The changes that took place in these three centuries established the foundation for new iterations of confessional relationships that later emerged in Germany.

Prior to the sixteenth century, confessions did not exist in Europe. While Christianity was not monolithic, in the centuries before the Reformation, there was just one sanctioned Christian church in Western Europe, alongside small communities of “unbelievers”—Jews and Muslims.\(^8\)

Religious orders existed within the Christian church, but they were variations on a hegemonic theme. Unsanctioned orders were condemned as heretical and, by definition, excluded from the Church and Christianity. The difference between sanction and heresy was often fine, but the consequences of being categorized as one or the other was significant. While the Pope in Rome was technically the authority over religious matters, which were intertwined with the matters of

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\(^7\) Weiss, “Deutche, Juden, und die Weder-Nochs,” 73.

pre-modern states, the church was actually decentralized. Members of the massive church bureaucracy held a great deal of power in localized environments and oversaw variations of religious practice, but within strictly defined parameters. So there were variants of practice, but the one Christian church unified them, which impeded competition between different conventions of that practice.9

The term “confession” resembles the American “denomination,” but the critical distinction that has to be recognized is that in German lands confession organized populations socially and politically. Social difference, therefore, was built into confession. The sixteenth century Reformation fractured the religious and political order of Europe and caused the emergence of confessions and confessional difference. The consolidation of confessions structured religious, social, and political life in the territories that would later become Germany until, some historians suggest, the early nineteenth century.10 Indeed, confessional difference continued to shape German society into the twentieth century, just in a different key. Martin Luther’s (1483-1546) break from the Roman Church, which from this point on we can refer to as Catholicism, in 1520 signified a permanent division in Christianity in Western Europe. Shortly thereafter, Dutchman John Calvin (1509-1564) established a variation of Luther’s Christianity that garnered enough support for it to thrive. Initially, the differences between Catholics, Lutherans, and Calvinists were primarily theological. But by the end of the century, historian Heinz Schilling posits, those theological differences had been transformed into social and

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political ones. That is, these groups “confessionalized” into distinct entities that guided social belonging and were attached to local politics.\textsuperscript{11}

Confessionalization left a legacy in Germany because it was deeply enmeshed with matters of state. Violent conflict and the ubiquitous threat of it was a primary cause of confessional integration. Significantly, the menace of violence was not just between confessional groups, but the polities to which they belonged. The imprint of this relationship is most evident in the principle of \textit{Cuius regio eius religio}, part of 1555’s Peace of Augsburg, which ended an armed clash between Lutherans and Catholics.\textsuperscript{12} \textit{Cuius} mandated that the confessional allegiance of political leaders determined the confession of his inhabitants. The decree applied to each of the more than three hundred entities that would later constitute Germany. More significantly, it established the parameters of confessional relationships far into the future because it intertwined states and religious institutions. \textit{Cuis} underlined the possibility and desirability of confessional homogeneity, and it tied confessional groups directly to the political environment in which they lived. This principle instilled notions of confessional and state alignment that eventually informed the “imagined communities” that competed over the definition of the German nation in the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{13} Additionally, the principle laid the foundation for a legacy of division and difference in Germany—whether that difference was between Lutherans and Calvinists, Catholics and Protestants, or Germans and Jews.\textsuperscript{14} Confessional division never went away in Germany, but it would assume different forms across the centuries as the tightly bound

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\textsuperscript{12} Usually translated as “his realm, his religion.” Henceforth referred to as \textit{Cuius}.
\textsuperscript{14} Harrington and Smith, 77-79.
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confessional alignment among populations, institutions, and states unraveled with changing contexts.

Confessional relations from the Peace of Augsburg in 1555 until the beginning of the Thirty Years’ War in 1618 can be characterized by the authority of official intolerance (Cuius) alongside the practice of tolerance, which had the explicit goal of maintaining confessional peace among Christian confessions. This seeming paradox shows that there were conflicts over proclamations of confessional and political unity from the start. The leaders of some cities, such as Hanover and Augsburg, leveraged Cuius to practice intolerance, as minority Catholic leaders imposed their confession on the majority Lutheran populations. Even with the common implementation of Cuius, however, confessional groups lived side-by-side in early modern Germany. For this reason, the Peace of Augsburg also included a statement on toleration that is evidence of the demand for political leaders to recognize and deal with confessional difference. While Catholics and Lutherans were the only two officially tolerated confessions, some towns were tri-confessional. These instances suggest that tolerance was often more of a daily negotiation among confessional groups than it was an imposition from above.

One such site of confessional negotiation was Wesel, a medium-sized town in the northwestern region of Rhineland-Westphalia. Historian Jesse Sponholtz examines the daily practice of tolerance in Wesel, which was home to Lutherans, Calvinists, and Catholics. In the mid-sixteenth century, Wesel abandoned Catholicism and officially adopted Lutheranism. Per Cuius, Wesel was a Lutheran political body. But the mandate from above did not result in the disappearance of Catholics and Catholicism from the town. Indeed, a Catholic community remained even after the town’s formal adoption of Lutheranism. Additionally, in the second half

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15 Harrington and Smith, 83.
of the sixteenth century, Calvinists in the Netherlands experienced religious persecution and expulsion. This violence resulted in population displacement and, ultimately, the settlement of Calvinist refugees in towns such as Wesel. While the tri-confessional character of Wesel in the sixteenth century was atypical, it does represent the typical demand of confessional coexistence under the auspices of *Cuius*.

The sixteenth century also saw marriage practices change in two ways that resonated into the nineteenth and twentieth century. First, confessional leaders, who also frequently acted in the capacity of state leaders, consolidated the authority to regulate marriage. The Catholic Council of Trent (1545-1563) is generally credited as a turning point in the Catholic regulation of marriage. Its provisions on marriage indicated that unions must take place in the presence of a priest and two witnesses, that only the consent of the couple were needed (and not their parents), and that marriages were indissoluble. While the council and these provisions were made partially in response to the Protestant Reformation, historian Joel Harrington demonstrates that they were in fact part a long-term process designed to eliminate common law and clandestine marriages in areas of Catholic jurisdiction. Most significantly, the marital provisions imbued the Catholic Church as the only authority that could validate marriage, which also meant that they provided themselves with the power to set the parameters of marriage. Lutheran and Catholic leaders alike advocated marriage practices that centralized authority with church elites. They differed only in how to enforce new marriage practices. Lutherans were more likely to concede authority to emerging state apparatuses than Catholics were. Additionally, elites who acted in the name of early modern states, regardless of that political body’s confessional alliance, also desired the centralized regulation of marriage. In the end, Harrington suggests that while “the contemporary

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religious reformation in most ways represented the apex of ecclesiastical influence over marriage, the simultaneous bureaucratic expansion of State authority over marriage marked the starting demise of ecclesiastical legal jurisdiction.”  

While one ascended and the other declined, the intersection of state and church claims over marriage, and the individuals involved, continued well into Germany’s future.

The second change to marriage practice dealt with intermarriage. Namely, confessionalization in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century made Christian intermarriage possible, which forced the Christian institutions and states to develop responses to it. Before the Thirty Years’ War, intermarriage was both infrequently prohibited and practiced, as the clerical and lay members of these Christian splinter groups had to learn how to manage confessional difference. The scattered injunctions against intermarriage prove the desire to maintain confessional divisions, while the relatively uncommon violation of those forbiddances demonstrate that boundaries were not impermeable. Intermarriage was novel in the sixteenth century, so there was a lack of guidelines from the confessions in terms of whether or not it was allowed, and if so under what conditions. Along with new marriage regulations from the Council of Trent, the Catholic gathering also produced a statement on mixed marriage. The decree Tametsi prohibited Catholic priests from overseeing the marriage between a Catholic and a non-Catholic, as such unions were disallowed. However, Tametsi required a strong Catholic bureaucratic presence in order for it to assume authority. In the Netherlands, for example, Catholics intermarried without fear of institutional censure until the mid-seventeenth century. Likewise, Calvinists did not have a clear prohibition of intermarriage, although authorities

17 Joel Harrington, Reordering Marriage and Society in Reformation Germany (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 10-14; on the parallel development of marriage policy among Lutherans and Catholics, see also Marjorie Elizabeth Plummer, From Priest’s Whore to Pastor’s Wife: Clerical Marriage and the Process of Reform in the Early German Reformation (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012).
18 Kaplan, Divided, 279-280.
frequently directed clerics in areas where Calvinists and Catholics mixed to warn families about the ills of mixed marriage. Such warnings, however, were not necessarily heeded. In other instances, Calvinist clerics unilaterally decided that a mixed marriage was preferable to the alternative, which was cohabitation without matrimony. Indeed, such informal marriages were precisely the types of unions that sixteenth century marriage reformers sought to rein in. Despite the presence of mixed marriages, political and confessional leaders who relied on clear boundaries between confessions did not embrace these unions. “More than any other relationship or interaction,” historian Benjamin Kaplan asserts, early modern intermarriage “threatened to break down whatever social barriers divided religious groups from one another.” Such dangers prompted Catholic authorities throughout Europe to require conversion prior to mixed marriage. This occurred in southern France in 1609, in the Netherlands in 1656, and in Augsburg in 1635.

The next historical rupture that shaped the course of confessional relations and intermarriage was the Thirty Years’ War. The war in central Europe was predicated on the principle of political and confessional alignment. Just as twentieth century ideas such as the self-determination of nations falsely assumed that neat borders could isolate homogenous populations, so too Cuius attempted to overpower the reality of confessional mixture within populations. Cuius, Kaplan claims, “turned religious choice into an attribute of sovereignty.” In that sense, it was similar to other incipient characteristics of statehood in the early modern period, such as the codification of laws, levying of taxes, and the implementation of a civil bureaucracy. Confessional homogeneity was incentivized politically, while confessional difference could signify political dissent. “The fusion of . . . piety and patriotism,” Kaplan claims, hardened the boundaries among the three confessions in central Europe, fostered

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19 Harrington, 205-206.
20 Kaplan, Divided, 268.
21 Kaplan, Divided, 279-281.
intolerance, and ultimately contributed to violent aggression involving all three confessions in early modern Germany.\(^\text{22}\)

Despite clearer boundaries, the seventeenth century also witnessed a momentous instance of institutional tolerance between Calvinists and Lutherans. One of the most prominent challenges to the mandates of *Cuius* appeared in Brandenburg. In 1539, Elector Joachim II declared Brandenburg to be a Lutheran state. It continued as such, and the majority of the population adhered to Lutheranism. In 1613, however, Joachim II’s great-grandson, Johann Sigismund, converted to Calvinism. His action signified the conversion of the royal Hohenzollern line in Brandenburg-Prussia, what would end up being the largest state in a unified Germany 250 years later. It is significant to note that the population, in general, resisted the imposition of Calvinism. Brandenburgers had become too entrenched in Lutheranism. Rather than attempting to force confessional allegiance, Johann Sigismund instead practiced tolerance, as the state chose not to interfere in the confessional practice of its inhabitants. Moreover, the royal army led Calvinists and Lutherans in opposition to Spain’s Ferdinand II in the Thirty Years’ War. Historian Bodo Nischan cites this cooperation as the emergence of a pan-Protestant awareness in early modern Germany. The war, in other words, began the slow alignment between the Lutheranism and Calvinism that culminated in the early nineteenth century.\(^\text{23}\)

The conclusion of the Thirty Years’ War in 1648 signified a turning point in tri-confessional relations and portended the tolerance that characterized the following century. The Peace of Westphalia that ended the war reaffirmed *Cuius* and included Calvinists as a tolerated confession. This inclusion was perhaps necessary due to the population displacement and newly pluralistic character of towns and cities in early modern Germany, especially in the Rhineland.

\(^\text{22}\) Kaplan, *Divided*, 102-103.
Moreover, the reaffirmation of Cuis “ensur[ed] that the German path . . . would be marked by problems of religious, and therefore cultural, disunity.” This fractured environment continued into the eighteenth century. Until about 20 years ago, historians had viewed the eighteenth as a sort century of confessional pause, when the terms of old conflicts no longer applied. Etienne François has done the most to revise this claim, as he showed that Catholics and Lutherans in Augsburg during the eighteenth century almost completely founded their identities on confessional separation. By the middle of the eighteenth century, political leaders ceased nearly all attempts to impose confessional homogeneity onto their mixed populations. But that did not affect the already internalized confessional boundaries that existed among the churches and their parishioners.

As tri-confessional relations settled into mutual toleration from 1648 until the Napoleonic Wars, the matter of mixed marriage became an act with the potential to unsettle confessional relations. The infrequency of intermarriage, however, contained its disruptive potential. Church leaders developed conditions for intermarriage—most commonly the guarantee of child education—but conditions meant that mixed marriages represented a credit for one confession and a debit for another. Case studies in regions where historians of early modern Germany are lucky enough to have intermarriage data illustrate these dynamics.

A small intermarriage problem existed in the Electoral Palatinate in western Germany between Calvinists, Lutherans, and Catholics. The most pressing issue for all three churches involved the fate of children from mixed marriage. If they could not stop the periodic crossing of confessional boundaries, they hoped to at least secure the confessional allegiance of the children. This was a new problem in the Palatinate in the late seventeenth century, and it was one that a

24 Harrington and Smith, 77.
25 François, 11-33.
26 Harrington and Smith, 87-89.
nineteenth century resident would recognize. According to the provisions in Cuius, until 1685 all children in the Palatinate, regardless of confession, were required to be baptized and educated as Lutherans. The softened stance after 1685 indicates a transition toward social tolerance, but the type of tolerance the institutions endorsed existed in a tense relationship with the intimate tolerance that parishioners practiced. Historian Dagmar Friest demonstrates that as early as 1702, couples sought dispensation from their confessional leaders in order to intermarry. While they did not always receive it, when they did, it was under the condition that all children be raised in the confession the couple asked to provide dispensation for the marriage. Still, it is unclear to what extent these conditions were enforced. Until the last quarter of the nineteenth century, conversion was a far more common lubricant to marriage than dispensation. “All three confessions,” Friest suggests, “tolerated mixed marriages only under the condition of conversion and religious securities to prevent seduction to the other faith.” Such was the case in mixed areas where intermarriage was common in late seventeenth and eighteenth century Germany, such as Osnabrück, Leipzig, Alzey, and the Palatinate. It is notable, however, that the frequency of mixed marriage in tri-confessional regions generally meant unions between Lutherans and Calvinists. In Augsburg, which housed Catholics and Lutherans, but not very many Calvinists, intermarriages represented less than one percent of all marriages.

The case of Oppenheim, a tri-confessional town in western Germany, can be read as a representation of the way confessional relations and intermarriage trends changed from the late seventeenth century to the beginning of the nineteenth. In 1681, Oppenheim was 59 percent

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29 François, 20.
Calvinist, 36 percent Lutheran, three percent Catholic, and it had a small Jewish population that composed about two percent of the whole. It was essentially a bi-confessional city with a handful of small minorities. But the shape of Oppenheim changed drastically over the next 125 years. It transformed from a bi-confessional city into a tri-confessional one by the middle of the seventeenth century. However, by the beginning of the nineteenth century it began to assume the veneer of a bi-confessional city once again, but this time it was of a different type. Rather than split between Calvinists and Lutherans, Oppenheim transformed into a city that was 48 percent Catholic and 46 percent Lutheran and Calvinist combined. Such a change anticipated the unification of Lutherans and Calvinists into the “Protestant” confession.  

**Table 1**  

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Confessional Population of Oppenheim by Percentage of Whole, 1681-1801</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Calvinism</td>
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<tr>
<td>1681</td>
<td>59</td>
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<td>1698</td>
<td>47</td>
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<td>1741</td>
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Demographic change and state of intermarriage in Oppenheim reveals that Calvinists and Lutherans were reconciling differences and unifying prior to institutional unification from above. Tolerance of mixed marriage existed in Oppenheim, but some confessions were more open to it than others. Lutherans were the most likely to intermarry, and Catholics the least likely. Historian Peter Zschunke asserts that only a small number of marriages between Catholics and Protestants took place. The reason he provides is revealing: while Lutherans and Calvinists could reconcile their differences, neither could do so with Catholics, who were just too different. “The difference between these two confessions,” Zschunke claims, “appeared to be too vast for the

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unity of the family not to be endangered” by a mixed marriage.\textsuperscript{31} Indeed, in another tri-confessional town in western Germany, Alzey, Calvinists and Lutherans were also more likely to intermarry than either with Catholics.\textsuperscript{32} And when such marriages did take place, the woman generally converted to the man’s confession. From 1755-1798, 60 percent of Lutheran marriages in Oppenheim were between two Lutherans, while 39 percent were between a Lutheran and a Calvinist. In contrast, 94 percent of Catholic marriages were between two Catholics.\textsuperscript{33}

From the mid-sixteenth century to the end of the eighteenth, intermarriage was contingent upon changes regarding confession and confessional relationships. The principle \textit{Cuius} remained a factor that linked confessional affiliation with the politics of emerging early modern states. This relationship, in turn, meant that the delicate issue of boundary crossing, especially when it came to intermarriage, was both a religious and a political issue. From the sixteenth century until the outbreak of the Thirty Years’ War in 1618, political leaders in the Holy Roman Empire frequently employed \textit{Cuius} in an authoritative manner. The attempted imposition of confessional alignment signified that populations were not homogeneous, but that state heads desired them to be. After the conclusion of the war in 1648 and through the eighteenth century, leaders practiced confessional tolerance more than they had previously. State injunctions in the early modern period were sometimes stricter than religious ones; the latter most often favored one confession, while the former tended to practice conditional tolerance.\textsuperscript{34} In practice, even the Catholic Church in the seventeenth and eighteenth century did not always enforce its own conditions, mostly the promise of child education, when providing dispensation for mixed marriages.\textsuperscript{35}

\textsuperscript{31} Zschunke, 104.
\textsuperscript{32} Friest, 285; see also Eva Heller-Karneth, \textit{Drei Konfessionen in einer Stadt: zur Bedeutung des konfessionellen Faktors im Alzey des Ancien Regimes} (Würzburg: Bayerische Blätter für Volkskunde, 1996).
\textsuperscript{33} Zschunke, 104.
\textsuperscript{34} Friest, 286.
\textsuperscript{35} Ayako Bennette, “Confessional Mixing,” 49.
of the entire time period, confessionalization was a product both of a population’s relationship with local state bureaucracy, as well as a negotiation among confessional groups in daily life. The tri-confessional environment composed of Lutherans, Calvinists, and Catholics changed in the nineteenth century.

The Shrinking and Swelling of the Confessional Landscape, 1800-1875

If the early modern intermarriage problem in Germany were overlaid onto the problem as it existed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the relationship between Calvinists and Lutherans resembles the relationship between Protestants and Catholics. Catholics in the early modern period and Jews in the modern were the groups perceived as different in a different way. Moreover, the conflation of Calvinists and Lutherans into Protestants—the product of efforts from below and above—roughly corresponds to the collapse of Protestants and Catholics into Germans. These formulations are simplified and imprecise, but they are also instructive, as they show the non-static nature of boundaries and confession in German history. Cuius saw its end in 1803, but the practice that guided the principle prevailed in nineteenth century Germany. The Napoleonic Wars in the early nineteenth century altered the political and confessional landscape of Germany. By the conclusion of these conflicts in 1815, the territories that would later unify into the German Empire were reduced from over 300 to 38. The reduction of territories coincided with the transition from a tri-confessional to a bi-confessional environment. Territorial reform, coupled with early forms of industrialization and urbanization in central Europe, engendered confessional mixing within regions, and eventually caused the previously negligible intermarriage problem between Protestants and Catholics to intensify. Additionally, religious reform within Judaism in Germany brought about Jewish confessionalization, which introduced another form of intermarriage to Germany, though it did not become common within
Jewish communities until the late nineteenth century. Finally, the early nineteenth century also saw the interjection of nationalism into confessional politics. As a result of these trends, confessional identities became stronger over the course of the century, as did the link between religion and politics.36

One of the most significant changes in the nineteenth century was the unification of the Calvinists and Lutherans. In 1817, Friedrich Wilhelm III of Prussia, the political leader of two-thirds of the territory that composed the German Empire after 1871, unified the Calvinist and Lutheran confessions institutionally to form the Old Prussian Union. It is unsurprising that this took place in Prussia. As noted above, the early seventeenth century Hohenzollern conversion to Calvinism in a predominately Lutheran state represented confessional tolerance within Prussia. Even more notably, the formation of the united Protestant Church was the product of an intermarriage. Friedrich Wilhelm III belonged to the Calvinist Church while his wife, Louise of Mecklenburg, belonged to the Lutheran Church. “It seemed senseless,” historian Ernst Christian Helmreich posits, that they “could not receive the Lord’s Supper together.”37 There is evidence that suggests parishioners of these confessions made independent attempts to unify as early as 1808.38 In this way, the monarchs reflected the inclination of the population, so while the unification of the churches came from above, the environment from below permitted it. Importantly, unity did not mean the abolishment of Lutherans and Calvinists, nor did it mean the assimilation of one into the other. In other words, unity did not abolish boundaries. It was an institutional unification that facilitated communication and, over time, doctrinal alignment among the state churches. The salient point is that Calvinists and Lutherans in Germany had long

36 Harrington and Smith, 78.
had a functional relationship while maintaining separate confessional identities, which did not erode upon unification but that did became less significant over time.\(^{39}\) A boundary between Calvinists and Lutherans remained, but over the course of the nineteenth century it lost meaning.

The newly mixed territories of Germany provided the foundation for different confessional relations in Germany. About the early nineteenth century, historian Rebecca Ayako Bennette asserts that “the norm changed from communal homogeneity to mixing on a scale unseen before,” and that “greater physical proximity between Catholics and Protestants did not bring them closer together in terms of their socio-cultural milieus. These new tensions reinforced religious identity and caused greater confessional differentiation.”\(^{40}\) In other words, the invisible boundaries that characterized Augsburg in the eighteenth century, as Etienne François presents it, persisted into the nineteenth century. The notable difference between the two was that intermarriage between Protestants and Catholics was far more common in the nineteenth as opposed to the eighteenth century.

The state of confessional relations and intermarriage in Germany during the first half of the nineteenth century is illustrated most lucidly in the Rhineland. Around 1800, Napoleon made encroachments into the left, and eventually the right, bank of the River Rhine. These regions were absorbed into the bureaucratic structure of the newly founded French Empire. One of the most significant material effects of French rule in the Rhineland was the implementation of the Napoleonic Civil Code in 1804, and civil marriage along with it. However, what the Civil Code did not do was abolish the array of local laws that existed throughout the region. For example, the Duchy of Berg, in present-day North Rhine-Westphalia, implemented civil marriage in 1810; however, in this region it was also obligatory for a clerical blessing to accompany civil

\(^{39}\) The union did produce the small splinter groups “Old Lutherans” and “Old Reformed” that rejected the union, but they existed outside of the institutional framework and remained small groups throughout the nineteenth century.

\(^{40}\) Ayako Bennette, “Confessional Mixing,” 16-17.
marriages. With the existence of civil marriage, mixed marriage was easier. However, the ability to intermarry does not necessarily translate into the frequent practice of it.

Mixed marriage remained relatively uncommon in the region not only despite the presence of civil marriage, but also despite the Catholic Church’s unaggressive approach to it. Intermarriage was hardly a problem in the early nineteenth century. The church’s tolerance is most evident in the way canon law existed alongside Prussian law after Prussia annexed the Rhineland in 1815. While canon law technically prohibited mixed marriage according to the decree *Tametsi* that dated back to the Council of Trent, Catholic clerics continued to provide dispensation for the unions. However, upon annexation, this Catholic law conflicted with existing Prussian law. Specifically, Friedrich Wilhelm III’s *Allgemeines Landrecht* (ALR), established in 1794, held authority in the Rhineland after 1815. One of its provisions stated that children from mixed marriages were to be educated according to gender. That is, daughters would be educated in their mother’s faith, and sons in their father’s. It is significant to note that, at least at first, neither of these legal maxims regarding intermarriage had much of an impact on individual practice. Over the previous two centuries, Catholic clerics did not necessarily enforce the conditions regarding the education of children, and nothing changed at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In fact, even the superficial imposition of the conditions was a matter of conscience for Catholic clerics; it was not a requirement.

The matter of Protestant-Catholic intermarriage in Germany changed in the 1830s due to the religious and political relationship between Prussia and one of its new provinces, the Rhineland. Both the state and the Catholic Church practiced leniency when it came to mixed marriage at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The church’s tolerant behavior was also

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41 Ayako Bennette, “Confessional Mixing,” 47.
42 Ayako Bennette, “Confessional Mixing,” 49.
present in an office that was at once political and religious, as was common in German lands for the previous 250 years. That office was the Archbishopric of Cologne. But the office did not remain lenient. The transition to stringency is evident in a mass controversy over intermarriage. The drama, known as the Cologne Troubles, was a product of conservative turns on behalf of both the Prussian state and the Catholic Church. Additionally, nationalism and the relationship between confession and politics underwrote the event—one that would resonate in Germany for the remainder of the century at the very least.

The Cologne Troubles grew out of population mixture, intermarriage, and the state’s desire to police confessional boundaries. After Prussia absorbed the Rhineland in 1815, a large influx of Protestant Prussian men from the eastern provinces traveled to the Rhineland to work as state administrators. Not long after arriving, these men began marrying Catholic women. Because of the relative acceptance of intermarriage, these actions did not initially cause any problems. Things started to change in the 1820s. The transformation can be read as a legacy of Cuius, as Prussia used the relationship between confession and state as part of the process of nation building. In 1825, Friedrich Wilhelm III nullified the practice of gendered education for children from mixed marriage as written in the ALR, which had long been regarded as a compromise among the confessions in the matter of intermarriage. Instead, an 1803 decree that had previously only been authoritative in the eastern provinces of Prussia took its place. This legal maxim, which remained in force and played a role in confessional disputes in Germany until 1921, stated that all children from mixed marriages were to be educated in the faith of the

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In an environment where most mixed marriages were between newly arrived Protestant Prussian administrators and local Catholic women, this was an attempt to Prussianize the west by way of Protestantization.

While the Prussian state’s actions eventually played a crucial role in igniting the Cologne Troubles, the state’s policies were initially greeted with conciliation. The Archbishop of Cologne, Count Ferdinand von Spiegel (1764-1835), agreed to allow Catholic clerics to provide dispensation for intermarriages without the gesture of imposing conditions, which were in any case infrequently enforced. This practice became known as “passive assistance,” where the priest oversaw and registered the union, but without ceremony. The Archbishop also agreed to combat clerics who refused to participate in mixed marriages altogether. In 1834, Archbishop von Spiegel and the Prussian state in Berlin came to yet another agreement. This time, the Archbishop agreed to sanction not just passive assistance with mixed marriages, but active participation. Dispensation would no longer be required, and the request to raise all children in the Catholic Church was to be retired. Moreover, the Archbishop stated that Catholic clerics would cease warning and threatening young Catholics about the ills of intermarriage.

The Cologne Troubles solidified the difference between Protestant and Catholic Germans into the twentieth century. At first, the Archbishop’s actions did not alienate parishioners. The agreements did, however, bother younger and more conservative clerics. The conflict that von Spiegel’s behavior preceded reinforced the link between Catholic parishioner and the Catholic Church as a confessional unit in German lands distinct from Protestants, the unified Protestant Church, and the Prussian state. Problems in the Rhineland emerged once power of the Archbishopric of Cologne transitioned from the tolerant von Spiegel to the stricter Clemens

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45 The law, its evocation, and its implementation continued to play a fundamental role the history of intermarriage in Germany. See chapter three.
46 Vanden Heuvel, 325-326; Ayako Bennette, “Confessional Mixing,” 51.
August von Droste zu Vischering (1773-1845) in 1835. Upon Droste zu Vischering’s assumption of the Archbishopric of Cologne, he declared that he was not answerable to Prussian authorities in Berlin, but only to the Pope, and he nullified all previous conciliatory agreements regarding intermarriage. Such a declaration embodied suspicions that non-Catholic Germans had regarding Catholic Germans until at least the 1920s—namely, that their allegiance lay outside of the German nation. Droste zu Vischering proclaimed that a Catholic priest could only perform mixed marriages passively with the fulfillment of the single most important condition: the promise to educate all children Catholic. His position conflicted with the newly enshrined 1803 provision that determined that children from intermarriages were to be educated in the confession of the father, and the state viewed his defiance as an act against its authority. The Prussian state demanded that he resign his office, but Droste zu Vischering refused. He was then arrested, as were other clerics in the Rhineland for refusing to adhere to state policy regarding mixed marriage.47

The Cologne Troubles contextualized the challenge that intermarriage posed to the idea of a bi-confessional German state after unification in 1871. The Prussian state intervened into matters in the Rhineland that involved both the Catholic Church and a sense of political autonomy in western Germany. The heavy-handed attempt to shape the population in a Prussian image might not have resulted in a popular backlash if Catholic leaders did not offer resistance. But because Droste zu Vischering defied the state, and because the Prussian state responded with the unprecedented and radical decision to arrest the Archbishop of Cologne, the relationship between the Catholic Church and the state in Germany became more antagonistic. As might be expected, the actions against Droste zu Vischering also generated popular support among

47 James Brophy, Popular Culture and the Public Sphere in the Rhineland, 1800-1850 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 254-257.
Catholics in Germany well beyond the Rhineland.\textsuperscript{48} If intermarriage between Protestants and Catholics was not a serious problem before the Cologne Troubles, it was after. Indeed, the Cologne Troubles entrenched the idea that clear and impermeable borders were needed to separate the confessions.

Another significant, though less frequently acknowledged, mixed-marriage controversy took place in Baden. The events there overlapped with the Cologne Troubles, and they indicate that the “intermarriage problem” between Protestants and Catholics was new to the nineteenth century. The new differentiation between the confessions has to be read as contingent. As the Catholic Church in Baden was becoming more and more conservative, it negatively identified the state as an entity that considered intermarriage to be “the major site at which the Catholic and Protestant populations of the grand duchy could be harmoniously unified.”\textsuperscript{49} The Catholic Church considered such a vision impossible. And, indeed, such a stance made officials even more conservative. Church leaders began to direct parish priests to report intended mixed marriages to the local archbishop. The aim was to prevent the intermarriages from taking place or, failing that, imposing conditions on the couple regarding child education. In the midst of the controversy over intermarriage, conservative Catholic leaders offered, in the words of historian Dagmar Herzog, “their own views on proper social boundaries” built on the assumption that “Catholicism was superior to all other confessions and religions, and that boundaries between Catholics and all others needed to be drawn far more strictly.”\textsuperscript{50} Or, as a contemporary summed it up: “Catholics and Protestants are substantially different from each other. . . . Between the

\textsuperscript{50} Herzog, \textit{Intimacy and Exclusion}, 48.
confessions there can be no mixing, no union, but only recognition, tolerance, and justice.”51 As in the late nineteenth century, such a demand emerged because intermarriage was fairly common in Baden. Anecdotal reports indicate that in 1839 one of every twenty marriages in Baden were mixed. The first statistical reports from 1864 confirmed that 5.6 percent of all marriages were intermarriages.52

While incidences such as the Cologne Troubles were political disputes that shaped confessional life in Germany, religious revival in the mid-nineteenth century contributed to political conflict in the last quarter of the century. Specifically, Catholic and Protestant revival provided the foundation for Bismarck’s *Kulturkampf* against the Catholic Church in Germany, which commenced upon German unification in the 1870s with a series of punitive laws against the Catholic Church in Germany. Catholic revival—evident in the increase of public declarations of confessional allegiance such as pilgrimages—after the Cologne Troubles served to highlight confessional difference in German society.53 It contextualized the *Kulturkampf*, but so did a correlative Protestant revival. Historian Rebecca Ayako Bennette argues that, just as much as Catholics beginning in the 1850s, Protestants “closed ranks against [Catholics] . . . forming their own ‘ghetto.’”54 In the 1840s, the Catholic Church placed a greater emphasis on the authority of the Pope, and it handled intermarriages more severely than before. Moreover, the bishops in Germany declared that marriages were only valid if they followed the provisions outlined at the Council of Trent. While such statements did not affect the official classification of mixed

54 Ayako Bennette, “Confessional Mixing,” 42.
marriages consecrated by a Protestant cleric, they did serve to underline confessional difference.\textsuperscript{55}

The \textit{Kulturkampf} is significant because it was the political expression of confessional difference between Protestants and Catholics. It was a state mandated attempt to undermine Catholic authority in Germany in order to neutralize the political pull Catholicism could have in regions such as the Rhineland and Bavaria. The primary aggressor was Bismarck and the Protestant Prussian state he led. It was a political conflict that, like political conflicts in Germany for the previous 300 years, was inextricable from confessional matters. Indeed, one of the most consequential results of the \textit{Kulturkampf} was the consolidation of the Center Party as the Catholic political party in Germany, despite the initial aims of its purveyors.\textsuperscript{56} The Prussian state’s legal injunctions in the 1870s were designed to undermine Catholic authority in appointing, training, and disciplining clerics by transferring that power to the Prussian state. A secondary purpose that was just as important was to destabilize the coherence of Catholic society in Germany because it existed outside of the Prussian-Protestant vision of the German nation.\textsuperscript{57} The aim of the \textit{Kulturkampf} was not simply to assert state authority over religious authority, but to frame “Germany,” and by extension what it meant to be “German,” under the guise of Prussian-Protestantism rather than Catholicism.

\textsuperscript{55} Ayako Bennette, “Confessional Mixing,” 54-59.
\textsuperscript{57} Jonathan Sperber and Michael Gross argue that the \textit{Kulturkampf} was an exacerbation of a previously existing conflict against an already unified German Catholic community. Margaret Lavinia Anderson claims that while that might be the case, the political consolidation of German Catholicism hinged on the events of the \textit{Kulturkampf}. Lavinia Anderson, \textit{Windthorst}, 136-144; Sperber, \textit{Popular Catholicism}, 209; Michael Gross, \textit{The War Against Catholicism: Liberalism and the Anti-Catholic Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Germany} (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 239.
The *Kulturkampf* can be read as an aggressive attempt to unify Protestants and Catholics into Germans. The state attempt backfired because, in contrast to the unification of Calvinists and Lutherans, it attempted to negate all Catholic authority and assimilate Catholics into a Germany made in a Protestant image. The *Kulturkampf* was an attempt to abolish the boundary between Protestants and Catholics, which is why it initially failed. Nevertheless, the creation of the Second Reich came with smaller forms of confessional unity that stuck. For instance, prior to 1871, the Prussian Ministry of Culture had Protestant and Catholic sections. In that year, however, the Prussian state abolished the separation, and from that point onward officials of the Ministry of Culture handled Protestant and Catholic matters from a single office. In 1872, Prussia passed a law that made schooling a matter of state rather than church. After 1872, the Protestant and Catholic clerics who served as school superintendents were appointed by the state, whereas previously such positions were simply a part of clerical duties in a given region. While political polarization was taking place due to the *Kulturkampf*’s extreme measures, bureaucratic unity was taking place. And these laws were not repealed.⁵⁸

Another significant law that was not repealed was the 1875 Civil Marriage Law. It was among the most significant outcomes of the *Kulturkampf* because it made it easier for Germans to cross confessional boundaries intimately. The Protestant-Prussian state’s goal in imposing obligatory civil marriage was not to make the border between Protestants and Catholics impermeable, but to weaken the ability of the Catholic side to manage the border so that the Protestant side could overwhelm it. One of the purposes of the introduction of obligatory civil marriage in 1875 was to counter the effectiveness of the Catholic Church in the way it handled mixed marriages by making it easier for Germans to circumvent Catholic demands.⁵⁹ As noted

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⁵⁸ Helmreich, 54.
above, the Catholic Church’s position on intermarriage was stricter starting in the 1840s and after than it was previously. Indeed, there is evidence that the stringent conditions that the Catholic Church began enforcing in the mid-nineteenth century were effective in either curbing mixed marriages, or at least bringing them under the auspices of Catholicism. For example, in the 1830s, the city of Münster, previously almost entirely Catholic, received an influx of Protestants from surrounding towns. The result of the population mixture was novel for the nineteenth century: intermarriage between Protestants and Catholics. Indeed, between 1838 and 1845, there were 1,056 marriages in Münster, 128, or 12.1 percent of all marriages, were mixed.\(^60\) This was a far cry eighteenth century Augsburg, where intermarriage stood below one percent in a mixed Lutheran-Catholic town. However, from 1860 to 1862, 593 marriages took place in Münster, but only 52 were mixed, which is 8.8 percent of the total. “The invisible boundary between the confessions in the city,” historian Antonius Liedhegener posits, “was violated significantly less frequently than 20 years before.”\(^61\) Moreover, in both contexts almost all of the marriages adhered to Catholic conditions, which were infrequently enforced before, as almost 83 percent of all children from the intermarriages were raised Catholic. In some, but not all, areas of Germany the division between confessions was proving more and more difficult to bridge by way of intermarriage, and it was because of the efforts of the Catholic Church.

But even in areas where mixed marriage rose over time, the Catholic Church continued to pose a threat to the Protestant-Prussian idea of Germany. From 1840 to 1914, intermarriage in Prussia rose from 3.7 percent to 10.2.\(^62\) In 1864, however, most intermarriages in Prussia were consecrated Catholic, and the majority of children born from mixed marriages were educated

\(^{60}\) Antonius Liedhegener, *Christantum und Urbanisierung: Katholiken und Protestanten in Münster und Bochum, 1830-1933* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1997), 111.

\(^{61}\) Liedhegener, 149.

\(^{62}\) Bennette Ayako, “Confessional Mixing,” 95.
Catholic, despite the fact that Protestants comprised a two-thirds majority.\textsuperscript{63} The 1875 Civil Marriage Law made intermarriage outside of Catholic requirements easier. The law provided the means for couples to evade the strict Catholic conditions that contributed to the ability of the church to keep mixed families within Catholicism. As the following chapters demonstrate, the shift to Protestant dominance in matters of intermarriage suggests that the intended strategic implementation of civil marriage worked.

The Civil Marriage Law had an even greater impact on Germany’s Jewish population because it enabled marriage between Jewish and non-Jewish Germans outside of a religious institutional framework. In addition to the emphasis on difference between Protestants and Catholics, the mid-nineteenth century was a turning point in confessional relations and intermarriage because of the emergence of a third confession. The Jewish Reform movement, which became a mass movement in Germany in the 1840s, can be read as the confessionalization of Jews in Germany because it meant that theology no longer provided the primary marker of difference between Jewish and non-Jewish Germans. Religious barriers to intermarriage, for example, were softened among Jewish reformers. For instance, at a gathering of Reform rabbis in 1844 in Braunschweig, the rabbis reconsidered Judaism’s prohibition on intermarriage. While the rabbis rejected the proposal that marriages between Jews and other monotheists be allowed, they agreed to allow intermarriage (without conversion) on a conditional basis. The rabbis conceded the regulation of marriage to the state by indicating that “members of monotheistic religions in general are not forbidden to marry if the parents are permitted by law of the state to bring up children from such wedlock in the Jewish religion.”\textsuperscript{64} In other words, Reform rabbis

\textsuperscript{63} Johannes Schneider, ed. \textit{Kirchliches Jahrbuch, 1905}, vol. 32 (Gütersloh: Druck und Verlag von C. Bertelsmann, 1906), 295.
\textsuperscript{64} Quoted in David Ellenson, \textit{After Emancipation: Jewish Religious Responses to Modernity} (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 2004), 166-167.
were tolerant of intermarriages, at least to the extent that Protestants and Catholics were. The state conditions the rabbis required existed in Germany after 1875.

Germany was composed of three confessional groups at the beginning and end of the nineteenth century, but the groups were different. At the beginning of the century, Lutherans, Calvinists, and Catholics were Germany’s confessional groups. Lutherans and Calvinists had a greater propensity to intermarry with one another than either did with Catholics. Indeed, this tendency anticipated the unification of the Lutheran and Calvinist confessions into the Protestant confession. As the century wore on, Catholics and Protestants intermarried more frequently than they had before. By the end of the century, Jews had confessionalized and became Germany’s third confessional group. However, confessional relations remained dualistic. The Jewish population was not only small in Germany, but by the middle of the nineteenth century there were already moves to cast Jews as religiously and ethnically different in a manner that did not coincide with the difference between Protestants and Catholics.

Conclusion

Confessional difference and the link confessional relationships had with politics continuously existed in German lands from the Peace of Augsburg in 1555 to the founding of the Second German Reich in 1871. Intermarriage was also a pressing issue over this extensive time period. However, confessional difference and the meaning of boundary crossing when it came to intermarriage were not the same over time. Initially, confessional difference was built into the desire to maintain peaceful relationships between Lutherans and Catholics. The principle Cuius

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65 Historian Todd Weir argues that secularism represented the “fourth confession” in Germany. While he compellingly argues that secularism was a movement with enough communal coherence to be considered a confession, intermarriage with secularists was never a problem. Classified as “dissidents” in intermarriage records, the numbers were small, and there was, by definition, no institution to offer concern or a response to mixed marriage. Todd Weir, Secularism and Religion in Nineteenth Century Germany: The Rise of the Fourth Confession (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

66 Herzog, Intimacy and Exclusion, 79.
was designed specifically to delineate confessional boundaries. Then as later, the realities of population mixing belied the goal of alignment between a political leader and a confessionally homogeneous population, as did the contingent nature of confession itself.

In the early modern period, intermarriage developed in a non-linear and non-progressive fashion. At first, it was somewhat of an afterthought. The novelty of Christian confessions left both confessional groups and emerging states ill-equipped to address intermarriage as a problem. While rare at first, intermarriage became more common over time as interaction between confessional groups increased. It is important to recognize that until the late eighteenth century, most mixed marriages were between Calvinists and Lutherans. This dynamic only changed in the nineteenth century after the formation of the Old Prussian Union that unified Calvinists and Lutherans into the Protestant confession. At that moment, intermarriage between Protestants and Catholics was uncommon and generally tolerated by churches and states. In the context of religious revival and national politics in the middle of the century, however, intermarriage became scandalous. The Catholic Church, in particular, had success in both preventing and controlling mixed marriages. But they could only do so until the introduction of civil marriage in 1875, which undermined the ability of the Catholic Church to regulate the politics of intermarriage. The mid-nineteenth century also witnessed the emergence of Jews as a confessional group, although almost immediately they were recognized as a confession and something else that set them apart from the divide between Protestants and Catholics.
Chapter 2: Protestant-Catholic Intermarriage and Bi-Confessional Germany

From the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth, intermarriage between Protestant and Catholic Germans was common and relatively benign. It was also viewed as a grave social problem with far-reaching consequences. On the one hand, ordinary Germans acknowledged, negotiated, and reformed confessional difference when entering into mixed marriages and raising children. On the other hand, confessional leaders attempted to harden the boundary between Protestants and Catholics as a means of maintaining confessional difference, and thus a confessional identity. A fundamental way they attempted to do so was to attack the primary act of boundary crossing: intermarriage. Nevertheless, in instances where efforts to prevent mixed marriage failed, church leaders turned their attention to children. Their re-directed focus reveals that they were anxious about much more than the act of mixed marriage. They were concerned with upholding confessional boundaries in order to sustain Protestant and Catholic identity in Germany. That is why church leaders easily forgave the past act of intermarriage as long as the future, in the form of the children, represented confessional continuity.

In this chapter, I show that intermarriages between Protestant and Catholic Germans rose steadily from the 1870s until the 1930s, despite institutional efforts to curtail them. I argue that intermarriage at two levels, the individuals who partook and the institutions that oversaw them, contributed to making Germany bi-confessional. Claims about the Protestant or Catholic character of the German nation were ubiquitous, but they existed under the assumption that Germany was a Christian nation-state. Confession itself was ultimately more significant regarding the making of Protestants and Catholics into Germans than claims about the Protestant
or Catholic nature of Germany were in keeping them separate. A bi-confessional Germany of Protestants and Catholics was not self-evident, but was made.

This chapter first illustrates the willingness of ordinary Protestant and Catholic Germans to intermarry. Despite dramatic differences in confessional make-up in regions and cities, local trends can be extrapolated to reflect the national divide between Protestants and Catholics. Statistical trends from the 1870s until about 1930 provide the evidence for steady rise of intimate boundary crossing. The chapter then argues that Protestant and Catholic church leaders interpreted intermarriage as a fundamental threat to confessional difference in Germany. The threat intermarriage posed to confessional difference meant a threat to Protestant and Catholic identity. Church leaders primarily found the challenge in the tension between social tolerance and individual tolerance, where the latter—embodied by intermarriage—endangered the former.

**Protestant-Catholic Intermarriage in Germany, 1875-1930**

Intermarriage in Germany was uneven region to region and city to city. But from the perspective of Germany as a whole, the most important trend was that mixed marriage between Protestants and Catholics was widespread and persistent, regardless of whether the region or city was majority Protestant or majority Catholic. The most important condition for mixed marriage to become a social phenomenon worth paying attention to was population mixture. The German population was a mix of Protestants and Catholics, although not every region or city was mixed in quite the same way. But even in environments where the split between the majority and minority confessions was extreme, intermarriage took place. Part of the reason for this was increased population mobility in the late nineteenth century, especially to cities. But more

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importantly, it was because the nature of Germany’s confessional divide at the national level was reflected in local practice. In the context of population mixture, this section illustrates intermarriage trends over a roughly 60-year period in places with different degrees of confessional mixture in the state of Prussia. It focuses on statistics from Prussia, two of its provinces, Saxony and the Rhineland, and three urban centers, Berlin, Magdeburg, and Cologne. Germany had both Protestant and Catholic majority regions and cities. It was not enough that Germany was two-thirds Protestant and one-third Catholic, but it was also critical that Catholics sometimes constituted the majority population. The nature of Germany’s confessional mixture meant that individual acts of boundary crossing never threatened to subsume one confession into the other at the national level, and actually led to making Germany bi-confessional not just as a matter of demography, but also in terms of national identity.

Germany’s confessional divide was a particularity that shaped the course of German history. Germany’s distinct confessional make-up made it distinct from other European states, and it is what contributed to the nature of its intermarriage problem. In 1925, Pastor Fritz von der Heydt claimed that “the Reformation initiated the process that led to today’s intermarriage crisis.” If the Reformation had attained its goal of unifying “German Christianity,” which von der Heydt argued was the movement’s aim, “there would have been no room for intermarriage.”² As opposed to other European states where the Reformation either led to continued Catholic or newfound Protestant dominance in the population, in Germany it contributed to confessional division. Historian Tillman Bendikowski suggests that the nature of Germany’s confessional

² Fritz von der Heydt, Die Mischehe (Berlin: Verlag des Evangelischen Bundes, 1926), 20.
divide meant that it was only there that intermarriage could be made to reflect the conflict between Protestantism and Catholicism.³

Things were different elsewhere in Europe. France was a predominately Catholic country, but French Catholicism was shaped by the secularizing legacy of the French Revolution and independence from the Vatican. Moreover, the history of the French Protestant minority was characterized by persecution, exile, and strong communal identity, which are traits that militate against mixed marriage.⁴ Italy’s miniscule Protestant minority was geographically isolated in the Piedmont region, and it was likewise too small to contribute to an Italian intermarriage problem.⁵ Catholic dominance in Polish speaking regions was similar to that of France in terms of population, although religious practice was stronger among Poles than in France. Additionally, the Polish regions with the most Protestants in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were border regions with Protestant Prussia, and dominant form of population mixture was between ethnic Germans and Poles rather than between Protestants and Catholics.⁶ Great Britain’s mostly Anglican inhabitants had a Catholic population of just five percent in 1900, and many of them were also ethnically marginalized Irish.⁷ The closest approximations to Germany were the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Netherlands. In Austria-Hungary, however, ethnic and linguistic pluralism, not confession, constituted the principal form of population mixture.⁸

While in the Netherlands, the Calvinist majority neither intermarried as frequently as the

Protestant majority in Germany, nor did the Netherlands have as many confessionally mixed or minority dominant regions as Germany did.\(^9\)

Germany’s confessional divide facilitated intermarriage. Roughly two thirds of the German population was Protestant, and one third was Catholic. It also had Protestant and Catholic regions, as well as Protestant and Catholic cities. The Prussian state as a whole most closely reflected the demographics of the German state, as it remained about two-thirds Protestant from the last quarter of the nineteenth century until 1925. Prussia also constituted two-thirds of the German population as a whole. While Bavaria was Germany’s largest Catholic state, it was the Catholic Rhineland that hosted a large Protestant minority. As chapter one shows, the Rhineland’s historical relationship to Prussia also contributed to the linking of confession, nation, and state in the early nineteenth century. From the late nineteenth century until the 1920s, the Rhineland’s Catholic population decreased from 73 percent of the population to about 67 percent. More than any other region, the Rhineland illustrates the increasingly precarious position German Catholicism was in when attempting to manage intermarriages. Finally, the population of Saxony indicates that an overwhelming majority of one confession, in this case Protestants, can quickly create a static demographic environment. But as opposed to Italian Protestants in Piedmont, the Catholic minority in Saxony frequently intermarried. The numbers were specific to the region, but the individual act of boundary crossing in Saxony reflected practices in other areas and, indeed, Germany as a whole.

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Table 2

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<td>62.6%</td>
<td>35.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>62.8</td>
<td>35.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>61.5</td>
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Table 3

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<th>Catholic</th>
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<th>Protestant</th>
<th>Catholic</th>
<th>Saxony</th>
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<th>Catholic</th>
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<td>1880</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>34</td>
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<td>73</td>
<td>93</td>
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<td>63.9</td>
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<td>65</td>
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<td>66.8</td>
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<td>7.611</td>
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The urban centers of the Rhineland, Saxony, and Prussia furnish a more granular look at population mixture and how they translate to intermarriage trends. Cologne was the most mixed of the three cities. From 1880 until 1925, Catholics composed about 80 percent of the population. It was not until after the First World War that the Catholic population dropped significantly.

After the First World War, Cologne’s Catholic population fell while its Protestant population remained static. Protestant Magdeburg was not as mixed as Cologne. From the late nineteenth century until the First World War, Magdeburg was over 90 percent Protestant. It closely resembled the confessional make-up of Saxony. In Magdeburg both the Protestant and Catholic populations decreased after 1918. The majority of the population in Berlin was Protestant. Measured by percent, the majority was somewhere in between Cologne’s 80 percent and Magdeburg’s 93 percent. As we will see, Berlin’s high and steady intermarriage rates

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10 Tables taken from Meiring, 99. Her tabulations are culled from German census data and Prussian statistical yearbooks. The population breakdown in 1880 can be read as a close approximation of the population during the 1870s.

11 Data taken from Meiring, 99.
distinguished it from other German cities. Protestant and Catholic leaders frequently observed that Berlin had the intermarriage rate of a truly mixed region, despite not being very mixed.\textsuperscript{12}

<table>
<thead>
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<td>Protestant</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
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<td>14.7%</td>
<td>82.1</td>
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<td>1895</td>
<td>16.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>19.2</td>
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Table 5

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<td></td>
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<td>1885</td>
<td>84.1</td>
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<td>1890</td>
<td>85.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>84.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>81.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925 (Greater Berlin)</td>
<td>76.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The intermarriage rates in these regions and cities normalized in the statistical sense, which also suggests that boundary crossing became a regular part of life for Protestant and Catholic Germans. The normalization of confessional intermarriage among parishioners has to be understood in both manners. In order to grasp the common features of statistical trends in the regions and cities at hand, it is necessary to trace their differences over time. Marriage data from the decade that saw the unification of Germany and the introduction of obligatory civil marriage is most complete in Prussia. The steady rise of mixed marriage rates in Prussia beginning in the 1880s was preceded by a brief period of decline. The decrease of intermarriage, however, was due to changes in marriage patterns in general, which suggests that it was embedded within larger trends rather than an independent phenomenon. Marriages in Prussia in the 1870s reached

\textsuperscript{12} Robert Schneider and Johannes Schneider, eds. \textit{Amtskalender für Geistliche}, 1895 (Gütersloh: Druck und Verlag von C. Bertelsmann, 1896), 191.
\textsuperscript{13} Table taken from Meiring, 99.
\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Berliner Statistisches Jahrbuch für Volkswirtschaft und Statistik}, 1875, vols. 1-34 (Verlag von Leonhard Simion, 1877-1927).
a high point in 1872 before dramatically decreasing by nearly 50,000 marriages per year in 1879. The reason for the decline was likely a combination of marriage saturation that took place in 1872 after the military campaigns of the 1860s concluded, as well as the liberalization of Prussian marriage law in 1868. These changes to Prussian marriage included the abolishment of economic and religious barriers to marriage. Prussians no longer needed to include proof of economic status, and they had the option to marry civilly. The decline of intermarriage existed in the context of declining marriage overall, and it had little to do with confessional oversight or changes in daily practice. While intermarriage data for 1872 is unavailable, it is likely that it also peaked in 1872 alongside marriage in general, at least in Prussia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Marriages in Prussia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>255,886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1873</td>
<td>253,237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>245,224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>231,331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>221,727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1877</td>
<td>210,357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>207,716</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879</td>
<td>206,752</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>208,456</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statistically, the normalization of intermarriage is evident in the steady rates despite a decline in the absolute number of marriages overall. Significantly, the mixed marriage rates were high for both Protestants and Catholics. In order to understand what the figures meant to contemporary observers, we must view statistical trends from the perspective of the institutions. Table 2.6 includes intermarriage rates as percentages of total Protestant and Catholic marriages.

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16 *Jahrbuch für die amtliche Statistik des Preussischen Staates (JPS), Band 5*. Königlichen statistischen Bureau (Berlin: Verlag des königlichen statistischen Bureaus, 1883), 119. In the data above, Lauenburg is included from 1872 until 1875, and it is excluded thereafter. This accounts for some of the decrease, but Lauenburg’s population was not large enough to account for the decrease from 1875 until 1876, which in any case continued to fall after Lauenburg was excluded from Prussian population statistics.
Protestant clerics, for instance, were unconcerned with how many Catholics married one another in Germany, so those unions did not figure into the way they viewed intermarriage trends. They were only concerned with the Protestants who married. From 1875 until 1880, about ten percent of Protestant and 19 percent of Catholic marriages were mixed. The most common form of mixed marriage was between a Catholic man and a Protestant woman. This combination also remained stable in Prussia. The salient point is that intermarriage in Germany’s largest state was ubiquitous—even in the 1870s, when confessional mixed marriage between Protestants and Catholics was still a recent phenomenon in Germany.

Table 7  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Intermarriages as Percentage of total Protestant Marriages</th>
<th>Percentage of Marriages between a Protestant Woman &amp; a Catholic Man</th>
<th>Percentage of Marriages between a Protestant Man and a Catholic Woman</th>
<th>Intermarriages as Percentage of total Catholic Marriages</th>
<th>Percentage of Marriages between a Catholic Woman and a Protestant Man</th>
<th>Percentage of Marriages between a Catholic Man and a Protestant Woman</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1877</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>10.517</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The statistical normalization of intermarriage between Protestants and Catholics continued. Beginning around 1879, the intermarriage rate in Germany increased more rapidly than the marriage rate, which meant more intermarriages relative to non-mixed marriages. The rise was steady and un-dramatic. Table 2.7 takes individuals, rather than marriages, as its unit of

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17. *JPS*, 120.
analysis. In 1885, about seven and a half percent of all Protestant and Catholic Prussians who married entered into a mixed marriage. In 1910, that rate rose to about nine and a half percent, and by 1925 it had grown to about 12 and a half percent. The rate at which Protestants and Catholics intermarried rose at a similar pace from 1880 to 1910, but by 1925 it rose slightly more rapidly for Protestants. According to historian Kerstin Meiring, from whom the following two tables and figures are culled, from 1880 to 1925 the intermarriage rate among Protestant Prussians grew by about 95 percent, while for Catholics it grew by about 89 percent. Once again, the most common form of mixed marriage involved a Catholic man and a Protestant woman. But, as Table 2.7 illustrates, the different rates at which men and women of each confession intermarried was very small.

In the Rhineland, the Protestant minority was smaller than the Catholic minority in Prussia as a whole, with the exception of the post First World War period, when the minority percentages aligned. The Rhineland had a correspondingly larger Catholic majority when compared to Prussia’s Protestant majority. From 1880 to 1925, both the majority and minority populations in the Rhineland intermarried at a relatively rapid rate. The Catholic intermarriage rate increased more rapidly compared to the rate among Protestants. As intermarriage became more common and the Catholic share of the population in the Rhineland declined, mixed marriage among Catholics increased. According to Meiring, the rate for Catholics rose about 129

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18 Meiring calculated these numbers by taking the number of marriages between, for instance, two Protestants, doubling that number to account for each married Protestant, and adding in all Protestant mixed marriages, in order to determine the percentage of individual married Protestants who entered into a mixed marriage. The figures under “Protestants” and “Catholics” signify that number, while the gender specific figures represent the percentage of Protestant and Catholic men and women who intermarried vis-à-vis the total number of married individuals in each respective confession. Meiring’s method differs from the one I used in the previous tables, where I treat marriages as a single unit. I added the number of mixed marriages and non-mixed marriages, and then determined the percentage of intermarriages from that total. Meiring, 196, n. 50.

19 Data taken and re-calculated to identify totals from Meiring, 98-102.

20 The percentages Meiring uses account for all intermarriages, not just intermarriages between Protestants and Catholics. Using the raw figures she provides, I adjusted the percentages downward to account for the few mixed marriages between Jews and Christians that figure into her calculations.
percent from 1880 to 1925, whereas for Protestants it was about 95 percent hike. The increase of Protestant intermarriage in the Rhineland reflects almost exactly the rise that took place in Prussia.

Saxony was different because its confessional makeup was so heavily weighted toward Protestantism. With a Protestant population that exceeded 90 percent, only a very small percentage of Protestants intermarried. Yet, intermarriage among the Protestant majority did rise over time, although the increase was negligible. It went from a rate of just over two percent in 1880 to a similarly small rate of just over four percent in 1925. At the same time, the rate at which minority Catholics in Saxony intermarried rose from about 33 percent to about 41 percent. But it is significant that Saxony maintained a bi-confessional character where boundary crossing was common without overwhelming the minority confession.

Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Protestants</th>
<th>Protestant Women</th>
<th>Protestant Men</th>
<th>Catholics</th>
<th>Catholic Women</th>
<th>Catholic Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Rhineland, 1880-1925

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Protestant Women</th>
<th>Protestant Men</th>
<th>Catholics</th>
<th>Catholic Women</th>
<th>Catholic Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>.2</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Saxony, 1880-1925

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Protestant Women</th>
<th>Protestant Men</th>
<th>Catholics</th>
<th>Catholic Women</th>
<th>Catholic Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>38.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>42.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>42.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>44.5\textsuperscript{21}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Intermarriage was most pronounced in cities, which is why they were singled out historically as a function of intermarriage. Working class migration to cities played a central role.

\textsuperscript{21} Meiring, 98.
in the high mixed marriage rate of cities because it usually made urban areas more confessionally mixed. Their character also makes it necessary to isolate them here. While the confessional makeup of cities did not differ greatly from the states within which they were situated, the intermarriage rates were quite different. It is also significant that urban intermarriage rates did not substantially increase from 1880 to 1910. The incongruent growth of regional and urban intermarriage rates suggest that mixed marriage rose steadily in non-urban areas over time, although they did not quite reach the level of intermarriage in cities prior to 1914. The rates in cities jumped only after the First World War. Table 2.8 illustrates the intermarriage rates in Cologne and Magdeburg, the primary urban centers of the Rhineland and Saxony. Most strikingly, the mixed marriage rate for the minority confessions in both regions were over 50 percent. Mixed marriage among Protestants in Cologne was much higher than in the Rhineland in general. For example, the rate was about 20 percent in 1910 in the Rhineland, while in Cologne it was about 51 percent. But because urban centers were destinations of population movement, even in cities bi-confessionalism held over time.

Intermarriage in Magdeburg is also telling. In contrast to the relationship between Cologne and the Rhineland, Magdeburg’s population closely resembled Saxony’s as a whole. The city was roughly five percent Catholic and about 95 percent Protestant. Yet, the percentage of Catholics that intermarried in Saxony peaked at 41 percent in 1925, whereas it was above 70 percent in Magdeburg until the First World War. Like in Saxony in general, the Protestant majority was so large that the intermarriage rate among Protestants never exceeded ten percent. From the Protestant perspective, Magdeburg was a problem because it was an urban area, and cities fostered intermarriage, whereas Saxony on the whole was not a problem. It is also notable that Magdeburg’s intermarriage rate among Catholics declined after the First World War.
Table 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>58.4</td>
<td>64.6</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>51.8</td>
<td>58.8</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>52.1</td>
<td>56.4</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>62.6</td>
<td>63.8</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Magdeburg, 1880-1925

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>76.2</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>81.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>70.3</td>
<td>64.9</td>
<td>74.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>72.2</td>
<td>70.5</td>
<td>73.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>64.4</td>
<td>62.7</td>
<td>66.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Berlin was distinct because its intermarriage rates were higher and even more stable than in Magdeburg and Cologne. The figures in Table 2.9 were calculated by adding the total number of Protestant-Catholic mixed marriages onto the total number of marriages between two Protestants and marriages between two Catholics, respectively. For example, there were 10,025 marriages in Berlin in 1880 that were either between two Protestants or a Protestant and a Catholic. In other words, Protestant leaders cared about 10,025 marriages in Berlin, and 1,337 of those marriages were mixed, which is 13.3 percent of the total. Five hundred and twenty four of those marriages, or 5.2 percent of the total, were between a Protestant man and a Catholic woman.

The figures indicate that mixed marriage as a whole was more common in Berlin, and it was primarily due to population mobility to the city. The rate at which the majority Protestants in Berlin intermarried, for example, matched that of minority Protestants in the Rhineland, at least until the spike after the First World War. It is also notable that Berlin was Germany’s biggest city, so the absolute number of minority Catholics living in Berlin was large, regardless of the population relative to the majority Protestants. Roughly three out of four Catholic marriages, for

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22 Meiring, 98.
example, were mixed in Berlin from the late nineteenth century until 1930. Additionally, the most common form of intermarriage in Berlin was between a Catholic man and a Protestant woman. Because of Berlin’s size, the gender difference is significant. The gap can be explained by the relative mobility of men at the turn of the century. More men than women migrated to Berlin, most were aged 15 to 35, only about one-fifth to one-sixth were married, most were working class, and many were Catholic.\footnote{Horst Matzerath, “Wachstum und Mobilität der Berliner Bevölkerung im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert,” in Seelsorge und Diakonie in Berlin: Beiträge zum Verhältnis von Kirche und Großstadt im 19. und beginnenden 20. Jahrhundert, eds. Kaspar Elm and Hans-Dietrich Loock (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1990), 210-211.}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage of Married Protestants who Intermarried</th>
<th>Percentage of Protestant Women Intermarried</th>
<th>Percentage of Protestant Men Intermarried</th>
<th>Percentage of Married Catholics who Intermarried</th>
<th>Percentage of Catholic Women Intermarried</th>
<th>Percentage of Catholic Men Intermarried</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>83.4</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>50.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>5.5</td>
<td>82.4</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>47.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
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<td>8.3</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>77.7</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>44.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>15.7</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>44.6</td>
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<td>8.4</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>41.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>74.5</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>41.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>71.6</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>39.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>76.1</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>37.6\footnote{BSJ, vols. 1-34.}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Individual Protestant and Catholic Germans regularly crossed confessional boundaries in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. In regions such as Prussia, the Rhineland, and Saxony, mixed marriage increased steadily over time. In Cologne, the Rhineland’s largest city, it rose un-dramatically prior to the First World War before spiking afterward, while in Berlin the rate remained relatively constant, and in Magdeburg intermarriage declined alongside confessional affiliation. Local exceptions prove that intermarriage and the confessional divide was a rule of the nation. Because Germany had Catholic as well as Protestant strongholds, its
mixture was more than just a breakdown of percentage. Without regions where the national minority was the majority, the debits and credits of intermarriage—represented by the children and determined by the region—would not have been balanced.

**Intermarriage and Confessional Anxiety**

As intermarriage normalized among parishioners, institutional leaders dramatized intermarriage’s un-dramatic rise and framed it as an immoral act that threatened confessional difference and confessional identity in Germany. Such dramatizations reveal institutional anxiety that intermarriage symbolized and meant much more than the union of two individuals from different Christian confessions. Yet, church leaders also presented mixed marriage as something that could be immediately forgiven. The way to do so was to educate children in the “correct” confession, which in turn symbolized the persistence of confessional identity into the future, even if the parents of the children belonged to different confessions. The basic tension regarding intermarriage that led to anxiety and compromise was between social and individual tolerance. By social tolerance, I mean the co-existence of Protestant and Catholic populations in places such as Cologne and Berlin. By individual tolerance, I mean intermarriage and the crossing of the confessional boundary inherent to the act. Both institutions valued what they termed “confessional peace.” What they meant by that was the sustenance of a confessional boundary that maintained Protestant and Catholic identity. Importantly, neither church advocated for the disappearance of the other. The history of confessions in Germany provided a framework in which co-existence was the alternative to violent conflict. But they also claimed that confessional co-existence was delicate and that acts of individual tolerance—such as intermarriage—threatened social co-existence. According to their rhetoric, the “mixture” inherent to individual
tolerance weakened the stabilizing boundary that separated the confessions and provided confessional identity.

Church leaders interpreted the relationship between tolerance and intermarriage in a bipolar fashion. These views reveal the deep connection church leaders saw between German families and German society. For church leaders, “tolerance” had a positive and a negative connotation. Each side advocated for group tolerance. While Protestant leaders generally did so by evoking the Thirty Years’ War and appealing to “confessional peace,” after the *Kulturkampf*, Catholic leaders were disinclined to validate any notion of confessional peace. Instead, Catholic leaders tended to advocate for religious freedom. Yet, both churches viewed individual tolerance in the form of mixed marriage negatively. On the one hand, Protestant leaders viewed tolerance that led to intermarriage as the first step toward disrupting confessional peace. Tolerance was a social value but an individual transgression. That is, individual tolerance in Germany led to the decline of peace in what one Protestant Pastor deemed the “coexistent state.” Protestant church leaders argued that individuals chose to intermarry with the idea that such an expression of tolerance could function as a unifying principle between the confessions.25 It is unlikely that individuals believed that, and it is similarly unlikely that church leaders believed that bridging the confessional divide was a motive for intermarriage. But the attribution of the motive is significant because it reveals that what institutional leaders feared most was the disappearance of the confessional boundary. They expressed their anxiety by crafting a motive to intermarry too lofty for even they themselves to believe. On the other hand, Catholic leaders had a more pressing challenge because more Catholics intermarried relative to the population than Protestants. Their advocacy for tolerance as an expression religious freedom was a way of

attaining more institutional autonomy in Germany, which ostensibly would have allowed them to police confessional boundaries among parishioners with less interference from the state.

The Protestant leadership’s perspective of tolerance and intermarriage was built on an imaginary motivation that they attributed to parishioners. For example, a didactic pamphlet from 1880 framed boundary crossing as a sort of crusade—intermarriage as social movement rather than social phenomenon. The pamphlet, written by a Protestant pastor, condemned individual tolerance in order to valorize confessional difference. Focusing on factors such as mobility and urbanization might explain why intermarriage took place, but they were insufficient in providing material to argue rhetorically against mixed marriage for parishioners. It was common for church leaders to warn about the dangers of the city, as analyzed below, but the weight of their argument was just as much in the outcome of intermarriage as the cause of it. The cause was individual tolerance, and the outcome they sought to combat was the lost distinction between the confessions—between Protestants and Catholics. According to the pamphlet, tolerant “Protestant Christians” were, “to God’s dismay . . . actually happy about intermarriage.” The contentment stemmed from “their misjudgment” and misguided belief “that through these unions the cataclysmic break, which by virtue of the Church division segmented our people into two camps, could perhaps be mended in a peaceful manner.”

Entertaining the idea that mixed marriage could unite the divided churches would have undermined the very legitimacy of the confessions. The segregation noted in the pamphlet was the basis of Protestant and Catholic identity in Germany. Unification denied it. Intermarriage represented a phenomenon that threatened to turn back the clock to a non-confessional moment in German history that rejected long-standing institutions, communities, and identities. From the

26 AEKR, Adolf Fauth (1836-1912), Hüte sich vor der Mischehe! Ein Wort der Warnung und Mahnung an die Evangelische Christenheit Deutschlands (Breslau: In Comission bei C. Dülfer, 1884), 6-7.
Protestant perspective, this was particularly galling because it meant pre-Reformation Christianity. The historical rupture, the “cataclysmic break,” to which the pamphlet referred was in fact the Reformation. Church leaders thought that the only solution to confessional conflict was sustained difference because too much unity—too much boundary crossing—changed the nature of Protestantism. “Our people,” the same pamphlet intoned, were divided into two camps, and the act of intermarriage could not lead to a peaceful reunion. Indeed, it could not even lead to a peaceful marriage. In this way, mixed marriage stood in for the possibility of confessional unity rather than confessional coexistence. That is why it was a site of concern. For instance, the pamphlet cited above indicated, “experience has taught [us] that intermarriage does not lead to peace, but rather it is a source of unceasing strife.” Intermarriage was “the flame of discord” at the intimate level and “anyone who believes that intermarriage can lead to the unity of the divided churches does not know Protestantism’s fundamental nature.”

That is, it was different from Catholicism.

Catholic interpretations of tolerance were also built on the separation of the confessions, but they differed because the Catholic view of tolerance was shaped by the state-sponsored attack on German Catholicism. The Kulturkampf lingered after the initial laws were passed and even after the most punitive ones were repealed in the 1870s and 1880s. Even as late as 1922, the Archbishop of Cologne rejected Protestant calls for confessional peace. He asserted that “[Catholic] priests shall not appeal to peace where none exists.” The Kulturkampf inarguably resulted in the fusion of confession and political allegiance for German Catholics. This link manifested in the Catholic Center Party, whose political power by the end of the nineteenth

27 AEKR, Fauth, 6-7.
29 Lavinia Anderson, Windthorst.
century is evident in its ability to use the legislative process in order to attempt to advance religious freedom as a form of tolerance in Germany, even if the attempt ultimately failed. In the late 1890s, the Center Party began crafting a proposal for the Reichstag intended to provide for full religious freedom and the separation of church and state in the form of complete institutional autonomy of religious institutions. From 1900 until 1912, the Center Party unsuccessfully submitted the proposal, known as the Tolerance Bill, to the Reichstag on five separate occasions.30

Above all, the Tolerance Bill attempted to secure greater Catholic autonomy and with it the ability to manage instances of individual tolerance as a way to uphold the confessional boundary outside of the purview of the state and the Protestant Church. The law, if passed, would have provided the Catholic Church greater authority to impose conditions on intermarriages, especially regarding the education of children in Catholicism. As chapter one indicates, the Catholic Church had that ability in the 1850s and 1860s before unification, and the effect was that more children from mixed marriage were educated as Catholics. Separation from the state might also have caused Catholic identity to evolve in a manner further removed from Protestantism. While the Tolerance Bill included provisions designed to empower individuals, such as lowering the age at which one can independently choose a confession from 14 to 12, it was mostly concerned with the total autonomy of religious communities to regulate the behavior of individuals within that community. The transfer of authority is evident in the bill’s proposal regarding marriage and other rituals that structured the life of German Catholics. “The approval and authorization in a recognized religious community, of its religious operations, as well as the undertaking of baptisms, religious marital ceremonies, or religious burials,” the main thrust of

30 Martin Sebaldt, Katholizismus und Religionsfreiheit: Der Toleranzantrag der Zentrumspartei im Deutschen Reichstag (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, Europäischer Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1994), 32.
the bill indicated, “is to be independent from the involvement of state authorities, other religious communities, or the judicial notification of such authorities.”

Leaders of the Catholic Church attempted to leverage institutional autonomy in the form of religious freedom as a way to combat acts of individual tolerance. Even if the attempt was successful, it is unclear whether or not more institutional autonomy would have been enough for the Catholic Church to reverse the flow of mixed marriage. It might not have mattered, because the ultimate focus would have landed at the same spot of tension: children from intermarriages.

Once a mixed marriage took place, the most pressing issue for church leaders became the confessional fate of the children, and this problem was deeply enmeshed in gender relationships. The confessional anxiety about the declining significance of confessional boundaries is evident in the switch from the marriage to the children, as well as the leaders’ flexibility regarding gender roles while making the switch. For the church leaders, the former focus, the intermarriage, moved to the periphery—it was still there and a problem, but not enough for intense scrutiny. At the same time, the new focus, the children, whether physically present or a future expectation, were confessional blank slates. The fact that future children were neither self-evidently Catholic nor Protestant represented the ultimate anxiety for church leaders. Yet, that very same fact provided possibility for both institutions. Almost all children ended up either Protestant or Catholic, which means that the realized possibility for one also meant loss for the other. Mixed marriages forced church leaders to rethink gender roles and the responsibility of the confessional education of children. Both churches tended to adhere to the patriarchal notion that the father was the “head of the household”—indeed, this notion was codified in the Basic Law of 1900—but they both also recognized that women played a critical role in educating children in

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the home. For marriages between two Protestants or two Catholics, defining gender was simple. The father assigned children their confession, and the mother cultivated it. Based on the churches patriarchal ideal, the man represented and worked for his family in the public sphere. In the private sphere, the woman made either a Catholic or a Protestant household and complemented the mandatory religious education the children received from public school. Both parents were responsible for the confession in which the children were educated.

Mixed marriage destabilized church notions of gender roles and led them to believe that the roles could and should be flipped if it meant confessional gain. Church leaders indicated that men and women could be either vulnerable or powerful in a mixed relationship, and the confessional education of the children was ultimately affected. Church leaders had to negotiate their idea of gender roles and child education depending on the gender combination of the intermarriage. Both churches were willing to subsume their assumptions about gender if doing so meant securing children in their confession. The sorting of children also sustained the confessional boundary. The leadership from both institutions argued that both mothers and fathers were responsible for the religious education of children, which they cited in support of the supposed impossibility of a functional intermarriage. However, they also provided rationales for the greater authority of either men or women to educate children in the event of a mixed marriage.

A critical component of institutional negotiation of intermarriage, gender, and children emerged from changing patterns of religiosity in Germany and the way it affected how children from mixed marriages were educated. In all, the percentage of children from mixed marriages in Prussia who were educated Protestant rose from approximately 54.4 percent in 1885 to 57.1

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percent in 1910.\(^{33}\) Correspondingly, the percentage of children raised Catholic declined from 45.6 in 1885 to 42.9 in 1910. The component parts of the numbers reveal how intermarried Germans negotiated gender, intermarriage, and child education. Namely, the likelihood of children to be raised Catholic depending on whether the father or mother was Catholic flipped before and after 1900. Before the turn of the century, children were more likely to be raised in the minority Catholic confession if the father was Catholic and the mother Protestant; however, after 1900 children were more likely to be raised Catholic with a Catholic mother and a Protestant father.\(^{34}\) The reason for this shift lies in changing religiosity at the turn of the century. Indeed, church attendance as a whole was in decline at the time, though that did not mean a decline in membership in either Protestant or Catholic communities. Waning participation in devotionals and church attendance was more pronounced among men than women. In fact, religiosity among women increased during this time period.\(^{35}\) This trend, which historians have termed the “feminization of religion,” was especially evident among German Catholics.\(^{36}\) It is notable here because the feminization of religion also points to a changing relationship between public and private religiosity. Specifically, public and private practice began to align more over time. Prior to 1900, children from intermarriages between a Catholic man and a Protestant woman were more likely to be raised Catholic despite the corresponding likelihood that the Catholic man did not attend church service and was overall less devout. But after 1900, children

\(^{33}\) The figures for Protestant children are approximations because the secondary source from which the numbers are pulled, Kerstin Meiring’s *Mischehe*, include the numbers for Catholics only. I drew the Protestant figures by filling in the Catholic figures to make 100 percent. Although not every child from Protestant and Catholic intermarriages were raised in one of the two confessions, most were. The actual percentage for Protestants was most likely slightly lower. See Table 2. Meiring, 106.

\(^{34}\) Meiring, 106. The percentage of all children from mixed marriages who were raised Catholic also declined over this time period, from 45.6 percent to 42.9.

\(^{35}\) The same trend applied to Jews in Germany as well. See chapter four.

from mixed marriages between Catholic women and Protestant men were more and more likely
to be raised Catholic, which is evidence, first, that their participation in public devotionals
translated to the household, and second, that a macro-trend of devotion existed even among
German Catholic women who intermarried.

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<td><strong>Confession of Children based on Gender and Confession of Parents (by percent)</strong></td>
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The shift in religiosity and the resulting change in how parents of a mixed marriage chose
to educate their children led Catholic leaders to portray the consequences of boundary crossing
and individual tolerance to their parishioners. For instance, a 1912 pamphlet that the Catholic
Church in Germany widely distributed to parishioners until at least 1929 posited the fate of
children from mixed marriage in two scenarios: a Catholic man married to a Protestant woman,
and a Protestant woman married to a Catholic man. In both instances, the pamphlet indicated,
the strong presence of the Protestant half of the intermarriage overwhelmed both the will of the
Catholic as well as the authority given to the gender role that the Catholic was supposed to
inhabit. Thus, a critical part of the pamphlet’s message was that confession had the ability to
supersede gender, especially when it came to interaction with children.

Gender, however, also represented a site where confessional leaders saw intermarriage as
an opportunity rather than a threat. The first situation the pamphlet described was a marriage
between a Catholic man and a Protestant woman. In this relationship, the author portrayed a

37 AEK CR.1.17,4, J.P Bachem Verlagsbuchhandlung, Köln, to Erzbischöfliche Generalvikariat, Köln, July 9, 1929.
Catholic father who had to adhere to his familial responsibilities outside of the home and therefore could “not actually oversee household religious education.” Read as a warning, the pamphlet directed its male readers to be vigilant about religious education in the home despite not being present. Read as a guide, the situation advised a Catholic female audience to take advantage of her Protestant husband’s absence. In the other scenario involving a Protestant man and a Catholic woman, the pamphleteer saw a patriarchal barrier between the mother and the children. The father’s “attitude and outlook regarding life would be more effective on them than the Catholic mother’s” and, the pamphlet indicated, “mockery and jokes about Catholic ‘churchyness’” were aspects of daily life in such an intermarriage. In this case, patriarchy is presented as an obstruction as well as an opportunity. If the former, the proximity between mother and child was strong enough to overcome it—especially if the Protestant husband is callous enough to mock his wife—if the latter, the mocking tone stood as a symbol of Protestant impiety that delegitimized patriarchal right. While implicit, it is evident that the Catholic Church in Germany viewed the role of gender in the education of children as flexible so long as the children were raised Catholic.

A similar but slightly different dynamic existed in the way Protestant leaders communicated with parishioners. We can glean the different way Protestant clerics communicated to male and female parishioners by looking at two key sources: guides that discuss family life in general directed at Protestant youth organizations for women and men, and distinct leaflets sent to Protestant women and men who were planning to marry Catholics. Taken together, these bits of evidence reveal that Protestant leaders recognized the fluidity of gender roles and how they can be used in confessionally mixed marriages. The different ways clerics

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communicated with female and male parishioners indicates that the Protestant Church, too, emphasized and de-emphasized the roles mothers and fathers played in mixed marriages in order to suit the needs of the Protestant confession. Protestant leaders acknowledged that women were more responsible for the religious education of children; however, in the case that the marriage consisted of a Protestant man and a Catholic woman, the clerics appealed to patriarchy and the men’s right of authority in determining the confession of the couple’s children. Because Protestant leaders recognized the significant role women played in the religious education of children in the home, they advised Protestant women to accept the role assigned them, and they directed Protestant men to be proactive in using patriarchal authority.

These differences are evident in the content and tone of documents directed at women and men. For example, in a guide for speaking to organizations of young women, the author outlined the mother’s responsibilities for children: prayer, bible study, learning and singing ecumenical songs, teaching right and wrong, and bringing the child to Sunday school. However, the text does not indicate that these practices were for the mother alone. Instead, it emphasized community and placed the mother at the center of it. “Who has the same responsibilities for the children as the mother?” the guide asks, “the father” in the collective pursuit of a “community of spirit.”

Only in one of the final sentences of the guide does it turn to intermarriage, and then only to indicate that an intermarriage undermines that community. In documents directed at Protestant women engaged to marry a Catholic, the focus remained on the household and community. For instance, one leaflet posited that even if the children were educated Protestant, the Catholic father would remain “religiously homeless.” The Protestant woman’s charge, then,

was to use the “truly pious family life to build a new religious homeland (religiöse Heimat)” for
the husband so that he could be in community with the wife and children.\textsuperscript{40}

The guide directed at Protestant men’s organizations similarly outlined the
responsibilities of Protestant fathers for family life, but when it turned to mixed marriage the
guide aggressively appealed to masculinity and the father’s rights. For example, it suggested that
ideal behavior for all Protestant fathers “applies especially (ganz besonders) for Protestant
fathers in intermarriages.” Whereas the communication to women implored them to tend to child
education as the member of the community with the closest proximity to the children, the
message for men was to take the right to determine the confession of the children. “If you don’t
consciously take control of the education of children,” pastors using this guide spoke to
Protestant men, “then it is practically impossible for them to become real Protestant Christians.”
Moreover, clerics suggested that control had to be taken immediately upon the child’s birth
because, in a concession to the ability of women to shape the religious environment of the
household, they claimed that upon a child’s birth either “a Protestant or a Catholic character is
already imprinted at home.”\textsuperscript{41} The leaflet given to men preparing to enter into a mixed marriage
was even more forthright in its appeal to masculinity. The leaflet asked its audience: “how many
men have died for your Protestant belief? Do you want to reject them on account of your wife?
Prove the power of belief in your life and show your wife the power of the Protestant faith . . . be
manly and be strong . . . and your wife will honor you.”\textsuperscript{42} Whether the audience was Protestant
men or women, clerics advised parishioners who might intermarry to inhabit the same gender
roles they would otherwise have, but they also wanted the roles to be more pronounced. On the
one hand, women made intermarriages Protestant by actively taking on the role of communal

\textsuperscript{40} Mischehenflugblatt Nr. 2, in von der Heydt, \textit{Die Mischehe}, 287-288.
\textsuperscript{41} Entwurf zu einem Vortrag in einem Männerverein, in von der Heydt, \textit{Die Mischehe}, 283-284.
\textsuperscript{42} Mischehenflugblatt Nr. 1, in von der Heydt, \textit{Die Mischehe}, 285-287.
caretaker, and by making the home a distinctly Protestant space for the children as well as the Catholic husband. Men, on the other hand, made a mixed marriage Protestant by leveraging the rights of patriarchy.

For church leaders, gender was flexible in the service of confession, and by extension confessional difference and confessional identity. But in order to get to the point where confessional difference was at stake in the children, the parents themselves needed to be conscious of confession. The meaning church leaders invested in confession is evident in their worry that intermarriage might lead to confessional indifference, which was usually followed by religious apathy. The sequence is significant. Historian Tillman Bendikowski argues that Protestant and Catholic clerics worried about “indifference” because it might lead to irreligiosity. Indeed, indifference is a key word in institutional conversations about intermarriage. But it is more significant that church leaders were anxious about confessional indifference first, which in turn points to the significance they placed in confessional boundaries. Confessional indifference meant the dismissal of the difference between Protestants and Catholics, whereas religious indifference or apathy referred to the loss of Christianity. The first led to the second.

Individual tolerance de-emphasized boundaries and lubricated the path to intermarriage. According to church leaders, individualistic parishioners—or, as one Protestant pastor called them, “newfangled dreamers”—were indifferent to confession. For instance, in 1883, the Catholic daily Die Schlesische Volkszeitung enumerated the reasons why the Catholic Church prohibited mixed marriages. Rather than worrying about the decline of Christianity in the household, the author first considered what the intermarriage might lead to for the “Catholic

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43 Bendikowski, 235.
44 AEKR, Fauth, 6-7.
45 The prohibition was only theoretical, as Catholic priests for centuries had provided dispensation that allowed intermarriages to take place.
half.” It was another way of emphasizing confession first and Christianity second: “because intermarriages endanger the faith of the Catholic half and can lead to religious apathy, and even the loss of faith.”⁴⁶ We can find the same formula in a Catholic pamphlet from 1912, where the author posited that intermarriages might appear fulfilling because the couple moved collectively from “half-heartedness” regarding their confessions to “complete apathy” regarding their religion.⁴⁷ Such sentiment existed among Protestant leaders as well. In 1897, one prominent Protestant pastor evoked the deterioration of confessional boundaries in mixed regions of Germany as the primary outcome of intermarriage. “The growing number of intermarriages,” he wrote, “documents growing confessional indifference.”⁴⁸

Church leaders demonstrated an even starker illustration of the fear of losing confessional difference by claiming that intermarriage led to the view that the confessions were equal. This form of anxiety was predicated on the parties of a mixed marriage holding onto Christianity while changing the meaning of confession within the household. For instance, the same 1912 Catholic pamphlet that warned about indifference leading to apathy in the event of intermarriage also argued that “the Catholic and the Protestant are not equal in matters of religion.” Moreover, it was not the faithless, but those “weak in faith” that were inclined to intermarry, and it was precisely these types of Catholic Germans who rationalized mixed marriage by claiming that “it doesn’t matter what [a person] believes” as long as he or she is Christian.⁴⁹ These words echo a Protestant pamphlet against intermarriage from 1883 that even more forthrightly underlined the distinction between the confessions. In this document, the writer, a pastor, considered the notion that Protestants and Catholics “all believe in one God” as a way for parishioners to rationalize

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⁴⁶ EZA, 7, 3318, *Die Schlesischer Volkszeitung*, no. 24 (March, 1883).
⁴⁷ EZA, 7, 3318, von den Driesch, n.p.
⁴⁹ EZA, 7, 3318, von den Driesch, n.p.
mixed marriage. Rather than contesting that sentiment, the pamphlet acknowledged the truth of
it; however, it then noted that “Jews and Muslims . . . as well as the devil himself” also believe in
the same God.\textsuperscript{50} The point was to emphasize the significance of confession for differentiating
Catholic and Protestant Germans.

German cities were sites where individual tolerance flourished, where intermarriage
reflected class division, and also where church leaders focused their energy. The institutional
emphasis on intermarriage and urbanization was an attempt to keep the confessions separate by
controlling the moral behavior of the urban working class because the city was the place where
individual tolerance was most easily exercised. In urban areas, demographic conditions for
intermarriage intersected with institutional anxiety regarding individual tolerance. Institutional
oversight was more difficult in cities. Moreover, cities were also places that conservative
religious observers portrayed as sites that foster immoral behavior, such as crime, alcoholism,
and prostitution. Such characterizations allowed intermarriage to be packaged as another
expression of urban immorality. In particular, clerical descriptions of intermarriage as a
transgression against confession a way for church leaders to legitimize the attempt to control the
behavior of working class parishioners. Historian Hugh McLeod maintains that urbanites,
especially transplants to cities, were the most likely to compartmentalize religion in the late
nineteenth century in favor of class or even urban identities.\textsuperscript{51} Such actions facilitated mixed
marriage. While church attendance among the working classes was lower than the rest of the
population, prior to 1918 they were still inclined to remain connected to confessional

\textsuperscript{50} AEKR, Fauth, 9.
communities; this was true even among Social Democrats.\textsuperscript{52} Church leaders also focused on the moral behavior of working class parishioners in cities, which they characterized as inherently immoral spaces. Historian Lynn Abrams argues that over the course of the nineteenth-century the state increasingly attempted to regulate relations between urban social classes as well as the sexuality of individuals, especially women, as a way of policing the morality of the German population under the auspices of a bourgeois and masculinized German nation-state.\textsuperscript{53}

Church leaders thematized the rootlessness of cities as a basis for the danger and immorality inherent to them. The writing of two clerical demographers, one Protestant and the other Catholic, who kept track of and analyzed intermarriage statistics, illustrate the confessional anxieties elicited by class, urbanization, and intermarriage. In 1906, Pastor Johannes Schneider claimed that the city altered the behavior of its inhabitants, especially recent arrivals from the countryside. Whereas civil marriage without a religious marriage was only common in rural areas for mixed marriages, cities represented the “headquarters” of such unions.\textsuperscript{54} That is, the source of his anxiety was that marriage itself in urban areas resembled intermarriage, and that in the city marriage itself hinted at the decline of confessional identity in an environment without roots. It is significant that the behavior he condemned was especially true for “the migrant populations of the metropolis.”\textsuperscript{55} Hermann Krose, Schneider’s Catholic counterpart, similarly argued that cities were primary centers of mixed marriage because of the constant injection of new residents from surrounding rural areas.\textsuperscript{56} These recent arrivals—who, as noted above, were most often working class men—risked getting lost in the size, disorder, and confessionally

\textsuperscript{54} Schneider, ed. \textit{Kirchliches Jahrbuch, 1905}, 289.
\textsuperscript{55} Schneider, ed. \textit{Kirchliches Jahrbuch, 1905}, 289.
\textsuperscript{56} Schneider, ed. \textit{Kirchliches Jahrbuch, 1909}, 311.
confused character of cities. They represented the rootless nature of urban life at the turn of the century. Indeed, their mobility was predicated on the ability to leave a hometown behind and settle in the city. The internal migrants’ lack of roots translated easily to an institutional worry about the migrants’ propensity to lose a sense of confessional difference. The abandonment of a home and, presumably, a family and a community, conditioned the neglect of confession.

Berlin, in particular, was a city church leaders singled out because of its distinct form of confessional mixture. While both Schneider and Krose expected higher intermarriage rates in mixed cities, they viewed Berlin’s intermarriage rate as “unnaturally high.”

Schneider in particular did not consider Berlin truly mixed. Given that Berlin was about 70 percent Protestant and 20 percent Catholic in a city that had about two million residents at the turn of the century, each population was theoretically large enough to remain endogamous. The nature of Berlin’s confessional make-up and its intermarriage rates were what made it “unnatural.” Nevertheless, Schneider wrote in 1895, “over one sixth of all marriages [in Berlin] are intermarriages. Already last year Berlin had relatively more mixed marriages than the more confessionally mixed provinces of Posen and Westphalia, and now it has also overtaken West Prussia.” In 1903, Schneider explained the scope of mixed marriage in Berlin, which was particularly acute in the Catholic population; he noted that in 1899 “2,418 Catholics married [in Berlin], from which 1,579 were mixed marriages. . . . The Catholic Church, therefore, had in Berlin for 1899 an

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59 Schneider, ed. Amtskalender, 1895, 191.
intermarriage rate of 65.30 percent.” These figures led Catholic clerics to fear the “ruination” of Catholicism in Berlin at the hands of the confessionally unconscious working class.

The confessional stakes of intermarriage are evident in church leaders’ characterization of anonymity in the city. It is difficult for confessional difference to persist, and easy for individual tolerance to manifest, in chaotic urban environments. For instance, in one leaflet designed specifically to greet a newly arrived Protestant parishioner in an unnamed “metropolis” (Großstadt), the pastor set a tone of danger in the city. He described the nameless and faceless people who, upon arrival in the city, ostensibly preyed on the person in an attempt to lure him (this pamphlet was directed at men) to locations of ill repute. Such descriptions set the stage for more familiar but no less dangerous encounters in the city, especially with women. The writer assumed that if the man had an intimate relationship in the place he grew up, it was one in which the partners’ “backgrounds, family circles, and beliefs aligned.” This was viewed as “normal” for non-urban areas, even though, as demonstrated above, non-urban areas witnessed their fair share of mixed marriages. It is significant to note that the leaflet presents the man’s original hometown and intimate relationships as knowable and discrete. The urban environment, however, was full of uncertainty, which made it even more critical to maintain awareness of confessional boundaries. “Do not allow yourself to be blinded by the superficially graceful features of city girls,” the pamphlet implored, lest he enter into the “vast mishmash of metropolitan marriages.”

Another leaflet directed at women simply advised them to “beware of unknown men” in the city, as women have been known to rush into marriage without first finding the “right community.”

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60 Schneider, ed. *Kirchliches Jahrbuch, 1902*, 247.
62 Mischehenflugblatt Nr. 8, in von der Heydt, *Die Mischehe*, 300-301.
63 Mischehenflugblatt Nr. 10, in von der Heydt, *Die Mischehe*, 303.
In both instances, the Protestant leaders assumed an awareness of confessional boundaries in one’s hometown and subsequent challenges to them upon arrival in the city.

While church leaders were unsuccessful in preventing intermarriages, they were successful in upholding the confessional boundary, even if it was only for themselves. While porous boundaries kept intermarrying Protestants and Catholics close, mutual anxiety about the boundaries and an intense focus on confessional future in the form of children kept the churches close. The result was the affirmation of Germany as a bi-confessional state.

**Interrmarriage: a Case Study**

A single case study illustrates how confessional boundaries looked to an intermarried couple and their family, as well how the institutions attempted to manage and uphold the confession. The exercise reveals that the stakes involved in mixed marriage for church leaders were evident in every single mixed family. Our ability to access this case can be traced to a program that Protestant clerics in the Rhineland developed in 1895 called “interrmarriage care” (Mischehenpflege).\(^{64}\) Interrmarriage care was essentially pastoral house visitation designed specifically for Protestants living in a mixed marriage. The ultimate aim was to protect Protestants from Catholic influence and to ensure that the couple raised their children Protestant. Its central principles were to gather knowledge of intermarriages, oversee them, and to shape them.\(^{65}\) While Protestant pastors developed the strategy, within ten years of its establishment Catholic clerics internalized the basis of intermarriage care and used the program to oversee their intermarried parishioners as well.\(^{66}\) One of the central tenets of intermarriage care was the

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\(^{64}\) AEKR, 1, OB, 002, Sitzung in Godesberg am Rhein, 1 October 1895.
collection of family cards designed to keep track of mixed families and the pastoral care clerics provided. The card of one family is the basis of the micro-study, and while the information recorded is from the Protestant Church, because the Catholic Church also practiced intermarriage care the case can be read as a representation for the way both churches handled mixed marriages.  

The story is about the Schmidt family and the complicated path to marriage for Hugo Schmidt, a Protestant, and Anna Schumann, a Catholic. Their marriage was the second for both Hugo and Anna. Hugo was born in 1874 in Erfurt, the year before the introduction of obligatory civil marriage in Germany, and his first wife Elisabeth, née Werner, was born in 1876 in Halle, the year after the civil marriage’s introduction. Both were professed Protestants. While Hugo and Elisabeth were from eastern regions of Germany, they likely married after moving to Cologne. That is where their three children were born between 1900 and 1903. Their children were all baptized, educated, and confirmed Protestant. Anna Schumann, Hugo’s second wife, was born in that very city in 1878. At some point, probably around 1900, Anna married a man whose surname was Klaus. It is unclear where they married, but their two children, born in 1902 and 1904, were born in Koblenz and raised Catholic, about 100 kilometers south of Cologne.

The two families on the Rhine, one Protestant and the other Catholic, were later joined in marriage. In between the years 1912 and 1914, Hugo’s first wife Elisabeth died, and Anna’s husband was killed in combat. In a sense, the Great War conditioned the impending intermarriage between Hugo and Anna—Germany’s national tragedy wrought a bi-confessional family. Hugo and Anna likely married in late 1915 or early 1916. Notably, it was in an altogether

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67 The card is taken out of a 1925 Protestant handbook about intermarriage as an example of what an intermarriage card looked like and how it should be filled out. It is, therefore, quite possibly a hypothetical family. However, given the frequency of intermarriage in Germany, it is an eminently believable one. Because this example appeared 30 years after the establishment of intermarriage care as a practice, it is reasonable to conclude that church leaders cataloged intermarriages on such cards. Von der Heydt, Die Mischehe, 310.
different city, Düsseldorf, which until their union neither had called home. Both remained affiliated with their respective confessions, as did the children from their first marriages, but they married in the Protestant Church. The Schmidt’s were a well-to-do working class family—a family of bookbinders, typesetters, and commercial clerks. The family’s intermarriage card also indicates that Hugo was a member of the Protestant Workers’ Association, while a son from his first marriage was a member of the Protestant Youth Organization. So while it is difficult to measure the family’s religiosity based on the card, there are clues that Hugo was a practicing Protestant. The Schmidts exhibited confessional coexistence, as there is no indication that anyone from either family converted. Hugo and Anna had three children together, who were born between 1916 and 1919. They were all baptized Protestant according to the right of patriarchy, but in defiance of the significant role Anna had in raising the children at home.

The children are central to the story the card tells. A pastor visited the home on the following dates: July 1, 1915; December 4, 1916; July 13, 1917, October 12, 1919; March 2, 1921; and November 6, 1924. The visits were clustered toward the beginning of the marriage, where the shape of the family was most unsettled, and around the births of children. Right next to the family name there is a series of boxes under the heading “Number of Souls” (Seelenzahl) with enough blank spaces to account for changes taking place within the family. The number and empty spaces we find there should be read as the clerical attempt to imprint confessional difference in the household, while leaving open the possibility of a truly “Protestant home.” That is, the figure is not a count of the number of residents, but the tabulation of Protestants in the household. The abundant empty boxes leave room not just to add newborn children, but they also signal the possibility that Anna’s children from her first marriage, and even Anna herself, can be added to the count of household souls.
### Familienname: Schmidt

<table>
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<th>Nr.</th>
<th>Vorname</th>
<th>Geboren</th>
<th>Konf.</th>
<th>Tra.</th>
<th>Beruf</th>
<th>Abgang</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Hugo</td>
<td>28. VIII. 74 Erfurt</td>
<td>ev.</td>
<td>1. ev.</td>
<td>Budsinder</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Elisabeth</td>
<td>2. IX. 76 Halle</td>
<td>ev.</td>
<td>geb. Werner</td>
<td>verm.</td>
<td>† 1912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>25. III. 78 Köln</td>
<td>ka.</td>
<td>geb. Schumann</td>
<td>verm. Klaus (1. Mann ka. gef.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1. VI. 00 Köln</td>
<td>ev.</td>
<td>ev.</td>
<td>14 Setzer</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>6. XII. 01</td>
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<td>7. X. 03</td>
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<td>16 kfm. Angestellter</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>27. III. 02 Coblenz</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>18. V. 04</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Fritz</td>
<td>3. XI. 16 Düren</td>
<td>ev.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Luise</td>
<td>4. VI. 17</td>
<td></td>
<td>ev.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Emil</td>
<td>23. VIII. 19</td>
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Bemerkungen: Vater im Ev. Arbeiterverein, Gustav Jugendverein
The card was a living document, which is evident in the changes made to it over time. The card reflected the ever-evolving nature of a single family through a series of snapshots. The count of souls went from five, to six, and finally to four, denoting that upon the most recent visit, there were four Protestant residents and two fewer than the last visit. The first loss is accounted for after the 1921 visit, when Hugo and Elisabeth’s oldest son Ernst decided to leave the Protestant community. The reason he left is not given. It might have been for an intermarriage, but the card clearly indicates that doing so was not a condition for a mixed marriage. The second loss is on account of the oldest daughter from Hugo’s first marriage, who herself married in Cologne in 1924 and left home. Joseph and Agnes, the Catholic children from Anna’s first marriage, had not reached soul-status, although the empty boxes at the top of the card always kept the possibility open. One such blank box appears next to Emil’s name, the youngest child of Hugo and Anna. At five years old after the most recent pastoral visit, he was a baptized Protestant but had not yet begun religious education. Emil’s progress toward fulfilling the Protestant church’s goal was still undetermined, especially in light of the presence of a Catholic mother in the home.

The purpose of these cards was to centralize knowledge in an effort to oversee and influence Germany’s confessional boundaries. The Schmidt card embodies the anxieties that intermarriage elicited for Protestant and Catholic leaders. The marriage and integration of Protestant and Catholic children into a single household unit is evidence of individual tolerance and confessional coexistence in the Schmidt household. The Protestant cleric’s visitation and the Protestant baptism and education of Hugo and Anna’s children indicate that the Protestant overseer shifted the mixed marriage to the periphery and the focused on the children. Gender dynamics are evident in the way Hugo and Anna’s children were raised, which adhered to
codified and commonly practiced patriarchy, but which itself hinted at the enormous role women played in raising children and the possibility that Anna could lead the youngest child, Emil, into Catholicism. The card intimates the presence of confessional indifference, and possibly religious apathy, in Ernst’s choice to leave the Protestant community. Finally, the Schmidt intermarriage embodies working class urban mobility—it is the story of a man from Erfurt first marrying a woman from Halle in Cologne, only to marry and start a family with a woman from Cologne, who had previously lived in Koblenz, in Düsseldorf.

In the end, however, the card also works to illuminate the ways in which individuals recognized, negotiated, and transformed confessional boundaries. The marriage did not lead anyone to convert—neither Hugo nor Anna nor their children. Raising their children Protestant might have been a compromise. An aspect of their cooperation hidden from the card just might have been Catholic education in the home in addition to Protestant education at school. It is also conceivable that Anna compartmentalized her Catholicism and informally converted to Protestantism. While the possibility was left open that she could shape Emil’s confessional future, the card also indicated that their middle child, Luise, was educated Protestant. Luise’s religious education most likely progressed without the assistance of her mother. Read from the perspective of the Protestant church, the Schmidt case is a success story because the children were all being raised Protestant. If read from the Catholic perspective, the Schmidt family is one of loss for the same reason. But in both cases, confessional boundaries are clear, even in the home. Alternative households lay in between the lines and in the empty spaces of the card. These possibilities could not be controlled from above. The card also hides the reach of a single intermarriage. At the time Hugo and Anna were born, Protestant marriages averaged 4.2 children, while Catholic marriages averaged 5.1, so the married couple likely had siblings that
served as aunts and uncles to their children. Helene, Hugo and Elisabeth’s middle child, married in 1924. It is unclear to whom, but her partner’s family was then linked to her two half-siblings from her father’s second marriage. And the fate of those children, Luise and Emil, a boy and a girl, were as yet undetermined.

**Conclusion**

The myriad intermarriages that took place, and took place at a greater frequency, from 1875 until about 1930 are Schmidt cases with variations. Individuals crossed confessional boundaries, and by doing so negotiated confessional difference and garnered the attention of the Protestant and Catholic churches. From the institutional perspective, such boundary crossing and negotiation signaled a challenge to confessional difference. The threat meant that confessional identity itself was at stake. As a way to combat the challenge to confessional difference, church leaders picked apart the motives and consequences of mixed marriage. While the themes they addressed were many, they can all be read within the tension between social tolerance and individual tolerance. Intermarriage, an act of individual tolerance that violated the confessional boundary, led church leaders to re-affirm the necessity of social tolerance—in other words, confessional co-existence—as a way of maintaining Protestant and Catholic identity in Germany. From the point of view of Catholic and Protestant leaders, mixed marriage threatened the assimilation of one confession into the other. The intense institutional focus on social boundaries, however, led to the affirmation of Germany as bi-confessional. The result of the simultaneous violation of the confessional boundary between individuals and the institutional affirmation of a social boundary led confessional difference under the auspices of Christianity to become a critical component of German identity. This process was central to the exclusion of non-Christians from that very same national framework.

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68 Meiring, 102.
Chapter 3: Differentiating Intermarriage from Below and Above

Historian Margaret Lavinia Anderson asserts that in a time-span covering the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries “nothing could be done or said in Germany that was not said or done by a Protestant, a Catholic, or a Jew.”¹ That is, not only was everyone conscious of where they landed on the confessional spectrum, but that the badge each person wore also informed her or his actions. For the individuals who intermarried and subsequently came into contact with the churches and the German state, Anderson’s statement is only partially true. The families that began with confessional boundary crossing also practiced a great deal of confessional fluidity within the household. Under certain circumstances, primarily having to do with the way the children were raised, these practices resulted in intervention from both church and state. Specifically, the application of an 1803 Prussian law regarding the education of children from mixed marriages brought families and the churches to German courts from the late nineteenth century until the law’s eventual repeal in 1921.² While the words and deeds of individuals were not always based on confessional identity, the actions of church leaders were done by and to individuals based on confession and religion. The result was that the meaning confession, religion, and their identity forming boundaries, changed.

Confessional flexibility in mixed families generated the intervention of the churches and the state. For the Christian churches, the task was to eliminate flexibility and place the children into either the Protestant or Catholic category, depending on the confessional belonging of the father. They did so by enlisting the authority of the law and the state. What the state actually did in many of these cases, however, was further fracture the family in terms of confession. Whether it was instilling confessional difference between siblings, between the mother and children, or

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² See chapter one for the origins of the law and the role it played in the Cologne Troubles.
between the children and their mother and stepfather. This process simultaneously validated and
defied confessional difference. The state, through its courts, valorized confession as the
meaningful measure of difference, but it also asserted that such a difference was not a problem
for the German family. The law transcended institutional views of difference without negating
them because it perceived Protestant and Catholic Germans equally, and it endorsed familial
difference by legislating confessional coexistence. To grasp fully the significance of such
decisions, the cases have to be situated alongside families, institutional intervention, and state
decisions regarding mixed marriages between Jews and non-Jews. In these families, flexibility
and fluidity were just as common. But the state did not interpret the families in the same way.
The Second Reich’s courts supplied a different measure of difference, religion, to such
marriages. Coupled with upholding confessional difference in Protestant-Catholic households,
the denial of confession to Jews and the installation of a different boundary contributed to the
diminishing difference between Protestant and Catholic Germans while simultaneously
accentuating the difference between Jewish and non-Jewish Germans.

This reduction of the confessions was the most lasting result of the intersection between
families, religious institutions, and the German state. The cases to which the 1803 law was
applied were exceptional, but the family contexts that made the law applicable were not.
Moreover, the law was a part of efforts of church leaders to educate parishioners about their
rights if they chose to enter into a mixed marriage. Due to this practical consideration, the law
and its guidelines were well known to both clerics and parishioners. These conditions meant that
when a case occurred, it received widespread coverage from Germany’s religious publications,
which further made it a regular part of the lives of Germans at the turn of the century. This
chapter argues that the knowledge, evocation, and implementation of 1803 meant that German
families, the churches, and the Imperial German state interacted within a dialectical matrix where the categories “Protestant” and “Catholic” were slowly being reduced to a single, albeit implicit, classification: “German.” At the same time and due to that same interaction, the use of 1803 put distance between Jews and that very category.

Reducing Confession

The family stories below are culled from court cases where one of the churches evoked 1803. They are a select few examples from the thousands of intermarriages that took place in Germany from the late nineteenth century and into the twentieth.3 While the cases came to court due to exceptional circumstances, they are nevertheless relevant readings for the way individuals who intermarried structured their families. The role of the churches and the state was significant because it was their intervention contributed to the transformation of permeable confessional boundaries into the nullification of Protestant-Catholic intimacy as a problem in Germany. Churches used 1803 to claim the education of children from divorcees and widows who wanted to educate their children in their confession. The state, in the form of the judicial application of the law, either agreed or disagreed with the claim, but ultimately assigned the children to a particular confessional education. As a result, Protestant-Catholic families were made German by reducing the significance of the confessional boundary.

It is first necessary to establish the nature of the 1803 law and what “confessional education” meant in the context of the decree.4 The law was a remnant of the Prussian annexation of the Rhineland in the early nineteenth century, and it played a role in the Cologne Troubles.5 According to the 1803 declaration, children from mixed marriages were required to be educated in the confession of the father. This was the default position of an intermarriage. Once a

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3 See the statistical overview in chapter two.
4 For simplicity’s sake, I’ll frequently refer to the decree simply as “1803.”
5 See chapter one.
union took place, however, the couple had the option to circumvent the law by making it known to their local civil clerk that they intended to raise the children in the confession of the mother. A non-confessional education was generally not an option, as secular schools and confessionally mixed schools (Simultanschule) were uncommon well into the twentieth century. In 1906, for instance, roughly 95 percent of children baptized Protestant received Protestant instruction and 91 percent of Catholic children were educated Catholic. The 1803 decree became a tool for German elites in the event that the couple divorced or the father died. While the application of the law differed depending on divorce or death, in both cases 1803 provided the interpretive lens for the court. In cases of death, the application of 1803 usually meant that the children were required to be educated in the confession of the father. The only exception to the law was in the case that the children had been educated in the mother’s confession for more than a year prior to the father’s death. As we will see, this exception made for unusual mandates between the state and families. At first blush, the law sounds strange. But it makes more sense in the historical context of confessional boundary crossing in Germany, where the confessional identity of the children from mixed marriage constituted the high stakes for the churches. The law also makes sense given the patriarchal structure of German law that gave men more rights than women.

What “confessional education” meant in the context of the law was a public education that included religious instruction in one or the other confession as part of state schooling. This education included participation in rituals such as confirmation for Protestants and confession, communion, and confirmation classes for Catholics. In regions where the Protestant or Catholic population was small or isolated to the point where there was no option for a Protestant or

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7 Abrams and Harvey, 14.
Catholic school, it was still possible for children to receive education in the confession to which they belonged. In Prussia, for instance, Protestant or Catholic teachers were appointed by the state depending on the number of minority children enrolled. In 1886, the Prussian Ministry for Religious Affairs and Education mandated that if at least 12 students from the minority confession attended either a Protestant or Catholic school, it must have an instructor for the minority confession. Significantly, neither the churches nor the state had the ability to determine how the children were educated in the home. So while the evocation and application of the 1803 decree was designed to combat confessional hybridity in the family, in some cases it ended up encouraging it.

Families

Based on the use of the law, we have glimpses of the porous confessional boundaries that existed inside mixed households that can be read as representative of the practice of intermarriage in Germany. Mixed marriages in Germany were characterized by negotiation, flexibility, and fluidity. The individuals who entered into mixed marriages, contrary to the anxiety expressed by church leaders, generally did not discard their confessional affiliation. Germans overwhelmingly remained dutiful, tax-paying, community members in one or the other confession. Historian Till van Rahden advanced the notion that the ethnicity of Jewish and other Germans in Breslau at the turn of the century was situational. One could be simply a “German” in public and “Jewish” in private. Likewise, the individuals in families that began as intermarriages practiced situational confessionality in the home. Both flexibility and fluidity are manifest in the shifting and situational allegiances of the individuals who intermarried, including

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10 See chapter two.
11 Van Rahden, Jews and Other Germans, 3-21 and 94-120.
the possibility that one or the other partner converted formally or informally as part of the negotiation of a mixed marriage.

Just about every intermarriage displayed the most common feature of household flexibility: the education of children in either Protestantism or Catholicism. This everyday decision is significant precisely because it was so common. Although mixed marriages on average produced fewer children than non-mixed marriages because the spouses tended to be older, the children from intermarriages overwhelmingly received a confessional education.\(^\text{12}\) It must be remembered that intermarriages were recorded as such because the partners neither converted nor left her or his religious community at the time of marriage. Otherwise, they would have been registered as unions between individuals of the same confession. Thus, negotiation had to factor into the decision to educate children in either Protestantism or Catholicism. The surrounding region played a central role in determining the confessional education of children. In Protestant majority regions, they tended to be educated Protestant, but in Catholic majority regions, the children usually received a Catholic education. Gender was also a factor. Until about 1900, children were more frequently educated in the father’s confession, but after 1900, it became more and more common for children to be educated in the confession of the mother. This had to do with the relatively greater religiosity of women compared to men, as well as the growing recognition that women played a significant role in the religious education of children in the household in addition to public education.\(^\text{13}\)

Regardless of the circumstances, it is noteworthy that couples chose one or the other confession because it suggests that some sort of negotiation took place that required either the man or the woman to at least informally endorse the confession to which he or she did not

\(^{12}\) Meiring, 102.

\(^{13}\) See chapter two.
belong. Based on the evidence, it is difficult to say whether or not either partner informally converted to the other confession, but validating the education of the children is sufficient evidence to indicate that they acknowledged and accepted the other confession. In this way, 1803 was influential without the dissolution of the marriage because families either defaulted to place all children in the father’s confession or required a statement of parental unity for them to be educated in the mother’s. In either case, household flexibility with regard to the children is evident. For instance, a 1909 case brought to court after a couple’s divorce illuminates the negotiation that took place prior to the dissolution of the marriage. The case indicates that neither the parents nor the children ever changed their confessional affiliation. Nevertheless, the marriage functioned within the parameters of 1803, which necessitated setting the children on a confessional path. Before and after the divorce, the children were educated in the mother’s Catholicism rather than the father’s Protestantism. The choice to do so was part of a negotiation defined by confessional flexibility. A Catholic education for this couple was not self-evident in the same way that it was for a marriage between two Catholics.¹⁴

Institutions

The churches cited the 1803 law to take advantage of the permeable boundaries in an attempt to claim children from mixed marriages. Protestant and Catholic clerics were the agents that brought cases to court. When cases were brought to trial, the process and results usually received commentary from various Catholic and Protestant papers, both regional and national. Parishioners widely consumed these papers. It is also likely that the cases made their way to sermons. Indeed, the uncertainty of what would happen to the children of an intermarriage if one of the partners were to die was a common theme in pamphlet literature designed to prevent

¹⁴ JEK 37 (1909): 48-54.
mixed marriage.\textsuperscript{15} The law even played a role in a 1904 play by a Protestant playwright about the ills of intermarriage.\textsuperscript{16} The contours and applicability of the law were well known among clerics and parishioners.

Directives from cleric to cleric to use the law provide evidence that 1803 was viewed as a legitimate method to contest the confession of children from mixed marriages. Protestant clerics described the law among themselves and also to parishioners as a “responsibility” and a “right.” By doing so, the Protestant Church presented the law as a tool by which pastors and parishioners could sort out difference in a mixed family and stake a claim on the future. For instance, a piece of internal correspondence from 1895 that circulated among Protestant clerics offered explicit recommendations to evoke the 1803 decree if it meant that children could be compelled into a Protestant education. Significantly, appeals in such cases necessarily meant the dismissal of the mother’s autonomy in raising the child. It also might have meant the posthumous rejection of the father’s intention for his children. But in this presentation, the law and confession were privileged above both. The first “responsibility” named in the note was for local clerics to monitor the way children were educated in the event that the Protestant father died. “The utilization of the legal precepts for Protestant interests,” the missive read, “are the responsibility of Protestant clerics and the community church leaders, above all after the death of a Protestant father who had a Catholic wife.” The pastor who composed the note went on to advise local pastors who might come across an intermarriage where the 1803 law applied to “guard the children, who according to the law are to be educated under the authority of the Protestant, not the Catholic, confession.” The second responsibility demanded intervention if the Catholic

\textsuperscript{15} See especially von den Driesch.
\textsuperscript{16} August Trümpelmann, \textit{Ein Herzensbund und sein Bruch!} (Berlin: Verlag C.A. Schwetschke und Sohn, 1904), 50b.
widow of a mixed marriage educated her children Catholic. It was irrelevant whether they were
educated in such a way prior to the father’s death, or if it was a new form of education. If these
circumstances prevailed, the local pastor should “bring a lawsuit regarding the withdrawal of
education rights against the mother, and accordingly petition that arrangements be made for the
responsibility of education be given to a Protestant family or reformatory.”

Evidence from Catholic and Protestant publications indicates that the Catholic Church
also used the 1803 law tactically. What made the tone of communication between clerics and
parishioners different was that the Protestant Church made an effort to reinforce confessional
difference, especially if the message was directed at a person living in an intermarriage.
Confessional difference among clerics was self-evident, but between clerics and parishioners it
had to be affirmed. For example, in an 1896 enumeration of the “rights and responsibilities” of
intermarried Protestants, the writer presented a hypothetical example where the Protestant man in
a marriage with a Catholic woman died and left children behind. The author argued that even if
the individual Catholic woman agreed to raise the children as Protestants in the event of the
Protestant man’s death, the institution to which the woman belonged might still end up being
authoritative. “Even if a Catholic widow has the good will to educate your children Protestant,”
the pamphlet read, “the Catholic Church knows and will find a way to breach her will and enable
the Catholic education of your children.”

“For the majority of cases,” an article from the Catholic daily the Kölnische Volkszeitung stated, “it had been Protestant Pastors that appealed to
the [1803] law in order to force the children of Catholic mothers to be educated Protestant.”

17 EZA, 7, 3321, Hermann Bungeroth, „Evangelische Rechtsgrundsätze für die Erziehung der Kinder in gemischten
Ehen,” Magdeburg, 1895.
18 EZA, 7, 3321, „Die Rechte und Pflichten der Evangelischen in Mischehen.“ Flugblatt des Berliner Zweigvereins
des Evangelischen Bundes. 1896.
19 EZA, 7, 3324, „Die Generalsynode der evangelischen Landeskirche und die Erziehung der Kinder aus gemischten
Ehen,” Kölnische Volkszeitung, 28 October, 1903.
Such an observation implies that the Catholics also used it, just not in the majority of cases. Nevertheless, the most substantive evidence that the Catholic Church also used the law are the cases themselves.

Because 1803 assumed authority with the death of the father, dying men in intermarriages were sites of contention for the churches. Deathbed conversions and deathbed declarations, in particular, were instances where confessional fluidity could alter the course of a family’s future. Two cases that provide the evidence for deathbed interventions both involved dying Catholic fathers who attempted to re-direct the education of their Protestant children. In the first case, four days before his death an intermarried father wrote and signed a letter to the local Catholic cleric with the request that his children be transferred from a Protestant to a Catholic school. In the other case, the father did the same thing, except it took place two days prior to his death and was even notarized. In these two cases, the fathers tried to break the confessional bond between mothers and children. Their efforts, therefore, demonstrate that they and their Catholic guides recognized the fluid environment that resulted from the intermarriage. We do not know a lot about the fathers in these families, but we do know that they were terminally ill. It is unclear why these two men wrote such letters, but it is possible that a Catholic cleric compelled these statements under duress. But if it was the case that a cleric impelled the men to make such statements, it then means that the clerics, too, functioned within the parameters of confessional fluidity and tried to take advantage of it.

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\(^{20}\) *JEK* 23 (1902): 27.

\(^{21}\) *JEK* 42 (1912): 44-45.

\(^{22}\) *Jahrbuch für Entscheidungen in Angelegenheiten der freiwilligen Gerichtsbarkeit und des Grundbuchrechts* 1, edited by Viktor Ring (Berlin: Vahlen, 1924): 61-63.
The State

Both Protestant and Catholic clerics attempted to use the law and their institutional authority to regulate mixed families and uphold an environment of confessional difference; the decision German courts handed down validated its own authority to intervene into family life, but the outcomes did not necessarily align with the vision of the churches. While the decisions upheld the difference between Protestants and Catholics, they also minimized the significance of that difference. This simultaneous affirmation and nullification is evident in mandates for confessional co-existence in families. The court rulings more closely paralleled the confessional flexibility of families. An illustrative case from the late nineteenth century reveals the effect the state had on the confessional make-up of cases that came to court. The instance involved a marriage between a Catholic woman and a Protestant man. After the man’s death and a series of contestations in court, the state declared that two of the children were to be educated in the mother’s confession, Catholicism, while the third was to be educated in the deceased father’s confession, Protestantism.23

The case took place in Schönwalde, Saxony, in 1885. The marriage between the Protestant man and Catholic woman probably occurred around 1875, given the ages of their children in 1885, when the man died. The couple had three children, Anna (nine), Oswald (seven), and Ida (three months). Practicing typical flexibility, the children were all baptized Protestant. Upon entering school age, Anna and Oswald attended a Protestant school in the town of Silberberg, about a kilometer away from Schönwalde. However, in 1884 the couple took their children out of the Protestant school and enrolled them in a Catholic school. The two oldest children, Anna and Oswald, attended the Catholic school for more than a year prior to their

23 *JEK* 9 (1890).
father’s death, which constituted an exception to the 1803 provision. Nevertheless, local Protestant officials cited the father’s Protestant affiliation as reason enough to intervene, bring the case to court, and attempt to compel the Protestant education of the children. The widow “argued that her husband had the inclination to allow the Catholic education of the children and declared for their part that all three children were to be educated Catholic.” The deceased’s “inclination” to educate the children Catholic was enough for the custodial office in Frankenstein, which acceded to her claim on December 26, 1888. But the local decision did not spell the end of the case. As was typical, the Protestant consistory made further attempts to shape the family in a Protestant image by appealing to an Imperial court.

Ultimately, the state determined that, according to the 1803 law, the family was to live confessionally mixed—the two oldest children continuing their Protestant education while the youngest was assigned a Catholic one. The Protestant church complained that the father’s decision to change the children’s education from Protestant to Catholic was disingenuous. The German state, represented by the application of its laws, legitimized the Protestant Church’s motive: that the confessional identification of children from intermarriages was problematic and authorities needed to intervene to sort out to which group they should belong. But it did so while confirming and even prescribing familial mixture by assigning the children to be educated in different confessions—the two older children Catholic and the youngest Protestant. And that was in addition to the family’s choice to first educate the children Protestant and then Catholic. Because Anna and Oswald partook in Catholic education for more than a year prior to the father’s death, they were to remain there. Ida, however, had not yet begun her religious education because she was so young, and under the provisions of the 1803 declaration she was assigned to

24 JEK 9 (1890).
a Protestant education when she came of age.\footnote{JEK 9 (1890).} The state accentuated the family’s confessional mixture by recognizing the confessional boundary, but at the same time the state dismissed confessional mixture as problematic.

The Intersection of Families, Institutions, and the State

The dialectical matrix of mixed Protestant-Catholic families, the Protestant and Catholic institutions, and the German state made and un-made mixed marriages, and in the process invented German families. This is the most significant insight gleaned from the court cases. The meeting of the three entities as a response to problems within mixed marriages was fundamental to evolving German identities in the early twentieth century. The basis of the making and unmaking of intermarriages was the strict application of the 1803 law.

It is first important to recognize that individuals who intermarried did not just demonstrate confessional flexibility and fluidity in the way they directed the confessional education of their children. They also exhibited these characteristics for themselves, and they are most evident in their actions after the dissolution of the marriage. One case reveals a high degree of compromise regarding confessional belonging that was entirely situational. Sometime in early 1900, a Catholic man and a Protestant woman married in Silesia. In 1906, they had a child. Later that year, the father converted to Protestantism. By doing so, the couple essentially unmixed their marriage. The child was baptized Protestant. Whether it was a part of a pre-nuptial compromise or a negotiation that took place once they had children is not clear, but it is evident that the man’s conversion depended on the marriage with a Protestant and the appearance of children. We can be sure about this because in 1908 the couple divorced, and soon afterward the father converted back to Catholicism. Thus, the marriage existed in three states at different times: mixed upon
marriage, “pure” after the man’s conversion, and dissolved after divorce. The question posed to the Second Reich’s court was which state of marriage should determine the education of the divorced couple’s child. That it settled on one of the two instances that provided for an education contrary to the mother’s, the mixed and dissolved states, instead of the time when the family was unified in confession, suggests the unproblematic manner in which German courts interpreted mixed marriage between Protestants and Catholics. The father in this case revealed that his confessional belonging depended on circumstance. After the divorce the father sued his ex-wife and demanded that the child receive a Catholic education. As was customary, the court cited 1803, agreed with the father, and subsequently required the child receive a Catholic education, despite the fact that the man was the sole guilty party in the divorce and despite the fact that he was, at one point, a Protestant. “That the father’s conversion took place after the legal dissolution of the marriage,” read the decision, “is, regarding the confessional education of the child, irrelevant.”

In another family, the state acknowledged and legitimized a child’s mixed education, which further indicates that it did not see the meeting of Protestantism and Catholicism in the home as a problem. This decision conflicted with the aims of church leaders but dovetailed with the practice of confessional flexibility and fluidity of individuals who entered into mixed marriages and started families. The case, therefore, shows how the actions of individuals and the state interacted to reduce the singular significance of confession, despite the stated goals of the churches and the actions they took regarding children from mixed marriages. The case is also an example of the state explicitly asserting that the coexistence of the Protestant and Catholic confessions in a single home, and even for a single individual, was not a problem. In 1884, a child was born to a Catholic mother and a Protestant father. After the Protestant father died, the

mother complied with the principles of 1803 and allowed the child to receive a Protestant education from a public school. However, she also enlisted a Catholic cleric to provide private lessons in the home. Her actions caused a Protestant cleric to sue for the child’s education, but the attempt was unsuccessful because the child was, in fact, receiving a Protestant education. The court indicated that the law did not, and indeed could not, legislate how children were educated privately in the home. It also noted that 1803 required only that the children receive education in the confession of the father, but that it did not disallow education in both confessions.\(^27\)

The state’s retroactive creation of a mixed marriage is perhaps the most substantive action that shows its role in diminishing the confessional boundary. First, by essentially creating an intermarriage based solely on a widow’s conversion and applying the principles of 1803, the German state worked toward the coalescence of the confessions that mixed households authorized. Around 1885, two Protestants married and had two children, a daughter and a son. Around 1900, the father died. At this time, the older of the two children neared 14, the age at which a person in Germany was able to determine her or his own confessional belonging. The youngest child, however, had just begun to receive a public education when the father died. Whether due to a newfound romance or a change of conviction, the mother converted to Catholicism in 1901, and she subsequently withdrew the child from Protestant education and enrolled him in a Catholic school. The problem was that the child had not received Catholic schooling for a full year prior to his father’s death, so the child was ineligible for an exception to the law. When a cleric sought the Protestant education of the youngest child, the Imperial court agreed that the deceased father could not have predicted that the education of his child would change, he therefore could not provide consent, and thus his widow could not claim that she and

\(^{27}\) *JEK* 17 (1898).
her former husband made a unified decision with regard to the child’s confessional education.\(^{28}\)

It created a mixed marriage where one did not previously exist, and it was because of the contest over the child’s education. A comparable case from 1909—a case where two Catholics married and had children prior to the father’s death, after which the mother subsequently married a Protestant—similarly resulted in the state’s legislation of confessional coexistence. This decision made a family where a Catholic wife and a Protestant husband raised children receiving a Catholic education. It also reaffirmed that 1803 had an expanded reach and applied to both mixed and non-mixed marriages.\(^{29}\)

The strict application of 1803 is most evident in some of the more peculiar cases to which the law was applied. Such instances also highlight how the interaction between families and the state changed the nature of confessional difference in Germany. One such case involved the 1894 marriage between a Catholic man and a Protestant woman in Magdeburg. The couple chose to baptize their only child Protestant, but soon afterward the father died. Later, the woman remarried, this time to a Protestant. Once the child from the woman’s first marriage reached schooling age, the Catholic Church sued for the Catholic education of the child. The court, following the principles of 1803, ordered the Catholic education of the child because it was the confession to which his deceased father belonged, despite the fact that his mother and stepfather were Protestant.\(^{30}\)

The instances where church leaders evoked 1803 and German courts applied it from the 1880s until 1921 were seminal in the process of diminishing the difference between the Protestant and Catholic confessions. The confessional boundary still existed, but it was unthreatening. Contrary to Margaret Lavinia Anderson’s maxim that opened this chapter, the

\(^{28}\) *JEK* 21 (1901): 225-229.

\(^{29}\) *JEK* 36 (1909): 78-79.

\(^{30}\) *EZA*, 7, 3324, “Mischehe,” *Der Reichsbote* 283 (December 2, 1904).
process took place as a series of dialectical relationships where confession did not necessarily inform action, even though it was affected by such activity. Protestant and Catholic individuals met, decided to marry, and negotiated how their respective confessions were going to exist in a single household. Most significantly, they decided which confession the children were educated. If we rely only on statistical data alone, for most intermarriages, the process stopped there. The court cases analyzed here, however, indicate that individuals in such families practiced situational confessionality not only for themselves, but also for their children. In general, church leaders could only militate against permeable confessional boundaries with rhetoric and ineffective persuasion. But things were different in the event that the marriage dissolved and children received education in the mother’s confession, which made the evocation of 1803 an option. The intervention of the Catholic and Protestant churches was self-interested and designed to solidify either a Catholic or a Protestant wall around the children. But such strict boundaries were impossible in mixed families. Church intervention, in turn, reintroduced the German state to the family. The state maintained confession as a measure of difference, but by reinforcing mixture—and sometimes creating it—the state sanctioned confessional difference.

**Differentiating Intermarriage**

In cases involving mixed marriage between Jews and non-Jews, the 1803 law did not apply in the same way. From the perspective of the state, intermarriages between Jews and non-Jews were unequal to intermarriages between Protestants and Catholics. The reason was because the measure of difference the state used, religion rather than confession, was not the same. The intersection of family, institution, and state that valorized the existence of confessional boundaries but sapped the notion that they can destabilize families did not work for marriages between Jews and non-Jews. The distinction between religion and confession meant different
treatment. Confession and confessional boundaries existed under the auspices of baptism and Christianity, whereas religion and religious boundaries were another step removed. The dialectical matrix between religiously intermarried couples, Christian institutions, and the state, explicated the religious boundary between Jews and Christians. At the very same time that the 1803 law was bringing Protestants and Catholics together, it was keeping Christians and Jews separate.

Two illustrative cases that were decided differently based on the Jewish identity of some of the participants reveal the significance of the cases, just as they provide the foundation for the way difference evolved in Germany afterward. In the first instance, the court denied a divorced mother’s request to educate her son within Judaism, even though she provided proof that she and her still living ex-husband agreed to educate the child as such. In 1897, a Protestant man and a Jewish woman divorced. Because guilt was attributed to the man, custodial rights of their son were given to the mother, who was a member of the Jewish community. In 1898, the woman attempted to obtain permission to provide a Jewish education for the child. However, the court ruled that the child was required to receive a Protestant education, per the provisions of 1803 regarding the dissolution of parental agreement. This decision was the product of the intervention from a third party, a court appointed Protestant custodian. The mother’s next action was to submit an appeal that included the consent of the boy’s father, which she did on December 6, 1902. In it, the father clarified that he approved the mother’s attempt to educate their child within Judaism. However, the court indicated that he had lost parental rights because he was the guilty party of the divorce. Despite the agreement of the parents, the custodial court maintained that parental unity dissolved with the marriage and the child was to be educated in the faith of the father. This decision eventually landed the case in front of the same imperial court that provided
the final decision for all of the aforementioned regional decisions. It, too, denied the mother’s attempt. “It follows,” the court indicated, “that as soon as the marriage is dissolved through divorce, the agreed desire of the divorced parents is no longer effective, but rather the principle of the [1803] declaration is applicable.” It meant that “the child is to be educated in the confession of the father,” Protestantism.31

This case is an example of the strict application of the 1803 law; however, in cases between Protestants and Catholics, the law was only applied so rigidly if the father was deceased, but not in the event of divorce. In 1909, the state decided on a case also involving a divorced couple and their children, but the decision was different—and it was different because the subjects were all Christians. In this case, the couple’s agreement still held after divorce. The instance involved a Protestant man and a Catholic woman. While married, the couple agreed to educate their children in the mother’s confession, Catholicism. After the couple divorced, and the mother had custody of their only child by virtue of the father’s guilt in divorce and his unknown whereabouts. According to the couple’s initial negotiation, the mother proceeded to provide for the Catholic education of her child. But, as was typical, Protestant intervention ensued in an attempt to claim the child by virtue of the father’s Protestantism. Initially, a regional court applied 1803 rigidly and assigned a Protestant education to the child. But this decision was overturned by the same imperial agency that upheld the case involving the Jewish education of a child from a different mixed marriage.32 In the Protestant-Catholic case, the court allowed for the authority of the parental agreement, even though the father’s whereabouts were unknown; in the Protestant-Jewish case, parental authority was denied, even though the father was present and consented. Different rules applied, and the variable that caused it was the presence of Jewish

32 JEK 36 (1909): 48-54.
actors, as well as the possibility of moving across a religious boundary between Christianity and Judaism rather than just a confessional boundary between Protestantism and Catholicism. Moreover, the different rulings cannot be attributed to the years that passed in between the cases. The 1902 case regarding Jewish intermarriage was sandwiched between this 1909 case and an earlier one from 1891. Like in 1909, the 1891 case involved a Protestant father and a Catholic mother. The decision was the same in 1891 as it was in 1909: “despite the divorce the parents are united in the matter of the Catholic education of [the child], and as long as they agree, the law may not interfere.”

While the 1902 case indicates that the law applied differently to Jewish-Christian intermarriage in the event of divorce, a 1906 case shows that 1803 also applied differently to Jewish-Christian intermarriage in the event of the man’s death. Whereas myriad instances involving Protestant and Catholic mixed marriages that assigned the children to be educated in the deceased father’s confession, a case involving the child of a Protestant widow of a Jewish man did not. The children were assigned an education in their mother’s confession, despite conventional legal practice. The court indicated that 1803 only applied to confessionally mixed marriages, but it did not similarly apply to religiously mixed marriages. The first meant unions between Protestants and Catholics, and the second referred to marriages “between Christians and non-Christians; Jews in particular.”

The decision separated intermarriage between Jews and Christians. While the application of the very same law was, at the very same time, in the process of shrinking the distance between Protestants and Catholics, it made the distance between Christians and Jews greater. In Prussia in 1903, a Jewish man married a Protestant woman, and they agreed to educate the children

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33 *JEK* (1891).
34 *JEK* 22 (1902): 63.
Protestant. The couple had two daughters. Both were baptized Protestant and were on track to receive a Protestant education, when the man died in 1906. In anticipation of her children approaching school age, the woman engaged directly with the local custodial court in an attempt “to enable her to educate her girls in the Christian religion.” In her claim, which was offered with the assistance of a local Protestant pastor, “she specified that the father also wanted Christian education for the children.” In other words, the Jewish father and the Protestant mother came to an agreement to educate the children Protestant. The district custodial court, following the typically rigid interpretation of the 1803 decree, rejected her attempt to educate her children Protestant. They “explained that the children must be educated in the Jewish religion of the father” because no exceptions to the 1803 law, such as a full year of education, applied.35 While the mother’s efforts were initially unsuccessful, she then turned to the Imperial court present in every other case in this chapter. This court awarded her the education of the children, despite the deceased father’s Judaism, and in the process framed Jews and Jewish intermarriage as different from marriages between Protestants and Catholics. The decision read: “the difference between the Christian and other religions are doubtlessly perceived as more significant than those between Christian confessions; that is so not only because of the belief and teaching, but rather also taking account of cultural matters and of sacraments.”36 The difference between Christians and Jews, according to the state, was greater than the difference between Protestants and Catholics, and not just theologically.

The basis of the difference between Judaism and Christianity—between Jews and Christians—was baptism. Theologically, this distinction is not problematic. But it posed a problem in the court cases at hand. The foundation for grasping the significance of the legal use

35 JEK 22 (1902): 60.
36 JEK 22 (1902): 64.
of baptism in the cases above is to set them next to a case involving an intermarriage between a Protestant and a Catholic. The only way the courts were able to reassign the confessional education of children was with the recognition that baptism did not determine education because the sacrament meant entrance into the Christian community within which different confessions existed. The churches also accepted this maxim. The German state claimed that baptism was a non-confessional, Christian, principle after which a child could either be educated Protestant or Catholic without undergoing another baptism. It was the indelible link between the confessions that also bound confessionally mixed homes. It was why a child from a marriage between a Protestant man and a Catholic woman could be baptized Protestant and begin receiving a Protestant education, but have that education change to a Catholic one at the behest of the court after the father’s death.

A case from the 1890s indicates that a Protestant father changed the education of his child from his Protestantism to his wife’s Catholicism, Protestant baptism notwithstanding. In concert with the looser view of confessional belonging expressed by individuals who intermarried, the state shrunk the distance between the Protestant and Catholic confessions. As the actions of individuals, intervention from the churches, and the response from the state show, the confessions operated under the auspices of Christian baptism, as well as Christian Germany. “The circumstance that a child from an intermarriage is baptized in the mother’s faith,” a court decision from 1900 read, “does not sanction the child’s education in the mother’s faith after the death of the father.”

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37 EZA, 7, 3321, “Frorenheit, oder was sonst?” Germania 11/10/1894. The national Catholic paper Germania reported a case from Breslau where a Protestant father switched the education of his children from his Protestantism to his wife’s Catholicism. The children attended a Simultanschule so the change did not require the enrollment in a new school. The local Protestant clergy sent a letter of admonishment to the father that argued it was his religious and legal responsibility to expose his children to a Protestant education.

38 JEK 20 (1900): A 246.
In the 1906 case regarding the child of a Protestant woman and a Jewish man, the child’s baptism in his mother’s faith, the court asserted, did sanction education in the mother’s faith after the death of the father. The baptism set a barrier between the child and Judaism that the court was disinterested in violating. According to this decision, Jewish intermarriage, Judaism, and Jews were different from confessional intermarriage, Christianity, and Protestants and Catholics. Because the children had already been baptized as Protestants, it was unthinkable for the court to order a Jewish education. This resistance to assign a Jewish education to a Christian baptized child underscores the momentousness of the decisions involving Protestants and Catholics. The state mandated confessional fluidity in those cases, and it was able to do so because baptism superseded the confessional boundary. Baptism was a confessional bridge in the precise way that it formed a barrier between Jewish and Christian Germans. If the court upheld the initial ruling of a Jewish education, it would have, according to the decision, “vehemently negate[d] the nature of baptism.”

This was not the case in matters between Catholics and Protestants because of the fluidity that existed between Protestantism and Catholicism, but not between the confessions and Judaism:

In religiously mixed marriages it is clear that the baptism of the child of a non-Christian (Jewish) father in the religion of the mother is fundamentally ascribed a much more far-reaching and stronger bond. If such a baptism happens with the agreement of the non-Christian father, it is thus concerned with an act that is not only objectively unalterable for the church belonging of the child, but subjectively so due to the father’s inscrutable position. Under these circumstances an order for the religious education of the child in the Jewish religion of the deceased father would, for one, betray authoritative Church law regarding the foundational quality

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of the sacrament of baptism, and secondly it would not be just to the father’s clearly stated ultimate will.\textsuperscript{40}

Neither of these cases escaped the attention of one of the largest Jewish periodicals in Germany, \textit{Im deutschen Reich}. The liberal paper did not begrudge the 1906 decision. The child was baptized Protestant, did not have a Jewish mother, and the living mother desired to raise the children as a Protestant, like herself. But, the article observed, the 1906 decision throws the 1902 decision, regarding the divorce, into stark relief. In that scenario, the living Jewish mother desired to raise her child Jewish, like herself. But she was denied.\textsuperscript{41} In a defense of the strict application of 1803 in Protestant and Catholic intermarriages, the court claimed that any deviation from the letter of the law risked the nullification of the law in its entirety. “Such legal practice [would] no longer [be] about the interpretation of a law,” the writer intoned, “instead, it [would] change the nature of the law.”\textsuperscript{42} The law was not applied rigidly to intermarriages between Jews and Christians. But it did not change the nature of the law. Instead, it changed the nature of the relationship between Germany’s confessions and its religions. The \textit{Im deutschen Reich} article about the cases between Jews and Christians concluded that the only reasonable explanation for the different decisions for the two cases—as well as the difference between those two and Protestant-Catholic cases—was based on the Jewish identity of the parties involved.\textsuperscript{43} It was a Jewish identity defined by religion, not confession; it was one not subject to the same rules; and it was one that changed in dramatic fashion in twentieth century Germany.

\textsuperscript{40} J\textit{EK} 22 (1902): 65.
\textsuperscript{41} “Religiöse Erziehung von Kindern aus jüdisch-christlichen Mischehen,” \textit{Im deutschen Reich} 13, 5 (1907): 276-279.
\textsuperscript{42} J\textit{EK} 9 (1890).
\textsuperscript{43} “Religiöse Erziehung,” \textit{IdR}, 276-279.
Conclusion

The 1803 decree remained in use until 1921, when the new constitution of the Weimar Republic reframed the law. The new law reiterated that parental unity determined child education. But for marriages dissolved by the death of the father and husband, mothers assumed the right of education completely. If the marriage ended due to divorce, the guilty party lost the right to choose the confessional education of the children. Finally, if both parties were pronounced guilty in the event of divorce, then mothers had the right to educate all daughters, as well as sons under six years old, while the father had the right to determine education for sons older than six years of age. Just like the old law, church leaders wrote down these provisions and offered them to parishioners as part of an effort to inform them of their legal rights just in case they decided to marry outside of the confession.\(^\text{44}\) The new law designed to regulate the confessional education of children from intermarriage, like the old one, was well known, and the contours of it reached a broad swath of the population.

The separation of Judaism and Christianity by religion, whereby Jews were denied confessional categorization akin to Protestants and Catholics, was reinforced by the demand for the confessional boundary between Protestants and Catholics to be upheld. This is evident in a didactic example of how Protestant pastors should instruct the youth about intermarriage while preparing for confirmation. The instruction takes the form of a hypothetical dialogue. In the dialogue, the pastor posited that confession and religion were related, but that the former existed underneath the latter. Significantly, “religion” in this instance meant Christianity, thereby excluding Jews. Moreover, the pastor wrote that among Catholic transgressions in Germany, one of them was the church’s attempt to assert Catholic dominance over religion. While this was a common rhetorical theme, the Catholic Church was in reality satisfied as long as the confessional

boundary in Germany held. Nevertheless, the Protestant claim is significant because it framed the confessional assertion of authority over religion as a transgression. The groups needed to maintain difference under that category. All the while, Jews were self-evidently separate. “In our last session,” noted the priest, “we spoke about the difference between religion and confession.” He then asked the student, “which is the more general concept?” “Religion,” the student correctly responded. The metaphor the characters used to describe religion and confession was a tree and its branches. Religion was the tree, and confessions the branches. “A tree can have many branches, but a branch cannot have multiple trees,” the pastor indicated. In this formulation, Judaism can very well be seen as a confessional branch growing from the tree of religion. But the dialogue reveals the underlying assumption of the metaphor. While possibly a part of the same forest, Christianity and Judaism were different trees altogether. “How many branches,” the pastor asked, “does the tree of Christianity have?”45

The cases analyzed in this chapter were part of a process of transforming the boundaries between Protestants and Catholics, on the one hand, and Jews and Christians, on the other. The transformation of the confessional boundary resulted in the minimization of the difference between Protestants and Catholics. The churches exerted a great deal of energy to maintain the boundary. The boundary itself survived, but among parishioners and the state, it was becoming less important. It was more similar to the Lutheran-Calvinist boundary from the 1840s than the Catholic-Protestant boundary of the same time. Baptism and Christianity superseded the confessional boundary. While the religious boundary was in no ways new in Germany, it was new in the context of confessional difference between Protestants and Catholics. It was also new in an environment where intermarriage of all types caused the intersection of families, institutions, and states to supply new meaning to social boundaries. No boundaries remained

static, and the religious boundary between Jews and Christians in Germany changed over time. It did so because of the growing prominence of a new category, and new boundary, in turn of the century Germany: race.
Chapter 4: Racializing Religious Intermarriage: Zionism and Antisemitism

As a measure of difference, confession did not apply to Jewish Germans in the same way that it applied to Protestant and Catholic Germans. The distinction is evident in the inconsistent way German courts used the 1803 law for mixed marriages between Jewish and non-Jewish Germans. As chapter three demonstrates, in the eyes of the state, Jewish Germans at the turn of the century were unequal to non-Jewish Germans by virtue of their Jewishness. While German courts distinguished between confession and religion, the scientific category of race had become an integral component of social differentiation for both Jewish and non-Jewish Germans.

The introduction of the racial boundary did not eliminate the religious one; instead, the boundaries overlapped. The prevailing interpretation regarding race, religion, and Jews in Germany from the turn of the century to the Third Reich is that racial antisemitism was different than religiously based anti-Judaism, but that expressions of the former were made possible by the tenacity of the latter. The interpretation that follows accepts this premise. Where it differs is in the focus on the consequences the environment had on boundaries and boundary crossing between Jewish and non-Jewish Germans. The consequential evolution of this boundary is most evident in the ways in which two groups—both small and unrepresentative, but significant because of the connections we can make with the course of German history—dealt with race, religion, and intermarriage. The groups were German Zionists and German antisemites. German Zionists at the turn of the century turned to race as a way to advance rhetoric about the decline of...

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Judaism in Germany. Race provided a way to circumnavigate the religious identity of Jews in a context where religion was becoming less important, or at least was transforming in the context of Jewish integration into the German middle class. Conversely, German antisemites, especially after the First World War, linked notions of racial superiority with Christianity, and by doing so expressed a form of antisemitism dependent on the illegitimacy of Judaism as a religion. This move was made possible by an environment where Jews were already de-confessionalized and thus a step removed from Protestants and Catholics.

This chapter first analyzes the scale of intermarriage between Jewish and non-Jewish Germans from the 1870s to 1933. The statistical trends reveal that mixed marriage between Jews and non-Jews was not only tiny relative to all marriages in Germany, but it was also small relative to intermarriages between Protestants and Catholics. This is expected given the scant population of about 500,000 Jews in all of Germany. The figures also indicate that the rate of intermarriage relative to all Jewish marriages was in line with the rates experienced by Protestants and Catholics when in minority contexts. The chapter then examines two groups unsympathetic toward intermarriage: German Zionists and antisemites. For the former group, the consequences of intermarriage represented the stakes of internal decline. The proposed solution was the return of the metaphorical ghetto by way of the assertion of Jewish national identity defined by race and emigration to Palestine. At the turn of the century, religious antisemites attempted to prevent racial, religious, as well as national decline by condemning mixed marriages between Jews and Christians and calling for increased church discipline toward the Christians who did not listen. Due to an environment where Jews and non-Jews were viewed as religiously different without confessional similarity, these antisemitic ideas were primed to radicalize. They did so from 1918 to 1933, when German National Socialists used the terms of
difference as a tool to advance its agenda. What made this possible was the coupling of a specific, political, National Socialist interpretation of the idea of “positive Christianity” and the prevalence of what Saul Friedländer calls “redemptive antisemitism”—a specific form of antisemitism that I interpret as the fusion of race and religion for Christian Germans and the racialization of Jews based partly on delegitimizing Judaism as a religion.² From 1918 to 1933, antisemitic condemnations against relationships between Jews and Christians turned away from the act of intimacy and framed the encounters as violence toward Aryans. The response toward Jews was similarly violent. The transition, therefore, formed a fundamental and lasting component of National Socialism.

**Jewish Intermarriage in Germany, 1875-1933**

It first is necessary to understand the scope of intermarriage between Jewish and non-Jewish Germans from the perspective of the Jewish community and relative to Protestant-Catholic mixed marriage. Intermarriage between Jewish and non-Jewish Germans composed a tiny portion of intermarriages in Germany. The Jewish population of Germany was much smaller than the Protestant and Catholic populations, but from the point of view of the Jewish community, mixed marriage was just as pressing of a problem. The following statistical overview shows intermarriage rates between Jewish and non-Jewish Germans in the same regions and cities covered for Protestant-Catholic mixed marriage in chapter two: Prussia as a whole; two of its provinces, the Rhineland and Saxony; and the urban centers of Cologne, Magdeburg, and Berlin. This section demonstrates that some of the patterns that applied to Protestant-Catholic intermarriage, such as higher rates in urban areas, also pertained to marriages between Jews and non-Jews. Most notably, the section reveals that Jewish intermarriage increased at the same time that the Jewish share of the population decreased, and that most

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² Friedländer, 3, 86-90.
children from intermarriages were not raised Jewish. The greater frequency at which Jews married non-Jews, the overall decline of the Jewish population relative to the whole, and the relative lack of children from mixed marriages growing up with a Jewish education conspired to accentuate the consequences of intermarriage for Jewish observers.

As opposed to Protestant and Catholic Germans, Jews were a minority everywhere in Germany, and a very small one. From the 1870s until 1910, the Jewish population in Germany increased, although it did so at a slower pace than the non-Jewish population. The population in Germany grew 58 percent from 1871 until 1910, while the Jewish population grew by 20 percent. At the time of German unification in 1871, there were just over 500,000 Jews within a population of 41 million, which is about 1.2 percent of the whole. This share of the population increased slightly to 1.25 percent in 1880, but it then declined to 1.15 percent in 1890. In terms of absolute numbers, the Jewish population of Germany peaked in 1910 with 615,021 citizens. That number, however, represented just 0.95 percent of the total population. From 1910 until 1933, Jews constituted less than one percent of the German population.  

The story was the same at the regional and city level. From 1880 to 1925, the Jewish population in Prussia, the Rhineland, Saxony, Cologne, Magdeburg and Berlin remained small, steady, and saw relative declines.  

In Prussia, the Jewish population peaked at 1.3 percent in 1880 and fell slightly to 1.1 percent in 1925. In the Rhineland in the same years, the Jewish population decreased from one percent to 0.8, while in Saxony it fell from 0.3 to 0.25 percent. Jewish Germans were more likely to migrate to cities than Protestants and Catholics, so their share of urban populations were larger, although they were still small and declined relative to the rest of the population. Jews constituted 3.1 percent of Cologne’s population in 1880 and 2.3 of it

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in 1925, 1.1 percent of Magdeburg residents in 1880 and 0.8 in 1925, and finally 4.8 of Berlin’s population in 1880 and 4.3 in 1925.\(^5\)

The introduction of civil marriage in 1875, what historian Kerstin Meiring terms the “legalization” of marriage between Jewish and non-Jewish Germans in all of Germany because it provided full autonomy to individuals for the first time, was significant. The importance of state legitimization of marriages between Jews and non-Jews is evident in the steady rise and slow accumulation of mixed marriages over time.\(^6\) The impact was not immediately felt. While not impossible prior to 1875, intermarriage between Jewish and non-Jewish Germans was uncommon without the conversion of one or the other partner. Most of the conversions took place prior to the marriage, it was usually the Jewish partner who converted, and women were more likely to convert than men. In other cases, however, couples lived together in common law marriages until they conceived a child, after which one of the partners, again usually the Jewish partner, sought conversion and marital legitimization. Due to legal constraints, conversion was more commonly used strategy for Jewish integration and assimilation prior to 1875. The difference between these marriages and those that took place after 1875, when conversion was less common, is that conversion came with a wholesale rejection of Jewish identity—at least in theory and with regard to the way one identified oneself to the state. With civil marriage came the ability to integrate into German society without rejecting Jewish identity. Tellingly, more Jewish Germans chose this route toward the end of the nineteenth and into the twentieth century.\(^7\)

Interrmarriage among Jewish Germans was not particularly distinct from mixed marriage between Protestant and Catholic Germans. During the 1870s, Jewish marriage patterns in

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\(^5\) Meiring, 99; \textit{BSJ} 1-34.
\(^6\) Meiring, 86.
\(^7\) Lowenstein, 43.
Germany reflected broader trends. As chapter two shows, marriage patterns in Prussia fluctuated greatly during the 1870s. The absolute number of marriages peaked in 1872, declined thereafter, and finally stabilized and began to rise steadily alongside the growth of the population beginning in the late 1870s and early 1880s. Marriage patterns among Jewish Germans reflected this broader trend. In 1875, there were 2,952 marriages in Germany where one or both of the partners was Jewish, while in 1881, that number fell to 2,526 marriages. Such unions did not surpass the 1875 mark until 1897.\(^8\) Intermarriage, as well, declined slightly in Prussia during the latter half of the 1870s. Immediately after the introduction of civil marriage in 1875, the intermarriage rate for Jewish Germans stood at a relatively high 9.4 percent in Prussia and remained steady afterward. Notably, the rate at which Jewish Germans intermarried was almost exactly the same as the Protestant rate, which was about 9.7 during the final five years of the 1870s. The tendency for Jews to enter into mixed marriages resembled the dominant Protestant population, whereas the rate was much higher among German Catholics. In Prussia, the Catholic mixed marriage rate was over 18 percent each year from 1875-1880. Despite the fact that Jews were a smaller minority in Prussia, they were less likely to intermarry than Catholics were.

\(\begin{array}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\text{Year} & \text{Intermarriages as Percentage of Total Jewish Marriages} & \text{Percentage of Marriages between a Jewish Woman and Christian Man} & \text{Percentage of Marriages between a Jewish Man and Christian Woman} & \text{Percentage of Intermarriages, Jewish-Protestant} & \text{Percentage of Intermarriages, Jewish-Catholic} \\
\hline
1875 & 9.4\% & 5.3 & 4.1 & 77.2 & 19.5\footnote{9} \\
1876 & 9.5 & 5.5 & 4 & 72.3 & 22.3 \\
1877 & 8.2 & 4.5 & 3.7 & 85.3 & 13.7 \\
1878 & 8.6 & 4.2 & 4.4 & 76.9 & 18.5 \\
1879 & 9 & 4.9 & 4.1 & 79.3 & 16.3\footnote{10} \\
\hline
\end{array}\)

\footnote{8} Meiring, 94-95.\footnote{9} The remaining intermarriages were likely with individuals from Germany’s smaller Christian sects and Dissidents.
Like unions between Protestant and Catholic Germans, beginning in the 1880s, marriage between Jewish and non-Jewish Germans began to rise steadily in Prussia, the Rhineland, and Saxony. The rate increase of Jewish intermarriage, however, was much more dramatic than for Protestant-Catholic intermarriage. As opposed to Table 4.1, which takes marriages rather than individuals as a units of analysis, the figures in Table 4.2 represent the percentage of Jewish German individuals who intermarried. Intermarriage among Jewish Germans rose steadily over time, but because the population was so small, the rate increase was exponential. According to historian Kerstin Meiring, from 1880 to 1925 the intermarriage rate among Jewish Germans jumped 357.8 percent in Prussia, 433.3 percent in the Rhineland, and 123.7 percent in Saxony. These rate increases must be viewed in the context of the Jewish population and its relative stagnation and decline. From the perspective of absolute numbers, the rate increases are less dramatic. For instance, in Prussia in 1880, there were 2,390 marriages between two Jewish Germans and 226 Jewish intermarriages; in 1890, those figures were 2,560 and 474. Both mixed and non-mixed marriages increased, although the former rose a bit more than the latter. The small absolute numbers make the jump seem more dramatic than it was.

The gender dynamics of intermarriage changed before and after the First World War, but class influenced each context. For instance, between 1910 and 1913, 13.5 percent of Jewish men and 10.92 percent of Jewish women, on average, intermarried each year in Germany. This trend also held in Prussia. However, the pre-war trends were different in the Rhineland and Saxony. In general, more Jewish women intermarried when either the mixed marriage rate or population was small. Both of these contexts were present in the Rhineland and Saxony. Because Jews who intermarried tended to be from the lower-classes, one possible reason for this trend is a lack of a

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10 I calculated these percentages based on the absolute numbers provided in Meiring, 94-99. For an explanation of calculations, see chapter two, note 23.

11 Kaplan, Making, 81.
sufficient dowry that could be used to attract a Jewish spouse at a young age. Coupled with the slightly larger population of women compared to men, a higher intermarriage rate among women makes sense. We also cannot discount the possibility that intermarriages were expressions of newfound female autonomy, as historian Till van Rahden argues. From this perspective, the higher likelihood for Jewish women to intermarry cannot be explained by a lack of a dowry because their empowerment represented the rejection of the patriarchal system the dowry embodied.

While uneven prior to World War I, the gender patterns of intermarriage during the interwar years in Prussia, the Rhineland, and Saxony, are similar. More Jewish men than women intermarried from 1918-1933. This trend can once again be explained by social context. First, historian Steven Lowenstein posits that the unbalanced gender ratios are evidence of the exercise of choice on behalf of Jewish men. In an environment where there were about 109 Jewish women per 100 Jewish men, he claims, the sharp rise in mixed marriage among Jewish men is evidence of an expression of autonomy similar to the one women might have exercised prior to 1914. The economic crisis of the early 1920s also contributed to the rise of intermarriage among Jewish German men. With inflation, most middle class Jewish families lost their savings, and with it any money they had for a dowry. In any event, individuals were increasingly inclined to choose a partner rather than rely on family arrangement, which dominated middle-class marriage practices among Jewish Germans prior to the war. In addition to economic factors, interwar Germany witnessed an increase in antisemitism, which particularly affected the marriage prospects of Jewish women. It was difficult for Jewish women because non-Jewish men had no financial incentive to cross religious boundaries for marriage in an environment hostile to Jews,

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12 Van Rahden, Jews and Other Germans, 96-110.
and at the same time Jewish men had incentive to escape antisemitism by attempting to break ties with the Jewish community by marrying a Christian woman.  

Table 13  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jewish Intermarriage Rate in Prussia, 1880-1925</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Rhineland, 1880-1925</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Saxony, 1880-1925</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Like Protestant-Catholic marriages, unions between Jewish and non-Jewish Germans were higher in urban areas. But because Jewish Germans were, on the whole, more urban, intermarriage in cities played a greater role in shaping Jewish difference in Germany. By the 1920s, Jewish Germans were comparatively more urban than Protestant and Catholic Germans. In 1925, 66 percent of Jewish Germans lived in cities of at least 100,000, while only 26 percent of the population as a whole did.  

Intermarriage in Cologne, Magdeburg, and Berlin illustrate distinct trends shaped by the environment. Prior to the First World War, the rate of intermarriage in Cologne was about twice as high as the rate in the Rhineland in general. In Magdeburg in 1880, the rate at which Jewish individuals intermarried was three times as high as it was in the

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14 Lowenstein, 28-32.
15 Meiring, 98. For an explanation of how she calculated these numbers, see chapter two, note 18.
16 Herbert Phillipsthal, „Der deutsche Jude und die Großstadt,“ in Gemeindeblatt der Israelitischen Gemeinde Frankfurt am Main 6 (1928): 205-206.
province that housed it, Saxony. The higher rates in Saxony compared to Cologne can be explained by the size of the population and the nature of the majority population. Jews composed about three percent of the population of Cologne, whereas in Magdeburg it was around one percent. Additionally, Jewish Germans were more likely to marry Protestants than Catholics—about 70 percent of Jewish mixed marriages were with Protestants.\(^\text{17}\) Jewish Germans were less inclined to marry Catholics because of the ritualistic nature of Catholicism and household iconography that, comparatively, was absent from Protestantism. At the same time, Catholics were less inclined to marry Jews, which can be attributed to Catholicism’s history of institutional anti-Judaism.\(^\text{18}\) Thus, higher intermarriage rates in Protestant dominated Saxony than Catholic dominated Cologne fit the demographic make-up of both places.

Berlin was distinct. In Berlin, intermarriage was already quite high in the 1880s and slowly crept upward. Prior to the First World War and into the 1920s, one quarter to one third of Jewish marriages in Berlin were mixed. Moreover, Berlin, as opposed to Cologne and Magdeburg prior to 1914, represented dominate patterns of gender and class when it came to intermarriage. More Jewish men than women entered into mixed marriages in Berlin, which can be explained by the large Jewish middle-class in Berlin. As opposed to men, women were more likely to intermarry out of economic necessity, though as noted before, we cannot discount the possibility that liberation from arranged marriage allowed for the exercise of autonomy.\(^\text{19}\) After the war, Jewish residents in Cologne fit into the larger pattern of gender and intermarriage, although denizens of Magdeburg did not. Finally, it is also significant to note that, again, the rate at which Jewish Germans intermarried in each of these cities was lower than the present confessional minority, whether it was Catholic or Protestant. The one-third of Jewish marriages

\(^{17}\) Meiring, 94-95.  
\(^{18}\) Lowenstein, 45.  
\(^{19}\) Kaplan, Making, 81.
in Berlin that were mixed in 1925, for example, was far less than the rate at which Catholics in Berlin entered into mixed marriages, where about three out of four Catholic marriages were mixed.

Table 14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage of Jewish Individuals who Intermarried</th>
<th>Jewish Woman &amp; Christian Man</th>
<th>Jewish Man &amp; Christian Woman</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>29.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Magdeburg, 1880-1925**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage of Jewish Individuals who Intermarried</th>
<th>Jewish Woman &amp; Christian Man</th>
<th>Jewish Man &amp; Christian Woman</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>21.4^2^</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Intermarriages as Percentage of Total Jewish Marriages</th>
<th>Percentage of Marriages between a Jewish Woman and Christian Man</th>
<th>Percentage of Marriages between a Jewish Man and Christian Woman</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23.3^2^</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The way these intermarried couples raised children distinguishes them from Protestant-Catholic mixed marriages. The reason likely has less to do with Judaism *qua* Judaism, but with the fact that Jews were not a majority population anywhere in Germany. In general, children from mixed marriages were more likely to be raised in the majority confession, whether it was

20 Meiring, 98.
21 *BSJ* 1-34.
Catholicism or Protestantism. However, on the whole most children from mixed marriages were raised Protestant. In Prussia, for example, about 43 percent of children from Protestant-Catholic intermarriages were raised Catholic at the turn of the century. However, from 1885 to 1910 only about 25 percent of children from Prussian marriages between Jewish and non-Jewish Germans were raised Jewish. Despite the fact that Protestant and Catholic minorities were more likely to intermarry than Jews in many regions of Germany, especially cities, a Jewish intermarriage signaled loss for the community more than it did for Protestants or Catholics. The fate of children from mixed marriages shaped the way commentators cast mixed families as a threat to Judaism in Germany.

Gender and codified patriarchy were more influential than religious law. Despite a tradition of matrilineal lineage in Judaism, children were more likely to receive a Jewish education in the event that the father rather than the mother was Jewish. Like Orthodox Judaism, Reform Judaism in Germany held to matrilineal law as a central tenet of Judaism. Members of the community, however, were more flexible. Children from Jewish-Protestant intermarriages were less likely to be raised Jewish than in Jewish-Catholic marriages. The type of union that was least likely to have children raised Jewish was between a Jewish woman and a Protestant man. However, the percentage of children from such unions did increase from 1885 to 1910, whereas the percentage of children of Jewish fathers and Catholic mothers remained steady over the same time period. This data is reflective of the “feminization of religion” referenced in chapter two. While Jewish Germans on the whole secularized at the turn of the century, the process was more prominent among Jewish men than women. Jewish women tended to maintain

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22 Meiring, 106.
Jewish ritual and practice in the home. Nevertheless, children of marriages between Jewish men and Protestant women were still more likely to be raised Jewish than the obverse.

Surprisingly, children from Jewish-Catholic unions were more likely to be raised Jewish. In 1885, 37.3 percent of children from such marriages were raised Jewish, although that number fell to 26.1 percent in 1910. One possible explanation for the relatively high percentage is that Catholic Germans who married Jewish Germans might have been more secular, or at the very least religiously indifferent. Another possibility is that the Catholic community more readily cut ties with parishioners who married Jewish Germans, leaving the family to raise the children Jewish, whereas the Protestant community was more accommodating. The significance of gender regarding how the children were raised in Jewish-Catholic unions is clear, although more uneven than Jewish-Protestant marriages. The most consistent trend was that children from marriages between Jewish men and Catholic women were less likely to be raised Jewish over time. We can see the feminization of religion at work here as well. Chapter two noted that Catholic mothers from marriages with Protestants were also more likely to raise their children Catholic over the same time period. At the same time, we can see a corresponding decline in children raised Jewish in marriages between Jewish mothers and Catholic fathers.

Table 16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Jewish-Protestant Intermarriages</th>
<th>Jewish Mother-Protestant Father</th>
<th>Jewish Father-Protestant Mother</th>
<th>Jewish-Catholic Intermarriages</th>
<th>Jewish Mother-Catholic Father</th>
<th>Jewish Father-Catholic Mother</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>37.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>35.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>31.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>29.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>24.2^24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

23 Kaplan, *Making*, 64-84.
24 Meiring, 105.
Finally, it is necessary to analyze some anomalies in the intermarriage rate between Jewish and non-Jewish Germans, as they illuminate both social context and the social awareness of the actors. It is also essential to get a glimpse of intermarriage trends in a broader data set, the whole of Germany. The anomalies took place during the First World War, the inflation years that extended from 1919 until 1923, and finally the time just before the Nazi seizure of power in 1933. As historian Steven Lowenstein argues, the statistical aberrations have to be interpreted in the context of rate as well as absolute numbers. Table 4.6 indicates the percentage of total Jewish marriages that were mixed, as well as the raw number of intermarriages that took place in each given year. From the beginning of the twentieth century to the First World War, Jewish intermarriages rose steadily. At the same time, marriages between two Jewish Germans remained stable from 1901 until 1906 before declining steadily until 1913. The simultaneous increase of intermarriages and decrease of non-mixed marriages accounts for the large relative increase of intermarriages, which rose from 14.4 percent in 1901 to 23.6 percent in 1913. It is also notable that the frequency at which Jewish men and women intermarried tilted toward men, but there was not a very large gap between them.

In terms of intermarriage rates, the war years witnessed a dramatic spike, but the change was not as momentous as it appears. In 1913, 23.6 percent of Jewish marriages were mixed, while in 1914 that number rose to 33.9, and in 1915 it peaked at 51 percent. That rate is still lower than, for example, the rate at which Catholic Berliners intermarried. However, the 1915 rate of 51 percent represented all of Germany, not just a city. Moreover, as noted above, most children from such intermarriages were raised Christian, so the spike was alarming for Jewish observers. The large increase, however, was due to a precipitous drop in marriages between Jewish Germans coupled with a consistently steady rise of intermarriages in 1914 and 1915,

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25 Lowenstein, 25.
followed by only a slight decrease in 1916 before once again rising steadily. Marriages all across Germany fell during the war years, so it is no surprise that they also fell among Jewish Germans. Additionally, individuals who intermarried were, on average, older than those who did not, and men were usually older than women. So Jewish men most likely to intermarry were also less likely to be among the first deployed to fight in the war.

Table 17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Intermarriages as Percentage of Total Jewish Marriages (number of intermarriages)</th>
<th>Percentage of Marriages between a Jewish Woman and Christian Man</th>
<th>Percentage of Marriages between a Jewish Man and Christian Woman</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>14.4 (652)</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>17.1 (805)</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>20.5 (1003)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>22.2 (1088)</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>22.8 (1130)</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>23.6 (1122)</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The War Years, 1914-1918

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Intermarriages as Percentage of Total Jewish Marriages (number of intermarriages)</th>
<th>Percentage of Marriages between a Jewish Woman and Christian Man</th>
<th>Percentage of Marriages between a Jewish Man and Christian Woman</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>33.9 (1344)</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>51 (1143)</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>33.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>42.8 (967)</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>26.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>42.5 (1035)</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>25.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>33.3 (1084)</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>19.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Inflation Years, 1919-1923

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Intermarriages as Percentage of Total Jewish Marriages (number of intermarriages)</th>
<th>Percentage of Marriages between a Jewish Woman and Christian Man</th>
<th>Percentage of Marriages between a Jewish Man and Christian Woman</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>23.5 (1929)</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>22.8 (2211)</td>
<td>9.21</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>25.2 (1890)</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>28.8 (2038)</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>29.4 (2008)</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Economic Stabilization and Years Before the Third Reich, 1924-1933

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Intermarriages as Percentage of Total Jewish Marriages (number of intermarriages)</th>
<th>Percentage of Marriages between a Jewish Woman and Christian Man</th>
<th>Percentage of Marriages between a Jewish Man and Christian Woman</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>31.9 (1547)</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>32.7 (1413)</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>36.5 (1642)</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>36.1 (1405)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>37.4 (1378)</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>23.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>43.8 (1693)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>30.9(^{26})</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The degree to which Jewish marriage patterns reflect marriage trends in Germany is evident in the immediate postwar years. Similar to the trends in the 1870s, Germany experienced

\(^{26}\) I calculated the numbers according to the data provided in Meiring, 94-95.
a marriage boom after the war. The population claimed the lost marriages that otherwise would have taken place between 1914 and 1918. In 1920, for example, there were 895,000 marriages in Germany, which, according to historian Steven Lowenstein, was about 80 percent higher than the pre-war average.\textsuperscript{27} It was also in 1920 that Jewish marriage and intermarriage reached new levels. There were 7,497 marriages between Jewish Germans in 1920—almost twice as many as the prewar average and seven times as many as took place in 1915—and 2,211 intermarriages. In no other year did more mixed marriages between Jewish and non-Jewish Germans take place than in 1920. Most notably, the postwar marriage boom displays a normalization of intermarriage rates among Jewish Germans. For instance, the percentage of Jewish marriages that were mixed in 1920 reflects exactly the 1912 rate. While the rates did begin to creep upward at the tail end of the inflation years, they did not deviate greatly from pre-war intermarriage ratios. Perhaps the most persistent trend that emerged during the inflation years was the widening gap between the rate at which Jewish men and women intermarried. For women, it remained relatively stable throughout the 1920s, although it did rise steadily. By 1922, however, intermarriage among Jewish men increased well beyond pre-war averages, and this trend persisted throughout the 1920s and peaked at 30.9 percent in 1933.

The stabilization of intermarriage rates did not last very long. Beginning in 1924 and continuing to the end of the decade, intermarriage rates among Jewish Germans rose to levels previously unseen. Like the war years, the rate increase can be attributed to a decline of marriage in general. In 1924, there were just 440,039 marriages in Germany, which was half as much as the height in 1920 and much lower than the prewar average.\textsuperscript{28} Intermarriage rates, however, began to rise steadily once again. Out of any period in German history, mixed marriage between

\textsuperscript{27} Lowenstein, 26.
\textsuperscript{28} Lowenstein, 26.
Jewish and non-Jewish Germans was most pronounced between 1924 and 1933. In this period, 
mARRIAGES BETWEEN JEWISH GERMANS CONTINUED TO DECLINE AS INTERMARRIAGES ROSE. FOR EXAMPLE, 
there were about 1,000 fewer non-mixed Jewish marriages in 1930 than there were in 1903, but 
1930 also saw about two and a half times as many intermarriages than 1903. 29 THE LARGEST 
NUMERICAL LEAP TOOK PLACE FROM 1932 TO 1933. WHILE THE 1,693 MIXED MARRIAGES THAT TOOK PLACE 
in 1933 were not the most there had ever been in Germany, the jump from the year before was 
UNUSUAL. IT MEANT A RATE INCREASE FROM 37.4 TO 43.8 PERCENT. JEWISH GERMANS AND THE NON-JEWISH 
PARTNERS THEY AIMED TO MARRY WERE AWARE OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES IN GERMANY WHEN THE NAZIS CAME 
to power.

JEWISH MARRIAGE AND INTERMARRIAGE HAD LONG BEEN DEFINED BY CONTEXT. WHETHER IT WAS THE 
POSTWAR PERIOD IN THE 1870S, THE INCREASING USE OF THE CHOICES MADE AVAILABLE BY CIVIL MARRIAGE, 
or the postwar period in the 1920s, individuals operated in environments that guided the 
decisions they made that are reflected in marriage statistics. The spike in intermarriages from 
1932 TO 1933 indicates that the actors were aware of some of the potential consequences of a 
National Socialist state. At the very least, Jewish Germans and their intimate partners were 
mindful that the Nazis might codify a variety of Jewish difference that might end up limiting 
who they can and cannot marry.

**Interracial and German Zionism: Race and the Metaphorical Ghetto**

In an environment of steadily increasing mixed marriages from the 1870s until 1914, 
followed by more and more rapidly rising intermarriages in the 1920s, the boundaries that 
SEPARATED JEWISH AND NON-JEWISH GERMANS TRANSFORMED. AS OPPOSED TO CONFESSIONAL DIFFERENCE 
BETWEEN PROTESTANTS AND CATHOLICS—WHERE THEY WERE UNIFIED BY RELIGION—JEWS WERE SEEN, AS 
sometimes saw themselves, as further apart. The court cases analyzed in chapter three indicate 

29 Meiring, 94-95.
that the German state at the turn of the century employed religion to define Jewish Germans separately from Protestant and Catholic Germans. At the same time and with the same parameters that kept Protestants and Catholics close and Jews at a distance, race was a self-evident scientific category used to describe social difference in Germany. For German Zionists, Jewish racial difference was something to be appropriated. In possession of such difference, they then advanced arguments about the problem of Jewish decline offered emigration to Palestine as a solution. In response to mixed marriage and Jewish integration, German Jewish Zionists—and in particular Zionist social scientists well-versed in the science of race—were flexible regarding the Jewish religion, placed the essential qualities of Jewishness in a racial context, and advocated protection by cutting Jews off from Germany altogether through emigration. The metaphor they used to advocate for such protection was the ghetto.

When German Zionists evoked “the ghetto,” what they were referring to were the social boundaries that separated Jews and non-Jews that constituted Jewish identity. Intermarriage suggested that the border was becoming permeable, and the essence of what it meant to be Jewish was at stake. German Zionists, then, made the boundary racial. A confessional boundary had no purchase and the religious boundary became muddled in the context of Reform and religious division among Jews.

The ghetto as a metaphor has played multiple roles in Jewish historiography that were shaped by context. With the knowledge of violent Nazi ghettoization, the evocation of the ghetto as positive sounds strange. But in an environment where some Jewish observers saw Jewish life beleaguered in the face of both antisemitism and assimilation, the ghetto as a rhetorical tool makes sense. In the United States, the famed scholar of Jewish history, Salo Wittmayer Baron (1895-1989), remarked in 1928 that “there were locks inside the Ghetto gates . . . before there
were locks outside.”\textsuperscript{30} Prior to the Nazi ghettoization of European Jewry in the midst of war, for some Jews the ghetto meant protection. It entailed the ability to cultivate and preserve a distinctly Jewish identity in the face of loose social boundaries. Intermarriage was one such threat that porous social boundaries allowed. In opposition to Baron, historian Jacob Katz (1904-1998), in his path-breaking 1973 book \textit{Out of the Ghetto}, argued that from the late eighteenth to the late nineteenth century European Jews experienced advancement by securing citizenship and having new occupational opportunities open up for them. The abolition of ghetto walls conditioned this progress. European Jews then responded with cultural adaptation and the modernization of religious behavior.\textsuperscript{31} Intermarriage followed, as state citizenship compelled Jews to participate in the machinations of civic bureaucracy, such as civil marriage. Significantly, Katz did not lament the ghetto, but highlighted its abolishment as an essential process that engendered Jewish participation in the shaping of modern European society. The turn of the century German Zionists who condemned intermarriage and advocated for the return of the ghetto as a way to stem Jewish decline fit with Baron’s thesis.

For Zionists, race and religion had always overlapped among Jews, but the environment around 1900 indicated that they were both under threat in a new way. This context contributed to the role German Zionists played in attempting to define Jewish difference. What made the late nineteenth and early twentieth century different was the waning power of religion. The barriers that religion provided to protect the Jewish race, such as the prohibition of intermarriage, were no longer effective. Thus, new appeals had to be advanced based on new forms of difference. Rather than advocating for renewed adherence to religious law, Zionists argued for Jewish


isolation from non-Jewish Germans. Appeals for emigration to Palestine, talk of the need for impermeable boundaries to surround German Jews, and alarmist cries about the “extinction” of Jews in Germany as a consequence of intermarriage, led many Zionist demographers to long for the return of a metaphysical ghetto.\(^{32}\) Such formulations were embedded in their view of the course of Jewish history. Emancipation and legal changes over the course of the nineteenth century had created new possibilities for Jewish interaction in daily life, the new possibilities caused increased intimate unions between Jews and non-Jews in Germany, which coincided with growing secularism and a decline in a religious basis to avoid intermarriage. Thus, the protections of the ghetto were necessary in order to cease the further dissolution of the Jewish people and ultimately to reinvigorate it. “Since the abolition of the ghetto,” noted one Jewish German Zionist, “the contact between Jews and non-Jews has become so close that, despite every religious legal injunction (*Verfemung*), Jewish-Christian intermarriage, which had previously been uncommon, has attained notability everywhere.”\(^{33}\)

The inside-outside binary fundamental to the idea of the ghetto indicates that it stood for Jewish particularity. The measure of difference could be filled in, and German Zionist social scientists used it as a symbol of racial difference. These Zionists, chief among them Arthur Ruppin (1876-1943), leveraged their professional training to frame the consequences of mixed marriage and advocate that Jewish Germans cut themselves off from non-Jewish Germans, and Germany altogether, through emigration.\(^{34}\) What German Zionists perceived to be the poor state

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\(^{32}\) Herbert Philippsthal, „Der zersetzende Einfluß der Mischehe: Das wichtigste innerjüdische Zeitproblem,“ *Das jüdische Echo* 15, 9 (1928): 131.

\(^{33}\) Stefan Behr, *Der Bevölkerungsrückgang der deutschen Juden* (Frankfurt am Main: J. Kaufmann Verlag, 1932), 111.

\(^{34}\) Ruppin has been a site of controversy among historians because of his use of his long-term use of race. In particular, Etan Bloom’s argues that Ruppin, who ended up being one of the “forefathers” of the Israeli state in Palestine, developed his ideas about race from the same intellectual tradition as National Socialism. From this premise, Bloom then suggests that Zionism was reverse antisemitism, and that its expression in Palestine at the turn of the century, particularly Ruppin’s settlement policies and relationship with the Arab population after 1907, can be
of Judaism in Germany was a product of the social boundaries between Jews and non-Jews in European history. German Zionists advanced the idea of the protective ghetto by arguing that Enlightenment ideals, including Jewish emancipation, had done violence against the barriers provided by the ghetto walls. In this formulation, the ghetto protected the collective Jewish body. It was Christians rather than Jews who made the ghetto walls porous and challenged the ability of Jews to remain separate and maintain their qualities as a people. For Ruppin, the European environment in which the Jews lived had an accumulative effect on the racial character of the Jews that, due to mixed marriage and its consequences, led to an irreversible decline. Ruppin, for instance, claimed that the foundation of

the so-called emancipation of the Jews lay not with the Jews, but rather in the intellectual world of Christians in the eighteenth century, an environment in which the French Revolution of 1789 and the proclamation of the universal rights of man appeared in effect. The Jews could not have opened the gate of the ghetto were they not razed from the outside.\(^{(35)}\)

In reference to conclusions he drew from his analysis of the Jewish population in Germany, he posited that “the best protection against intermarriage, as against baptism, is the ghetto . . . In the countries where Jews participate in public and economic life as emancipated people, mixed

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marriage ascends and constitutes a considerable percentage of pure Jewish marriages.” The same recognition of statistical intermarriage trends—and also the same figures noted above—led yet another Zionist social scientist to preemptively reverse Jacob Katz’s 1973 formulation about Jewish history: “Emancipation had opened the gates and allowed the current of new ideas into the ghetto.”

Ruppin played a central role in an influential organization that shaped a German Zionist vision of Jewish difference scientifically and, significantly, against religion. In 1902, Alfred Nossig (1864-1943) founded the Verein für jüdische Statistik (VJS). Shortly after founding the organization, he hired the self-trained demographer Ruppin to run it and edit its journal in 1903. Collectively, their goal was to demonstrate that Jews, rather than adhering to a religion and certainly not identifiable as the antiquated “Germans of the Mosaic persuasion,” were a Volk. Ruppin and the VJS sought a category to which all Jews could belong. After the Reform movement of the mid nineteenth century, a strictly religious interpretation of Judaism was no longer possible because religious Judaism itself had fractured. In this way, German Judaism resembled the necessity of confessional identification within German Christianity, although it did not sit comfortably as a “confession” because German Christian leaders, as well as the state, cast Judaism as religiously rather than confessionally different. Ruppin recognized the inability for

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36 Ruppin, Die Juden, 7-8.
37 Felix Theilhaber, Die Untergang der deutschen Juden: eine volkswirtschaftliche Studie, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Jüdische Verlag, 1921), 157, emphasis added.
38 The focus on race for German Zionists was unique to Western Europe. East European Zionists did not pay much attention to race as a category. See Mitchell Hart, Social Science and the Politics of Modern Jewish Identity (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 29-31; Morris-Reich, 116-119.
39 Hart, Social Science, 36-64.
40 Historian Till van Rahden also notes another term that gained popularity among Jewish Germans: Stamm, which roughly translates as “tribe.” This term was most popular among liberals who interpreted the Jewish presence in Germany in a multicultural and non-Zionist national context. That is, Jews were one Stamm among many in Germany, all of whom existed under the auspices of the German nation. See Till van Rahden, “Germans of the Jewish Stamm: Visions of Community between Nationalism and Particularism, 1850-1933,” in German History from the Margins, eds. Neil Gregor, Nils Roemer, and Mark Roseman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 27-48.
a universal religious interpretation of Judaism to resonate in the twentieth century. Thus, he not only privileged science and race as objective and applicable tools for analyzing the problems Jews in Germany faced, such as intermarriage, but he also conflated religious interpretations of Judaism as unscientific, antiquated, and ultimately destined to fail in any effort to protect Judaism. “The numerous writings about Jews and Judaism that appear year in and year out,” Ruppin wrote in 1904, “seek to prophesize and to preach, rather than to demonstrate; to show what should be, rather than what is.”41 In a similar vein, another prominent German Zionist, Felix Theilhaber (1884-1956), argued in 1911 that “we orient ourselves and form our convictions not according to religious prophecies, but the legitimacy science gives them . . . for Jews race is stronger than religion.”42

While Ruppin envisioned his social scientific analysis of Jews and Judaism against religion, in his writing he also interpreted them as interdependent categories. For Ruppin, the overlap of race and religion was particularly evident in the way he distinguished intermarriage from conversion, and especially in the way that religion and race could be causes and effects of one another. Ruppin viewed both baptism and mixed marriage as contributors to Jewish decline in Germany. “Like baptism,” Ruppin suggested, “intermarriage—meaning the marriage between a Jewish spouse and one of another religion (andersgläubige)—causes the decline of the existence of the Jewish population.” In particular, Ruppin’s use of the revealing word of differentiation, andersgläubige, suggests that he thought about social distinctions in religious terms, but he viewed the consequences as racial. At the very least, he could not remove himself from a religious vocabulary. More revealing is his analysis of the consequences of taking a spouse that belonged to another religion—he claimed that it signaled a more general racial

41 Ruppin, Die Juden, n.p.
42 Theilhaber, Die Untergang, 17-18.
decline of Jews than did conversion. According to Ruppin, religion had to be maintained because it was the proxy for the continuity of the race. He viewed religion as a means to the end of preserving the Jewish race, because conversion or the baptism of children often catalyzed Jewish assimilation. He argued that the difference between baptism and mixed marriage was that in the event of baptism de-judaization in the religious sense occurred first and racial de-judaization followed in the next generation because baptized children were not likely to marry Jews. But Ruppin argued that the process was reversed in cases of intermarriage because the children of mixed marriages were already born “according to a lineage that is no longer purely Jewish.”

For Ruppin, just like many scientists throughout the world at the time, Jewish blood served as a metaphor for the Jewish people in Europe. “Both [baptism and intermarriage] initiate the same process—the integration and disappearance of Jewish blood in the surrounding, and vastly larger, population of Andersgläubige.” The salient difference—a distinction absolutely necessary to keep in mind—between Ruppin’s use of blood as a symbol and later uses of blood by German antisemites, is that Ruppin’s view was internal, not hierarchical, and was never cited as a justification for violence against non-Jews.

The way children from mixed marriages were raised greatly contributed to Ruppin’s privilege of race, and it also distinguished him and other Zionist social scientists from Protestant and Catholic leaders, including Protestant and Catholic social scientists. German Zionists used race because in it they found a category that transcended the influence gender and confession had in mixed families, neither of which worked to protect Jews in Germany. Protestant and Catholic leaders could take comfort—if not publicly—in the knowledge that children from intermarriages were likely to be raised in the confession of the majority population. The comfort came from the

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43 Ruppin, Die Juden, 78.
44 Ruppin, Die Juden, 78, emphasis added.
fact that there were regions where Catholics were the majority, and other regions were
Protestants were. They could also rely on the proven pattern that men had a greater influence in
determining the way children were raised. What is more, Protestant and Catholic leaders could
also count on the consistency, if not the fairness, of custodial courts in the event that the state had
to intervene in the education of children. Jews, however, were a majority nowhere in Germany;
men were still more likely to raise children as Jews, but they also intermarried more frequently,
especially in the interwar years; and the court cases analyzed in the previous chapter demonstrate
that Jewish Germans could not count on legal consistency from the German state. In an idealized
and still metaphorical ghetto where Jews were the majority, it was said, “marriages between Jews
and Christians are not completely unconventional—but mostly the woman nominally converts to
Judaism and the children are raised Jewish.”45 The problem in Germany was that Jews were not a
majority population anywhere.

The way German Zionists analyzed children from mixed marriages and the gender of
those unions shows the preferential use of race due to the insufficiency of religion. Even typical
gender patterns of intermarriages could not overcome the drift away from Judaism in mixed
marriages. Ruppin, for instance, concluded that raising a child from a mixed marriage within
Judaism—which, as noted above, was uncommon—could not reconstitute the child’s adulterated
Jewish heritage. His data indicated that children from mixed marriage did not “fall half to
Judaism and half to Christianity, but rather [they fall] predominately to Christianity.” The
tendency of the population “shows the power with which the Christian majority impresses its
social features on the Jewish minority—a phenomenon that is observable everywhere . . .
religious minorities gravitate toward the existing dominant religion.”46 An author using

45 Ruppin, Die Juden, 85.
46 Ruppin, Die Juden, 89.
demographic data from the VJS’s *Zeitschrift der Demographie und Statistik der Juden* posited that it was understandable that in unions with a Christian father the children were also Christian—a statement that relies on the generally held belief in gender roles wherein the man was the head of the household. But in cases where the father was Jewish, the writer suggested with urgency, even they chose to raise their children Christian the majority of the time. Given the choice, German-Jewish fathers “choose in 82 of 100 cases the Christian religion for his, of the Jews’, children.” This trend was even more troubling considering that Jewish-Christian intermarriages produced fewer children on average than Protestant-Catholic intermarriages. Even in the case that intermarried parents decided to raise their children Jewish, the desire of the parents could be “corrected” by the children as they grew older and took it upon themselves to transition from Judaism to Christianity. The fact that they had “only half-Jewish blood made conversion easy,” Ruppin claimed. In 1925, another observer noted that “children [from mixed marriages] rarely reach the level of racially pure. They do not know where they belong, and that discord denatures their being until the end of their lives.” Or, as Felix Theilhaber succinctly put it, “intermarriage leads out of Judaism.”

All anxiety regarding boundaries led back to identity, whether or not they aligned with the Zionist perspective. The arguments about intermarriage, race, and Jewish decline outlined above were not the only ones offered in Germany. But contrary opinions still were still centered

48 Tänzer, 34.
49 From 1885 until 1929, Jewish-Christian marriages produced anywhere from 0.4 to 1.9 children per marriage on average, compared to Protestant-Catholic marriages that produced 1 to 3.3 children on average. Both forms of intermarriage produced fewer children than so-called “pure” marriages, which ranged from 1.6 to 4.3 children per marriage for Jews, 2.5 to 5.3 for Catholics, and 1.7 to 4.2 for Protestants. For all marriages, the number of children per marriage decreased over time.
50 Ruppin, *Die Juden*, 91.
51 Philippsthal, *Das jüdische Echo*, 131.
52 Theilhaber, *Die Untergang*, 137.
on religious and racial boundaries. German rabbis and theologians, for example, acknowledged race but viewed a religious definition of Judaism as indispensable. Rather than guarding against intermarriage due to racial consequences that would, incidentally, affect religion, as the Zionist social scientists claimed, German rabbis and theologians perceived religion as the critical object of guardianship that also resulted in racial defense. For instance, in 1913 Reform rabbi Aron Tänzer (1871-1937) argued that the most significant threat to Jewish life in Germany was the decline of Judaism as a religion, but at the same time he framed the protection of Judaism as the preservation of essential qualities. Moreover, he held that religion formed the core of family life, which was the unit that intermarriage affected. So, much like Protestant and Catholic leaders, without the integrity of the Jewish family, for him the future of Judaism was at stake. “Jewish men and women find their innermost elements of life only from religion, Judaism, and the Jewish family,” he argued. But Tänzer also linked race and religion by using the language of purity. As opposed to racial antisemites, who constructed a racial hierarchy of purity scaled by degrees of superiority, Tänzer’s reference to purity functioned independent of any notion of the supremacy of one race over another. That is, impurity meant intermixture in general, though not infection of superior entities by inferior substances. He attacked the act of boundary crossing as something that would dilute Jewish identity; he did not attack the identity of the non-Jewish partner as something that would pollute Jewish identity. Tänzer claimed that the survival of the Jewish religion was under threat by the “truly horrifying numbers . . . of the spread of intermarriage” and that measures had to be taken “to keep the unity of the Jewish people and to protect it before every stain of intermixture.” The ultimate goal was “to keep the religion of the

53 Tänzer, 46.
Jews pure and defend against every danger of familial relationships with adherents of other faiths.”

All of the arguments analyzed above were directed at Jewish Germans. The idea of Jewishness German Zionists advanced was a result of the way they interpreted the behavior of the Jewish population in Germany, the vast majority of which was not Zionist. The individuals represented in the statistical tables above were mostly nonplussed in the face of such criticism from other Jewish Germans. For example, in 1925 the Cologne based newspaper *Die Jüdische Frau* ran a series outlining the problems of intermarriage. The paper then published two responses to the story. Both letters were from individuals in intermarriages who claimed that, contrary to the warnings, they were perfectly happy in their marriages. However, one of the readers noted that his marriage was easy because the couple had no children, while the other wrote that both parties left their respective religious communities prior to marriage, which led to a happier union. Thus, both readers cited what German Zionists and religious leaders feared about intermarriage: racial termination on the one hand due to the lack of children, and irreligiosity on the other.

In addition to responding to the behavior of the population, critiques of intermarriage were also in response to prominent voices in Germany that advocated for intermarriage. These voices, too, were part of the process that shaped the perception of Jewish difference among Jewish Germans. Two declarations, made 25 years apart, illustrate how the notion of intermarriage evolved alongside the development of the religious and racial boundaries without ever losing the central thread of the argument: the claim that mixed marriage facilitated the disappearance of Judaism because it worked to efface Jewish difference. The first of these two

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54 Tänzer, 10-12.
works appeared in 1880 and was written by Jakob Stern (1843-1911), a rabbi in Würtemberg. The second, written by popular editor and outspoken Zionist Adolf Brüll (1846-1905), was published in 1905.

First, Stern argued that Judaism needed to embrace intermarriage because it had the capability to modify religion—Judaism as well as Christianity—to the point where religion itself became a relic of modern life. He acknowledged Jewish religious difference and advocated for intermarriage as a way to nullify both difference and the religious boundary that separated the two. According to Stern, religion was the barrier to Jewish inclusion. For instance, he readily accepted civil marriage and the transfer of marital authority from religious to state bodies. He also did not think that civil marriage should have posed a problem to anyone. He termed civil marriage the “prose” of intimate bonding and the subsequent religious ceremony the “poetry” of it.  

Stern offered bolder statements regarding intermarriage and religion. Namely, he argued that “Judaism [has] every reason to give up its aversion to intermarriage.” Finally, Stern proposed a radical vision of what intermarriage could do for Jews. More than integration, he thought that mixed marriage could be the basis for a new and more enlightened body of religious principles. In order to achieve that, however, both the Christian and the Jewish party of the union had to shed their respective religions in order for them “to metamorphose into a pure religion of humanity.” His vision was idealistic for the time. In an environment where the confessional boundary between Protestants and Catholics was as tenacious as it was, the religious boundary

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57 Stern, 4.
58 Stern, 26.
between Christians and Jews had little chance to be overcome. While Stern was a rabbi when he published this tract, soon afterward he committed himself fully to secularism.\(^{59}\)

Conversely, Brüll was a committed Zionist. More than any of the other figures, his words reflect the interdependency of race and religion in terms of Jewish identification in Germany, as well as the complexity of the categories in instances of boundary crossing. Like figures such as Ruppin, Brüll accepted the contours of race, as is evident in his 1905 pamphlet and the lectures on which they were based. Unlike Ruppin, however, Brüll was not categorically against mixed marriage. He maintained that neither the Bible nor the Talmud prohibited intermarriage with Christians. Instead, the biblical and rabbinic prohibition against mixture applied only to heretical Canaanites. In one sense, Brüll echoed the first conference of German Reform rabbis in 1844, which indicated that mixed marriage was acceptable as long as there were no state provisions requiring that the children be raised Christian.\(^{60}\) But his literalist interpretation received a stark, if brief, admonition from Die Welt, one of the most notable Orthodox periodicals in Germany.\(^{61}\)

Brüll’s position differed from Stern and those of the rabbis at the 1844 conference because, for him, mixed marriage could function as the impetus of Jewish survival rather than the signal of its decline. This view did not sit well with religious leaders either. “My opinion regarding intermarriage,” Brüll stated, “is that it is capable of preparing a quick and thorough end to Jewish suffering in Europe as well as Palestine—as long as the children are raised Jewish, as they provide the human material that benefits the Zionist cause.”\(^{62}\)

Race was a principle used to define and defend Judaism. However, Jewish Germans could control neither the idea nor the use of race among non-Jews. Indeed, it was even used

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\(^{59}\) Weir, 236, note 97.

\(^{60}\) For more on this meeting, see chapter one.

\(^{61}\) Die Welt 50 (1902): 8.

differently within the small cadre of German Zionists. Specifically, Jewish Germans defended themselves against racial antisemitism, but they could not shape how the idea of race evolved alongside antisemitism. Zionism and turn of the century völkisch nationalism developed in the same intellectual environment. Indeed, historian Francis Nicosia even argues that they pursued the same end, although they had little actual contact with one another. German Zionists viewed Zionism as a solution to antisemitism, while German antisemites viewed the goals of Zionism as a solution to the “Jewish problem.”63 Nevertheless, the religious and racial character of Jewishness as defined by Jews differed from the interpretation of non-Jews, especially antisemites couched both in völkisch-ness and religion. They also dramatically changed over time. Indeed, the separation appeared with the transition of race as scientific method for categorizing and making sense of the world, to a pseudo-scientific basis for taking control of the world by delineating a racial hierarchy built on violence.

**From Intimacy to Criminality: Race, Religion, and German Antisemitism**

From the turn of the century to the interwar period, the boundary separating Jews and non-Jews in Germany transformed for religious antisemites. And in this process, the unifying qualities of the confessional boundary—baptism and Christianity—hovered in the background. The change had to do with the intensification of the racial boundary. Two figures exemplify the radicalization of race, religion, and intimate contact. The first is a well-known Protestant pastor Adolf Stoecker (1835-1909). The second is Artur Dinter (1876-1948), who was a National Socialist writer so virulent in his advocacy of the link between race and religion that he alienated his own party, and he did so by attempting to dismantle the confessional boundary between Protestants and Catholics. Stoecker viewed religiously mixed marriages as transgressive unions possibly resulting from misguided intimacy to be handled by meting out punishment to Christian

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parishioners. By the interwar period, as National Socialist ideology began to take shape, racial
antisemites such as Dinter saw mixed marriages between Jews and non-Jews as forms of
destructive sexual contact undeserving of the name “marriage,” but deserving of being classified
as criminal. Rather than punishing Christian transgression, the figures representing interwar
antisemitism perceived the contact as products of Jewish violence to be met with violence
against Jews.

Adolf Stoecker was best known as an anti-Semitic populist. Stoecker’s brand of
antisemitism is most precisely viewed as a form of turn of the century political antisemitism. He
disseminated his views as an active preacher, writer, and leader of the Christian Labor Party
(Christlich-Soziale Arbeitspartei), a party he founded in 1878. Like other forms of political
antisemitism in Germany at the time, his movement was fringy and never gained enough support
to influence policy during the Second Reich.\(^{64}\) Regarding his commentary on mixed marriage, he
did not gain traction among Protestant clerics because he focused on what was widely viewed as
the marginal act of boundary crossing: marriage between Jews and Protestants. By ignoring
Protestant-Catholic intermarriage, Stoecker set the confessional boundary aside, though he never
advocated for unity of the confessions. Importantly, Stoecker’s antisemitism was unmistakably
rational, yet he overlaid it with religious language, especially regarding ethics.\(^{65}\) But Stoecker’s
evaluation of intermarriage in terms of ethics remained vague. For Stoecker, what continued to
be indisputable was that Jews and Germans constituted two entirely different social groups. The
latter group was Christian, and the former threatened it. For instance, on the antisemitic

\(^{64}\) Anders Gerdmar, *Roots of Theological Antisemitism: German Biblical Interpretations and the Jews, from Herder
and Semler to Kittel and Bultmann* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 176-179.
\(^{65}\) Leopold Auerbach, *Das Judenthum und seine Bekenner in Preußen und in den anderen deutschen Bundesstaaten*
(Berlin: Verlag von Sigmar Mehring, 1890), 18; Fr. Müller, *Stoecker’s angeblich ethisch-sociale Judenfrage. Eine
allseitige Beleuchtung derselben vom politischen und sittlichen Standpunkte aus mit besonderer Berücksichtung der
Mischehe* (Würzburg: Verlag von Mortiz Baum, 1881).
hypothetical that the Jews might diminish the “glory” of Germany, Stoecker wrote that if “Christians continue to give in to the influences of the Jewish spirit that de-Germanizes it,” then it will.66 Stoecker’s antisemitism is significant not because it was widely influential at the time, but because he was one of the few clerics who deviated from focus on the confessional boundary to focus on the religious-racial one. His antisemitism was an antecedent to the more virulent forms that appeared in Germany after 1918, and his marginalization of confession hinted at a critical component of National Socialist thought in the 1920s: positive Christianity.

Stoecker was central to one of the most significant public displays against intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews at the turn of the century. It took place at the Protestant Brandenburg Provincial Synod of 1893. Here, Stoecker and a few of his like-minded colleagues framed intermarriage with Jews as a religious transgression with racial and national consequences. Relative to Protestant and Catholic intermarriages in Germany, unions between Jews and non-Jews were rare. As such, they did not garner much attention from church leaders. The Protestant diatribe against Jews at the 1893 synod, therefore, was unusual. Moreover, it was a fairly unpopular opinion among Protestant leaders. The reason for that was because the focus on uncommon unions between Jews and Protestants led Stoecker to neglect and dismiss the significance of marriages between Protestants and Catholics. In 1893, he and his cadre of supporters used metaphors of infection of the “national body” to more precisely frame the stakes of intermarriage, and in the process they shaped the racial boundary as an antisemitic trope.

Most controversially, Stoecker argued that Protestants who married Jews, but not those who married Catholics, should be subject to punitive Church discipline. It was a deviation from the emphasis on confessional difference. The disciplinary measures included denial of

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66 Quoted in Gerdmar, 177.
sacraments, and in particular the right of religious burial.\textsuperscript{67} These punishments had officially existed since the early 1880s, although there is not much evidence that the punishments were ever actually applied. Additionally, they were never enforced if the child was raised Protestant. Stoecker, however, focused on the act of intermarriage as the unforgivable behavior, which was atypical. Carl Henrich Christian Plath (1829-1901), who spoke in support of Stoecker, stated that “the Synod may not stand idly by with arms crossed” because of the threat Jewish-Christian mixed marriage posed to the character of Germany. Plath illustrated the racial component of the marriages with a resonating biological metaphor: “The bulk of the marriages are a new virus that emerges in our \textit{Volksörper} as a consequence of close ties with Judaism.”\textsuperscript{68} In a register different from many of his contemporaries, Stoecker did not reference the ill effects of confessional intermarriage, but emphasized intermarriage with Jews characterized by a confusing mix of religious and racial principles. For instance, he conflated German identity with Christianity. The \textit{Volk} was at once German and Christian, according to Stoecker. As was typical, he also referenced the significance of children. By doing so, Stoecker presented the unions in a fashion similar to Protestant-Catholic marriages and the fundamental problem they entailed. The difference here is that Stoecker also categorically stated that both spouses of a Christian union must be Christian. Significantly, that requirement allows for the conversion of a Jewish person to Christianity. This is something that later, more radical, expressions of racial antisemitism rejected. Finally, Stoecker tied all of these threads together with a statement on difference. He declared the spiritual chasm between Jews and Christians was greater than the one between Protestants and Catholics. While he relied on an environment based on religious difference

\textsuperscript{67} Von der Heydt, \textit{Die Mischehe}, 161-178.
\textsuperscript{68} Transcripted in \textit{BT} 537, October 21, 1893.
between Christians and Jews, he presented the distinction in a way that evoked an indelible racial
difference. Stoecker stated:

the large number of Jewish-Christian intermarriages is a plain indictment of the
Christian-German Volk. . . . if a Christian lives in a Jewish intermarriage and
allows his children to be educated Jewish, then church discipline is not only
allowed, but rather demanded. . . . A Christian family life can only result if both
spouses are Christian. The difference between the Jewish and Christian spirit is
infinitely larger than that between the Catholic and Protestant spirit.  

Like later forms of religiously based racial antisemitism, Stoecker’s antipathy toward the
Jews was about Christianity more than it was about Judaism. Importantly, Stoecker shifted the
conversation about Jews from religious difference to a problem of how Jews negatively shaped
the Christian-German population. Stoecker advocated for a form of national Protestant revival
based on cultivating the fear that the supposed religious and cultural decline of Jews was going
to spur a similar decline among Protestants. Stoecker’s aim, according to historian Christian
Gerlach, was a Protestant “awakening” based on “a decisive antisemitism.”  

Although his emphasis was on the German nation anchored in Protestantism, it is significant that Stoecker’s
foil was Judaism rather than Catholicism. This emphasis is evident in the way he addressed
intermarriage in Germany. At a time when church leaders were preoccupied with the
confessional boundary and very few of them paid attention to mixed marriage between Jews and
Christians, Stoecker forced the question of Jewish intermarriage into the public sphere.  

69 BT 537.
70 Gerlach, 2.
71 See, for example, “Mischehe,” BT no. 535 (20 October, 1893); „Die christlich-jüdische Mischehen,” Neue
Preußische Zeitung (Kreuz-Zeitung) 502 (26 October, 1893); „Die jüdisch-christlichen Mischehen vor der
Stoecker’s fusion of Protestant and German identity and his emphasis on intermarriage with Jews, rather than Catholics, continued to influence Protestant leaders up to 1933.\textsuperscript{72}

The form of antisemitic argumentation against mixed marriage Plath and Stoecker disseminated was the antecedent to a more virulent form of racial antisemitism that appeared in the writing of Artur Dinter, especially his 1918 novel \textit{Die Sünde wider Das Blut (The Sin against Blood)}. Historian David Biale argues that Dinter formed the bridge between nineteenth-century antisemitism and Nazi ideology.\textsuperscript{73} Another historian claims Dinter provided a new theoretical foundation for antisemitism, but one that was still built on religious tropes.\textsuperscript{74} More than a disseminator of ideas, Dinter himself was a high profile Nazi—party member number five and Gauleiter of Thuringia—until he was expelled from the party in 1928.\textsuperscript{75} Dinter’s novel was widely read. It sold 235,000 copies from 1918 to 1928, and it is estimated that well over a million Germans read it. \textit{Die Sünde wider Das Blut} was the most popular novel written by a Nazi.\textsuperscript{76} The primary difference between Stoecker’s ilk and Dinter is that while Stoecker and Plath argued that the church should discipline Protestants for marrying Jews, Dinter argued that sexual contact between Jews and non-Jews result in the violent marginalization of Jews. Dinter’s form of antisemitism against boundary crossing relied on the elevation of race to a cosmic and spiritual category, and it played a significant role in the constitution of National Socialist ideology. Significantly, it was the way Dinter treated confessional difference that led to his

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{72} Gerlach, 6.
\item \textsuperscript{73} Biale, 140.
\item \textsuperscript{76} Kren and Morris, 246; Steigmann-Gall, 19.
\end{itemize}
banishment from the Nazi Party. The problem was that he did not recognize the confessional boundary.

Dinter’s *Die Sünde wider Das Blut* and his eventual expulsion from the Nazi Party has to be understood in the relationship between the legacy of intermarriage and the Nazi Party’s 1920 declaration in favor of “positive Christianity.” Positive Christianity was a formulation that originated in turn of the century religious *völkisch* movements as a way to proclaim Christianity and nationalism simultaneously.\(^77\) While frequently understood as the expression of an interconfessional ideal, positive Christianity in the Nazi context has to be seen as the articulation of a bi-confessional reality.\(^78\) For the Nazis, positive Christianity meant bi-confessionalism, and their support of it reveals another instance where the confessional boundary between Protestants and Catholics played a role in forming the boundary between Jews and non-Jews in Germany. In a way, Dinter’s racial antisemitism performed a similar function that frequent Protestant-Catholic intermarriages did. Dinter provided a supra-category that subordinated confessional strife and provided common ground for Protestant and Catholic parishioners.\(^79\) Due to the Second Reich’s intervention into the family life of mixed households, intermarriage did the same thing. It offered Christianity and the rite of baptism as categories that unified the confessions, while Jews and Christians were religiously different and explicitly non-confessional. Yet, the confessions remained intact. Dinter’s radicalism in the context of 1920s Germany was the call for uprooting and abolishing the confessional boundary.


\(^{78}\) Derek Hastings views positive Christianity in the context of the early 1920s to be interconfessional but “strongly oriented toward Catholicism.” Doris Bergen analyzes positive Christianity in the context of the predominately Protestant German Christian Movement of the late 1920s and early 1930s. Finally, Richard Steigmann-Gall views positive Christianity as the representation of Christian Nazism—a new religion, but still Christian. Conversely, I interpret positive Christianity as the expression of bi-confessional coexistence. It was not an idea in need of indoctrination because such co-existence existed at the grass-roots level already. Hastings, *Catholicism and the Roots of Nazism*; Bergen, *Twisted Cross*; Steigmann-Gall, *Holy Reich*.

\(^{79}\) Kren and Morris, 246.
The early Nazi Party declared their support of positive Christianity as part of the unveiling of the Party’s 25 Point Program in Munich in 1920. Anton Drexler (1884-1942) and Adolf Hitler (1889-1945) wrote the program. The support of positive Christianity is evident in Point 24 of the Program. That point, and the program itself, has to be understood as a long-term agenda designed to provide the framework for achieving national aims rather than a short-term agenda used to garner local support.\textsuperscript{80} Each point in the program presented a statement that was either a means of achieving a goal or a goal itself. The point regarding confession was a means to an end, and the aim was dual support of Protestants and Catholics at the national level. The construction of Point 24 reveals that the authors were acutely aware of Germany’s confessional culture, which was shaped by the history of intermarriage between Protestants and Catholics. The point also illustrates that they attempted to latch confessionalism onto their ideology of race, which in turn meant that the confessional boundary served to intensify antipathy toward Jews.

Interpreted through the lens of the history of the confessional boundary and its crossing, positive Christianity is an articulation of bi-confessionalism. It was not interconfessional in that it did not advocate for cooperation regarding religious matters.\textsuperscript{81} It was not non-confessional because it declared non-interference from the state. The end toward which the point worked was the elimination of Jews from Germany, though what that meant exactly and the capacity to implement any provisions against Jews relied entirely on the Nazis having power. Positive

\textsuperscript{80} Hastings contends that Point 24 was local in nature and subsequently dismissed by the Nazis, as the movement transitioned from a Catholic one to one that integrated Protestants and neo-pagans, eventually becoming a pure political religion.

\textsuperscript{81} In his analysis of the emergence of Nazism in the Catholic context of Munich, historian Derek Hastings repeatedly refers to positive Christianity as “ideally interconfessional but Catholic inflected.” While locals did interpret positive Christianity through their local lens, it is critical to recognize that the Party Program was designed for national rather than local aims. Indeed, the program never went away. Moreover, as the next chapter demonstrates, in the late 1920s and into the Third Reich positive Christianity also became a Protestant inflected idea. The fungibility of positive Christianity indicates that it was an expression of a nationally oriented German bi-confessionalism. In fact, even in the mid-1920s, Hastings cites the incursion of Protestant pastors and religious-völkisch thinkers as the undoing of the early Catholic-Nazi synthesis. Hastings, Catholicism.
Christianity was a declaration of subdued confessional difference that existed among wide swaths of the populace, if not the institutions. Finally, the program separated Jews even further from Protestants and Christians. Even more than religious difference, Point 24 of the program denied Jews a religion altogether. What they were left with, according to the Nazi program that received commentary throughout the 1920s and informed anti-Jewish legislation in the 1930s when the Nazis had power, was a racial identity alien to Germany and Germans. It read:

We demand the freedom of all religious confessions in the state, as long as they do not endanger stability or threaten the ethics and morality of the German race. As such, the party represents the position of positive Christianity, and does not offer allegiance to any particular confession. It combats the Jewish materialistic spirit in and around us and maintains conviction that the lasting health of our people, based on the principle of general interest before self-interest, can only come from within.

In this context, a racial antisemite who sought a single German Christianity, such as Artur Dinter, only satisfied one of the aims of the budding National Socialist movement. Most significant for the purposes here, in Die Sünde wider Das Blut Dinter shifted the debate about boundary crossing away from the act of marriage and emphasized sexual contact in general and the consequences it has on the Christian based German race. Historian David Biale observes that Dinter’s use of blood differed from the long history of blood as a symbol among Jewish and Christian communities. Historically, blood was the center of a form of Jewish exclusion, blood libel. Blood libel, however, had to do with the extraction of Christian blood—for matzo during Passover, as the canard went—while Dinter’s emphasis was on the contagious properties of

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Jewish blood that led to physical and spiritual degeneration.\textsuperscript{84} Thus, Dinter and the National Socialist ideology he was instrumental in formulating made the problem of mixing an existential matter. For Dinter, coexistence—either social or intimate—was impossible without the deterioration of the “Aryan” race.

An analysis of Dinter’s novel reveals that it was grounded in the intermarriage debate that existed prior to its release in 1918, but that he emphasized the violence of the intertwined racial and religious boundaries and dismissed the confessional boundary.\textsuperscript{85} To advance his agenda of violent marginalization, Dinter thematized science, race, and religion. First, science is an essential part of the book both in content and form, and it illustrates a way in which the previous scientific use of race as a social organizer turned completely into a pseudo-scientific method of hierarchizing society. The novel’s protagonist, Hermann Kämpfer, is a chemist.\textsuperscript{86} The opening lines set the tone of the novel. Hermann, a man of science, will be forced to navigate light and dark—a duality of cosmic significance. This binary represents good and evil, Christianity and Judaism, Germans and Jews. As an observer and participant in the struggles between these competing forces, Kämpfer repeatedly appeals to his authority as a “natural scientist.” “In the large hall of the university’s chemistry lab,” the novel begins, “light still shone, even approaching midnight.”\textsuperscript{87} In terms of form, Dinter’s novel is supposed to read as a hybrid between fiction and non-fiction. This pursuit is evident in the 49 pages of footnotes that appear

\textsuperscript{84} Biale, 139.
\textsuperscript{85} Kren and Morris note that as early as 1919, Dinter denounced violence against Jews. His denunciation of violence is less important than the advocacy of it that is evident in his writing. Dinter could not control the interpretation of his novel. In fact, Kren and Morris note that Dinter’s denunciation was met with “horror” from some of his supporters. See Kren and Morris, 244-245.
\textsuperscript{86} Arthur Dinter was also a trained chemist. The protagonist of the novel obviously represents the author and all of the character’s words can be read as direct equivalents of the author’s opinions. Even some of the intimate relationships reflect instances from his life. See Kren and Morris, 233-234.
\textsuperscript{87} Artur Dinter, \textit{Die Sünde wider Das Blut} (Leipzig: Verlag Matthes und Thost, 1921), 1.
after the conclusion of the novel. In the footnotes, Dinter cites biblical scholars, scientists, and purveyors of the poisonous form of antisemitism he favors, such as Houston Stewart Chamberlain. Moreover, the novel contains multiple diatribes that span pages, which reveal the didactic nature of the book. Both in content and form, Dinter attempted to appeal to the scientific authority that made race a popular category for understanding society, while he presented it as a way to modify society. For Dinter, science was a means to an end, and his end was the strict marginalization of Jews from Germany.

Like science, religion, and Christianity in particular, plays a role in the content and form of the novel. Dinter sought to illustrate an image of Germany that was inherently Christian by structuring Hermann’s life around the Christian calendar. For instance, while the book is about Hermann’s sexual liaisons—which will be summarized and analyzed in a moment—Dinter spends most of the first 39 pages of the book, about 14 percent of the entire novel, describing Hermann’s memories of Christmas as a child, with mentions of Easter peppered in. The message was simple: the basis of German life is the Christian calendar.

The inextricability of race and religion undergirds the entire novel, which is evident in a handful of declarations within it. These statements show the direction National Socialist ideology drifted, especially regarding boundary crossing. They were informed by religious tropes but inextricably linked to a racial interpretation of the world more and more detached from mainstream science and increasingly about the construction of a rigid hierarchy. Dinter referenced the “gaping and racially conditioned spiritual divide between the old and new Testaments.” In the midst of a lengthy diatribe about the non-Jewishness of Jesus, he claimed

88 Biale, 143.
89 The frontispiece of the book even calls Dinter “the German Houston Stewart Chamberlain.”
90 Dinter, 79.
that “these incompatible spiritual differences between Jesus and the Jews can only be conceptualized and understood in the difference between their races.”

Moreover, he stated that “every race, by nature, has its specific religion” and that “the relationship between religion and race everywhere is unmistakable.” Proclamations such as these inform every event and individual action throughout the book.

The core of the novel is Hermann’s sexual history as a story of cosmic contamination and the inability of Jews and Aryans to live together. This narrative arc was critical for the formation of an interpretation of boundary crossing as an existential matter that required the violent marginalization of Jews. “Interracial marriage” does not play much of a role in Dinter’s novel because the word maintained a hint of intimacy. Dinter extricated anything resembling love or tolerance from sexual contact between Jews and Christians (the latter a category Dinter used interchangeably with “Aryan” and “German”). Hermann’s first sexual partner, and his first wife, was a woman named Elisabeth Burghamer. Hermann met Elisabeth at one Christmas party, proposed at another, and they were married on Easter. Dinter described Elisabeth as blond and beautiful—the ideal image of an Aryan woman. Elisabeth, however, is the son of a Jewish man and an Aryan woman. Dinter described the character using conventional physiological stereotypes. According to Dinter, Elisabeth’s father’s general disposition was “diabolical.”

Significantly, Elisabeth was not the daughter of a love relationship, but the product of sexual assault and compulsory marriage. Hermann knows that Elisabeth’s father is Jewish—his

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91 Based on his heritage in the northern region of Galilee, the supposedly Aryan region of the ancient near east, rather than Judea, the supposedly Jewish region. The same tropes continued to appear throughout the Third Reich, but were particularly evident in the Institut zur Erforschung und Beseitigung des jüdischen Einflusses auf das deutsche kirchliche Lebens. See especially Susannah Heschel, “Nazifying Christian Theology: Walter Grundmann and the Institute for the Eradication of Jewish Influence on German Church Life,” Church History 63, 4 (1994): 587-605; Heschel, The Aryan Jesus: Nazi Theologians and the Bible in Nazi Germany (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).
92 Dinter, 124.
93 Dinter, 135-136.
94 Dinter, 43.
conversion notwithstanding, and in Dinter’s telling of it, irrelevant. But Elisabeth’s physical features are so compelling that he convinces himself that her mother’s traits hold sway in Elisabeth’s veins. As Hermann learns in the novel, Elisabeth inherited her mother’s physical features, but her spirit reflected her father’s base sexual urges. Elisabeth’s overwhelming Jewish spirit is even more evident when she conceives a child. It is then revealed that the Jewish blood Elisabeth inherited from her father is more powerful than the German blood of her mother. The stillborn child had the noticeable traits of his grandfather rather than Hermann, his Aryan father. They then have another child who survives. This child also has the “Jewish” traits of his grandfather. Significantly, Elisabeth dies while giving childbirth to this second son. Dinter symbolized biological incompatibility with the stillbirth of the first child and the mother’s death during the birth of the second child, which is a theme that reappears.95

Dinter’s basis for portraying the contaminating ability inherent in Jewishness is evident in Hermann’s sexual encounters with two additional women who have no familial connection at all with Jews. In both, Dinter’s message was that any and all sexual contact with Jews was eternally polluting. While raising his surviving son, Hermann finds out that he previously fathered another son from an Aryan woman named Rosalinde. In the story, she died shortly after Elisabeth’s death and provided custodial rights to Hermann. He raises the children together, but, as is evident throughout the narrative, living together is impossible—one of the two has to die. Dinter described each child as the embodiment of the group to which he belonged. He portrayed the German child as masculine and selfless, while the Jewish child was depicted as feminine and

95 Observers such as anthropologist Felix von Luschan claimed that biological incompatibility between Jews and Christians was the reason that mixed marriages between them produced fewer children on average. Sexologist Max Marcuse, however, demonstrated that the reason marriages between Jews and non-Jews produced fewer children was because the individuals were, on average, older than non-mixed couples and even Protestant-Catholic marriages. The reason both for the intermarriage and the relative lack of children, therefore, was economic. Max Marcuse, “Über die Fruchtbarkeit der christlich-jüdischen Mischehen, Ein Vortrag” (Bonn: A. Marcus & E. Webers Verlag, 1920), 3; Gustav Löffler, „Von Mischehen,“ IdR 27 (1921): 122-125.
greedy. This duality is most evident in the story of their deaths, which were simultaneous but caused by the non-Aryan son. While the three were spending leisure time near a lake, Hermann’s Jewish son fell into the water. Unable to swim, Hermann’s German son went to save his half-brother. But the Jewish son’s struggles pulled them both underwater, where they both drowned. Like the stillbirth of Hermann and Elisabeth’s first child and Elisabeth’s subsequent death, Dinter attempted to portray the inability of Jew and German to, literally, live together. This was the basis of an appeal to violence.

Hermann had one more intimate relationship, and this time with an Aryan woman named Johanna, who he married. The problem with his second marriage and the third woman with whom he had a child was that Johanna previously had had a sexual relationship with a Jewish man. Notably, this man is a Prussian officer in the novel. The tropes of incompatibility and the contaminating effect of that resulted from crossing the racial boundary are evident here, as well. First, Johanna conceived a child with the Prussian officer. But their child was stillborn—she was the one to survive the life and death struggle. Second, Hermann and Johanna also conceived a child. Like the child Hermann had with Elisabeth, Dinter depicted this child as having stereotypical Jewish features. Hermann responded to what he viewed as biological violence against Johanna and himself by taking the life of the Jewish officer with whom Johanna previously had a relationship. Johanna, in turn, took the life of the child, as well as her own. Hermann was charged with murder for killing the Prussian officer.

Hermann’s murder trial provided Dinter the setting to present the law as a tool to sanction violence against Jews. According to Dinter, the legal legitimacy also meant absolution for German aggression and, ultimately, salvation for Germans and Germany. In writing Hermann’s

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96 Dinter, 235.
97 Dinter, 264.
fictional murder trial, Dinter argued that race and religion were linked and that both were the basis for Jewish exclusion. He did so through a diatribe about sexual contact and mixed marriage. Tellingly, Dinter referred to past prohibitions of intermarriage. These had always been explicitly religious, but Dinter imposed his racial view onto them. He did so by referring to Jewish blood. It was with a legal argument that Dinter argued for Jewish exclusion, and it was the legal system that exonerated Hermann of his crime. “It is high time,” Dinter wrote, “to finally demand a law be made that stops the racial contamination of the German people through Jewish blood. We must once again have a law that forbids marriage between Germans and Jews. . . . Jews are spiritual and racial foreigners, must be treated as such, and should be dealt with as foreigners according to particular laws if we don’t want them to lead us to our ruin.”

After Hermann is acquitted, he volunteers for the German army. He fights for Germany during the First World War and is promoted to officer due to his bravery. He therefore symbolically replaces the Jewish officer he killed. Adorned with two Iron Crosses—linked Christian and national symbolism intended—Hermann is shot and killed on Christmas day and dies a martyr for his “holy fatherland.”

The legal setting with which Dinter closes *Die Sünde wider das Blut* is significant, as it recalls the role the law played in defining boundaries in the early twentieth century, and it hints how legislation itself can be violent, which was the case when the Nazis held power in Germany from 1933 to 1945. Historian Alexandra Przyrembel contends that Dinter’s novelistic rendering was part of an extensive history in Germany that conditioned the acceptance of stigmatized marriages between Jews and non-Jews in Germany, which eventually manifested in the 1935

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98 Dinter, 275-276.
99 Dinter, 282.
Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor, as the following chapter suggests.\textsuperscript{100} If we take ideology to be partially formed by ideas and partially formed by actions, \textit{Die Sünde wider das Blut} represents the idea side of Nazi ideology. But Dinter himself was active in promoting the actionable component of racial ideology. Indeed, at the Nazis’ 1927 Nuremberg Rally, Dinter made clear that he advocated for anti-Jewish legislation in Germany. Applying his novelistic ideas to real life, Dinter proposed what were essentially early iterations of the 1935 Blood Law and the crime of \textit{Rassenschande}.\textsuperscript{101}

Artur Dinter’s role in intensifying the focus on the racial boundary in the 1920s is significant, but so is his ultimate expulsion from the Nazi Party, which was due to his dismissal of the confessional boundary. He and his novel stand as a deviating link between pre-1918 boundary building and their post-1933 reinvention. \textit{Die Sünde wider das Blut} was more than just a racist novel. It was a widely read representation of “the Jew” as the consummate evil that threatened Christian Germany not by intimacy, but by violence. His answer to what he characterized as Jewish aggression was, in turn, violent marginalization of Jews.\textsuperscript{102} Even if the violent solution was not popularly accepted, the idea of Jewish marginalization—based on race but conditioned by religion—was at least acceptable enough to garner a wide audience. Moreover, it is also notable that Dinter disregarded confessional difference in his novel. While Dinter appealed to a wide audience and his racist ideas paralleled the Nazi Party’s, \textit{his sin} was that he did not pay heed to the confessional boundary. Indeed, Dinter’s non-confessional Christianity was eventually what led to his expulsion from the Nazi Party. Rather than

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{100} The most significant additional conditioning factor, according to Przyrembel, was colonial contact and the demand for legislation regarding „mixture“ in German colonies. Przyrembel, 33-34. See also Lora Wildenthal, \textit{German Women for Empire, 1884-1945} (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 80-129.
\item \textsuperscript{101} Kren and Morris, 245-246.
\item \textsuperscript{102} Imagining violence against Germans and Germany in the interwar period is significant because it reveals that victimization was used as a method of popular appeal. See also Peter Fritzsche’s \textit{Life and Death in the Third Reich}, which opens with the imagination of a Polish holocaust perpetrated against Germans.
\end{itemize}
recognizing the notion of positive Christianity as a bi-confessional principle designed to neutralize confessional strife and lead to a mass political revolution, Dinter attempted to even move beyond interconfessional cooperation and advance a religious revolution designed to the abolition of the confessions altogether and the emergence of a single, German, Christianity. As is evident in the 1920 Nazi Party Program, Hitler knew that promoting the end of confessional conflict by overcoming the confessional boundary would be counterproductive. Contesting claims that Dinter was expelled from the Nazi Party for being too Christian, historian Richard Steigmann-Gall argues that Dinter was banished for “not being Christian enough.”

In fact, Dinter was kicked out for not being confessional enough. His emphasis on the racial boundary was not misplaced, according to Hitler, but his disregard of the confessional boundary made him a religious radical.

In 1926, Dinter published a tract titled 197 Theses for the Completion of the Reformation. Among his claims, Dinter called for a national church that transcended the Catholic and Protestant confessions. If the rejection of a stabilizing force among the German population was not enough to earn discipline from the Nazi Party, Dinter also suggested that the religious revolution should be elevated above all political parties.

In the following year, Dinter founded the Geist-christliche Religionsgemeinschaft, which was specifically designed to be the basis of a religious revolution in Germany. Dinter was a religious agitator for the Nazis because he continued to try and remake German Christianity into a race-based, nationally oriented, and confessionless religion. In 1928, Hitler took it upon himself to expel Dinter from the Nazi Party.

The party from which Dinter was banished fully endorsed Dinter’s vision of race and

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104 Kren and Morris, 244.
105 Kren and Morris, 246.
nation co-existent with Christianity, albeit sometimes tacitly, but thoroughly rejected the elimination of the confessional boundary. Abolishing the confessions would have been too destabilizing and, in the end, would not have worked toward the creation of a mass movement.\footnote{Helmreich, 78-79.}

The anti-Semitic interpretation of intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews changed from the time of Adolf Stoecker to that of Artur Dinter. While Stoecker attacked intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews, Dinter maligned all sexual contact and framed intimacy as impossible; while Stoecker called for the punishment of offending Protestants, Dinter appealed to violence against Jews; and while Stoecker justified his appeal for punishment based on church law, Dinter wrote about and publicly advocated state laws against marriage and sexual contact between Jews and non-Jews. They were similar in that their pronouncements have to be understood in the context of the confessional boundary. From the perspective of the institution to which Stoecker belonged, the Protestant Church, his focus on intermarriage between Protestants and Jews was misplaced. They were condemnable, but they were also rare. Stoecker therefore remained on the institutional periphery. Dinter, a Catholic only in name, did more than ignore the confessional boundary.\footnote{Bergen, Twisted Cross, 14.} He wanted to eliminate it. In a context where positive Christianity meant bi-confessional co-existence, Dinter’s call for a single German Christianity went even beyond the notion of interconfessional cooperation. It did not matter that his racial antisemitism paralleled Nazi ideology, his rejection of confession still led to his expulsion from the party. A final, and critical, similarity between Stoecker and Dinter is that they each viewed Jewish difference in Germany as particular. It was simply not the same as the chasm separating Protestants and Catholics.
Conclusion

This chapter details three distinct arcs of the history of mixed marriage between Jewish and non-Jewish Germans. The first demonstrates that such unions became more common over time from the 1870s to the 1914, but that the rate at which Jewish Germans intermarried really only rose sharply in the interwar years. While the rate at which Jewish Germans, who were a minority everywhere, was frequently lower than the rate at which minority Protestant and Catholic (depending on the region) Germans intermarried, the way children were raised made mixed marriage a notable problem for Jewish leaders with public platforms. The second arc existed among German Zionists. This group was most vociferously against mixed marriage because their interpretation of it spelled the downfall of Jews in Germany and beyond. They therefore advocated for the return of autonomy and self-protection by citing the need for a new ghetto, as well as the demand to cut ties to existing states and promote emigration to Palestine. The third and final arc shows the evolution of race and religion among German antisemitism. Sanctions against Protestants married to Jews due to the threat such unions posed to the German Volkskörper turned into condemnations of Jews as sexual pariahs that had to be violently marginalized in order to protect German Christianity. The transition is most evident in Dinter’s novel Die Sünde wider das Blut.

The trial Dinter imagined for his protagonist, Hermann Kämpfer, sits in between the court cases of the early twentieth century covered in chapter three and the Nuremburg Laws of 1935, analyzed in the following chapter. The first defined Jews as religiously different as opposed to confessionally different, while the second used religious difference as the canvas on which to work out racial difference, prohibit mixed marriage and sexual contact between Jews and Aryans, and codify exclusion of Jews as state policy.
Chapter 5: Making Intermarriage “Jewish,” 1933-1935

The two linked aims of the Nazi Party were to consolidate German unity in preparation for war and the exclusion of Jews from every aspect of German life.¹ One of the foremost components of the former aim was the unified support of Protestants and Catholics, and this goal in turn functioned to fulfill the latter objective. Intermarriage was central to both.

The culmination of mixed marriage and the dialectical matrix involving families, churches, and the German state was the preparation and implementation of the Nuremberg Laws in September of 1935, which, among other things, defined and prohibited marriage between “Jews” and “Aryans.” At the turn of the century, the normalization and self-authorization of intermarriage between Protestant and Catholic individuals received the sanction of the state, if not the endorsement of Protestant and Catholic churches.² At the same time, mixed marriages between Jews and non-Jews were defined differently. Even if the turn of the century Second Reich did not invalidate them, it separated “confession” from “religion” by instituting different categories of mixed marriage. From the turn of the century until 1933, the meaning of Jewish difference became racial as well as religious, but the widespread recognition of race as a social category did not itself lead to a change in the nature of intermarriage or antisemitism. After the First World War a particular form of German antisemitism—what historian Saul Friedländer terms “redemptive antisemitism”—blended with a form of racialized Christianity with a particularly venomous, and violent, view of Jews as racially different.³ This merger formed a central tenet of Nazi antisemitism. While a basis of Jewish racialization was the denial of

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² See chapter two.
³ Friedländer, Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1-6 and 73-113.
Judaism’s legitimacy as a religion, we will see that religion continued to be foundational for conceptions of Jewish difference.

Nazi Germany inherited an environment where Protestant and Catholic Germans were already predisposed to collapse confessional difference, even if the boundary that separated them remained. This unity is evident in the normalization of intermarriage from below. The institutions, however, were disinclined to ignore confessional difference and continued to pursue a bi-confessional nation-state. Institutional intransigence in this regard, however, was expected and ultimately advantageous for the Nazis, as is evident in the 1920 Nazi Party Program. Starting in 1933, the Nazis had the governmental authority to legislate different measures of intermarriage. In 1935 they did just that, and they were able to do so with the consent of the Protestant and Catholic churches, even though the Nuremberg Laws, as opposed to the 1803 Prussian law, challenged the nature of baptism. The key to the Nazi ability to reach an accord with the churches was the dismissal of zealous ideas about a supraconfessional German Christianity and a national church as serious propositions. That is, the Nazi state had to acknowledge confessional boundaries. Hitler and the Nazis needed to obtain consent, if not validation, from the Protestant and Catholic churches. It would have been very difficult to gain this by entering into a confessional conflict and challenging a principle from which individuals from both sides drew an identity. The maintenance of the confessional boundary was a condition for mass support.

**The Churches before the Nuremberg Laws**

It is necessary to establish the relationship the Nazi regime had with the Protestant and Catholic churches and the responses of each institution to the disfranchisement of Jews in Germany. The interaction between churches and the state and its Jewish policies reveal that, in
the first years of the Third Reich, the Protestant and Catholic churches helped perpetuate the environment that cast Jews as religiously and racially different. The area where race and religion most overlapped—and it was also a site that impinged on boundary crossing and intermarriage—was baptism. From 1933 to 1935, Jewish Germans were excluded from civic, political, and social life. Moreover, the contest over baptism resulted in the exclusion of Jewish converts to Christianity from religious life, and it simultaneously elevated Christian baptism as the privileged domain of racial Germany under which the confessional boundary could exist. That is why mixed marriage between Protestants and Catholics was not a problem for the Nazis. The churches and their relationship to National Socialism and the Third Reich provides the immediate context for making intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews an ideological and practical impossibility.

While Jewish marginalization was taking place, the Protestant and Catholic churches vied for legitimacy in Germany. The Protestant church was forced to reconcile an internal split, while the Catholic Church worked to come to an agreement with the Nazi regime regarding the autonomy of the church inside the Third Reich. There was no widespread movement against the regime from either church, even if “selective opposition” existed among individual church leaders. The reason for the stasis regarding the Third Reich was that both churches agreed with the general outline of the aims of the regime, especially its anti-communism and pursuit of national revival. While they may not have completely agreed with measures taken against Jews in Germany—beginning with the law that dismissed Jews from civil service appointments in 1933—they did not speak out against them, either.

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5 Wolfgang Gerlach, *And the Witnesses were Silent: The Confessing Church and the Persecution of the Jews*, trans. and ed. by Victoria Barnett (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 22.
First, the Protestant split exemplifies just how relevant various interpretations of confessional, religious, and racial difference became. Indeed, these readings of difference, which evolved alongside intermarriage, were the basis of the split within Protestantism. The Protestant Kirchenkampf (Church struggle) was not a conflict between the church and the regime, as had long been suggested in the first thirty years or so after the end of the war, especially in Germany. Instead, the Kirchenkampf was an internal clash between two groups fighting for control of the Protestant Church and the way it was to function within the Third Reich. The first group, the German Christians (Deutsch-Christen), sought a Protestantism that reflected the ideology of the Third Reich, including its racial views, while maintaining ties to Christianity. This alignment meant that they rejected all forms of mixed marriage with Jews, whether or not the Jewish person was baptized. Additionally, over time the group became more invested in confessional unification in the form of a de-confessionalized national church—an aim that proved to be something of an annoyance to the Nazis. The group that emerged in response to the German Christians, the Confessing Church (Bekennende Kirche), desired institutional autonomy within the Third Reich, including the protection of the church’s role regarding marriage and baptism, including the theological meaning of both. The Confessing Church, therefore, was at odds with the Nazi regime more than the German Christians were. For instance, the Confessing Church viewed marriages between Christians and Christian converts from Judaism as fully legitimate, “pure” Christian marriages, because of the indelibility of baptism.

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7 Such groups existed throughout the 1920s. The movement’s desire to maintain ties to Christianity differentiate them from the neo-pagan Deutschgläubige Bewegung. See Helmreich, 78.
The terms of difference that had evolved with intermarriage appeared most forcefully in the German Christian movement. The German Christian movement was the product of multiple smaller movements within Protestantism aimed at the interdependent renewal of the German nation and Christianity. Perhaps the earliest of these movements can trace its origins to the mid-1920s, when pastors and Nazi Party members Siegfried Leffler (1900-1983) and Julius Leuthueser (1900-1942) made the integration of a Christian consciousness with the aims of national renewal the basis of the Thuringian wing of the Protestant church. As opposed to Artur Dinter’s aims, as analyzed in the previous chapter, Leffler and Leutheuser did not attempt to transform the Nazi movement into a religious revolution. Moreover, the nascent movement did not attempt to break down confessional barriers in favor of a de-confessionalized, völkisch, Christianity—at least not at first. For these reasons, they were not marginalized and expelled in the same way Dinter was. A second event that led to the creation of the German Christian movement took place closer to the Nazi assumption of power in January 1933. In the summer of 1932, a group of Protestant civil servants, clerics, and laypersons gathered in Berlin. Their task was to address how to combine the enthusiasm of the National Socialist cause with the institutional prowess and mass participation found in the Protestant Church. According to historian Doris Bergen, the group from Berlin wanted to call themselves “Protestant National Socialists,” but evidently Hitler rejected the name and suggested they call themselves “German Christians.” The distinction is notable because “Protestant National Socialists” would have implied the state endorsement of a confession, which was anathema to a party that had not yet obtained total authority. The group from Berlin cooperated with the movement led by Leffler and Leutheuser in 1932, creating the German Christian movement within the Protestant Church.

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8 Helmreich, 79.
The German Christians most closely aligned with the ideology of the Nazi regime, yet the Nazis did not give their full-fledged and lasting support to the movement. Nevertheless, that German Christians “endorsed Nazi ideology” was the factor that held the disparate group together. As Bergen notes, German Christians aimed to dominate institutional Protestantism in Germany and believed in “a people’s church as a community of race and blood.” Because their aims overlapped with those of the Nazis, the movement enjoyed legitimacy and favor from the regime from the time of the cooperative efforts in 1932 until late 1933. It also made strides in realizing its domination of institutional Protestantism. In this time period, the Nazi regime openly supported the German Christian movement. In July of 1933, the Protestant church held elections to fill a variety of offices, which meant that the ability to shape the course of Protestantism in Germany was up for grabs. German Christians won two-thirds of the votes. Based on its newfound institutional power, it led the unification of Germany’s regional churches into a Reich church and the election of a Reich bishop, who was himself a German Christian.\(^\text{10}\)

In October of 1933, however, the Nazi state declared neutrality in church—one can also say confessional—affairs, which meant the withdrawal of support given to the German Christians. In other words, in the first months of power, the Nazis reiterated Point 24 of the 1920 Nazi Party Program, which was an endorsement of Christianity but a statement of non-endorsement for either confession.

The revocation of support caused disagreements over the direction of the German Christian movement to emerge. The single most significant cause of what Bergen calls the group’s period of “fragmentation” was the revelation of the movement’s radicalism with regard not only to the relationship between Judaism and Christianity, but also—crucially—between Protestants and Catholics. Hostility surfaced with regard to the former, theological, relationship,

\(^{10}\) Bergen, *Twisted Cross*, 7-19.
and a vision of supraconfessionality appeared with regard to the latter. Significantly, these two themes were linked. It was only logical that “if the church were to be a church of the Volk . . . it could recognize no boundaries but those of blood. If belief played no role in determining membership in the spiritual community, then confessional divisions were inauthentic and obstructed genuine fellowship.” These issues came to the fore in November 1933, when Rheinhold Krause, a layperson and leader of the movement in Berlin, offered a radical vision of the German Christian movement to 20,000 onlookers and dozens of soon-to-be public commentators for all of Germany. Like Dinter, Krause excoriated the Old Testament, denigrated the teachings of the Apostle Paul as corrupted by his Jewishness, and altogether attacked any meaningful relationship between Judaism and Christianity. Also like Dinter, Krause lauded the Reformation as an admirable, though as yet unsuccessful, attempt at the unification of the German confessions, and he appealed to “a dramatically new, all-encompassing German people’s church.” Here, as before, the discussion and practice of one measure of difference was entangled with the other.

If the Nazi Party did not already rescind its support, the argument to abolish confessional borders would have done it. Indeed, over the course of the 1930s the development of a national church became a central goal of the German Christian movement. This made sense. Even though German Christianity was a Protestant movement within the contours of institutional Protestantism, it could never claim to be exclusively for Protestants. The exclusion of Catholics would have meant the exclusion of Hitler. While German Christians reached out to Catholics, they were never able to garner much Catholic support. The reason was because even the German

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11 Bergen, Twisted Cross, 102.
12 Bergen, Twisted Cross, 7-19.
13 Quoted in Bergen, Twisted Cross, 102.
14 Bergen, Twisted Cross, 102.
Christian movement remained thoroughly confessionalized, and thus thoroughly Protestant. Catholics were uninterested in joining an organization that feted Luther as a symbol unity, for example. The height of this blindness took place in 1934, when a Westphalian meeting of German Christians called for the abolition of confessional boundaries but closed the meeting by singing a battle hymn against Roman Catholicism—a remnant of the Thirty Years’ War.\textsuperscript{15} Such moves also had to contend with prevailing anti-Catholicism among the clerical members of the movement, though not necessarily with laypersons. For instance, in 1942, one person in Bavaria indicated that he was invested in dissolving confessional boundaries simply to make mixed marriage easier.\textsuperscript{16} Finally, the attempt to abolish confessional boundaries, and bi-confessional Germany along with it, aroused distrust from the Nazi state, as it recalled the conflict of interests that led to Arthur Dinter’s expulsion from the party in 1928.\textsuperscript{17} Krause’s 1933 attack on the theological relationship between Judaism and Christianity and the move to “complete the Reformation” caused a scandal within the German Christian movement. Many left the movement only to form splinter groups within the splinter group, Krause lost his appointment, and the German Christian Reich Bishop departed from the ranks of German Christianity. What it did not do, however, was augur the end of the movement, as it regrouped by 1935 and continued to exist within the Protestant Church until the end of the Second World War.\textsuperscript{18}

The Protestant \textit{Kirchenkampf} emerged when the Confessing Church publicly rejected the German Christian interpretation of the relationship between race and religion. This repudiation was based on the nature of baptism, and was thus embedded in difference and boundary crossing.

\textsuperscript{15} Bergen, \textit{Twisted Cross}, 105.
\textsuperscript{16} Bergen, \textit{Twisted Cross}, 112.
\textsuperscript{18} Bergen, \textit{Twisted Cross}, 1-8.
Though the Confessing Church—which was also a component of the Protestant Church, and therefore not a “church” in the literal sense—formed in 1933, it had a pre-history prior to the Nazi seizure of power. In December 1932, a group of pastors in Oldenburg declared publicly, and in opposition to the German Christians, that race cannot trump faith, and that religion cannot be defined by blood, but only by belief. These statements set the tone for the Confessing Church in the first years of the Third Reich. The event that sparked the formation of an opposition to German Christians was the Reich Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service, and in particular the “Aryan paragraph” that banned non-Aryans from holding posts in the civil service. The law affected the church because some church appointments were also civil appointments, but more than that it was because some authorities took it upon themselves to cite the law even in non-civil settings. The German Christians endorsed the law and wanted to introduce a similar Aryan paragraph to apply specifically to the Protestant church. The Prussian General Synod of September 1933 did just that, as it passed the Law Concerning the Legal Status of the Clergy and Civil Servants in the Church. The cadre of pastors who rejected the law formed the basis of the Confessional Church.

The Confessing Church’s stance on the Aryan paragraph reveals that while they rejected a strict racial interpretation of Jewish difference, they held strongly to an interpretation of Jews as religiously different, which similarly resulted in the marginalization of Jews. This continuity of differentiation was significant because it led the Confessing Church to combat fiercely the idea that baptized Jews were not Christians, but it also led them to remain silent regarding the

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19 Gerlach, 5.
20 Gerlach, 17-25.
21 The law was later revoked, although as time went the principles of the Aryan paragraph became a de facto part of the Protestant Church. Moreover, of the 18,000 pastors in Germany, only 29 were subject to exclusion based on the law, and of those 23 were exempt due to military service. The law applied to a total of six pastors. Gerlach, 30; Bergen, *Twisted Cross*, 93.
plight of unbaptized Jews in Germany.\textsuperscript{22} Indeed, their opposition to the Aryan paragraph was limited to its application in the Protestant Church, not its implementation elsewhere in Germany.\textsuperscript{23} Their position reflected the German court decisions from the turn of the century in that baptism could overcome the religious barrier that separated Jews and Christians, but without baptism the boundary remained.\textsuperscript{24} Another reason that the group rejected the exclusion of non-Aryan Christians was because it denied their right to missionize and convert Jews.\textsuperscript{25} In other words, it disallowed their use of baptism to overcome the religious boundary that separated Jews and Christians, and it thereby revoked their assumption that Jewishness disappears with baptismal waters. As historian Richard Evans notes, pastors in the Confessing Church “believed that baptized Jews were by definition no longer Jews, and they cared little about the unbaptized.”\textsuperscript{26} The group’s position on baptism also meant that the Confessing Church replicated the turn of the century stance that confessional boundaries between Protestants and Catholics should be maintained, but that they existed under the auspices of the Christian mark of baptism. Jews were different in a peculiar way, even according to the Confessing Church.

The group’s battle against the Aryan paragraph in the Protestant Church was short-lived, as its foundational document from 1934, the Barmen Declaration, ignored the issue, and the state dissolved all bodies speaking on behalf of the Confessional Church in early 1936. The Confessing Church directed its efforts away from the Aryan paragraph after Rheinhold Krause’s September 1933 speech that argued for the “de-Judaization” of Christianity and the creation of a

\textsuperscript{22} Postwar historiography, especially in Germany, framed the Confessing Church as a resistance movement within the Protestant church. See Helmreich, 468. More recently, historians have revised this view by emphasizing the group’s intense focus on baptized Jews and avoidance of engaging in civic oppression of Jews qua Jews. See Gerlach, \textit{And the Witnesses were Silent}; Baranowski, \textit{The Confessing Church}; Robert Ericksen, \textit{Complicity in the Holocaust: Churches and Universities in Nazi Germany} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

\textsuperscript{23} Gerlach, 64.

\textsuperscript{24} See chapter three.

\textsuperscript{25} Baranowski, 47.

\textsuperscript{26} Evans, 228.
national church. The group was incensed by the speech’s call to eliminate the Old Testament as a central component of Christianity and a revision of the New Testament to erase so-called “Jewish influence.” Similarly, one of the Confessing Church’s central aims—to maintain Protestantism’s institutional primacy in Germany—conflicted with Krause’s call for a national church. In May of 1934, the Confessional Church held a synod in Barmen in order to outline its rejection of the German Christian movement, members of which composed the majority of Protestant officials. While the Barmen declaration declared Protestant autonomy from the church and maintained the theological relationship between Judaism and Christianity, it did not say anything about the inclusion of non-Aryan Christians in Christianity. Thus, as historian Wolfgang Gerlach argues, “the Confessing Church had severed itself from the issue that had brought it into being—the Aryan paragraph” and the non-Aryans it affected.

The Kirchenkampf that split the Protestant Church for a time did not exist among institutional Catholicism in Nazi Germany. The Catholic Church in Germany can be seen as a loose combination of the tenets expressed by German Christians and the Confessing Church regarding its view on confessional, religious, and racial difference. High-ranking members of the church, especially members of the Center Party, negotiated and complied with Hitler in exchange for institutional autonomy, as did the Vatican and Berlin. The Catholic Church never entertained the idea of a unified national church. Regarding the nature of baptism, Catholics tended to align more closely with the Confessing Church, seeing it as a symbol of religious belonging that transcended race, but also like the Confessing Church, their concern usually only

27 Baranowski, 4.
29 Gerlach, 76.
extended to Jewish converts to Catholicism. Unlike the Confessing Church, however, the Catholic Church did not speak out against the application of the Aryan paragraph in any meaningful or unified way. The Catholic Church’s political relationship with the National Socialist state prior to the Nuremberg Laws demonstrates that they were unconcerned with the relationship the state had with Jewish Germans.

The Catholic Church’s position regarding National Socialism changed from 1932 to 1933. While the Protestant Church was fractured and both groups sought to reconstitute the close relationship between church and state enjoyed prior to the founding of the Weimar Republic, political Catholicism in Germany experienced relative continuity from the Second Reich to Weimar. The Center Party remained large and influential among its parishioners and parliament alike. The Catholic Church, then, had a political stake in the ascendance of National Socialism in Germany. Unsurprisingly, there was animus between National Socialism and Catholics prior to 1933. Some bishops told members of their diocese not to join the Nazi Party, and others refused to allow uniformed party members participate in Catholic ritual. Upon the Nazi seizure of power, however, the Center Party and the Catholic Church both softened their positions. Part of the reason the Catholic Church shifted course was because uniformed Catholics simply began attending Protestant services. While they were political rivals, in the Nazi Party the Center saw an ally against atheistic communism, as well as a party dedicated to a conservative moral agenda. While the Nazis never wavered from its animosity toward communism, the Nazis quickly shattered illusions regarding their moral conservatism. The change, however, was due to

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31 Lewy, 280.
32 Ericksen, *Complicity in the Holocaust*, 47.
33 Griech-Polelle, 32.
34 Anti-communism and moral conservatism were also Nazi traits that attracted support from the Protestant Church. Ericksen, *Complicity in the Holocaust*, 49.
its liberal policies regarding sexuality; the moral nature of Nazism, for the Catholic Church and the Center Party, had little to nothing to do with its antisemitism or Jewish policy.  

Most significantly, the Center Party played a fundamental role in getting the Enabling Act through the Reichstag in March, 1933. The Enabling Act essentially divested parliament of all authority, suspended the constitution, and allowed Hitler to govern independent of any democratic oversight. In short, it provided him with authoritarian power. Securing that power, however, required the democratic process. Hitler needed two-thirds of the parliament to vote for the Enabling Act in 1933. The right-wing coalition was not enough by itself to form a two-thirds vote, as socialists and communists would not support it. He then went to the Center Party for backing. The Center Party agreed to offer the votes of its delegates in exchange for the assurance of church autonomy. “The transition in Adolf Hitler’s reign from democratic to dictatorial power,” historian Robert Ericksen asserts, “came at the hands of German Catholics.” The Concordat signed between Germany and the Vatican on July 20 of 1933 was the foreign policy equivalent of the Center Party’s delegate support. It offered recognition in return for Catholic autonomy and protection.

Perhaps most notably regarding the exchange between the Nazi regime and the Catholic Church was Hitler’s public, ostensible, fulfillment of the agreement. The speech Hitler gave after passing the Enabling Act was not only designed to pacify Catholic fears regarding the state’s infringement on Catholic practice, but it was also intended to allay the worry that confessional borders were meaningless in Nazi Germany. Like the Catholic and the Protestant churches, Hitler validated the social coexistence of the two confessions and offered words to unite them.

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36 Ericksen, Complicity in the Holocaust, 52-53.
37 Lewy, 57-93; Ericksen, Complicity in the Holocaust, 56-59.
under the auspices of Christian Germany—but, pointedly, not German Christianity. So when he negotiated with the Center Party, he also had in mind relations with the Protestant Church. And both were aimed at the codification of indelible Jewish difference and exclusion. “The national government regards the two Christian confessions as the most important factors for the preservation of our national culture,” the speech read,

Their rights will not be infringed . . . The national government will guarantee the Christian confessions their due influence in school and educational matters . . . Likewise the government of the Reich, which regards Christianity as the unshakeable foundation of our national life and morality, regards the fostering and the extension of friendly relations to the Holy See as a matter of the greatest importance. The Rights of the churches will not be restricted, nor will their relationship to the state be changed.  

Clearly, the motivation to sustain a bi-confessional environment prevailed. Even in 1933 and even in a declaration ostensibly about the Catholic Church, the pronouncement referenced the “Christian confessions” and the autonomy of the “churches.” Just as the 1920 Party Program asserted the freedom of all “religious confessions,” as long as they did not infringe upon the pursuit of realizing racial ideology as policy.  

Indeed, even in Mein Kampf, published in the mid 1920s, Hitler insisted that any and all National Socialist aims would have to accept Germany’s bi-confessional nature. “It will always be the supreme duty of the leadership of the National Socialist movement to offer the keenest opposition to any attempt to put the movement at the disposal of such [confessional] fights,” he wrote regarding the tenacity of the institutions. And pertaining to individuals, Hitler posited that “the most believing Protestant could stand in the ranks of our movement next to the most believing Catholic, without either having to come into

38 Quoted in Ericksen, *Complicity in the Holocaust*, 53.
39 See chapter four.
the slightest conflict of conscience” with regard to “religious convictions.” They could also be married.

Nevertheless, high-ranking Catholic Church officials met such pronouncements as the one from 1933 with skepticism. But even the hesitant responses accepted the contours of the privileged relationship between Christianity and Germany in a bi-confessional context. For instance, a set of sermons offered by Archbishop of Munich Cardinal Faulhaber (1869-1952) refer to numerous themes involving the intersection of race, religion, and confession in Germany after the accession of the Nazis. While the sermons were designed to assert the primacy of Christianity in the face of neo-paganism and the German Christian movement, they ended up as an endorsement of Germany as a Christian state with a population of Jews separated by racial and religious difference impossible to overcome. The sermons exemplify the conceptualization and construction of the type of boundaries that made the Nuremberg Laws and the prohibition of intermarriage acceptable to Protestants and Catholics alike.

Faulhaber argued that both Christianity and Germany depended on having roots, which provided the basis for the religious and racial exclusion of Jews. He argued that the relationship between Judaism and Christianity had to be maintained, or else Christianity would lose its true character. A defense of Judaism, however, was not a defense of Jews. And, notably, Faulhaber was only concerned with pre-Christian Judaism. The other form of Judaism was the rabbinic variety, which emerged in the first century as a way of maintaining communities in light of the destruction of the Second Temple. Rabbinic Judaism was the form of the religion that was familiar to Catholic and Protestant clerics alike, as it was the origin of the Talmud and what later

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40 Quoted in Hastings, 185.
41 Faulhaber served as Archbishop of Munich from 1917 until his death in 1953. He was a virulent anti-communist, and throughout the 1920s he was particularly against the attempt to de-confessionalize schools in Bavaria. Because of his anti-communism, Faulhaber was sympathetic to the Nazi cause in the early 1920s and a tacit accommodator thereafter. See Hastings, 12, 48-49, 145-149, 170-171; Griech-Polelle, 31, 52.
became Jewish communities structured by rabbinic authority.\footnote{Michael Brenner, \textit{A Short History of the Jews}, trans. by Jeremiah Riemer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 55-69. Additionally, turn of the century antisemitic writings such as Catholic theologian August Rohling’s \textit{Der Talmudjude} relied on the distinction between pre-rabbinic and rabbinic Judaism to extricate Christianity from Judaism. See August Rohling, \textit{Der Talmudjude: Zur Beherzigung für Juden und Christen allen Stände} (Münster: Adolf Mussel’s Verlag, 1878).} Framed as a response to the German Christian attempt to sever the link between Judaism and Christianity, the introduction to the English translation of the sermons (published in 1935) suggested that decoupling Judaism and Christianity “in order to prepare the way for a cult of racial nationalism is to leave that faith dangling in mid-air, without roots.”\footnote{George N. Schuster, introduction to \textit{Judaism, Christianity and Germany}, by Cardinal Faulhaber (New York: Macmillan, 1935), ix.} Judaism, then, only provided the functional grounding of Christianity, which meant that its utility ceased with the life of Jesus. Faulhaber reminded his audience that in defense of Judaism “I am speaking only of pre-Christian Judaism.” He cast the Jews as religiously rootless by arguing that pre-Christian Judaism served as the religious roots to contemporary Christianity, which meant that contemporary Jews lacked those religious roots. The image Faulhaber evoked, tellingly, was that of the “wandering Jew.” “After the death of Christ,” Faulhaber intoned, “Israel was dismissed from the service of revelation.” The Jews “had repudiated and rejected the Lord’s Anointed, had driven Him out of the city and nailed Him to the Cross. Then the veil of the Temple was rent, and with it the covenant between the Lord and His people. The daughters of Zion received the bill of divorce, and from that time forth . . . wander, forever restless.”\footnote{Cardinal Faulhaber, \textit{Judaism, Christianity and Germany}, trans. George D. Smith (New York: Macmillan, 1935), 5. The omission from the quotation is the word “Assuerus,” which is a name that appears in the Hebrew Bible and is associated with the canard of “the wandering Jew.”}

It is necessary to keep Faulhaber’s established imagery in mind when looking at his argument for the national and racial roots of Germany. According to Faulhaber, the religious roots of Christianity were not initially tied to place. But the conversion of Europe was the process of rooting Christianity in places whose inhabitants already exhibited unified national and
racial characteristics. The expression of national and racial Germanness, therefore, was tied directly to the inheritance of Christian roots. The places relevant for Faulhaber’s purposes were the lands that became Germany and the fragmented pagan tribes who lived there. One of the missionaries tasked with converting these peoples, Faulhaber indicated, was St. Boniface. He wrote that “St. Boniface died a martyr” while attempting to convert the Germans to Christianity. In life, his task was unsuccessful, but due to his Christian death “German soil was newly irrigated with martyr’s blood” so that “God’s plant could grow and flourish.” He thus fulfilled the missionary goal “to uproot and plant, to pull down and build up.”

According to Faulhaber, the mobile roots that the missionaries brought and laid down in Germany formed the basis of the unification of the competing Germanic tribes. “Through Christianity,” he asserted, “Germany became a nation.” Moreover, Faulhaber viewed the inheritance of national characteristics in racial terms. Indeed, right after the assumption of power Catholic bishops generally extolled the “natural values” of race. “From the Church’s point of view,” he said, “there is no objection whatever to racial research and race culture. Nor is there any objection to the endeavor to keep the national characteristics of a people as far as possible pure and unadulterated, and to foster their national spirit by which emphasis upon the common ties of blood which unite them.”

Though he also stated that race should not be used as a basis for hatred, Jews were excluded from Faulhaber’s formulation, who he cast as racial and religious itinerants.

The emphasis on the conversion of pagans was an attack on neo-paganism, but it was also a validation of baptism as a defining characteristic of being Christian. For Faulhaber, baptism had the ability to turn a Jew into a Christian. Significantly, he claimed that this was the only way

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45 Faulhaber, 100-102.
46 Faulhaber, 104.
47 Lewy, 275.
48 Faulhaber, 107-108.
to unite the two groups. In this manner, the Catholic Church aligned with the Confessing Church rather than the German Christians. Unlike the Confessing Church, however, the Catholic Church accepted the institution of the Aryan paragraph in Germany without a quarrel.\textsuperscript{49} The likeliest reason for the church’s silence in this regard is that there were even fewer non-Aryan Christians among the ranks of Catholic officials than Protestant ones, though the meager number of non-Aryan pastors did not stop it from being an issue among Protestants.

Faulhaber’s phrase that “through Christianity Germany became a nation” can be tweaked: through the Reformation, Germany became confessional—yet it remained Christian. While Faulhaber recognized the indelibility of baptism, even for Jews, he also accepted the religious and racial barriers that separated unbaptized Jews and made the reformulation of intermarriage a necessity for the Nazi state. “Race means union with the nation,” he posited, and “Christianity means union with God.”\textsuperscript{50} But according to his argument, the nation was also linked with Christianity. The result was a formula that separated Jews and made baptism the only possible path of unification, and it was one that eradicated Judaism. Put differently, Faulhaber contended that the “cornerstone” and link between Jews and Christians, besides Christianity’s roots in Judaism, was Jesus.\textsuperscript{51} In this way, he showed a similar intransigence to the context of other groups that German Christians did when they offered Luther as the symbol of unification between Protestants and Catholics. For both groups, dealing with the state of Jewish difference from 1933 to 1935 betrayed their confessional grounding.

Similarities and differences existed among the two Protestant groups and Catholicism. In terms of the way Protestants and Catholics related to one another, each group reinforced

\textsuperscript{49} Lewy, 280-281; Ernst Klee, “\textit{Die SA Jesu Christi’’}: \textit{Die Kirchen im Banne Hitlers} (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1989), 32-34.
\textsuperscript{50} Faulhaber, 107-108.
\textsuperscript{51} Faulhaber, 71.
confessional difference and boundaries, even while parishioners were entirely familiar with
intimate confessional coexistence. They differed in the way they viewed Jewish difference,
especially in the manner they ordered race and religion, which particularly impinged on their
view of intermarriage. Yet they each participated in the conversation of Jewish difference, which
beginning almost immediately in 1933 meant Jewish exclusion. Jewish exclusion saw a turning
point with the Nuremberg Laws of 1935. The laws attempted to clarify and codify the meaning
of Jewish difference and the boundaries that separate them, and they informed and underwrote
policies of Jewish exclusion throughout the course of the Third Reich.52 In 1935, as before, any
church objection against the law dealt with baptism and institutional autonomy. Otherwise, there
was no protest.53

Making Intermarriage “Jewish”

Institutional separation between the confessions, the state’s knowledge that difference
between Protestants and Catholics on the ground was already collapsing, and the ideology and
practice of Jewish exclusion both racially and religiously provided the context for the Nuremberg
Laws of 1935. The laws should be understood as acts of nullification and isolation. They
annulled the Protestant-Catholic intermarriage problem and segregated it as a confessional issue
to be dealt with by the institutions rather than a religious or racial one under the authority of the
state. The prohibition of intermarriage and the regulations regarding who “mixed” persons could
and could not marry was an attempt to isolate “Germans” and “Jews.” The pursuit of legislative
segregation, however, betrayed the fluidity between the two categories as they existed at the
time. They claimed to solidify the boundary between Jews and Aryans, but they allowed for the
possibility for Aryans to become Jewish. It is significant that the state targeted intermarriage

52 Thomas Pegelow-Kaplan, The Language of Nazi Genocide: Linguistic Violence and the Struggle of Germans of
53 Baranowski, 83-84; Ericksen, Complicity in the Holocaust, 118; Helmreich, 190; Lewy, 280.
because it reveals just how formative the practice was for the creation of German identities and their foundations in confession, religion, and eventually race. “Protestant” and “Catholic” could be collapsed into “German” because of the extensive history of confessional coexistence and mixed marriage. The Nuremberg Laws, and Nazi ideology in general, was built on the goal of making sure “German” and “Jew” did not do the same.

The history of intermarriage and the way it shaped the confessional boundary kept the churches close together during the Third Reich. Moreover, this history contributed to the marginalization of Jews. It was the persistent intimate proximity between Protestants and Catholics that, in the words of historian Doris Bergen, “worsen[ed] the situation of Jews in Germany” during the Third Reich. Even rhetorical exchanges of animosity between the churches negatively affected the Jews. For the Protestant and Catholic institutions, Jews served as ciphers that embodied the worst traits of the opposing church. Rhetorical exchanges between the institutions were less important. For instance, Bergen observes that the Catholic Church during the Third Reich combatted their old confessional enemies using terms such as “godlessness, immorality, and liberalism.” These terms also frequently applied to Jews. Likewise, the Protestant Church continued to condemn Catholics as dogmatic and international. These accusations were also applied to Jews. Nevertheless, during the Third Reich marriage between Protestants and Catholics was not stigmatized in the eyes of the state, while marriage between Jews and non-Jews was made taboo even before it was made illegal. Because there was a dividing line between legitimate and illegitimate intimacy, the back and forth between Protestants and Catholics served only to marginalize Jews.54

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Before analyzing the significance of how the Nazis approached the churches prior to the introduction of the Nuremberg Laws, it is necessary to establish the details of the laws. There were three laws introduced at Nuremberg on September 15, 1935, and each represented a distinct form of exclusionary violence. The first prohibited Jews from displaying the state flag. This provision can be read as a form of national exclusion. The second provision defined Jews as “subjects” (Staatsangehöriger) of the state while classifying Aryans as “citizens” (Reichsbürger)—political and civic exclusion. Intimate exclusion lay in the prohibition of intermarriage and sexual contact between Jews and Aryans. The fulfillment of each law relied on a new taxonomy of who was an Aryan, a Jew, or anything in between. The system the law produced was nothing less than the mass revision of family histories that, ultimately, determined life and death. First, anyone who belonged to a Jewish community was considered fully Jewish irrespective of whether the person was born into Judaism or converted into it. Though Aryans who converted to Judaism could leave the Jewish community and regain Aryan bona-fides, as long as the conversion to Judaism took place before the pronouncement of the laws. Others classified as fully Jewish were individuals with four Jewish grandparents and individuals who had one set of Jewish grandparents and another set of grandparents who might have lived in a mixed marriage (three Jewish grandparents). The qualification that one set of grandparents “might” have lived in an intermarriage is because it did not matter if the individual converted from Judaism to one of the Christian confessions. Conversion was only relevant if the direction was toward Judaism. In this way, the Nazis created mixed marriages—according to their definition—where they did not previously exist. We saw in chapter three that the Imperial

55 This stands in contradistinction to the 1906 court case analyzed in chapter three, where the sacrament of baptism was the act that prohibited the child’s Jewish education.
56 Marion Kaplan, Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 77-80.
German state invented German families by creating intermarriages. In this case, the Nazi state invented Jewish families by doing the same. Moreover, the laws created the crime of *Rassenschande* ("racial pollution"). This addition to the law is significant because it prohibited not just marriage and the intimacy implied by participation in that institution, but it also forbade sexual contact. Intimate and sexual prohibitions recall two strains of intermarriage and antisemitism. The former resembles Adolf Stoecker’s turn of the century condemnation of intimacy between Jews and Christians, while the latter mirrors Artur Dinter’s racialist antisemitism where intimacy was impossible and sexual contact polluting.\(^{57}\)

To grasp fully the meaning of the use of religion for racial ends in the Nuremberg Laws, it is necessary to recognize the marriage regulations that applied to the children and grandchildren of intermarriages. These individuals were classified as "*Mischlinge*" (roughly, "hybrid"). There were two gradations: first-degree *Mischlinge*, or "half-Jews," had two Jewish grandparents, while second degree *Mischlinge*, "quarter-Jews," had one Jewish grandparent. The latter instance might have been because a person had one set of Jewish grandparents and one set of Aryan grandparents, meaning that her or his parents lived in an intermarriage. Or, it might have been because both sets of grandparents were intermarried, meaning that the person’s parents each had one Jewish parent themselves—conversions to Protestantism or Catholicism notwithstanding.\(^{58}\)

The marriage provisions attempted to freeze race by only allowing self-replicating marriages and making almost all fluidity between Aryans and Jews unidirectional and toward the Jewish category. It did so by reverting back to the ostensibly pure origins of each individual’s grandparents. Among grandparents, the Nuremberg Laws recognized no degrees of mixture.

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\(^{57}\) Przyrembel, 14-42.

Racially, they were either Germans or Jews, and this was determined by whether or not they belonged to the Jewish religion. The new regulations applied to everyone on the non-Aryan spectrum. First degree Mischlinge, individuals with two grandparents classified as Jewish, could either marry one another or individuals classified as fully Jewish. If the person married someone fully Jewish, the Mischlinge became Jewish, as were all children. The children of two Mischlinge were Mischlinge ad infinitum. First degree Mischlinge were also considered fully Jewish if they belonged to the Jewish community or if they married someone defined as Jewish after the introduction of the laws, but not before. This could take place by joining the Jewish community in Germany. They were not considered Jewish if they were married to an Aryan prior to the introduction of the laws. Additionally, Mischlinge of the first degree could apply to change one’s status to Aryan, but it needed approval from Hitler. Conversely, second degree Mischlinge, individuals with one Jewish grandparent, were prohibited from marrying full Jews, but they were allowed to marry Aryans and, with approval, half-Jews. The constraints were designed to eliminate ambiguity—as if the system had clarity beyond an ideology of exclusion. The marriage regulation that deconstructs all of the others was the one for quarter-Jews, or Mischlinge of the second degree. The only form of marriage open to quarter-Jews without exceptions was with Aryans, and it was likewise the only form of marriage whose children were set on a path from Jewishness to Aryanness. Marriage between two quarter-Jews was prohibited because such a union was ideologically impossible: the children would have had two grandparents classified as

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61 Essner, “Nazi Anti-Semitism,” 34. See also Burr Burkey.
62 Kaplan, Dignity and Despair, 77-80.
Mischlinge of the first degree but no Jewish grandparents. They would therefore have been Aryan.⁶³

Not included in the Nuremberg laws was any mention of Protestants and Catholics, and that was because by the time the laws were introduced the state had already made their specific intent and goals clear to the Protestant and Catholic churches. In May of 1935, the Nazi state wrote to both the Protestant and Catholic churches to inform them that the state was taking it upon itself to simultaneously annul Protestant-Catholic intermarriage as a problem and isolate intimacy between Jews and Aryans as the fundamental threat to Germany. The document sent to the churches is extremely telling. It acknowledged the extensive history of intermarriage between Protestants and Catholics, as well as the fact that this issue has occupied both of the institutions. It was the intermarriage problem in Germany since the mid-nineteenth century. Pastors such as Adolf Stoecker were exceptions that proved the rule. The brief message also implicitly sanctioned such forms of intermarriage in the eyes of the state. It simultaneously appropriated the resonant word the institutions had long used, “Mischehe,” and guided them to use the softened “confessionally mixed marriage” when referring to unions between Protestants and Catholics. The self-evident truism contained in the missive was that Protestant and Catholic Germans coexisted intimately and socially under the auspices of indelible Christian baptism and the sanction of a Christian state. The directive sent to the churches reveals that the regime began paving the way for the Nuremberg Laws for months prior to their announcement. The content reveals that the evolution of social relationships as they existed on the ground and with regard to the German state had provided the foundation long before.

The concept of ‘Mischehe’ has been until the present time used in different senses. While National Socialism understands it as the marriage between people

⁶³ Essner, Die Nürnberger Gesetze, 236.
belonging to different races, the Church deploys the signification for marriages between members of different confessions. I hereby order that in official communications the word ‘Mischehe’ is only to be used and understood when referring to racial mixing; that is, when a marriage between an Aryan or a non-Aryan takes place.  

The letter was a statement of authority, and the internal questions that arose, whether in affirmation or dissent to the directive, meant that the churches operated within the discursive framework of the Nazis. For the rest of 1935 and after, Protestant officials discussed the change of language in three registers: first, they were worried about what it might mean for confessional boundaries; second, they were concerned over what the categorical differentiation meant for purposes of taxation; finally, they searched for a new vocabulary to express their continuing concern over mixed marriage between Protestants and Catholics. There is evidence that the Catholic Church also participated in this last endeavor. Based on internal communication within the Protestant Church, it is clear that leaders accepted the declaration regarding intermarriage, as long as it did not attempt to abolish the barriers between Protestants and Catholics. It did not. Importantly, church officials read the message’s implicit directive to use “confessionally mixed marriage” as a “suggestion.” The church’s autonomy, therefore, was still intact. And from their perspective, so was the significance of the boundary between the confessions, as well as intermarriage between Protestants and Catholics. Moreover, in September of 1935, the Pomeranian consistory wrote to the central offices in Berlin asking for official clarification regarding the church’s language, as well as assurance that the change did not mean the

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64 EZA, 7, 3328, Der Reichs- und Preußische Minister für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Voksbildung an die obrsten Behörden der deutschen evangelischen Landeskirchen, May 23, 1935; AEK, CR 17.1.4, Der Reichs- und Preußische Minister für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Voksbildung an Erzbistums Köln, May 23, 1935, emphasis in original.
endorsement of German Christianity or a “supraconfessional” (überkonfessionelle) church.\textsuperscript{65} Again, it did not.

The change of language raised monetary concerns, which similarly prompted the request that the church establish a useful vocabulary of mixture. The linguistic shift raised a problem regarding the taxation of intermarriages between Protestants and Jews, and it caused them to redefine mixed marriages between Protestants and Catholics for taxation purposes. In both cases, the church functioned within the parameters set by the Nazis. But that did not mean that the terrain was unfamiliar, as they also used distinctions, if not precise definitions, that had long resided in the church. In October of 1935, the financial division of the Rhine Province’s consistory asked how intermarriages between Protestants and, implicitly, Jews be taxed. The communication read: “For us, it seems appropriate and necessary, that church concerns regarding the area of taxation, a singular term be established by the church side for a half-Protestant marriage in which one of the partners is Protestant, the other of a foreign or no religious community.”\textsuperscript{66} Also in October of 1935, the Association of Protestant Communities of the Rhineland in Cologne wrote to its regional offices in Düsseldorf and requested that new language be established for marriages between Protestants and Catholics. “The only possible meaning for the expression ‘Mischehe,’” the letter read,

pertains, from now on, to different racial belongings. However, in the church communities as well as in all of the regions of pastoral care and in the area of church taxation, it has until now applied to the difference of pure Protestant marriages. It is therefore urgently necessary that a new expression be chosen other

\textsuperscript{65} EZA, 7, 3328, Evangelische Konsistorium an EOK. Stettin, 13 Sept., 1935.
\textsuperscript{66} EZA, 7, 3328, Finanzabteilung beim Evangelische Konsistorium Rheinprovinz an Finanzabteilung beim EOK. Düsseldorf, 15 Oct, 1935.
than “Mischehe” that can also be used for church taxation. We suggest that this matter be taken care of quickly.\textsuperscript{67}

According to the state’s guidelines, church leadership in Berlin recommended that the communities in the Rhineland use “mixed confessional marriage” or “confessionally mixed marriage” in reference to Protestants and Catholics.\textsuperscript{68}

The search for new words to describe intermarriage led both the Protestant and Catholic churches to assimilate the parameters set by the state and integrate them with the still present mode of social difference: religion. They did not contest racial categorization, but there is evidence that the churches tweaked the formula. The result recalled the different content but same exclusionary results of Jewish difference in German history. This primarily took place after 1935, and it centered on outlining the meanings of “interfaith marriage” (\textit{glaubensverschiedene Ehe}), “interreligious marriage” (\textit{religionsverschiedene Ehe}), and “interconfessional marriage (\textit{konfessionsverschiedene Ehe}). A missive to the Catholic Archbishop in Cologne identified these three categories in July, 1937.\textsuperscript{69} But a Protestant clerical newspaper elaborated upon them in August of that same year. The Westphalian paper first noted the racial conceit: according to the state’s direction, “the word ‘Mischehe’ may be used in official communication only to signify the marriage between persons who belong to different races, and not to those marriages between persons whose religious confessions differ. The same applies to the term ‘mixed marriage’ (\textit{gemischte Ehe}).”\textsuperscript{70} It then indicated that “interfaith marriages” were to have two distinctions underneath them. The first was “interconfessional marriage,” which meant “marriages between persons who belong to different Christian confessions.” The target for this in Germany had to be

\textsuperscript{68} EZA, 7, 3328, EOK an Finanzabteilung beim Evangelische Konsistorium Rheinprovinz. Berlin, 9 Nov., 1935.
\textsuperscript{69} AEK, CR, 17.1.4, An Erzbischof Köln, 8 July, 1937. AEK CR 17.1.4.
\textsuperscript{70} EZA, 7, 3328, \textit{Kirchliches Amtsblatt der Kirchenprovinz Westfalen} 16, 15 Aug., 1937.
marriage between Protestants and Catholics, although it technically also could apply to intermarriages previously classified as between Protestants and “other Christians,” such as Orthodox or Baptists. The other category was “interreligious marriage”—or, “marriages between persons whose religions are otherwise different or where one is an unbeliever.” This grouping does not mention Jews specifically—but as long as the churches continued to see them as religiously different, Jewish intermarriage fit this classification. It did not challenge the state’s definition of race or racial intermarriage, but worked alongside it.

Conclusion

The way the Nazi state prepared the churches for the Nuremberg Laws, and the laws themselves, annulled Protestant-Catholic intermarriage as a problem in Germany and attempted to turn all attention toward “racial” mixing between Jews and Aryans. It is imperative to recognize that the Nazis did not simultaneously abolish confessional borders. At least, they did not do so for the ones tending the boundaries, church leaders. The borders were necessary because the leaders of the institutions invested a great deal of meaning into them, and church leaders represented powerful bodies of political support. A 1938 exchange between a Catholic Bishop and Joseph Goebbels’s Ministry of Propaganda reveals that the concurrent negation of the Protestant-Catholic intermarriage problem did not conflict with institutional boundaries. And, most crucially, that both combined to advance the Nazi agenda of isolating intimacy with Jews as a process of exclusion and, in the end, violence. The interaction centered on an observation found in the Katholischen Kirchenblatt für das Bistum Berlin.

Propped up by six decades of rhetoric, the paper noted that “confessional intermarriage” was on the rise, that one out of five Catholics marry non-Catholics, and that the majority of those unions took place outside of the Catholic Church and resulted in children raised outside of

71 EZA, 7, 3328, Kirchliches Amtsblatt der Kirchenprovinz Westfalen.
Catholicism. The ministry admonished the emphasis on confessional intermarriage because it focused on Germany’s confessional division. A clerk from the ministry wrote:

Marriage is not only a religious matter, but also, and in a greater measure, a state matter. If the National Socialist state does not wish that the struggle against confessional intermarriage be in the press, that in no way means that it wants to eliminate one of the confessions. Rather, it only means that it wants to stop the perpetuation of the type of expansive confessional division that so divides the German people into two groups. On both sides, the marriages themselves are declared invalid—as if they involved two completely different peoples (Völker).

In sum: the churches shall not act as if the marriages between Protestants and Catholics at all resemble those between “different peoples”—such as between Jews and Germans.

On the eve of the Second World War and the Holocaust, the Nazi state radically and irrevocably dissociated Germany’s intermarriage histories. The severance was about categories, but the consequences of categorization were felt by real people during the Third Reich. Indeed reclassification amounted to the re-writing of individual and family histories. One of the most astute observers of the Third Reich, Victor Klemperer (1881-1960), captured such a change with a few marks of his pen. Klemperer survived the war in Germany largely due to his marriage to a non-Jew. In a diary entry from March 30, 1933, Klemperer wrote in the face of hostility against Jews in Germany: “I have truly always felt a German.” Then, in response to the announcement of the Nuremberg Laws, he wrote on September 17, 1935 that the state resolved to imprison individuals “for marriage,” meaning “racial intermarriage,” and “extra-marital intercourse between Jews and ‘Germans,’” in reference to the crime of Rassenschande.

For Klemperer,

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75 Klemperer, 1933-1941, 133.
Germans became “Germans” when he was *ex post facto* excluded from the category. He was far from the only one.
Chapter 6: Intermarriage’s Afterlife: Reclaiming Family Histories through Narrative

More than twenty years after it took place, the marriage between Mieke Mertens (1903-1997) and Franz Monjau (1903-1945) was captured like this:

A registry office in [Düsseldorf]: it is the tenth of May, 1930. Something mundane is happening. A small, casual 26 year old and a delicate, thin young man, 11 months older than her, stand before the record’s clerk. He—the representative of this already fragile first republic on German soil, the Weimar Republic—wants to perform the marriage in a ceremonial fashion. He asks the young couple for the rings: ‘We don’t have them and we don’t want them!’ The woman asserts. In the course of the civil servant’s bourgeois and ritualized world, there appeared a disruption—that had never happened to him before!\(^1\)

The telling above reveals much about their marriage and the context in which it took place. It was not unusual that they married in front of a civil clerk. Since 1875, civil marriage was mandatory prior to any religious ceremony in all of Germany. They also forewent entirely a religious ceremony, which was still the exception, but it was becoming more common throughout the 1920s in Germany. It is also clear that they rejected bourgeois ritual attached to marriage. With relish, Mieke and Franz married without wedding bands. Considering that both individuals were artists who participated in Germany’s avant-garde scene, it is understandable that they rejected bourgeois convention. Indeed, it was not even the most obvious rejection of moral conservatism they expressed. Mieke and Franz had gotten to know one another in the context of free love and nudism during the 1920s, and they had lived together, unmarried, prior to their marriage on May 10, 1933.\(^2\)

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\(^2\) Stappert, 8-9.
The characterization above stands in stark contradistinction to another reading of Mieke and Franz’s marriage. According to the 1935 Blood Law, the marriage was simpler: it was mixed. Franz was born to a marriage between a Catholic woman with Jewish heritage and a non-Jewish man, while Mieke was classified as an Aryan. He was, therefore, a Mischling of the first degree. Through the lens of the Blood Law, mixture became the defining trait of the marriage between Mieke and Franz. And in fact, the law and the taxonomy of race that accompanied it defined the individuals along with the marriage after 1935. The National Socialist state punished Franz and Mieke for political challenges. For instance, the couple and their friends celebrated Franz’s birthday party on January 30, 1933 under the heading “Revelry of Resistance” (Gegenfest). The festivities resulted in temporary imprisonment and surveillance for both Franz and Mieke. But they were also punished for their marriage. For them, their union was quite ordinary. Mieke, for instance, was arrested for Rassenschande. Franz, partly due to his political challenges and partly due to the classification the state gave him, was killed in Buchenwald in 1945.

There is a good reason why the National Socialist definition of Mieke and Franz’s marriage is not evident in the scene detailed above: it was an imposition. More precisely, the Blood Law rewrote the history of Mieke and Franz and made it mixed. In 1930, it is almost inconceivable that they would have recognized their marriage as such. One of the consequences of the Blood Law was that it revised the history of myriad families in Germany where one partner was either Jewish or a “Mischling” of the first degree, as Franz was. Postwar writings, such as the sequence above, intervene into the way the Blood Law rewrote family stories. The authors effectively rewrite them once more, and they stand as reclamations of history. While they

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3 Stappert, 8-9.
4 Stappert, 5-9.
do not necessarily intend to capture “authentic” moments, postwar writings seek to provide
texture to the environment and stories that the Blood Law simplified.

This chapter relates and interprets those stories. It argues that the voices analyzed below
are renotations of individual, family, and German histories that National Socialist Germany
attempted to revise in 1935. The Blood Law of 1935 was a project of revisionist history
because modifying family pasts formed a central component of the National Socialist aim to
distinguish Jewish Germans from other types of Germans, such as Catholics and Protestants.
Differentiation as revision attacked intermarriage because it was precisely there where the
boundaries were blurriest and most permeable. Mixed marriage was also the site that most
threatened to undermine the ideological binary that pitted Aryans against Jews. Recognizing the
Blood Law as revisionist history establishes the reading of experiential narratives written after
1935 as reclamation.

This following chapter is based primarily on memoirs, but it also includes
autobiographies, published letters, and published vignettes of experience that appear in

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5 The marriages analyzed in this chapter are almost exclusively between Jews and non-Jews. The destruction of
European Jewry at the hands of Nazi Germany resulted in the demand to record personal narratives about
persecution. Mixed marriages between Catholics and Jews are largely absent from this chapter. While often
condemned by institutions, they were prosecuted neither by churches nor iterations of the German state.
Additionally, when the Nazis revised the past of unions between Jews and non-Jews and gave them existential
stakes, they also declared that confessional intermarriage was not a problem. The long-term normalization of mixed
marriage between Protestants and Catholics on the ground made such a decree palatable, as did the de facto
accommodation of intermarriage on behalf of the institutions. The almost total absence of Jews from intermarriage
files at Protestant and Catholic archives can be explained by the relative paucity of mixed marriage between
Christians and Jews. Notably, those files are histories built in the moment, as institutional clerks compile what they
consider relevant information until they deem the file large enough to be bound and stored. They do not, and cannot,
account for revisions to the moment in which they lived. Conversely, the imbalance of first-hand accounts about
experience of living in a Protestant-Catholic household in Germany compared to Jewish-Christian accounts can be
explained by the violent marginalization of the latter, the relative disregard of the former, and the Nazi project to
shape German history in the moment, partly by staking claims on the histories of myriad families in Germany. I
would like to thank Dr. Peter Beier of the EZA in Berlin for an illuminating conversation about how the archival
files held there were constructed.

6 Following Mary Jo Maynes, Jennifer Peirce, and Barbara Laslett, I analyze these voices under the assumption that
“individuals are shaped by their contexts but are not reducible to them.” Mary Jo Maynes, Jennifer L. Pierce, and
Barbara Laslett, Telling Stories: The Use of Personal Narratives in the Social Sciences and History (Ithaca: Cornell
University Press, 2008), 67.
secondary literature. The date of authorship of the documents range from the early 1920s until the late 1990s. Some of the biographical accounts are from children who mediate the narration of memory by writing the life of a parent. The earliest memoirs used in this chapter were written around 1939-1940 and are drawn from Harvard University’s 1939 essay contest “My Life in Germany before and after January 30, 1933.” The second major source base: the Leo Baeck Institute’s memoir collection, which holds over 2,000 memoirs dating from the eighteenth century to the present. The memoirs I use from the Leo Baeck Institute collection were either written in the United States, Germany, or Israel, and they date from the 1970s until the late 1990s. Because memory is fluid and changeable, we must account for the possible influence of “master narratives” on the individual author, depending on when and where the document was written. Indeed, the Nuremberg Laws constitute an important point in the master narrative. It was a moment that did not just alter lives in the moment, but also deigned to alter family histories.

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7 Specifically, I use long interview excerpts and case descriptions that appear in Beate Meyer, “Jüdische Mischlinge.” All of the names from Meyer are pseudonyms.
8 The contest generated over 250 responses that varied in length from a few pages to several hundred. Almost all of the respondents were refugees in the United States and were guided by the historical rupture built-in to the essay contest. Many of the respondents were a part of an intermarriage, including responses from those that identified as Jewish prior to displacement, those that only began identifying as Jewish after leaving Germany, and non-Jewish parties to a mixed marriage. The essays are similar to memoirs written much later in that they emphasize persecution and escape from Germany. There were many Austrian respondents, which by 1939 had been annexed by Germany. Because the context varied, writers whose experiences were exclusive to Austria (mostly Vienna), are not considered here. All documents from this collection were accessed at Berlin’s Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung.
9 I accessed all of the documents from the collection “My Life in Germany before and after January 30, 1933” using microfilm copies at the Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung in Berlin; a significant portion of the memoirs held at the Leo Baeck Institute in New York are available online. For those that are not, I used the microfilm collection at the Jüdisches Museum Berlin.
11 The chapter is built primarily upon 29 cases, all of which report on an experience of intermarriage. Nine of the 29 experiences are from persons who entered into a mixed marriage, while 20 are from a child of an intermarriage. Of the cases at hand, 14 were either written by a woman or are based on an interview with a woman, and 15 were written by a man. This includes documents in which, for example, a daughter writes the biography of her father. Four of the voices are from persons with no Jewish lineage at all, the remaining 25 either self-identified as Jewish or
In this chapter, I first contend that writers focused on the porous boundary between Jews and non-Jews in Germany before 1935, which constituted a basis for negotiating identity in the family context. In this way, such unions were very similar to marriages between Protestants and Catholics. Second, the chapter posits that by dwelling on the range of responses families put forth regarding intermarriage—from acceptance, to total rejection, to not thinking about it at all—the authors normalize their experiences. The humanizing details provided a path for the writers to reclaim the complexity of the past. Next, I assert that the emphasis on generation ties, particularly with grandparents, stand as reclamations to the individuals who the Nazis cast as the racial zero hour for both subjects and citizens in the Third Reich. Finally, the chapter analyzes intermarriage expansively and argues that even the very few intermarriage stories addressed below generated webs of mixed intimacy throughout Germany. The practice of intermarriage reached well beyond what available documents reveal.

**Negotiating Boundaries**

After 1935, the boundary that separated Jews from non-Jews—as well as Aryans and Jews from the shades of neither-nor identities—meant something different than they did prior. The Nazis made the boundary a matter of life and death. But the individuals who entered into marriages between Jews and non-Jews, or the children from those unions, recalled the boundary in family life as a fluid entity. By conveying the porousness of the boundary, the writers were subject to regulations that placed them in that category. Most of the “Jewish” voices examined, particularly children from intermarriages, were baptized as young children, which may or may not indicate an attachment to Protestantism or Catholicism. Likewise, whether or not they identified as Jewish before 1935 was made superfluous by the context of the Nazi German state. Of the 29 voices, nine involved the union of a Jewish woman and a non-Jewish man, while 19 were between a Jewish man and a non-Jewish woman. Three children were born outside of marriage to one Jewish and one non-Jewish parent, and the lineage of the married couple in two instances is unclear. One of the marriages took place prior to 1875, eight between 1875 and 1918, 14 between 1919 and 1932, two between 1933 and 1935, and one abroad after 1935 following courtship in Germany. The instances came from various parts of Germany, but most emerged from cities such as Berlin, Hamburg, Cologne, and Düsseldorf. This is due to two socio-cultural trends: first, the majority of intermarriages prior to 1918 took place in cities; and second, the urban middle classes tended to write more memoirs than the rural population.
humanized the actors. They showed the rigidity, flexibility, and negotiation of historical agents. Despite being forced to reconcile with externally imposed identities and histories, the recollection of experience analyzed below indicates that life writing was a way for these people to reclaim the story of their lives.

Three cases—from the families Drucker, Wieruszowski, and Smith—exemplify manners in which families recognized potential ill effects of entering into a mixed marriage. These positions resulted in the attempt to negate the meaning of boundary crossing either through conversion, baptism, or simply the casual dismissal of the boundary altogether. The nineteenth century example of the Drucker family is revealing in two key ways. First, it is a stark example of a marriage that was not mixed at the time because of the pre-nuptial conversion of the Jewish party, but was made mixed in the 1930s. Second, the narrator of the story—Martin Drucker (1869-1947), a child of the invented intermarriage—recalled the significance of a boundary from his childhood, but it was the gulf between Protestants and Catholics, not between Jews and non-Jews.

The negotiation of difference played a central role in the way Martin wrote about his family’s past. Martin’s father, who came from a practicing Jewish family, converted to Protestantism prior to marrying his Protestant mother. Naturally, the children were all baptized Protestant and received a Protestant education. When Martin was a young child, the family relocated from eastern Germany to a Catholic dominated region of Düsseldorf in the Rhineland, which is about 50 kilometers north of Cologne. Martin remembers the family’s move to Düsseldorf around 1875 when he was about six years old. When writing his memoir in Germany sometime in the late 1930s or early 1940s, he interpreted the environment in Düsseldorf as predominately Catholic and generally unwelcome to Protestants. “Düsseldorf was a strict
Catholic city,” he recalled, and “we lived in a region, populated by an energetically intolerant and orthodox population ruled by clerics particularly rigid in their belief, where we were the only Protestant family.”

The confessional environment coupled with Martin’s father’s Jewish heritage intersected to reveal a way in which a family negotiated boundaries and made their own identities. For the Druckers, the patriarch’s former Judaism offered a lesson for navigating an environment of difference. The public separation of Protestants and Catholics Martin remembered led to the revelation that Martin’s father had a Jewish background. Indeed, Martin’s mother used her husband’s heritage to teach Martin a lesson about social tolerance after she learned that he maligned both Catholicism and Judaism at school. After a school lesson about the differences between Protestants and Catholics, Martin pronounced what he believed to be an authoritative position: “I propped myself up as a religious critic: ‘only we Protestants are correct; Catholics have too many gods, and the Jews too few.’” Martin’s comment bristled his mother. Perhaps after considering his remarks, she called explained to Martin that religious identification is complicated, and that one’s affiliation should never be denigrated. She described it as “unjust” and scolded Martin for having been “dismissive of other religions” because their “father was born Jewish and only later converted to the Christian religion. But his parents [Martin’s grandparents] had remained Jews, and it would aggrieve them if their son viewed their religion as inferior.” Following this “lesson,” Martin recalled that he had “sensed the meaning of tolerance for the first time.”

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13 They received Protestant instruction. According to schooling regulations in Prussia, this indicates that the school they attended had at least a dozen Protestant students. Lamberti, 102.
14 Drucker, 47.
15 Drucker, 47.
While the Drucker case is about a marriage that became an intermarriage only in hindsight, the case of the Wieruszowski family is about one Jewish man’s two marriages: one with a Jewish woman and one with a non-Jewish woman. This family similarly shows a history of negotiating identities because Judaism played different roles at different times for different family members. The case is drawn from Ruth Pincus-Wieruszowski’s (1910-1995) biography of her father Alfred (1857-1945), which she completed in 1989 and wrote in Jerusalem. The narrative of her family through the figure of her father illustrates how a family was actively reshaped in light of an intermarriage. Alfred grew up in a traditional Jewish home in Görlitz and became a law professor in Cologne. An integrated Jewish German, Alfred married a Jewish woman, and they began raising their four daughters secularly, but with awareness of their Jewish background. Indeed, the children attended the lyceum of the Protestant community in Cologne. The youngest, Ruth, was born in 1910. Ruth’s mother and Alfred’s first wife died in 1918, after which Alfred married Frieda Fischer, a Protestant, and had all of the children baptized Protestant.

The children’s baptism is an example of a family negotiating the future. Alfred did not convert, and Ruth did not recall a religious upbringing, so the baptism was likely for practical reasons. “I have neither proof nor recollection,” Ruth wrote, “of why they [baptized us]. Surely not for religious reasons. As far as I know none of us were ever sent to church.” Instead of religion, Alfred privileged German culture and intellectualism. In the biography of her father,

17 The Leo Baeck Institute catalog indicates that the four girls were baptized after Alfred’s second marriage. The document does not state one way or the other, but I suspect that they might have been baptized as young children while their mother was alive.
18 Pincus-Wieruszowski, 2.
19 For example, Ruth wrote that one evening her father declared that “God had made just one mistake. He allowed Shakespeare to be born in England and not in Germany.” Years later, while studying Shakespeare, Ruth indicated that she fully realized “how much typical German, rather than Jewish, arrogance was concealed behind this statement.” Pincus-Wieruszowski, 22.
Ruth emphasized how peripheral Judaism was for him, which was a way of demonstrating that even after the experience of the Third Reich he cannot be reduced to being simply “Jewish.” For instance, as an educated Jewish German, Alfred was aware of the history of antisemitism in Germany. After the introduction of the Nuremberg Laws in 1935, he evidently referenced Heinrich von Treitschke’s (1834-1896) infamous 1879 pronouncement that the Jews were Germany’s “misfortune”: “being a Jew is not to be part of a people or a religion,” Ruth recalled Alfred stating, “but rather it is a misfortune [ein Unglück].”²⁰ Because of Alfred’s marriage with the non-Jewish Frieda, he survived the war in Germany due to temporary privileges provided to mixed marriages where the individuals were beyond childbearing ages. “The intermarriage,” Ruth wrote, “proved itself to be a fortune [ein Glück].”²¹

Ruth’s biography is a reclamation of her father as a complex individual who cannot be reduced to a single category. He was Jewish, but not particularly interested in religion or any other form of Jewishness. He was more invested in German culture. Indeed, after marrying a Protestant woman, he likely baptized his children Protestant because he did not care about religion, but he did care about opportunity. Ruth and her sisters exemplified Alfred’s spirit of negotiation and reclamation. One of her sister’s converted to Catholicism, while another remained Protestant, and the third became an atheist. Ruth took a different path. In 1936, she converted to Judaism and emigrated to Palestine.²²

A third case, Cathrin Smith’s, is revealing because it shows that conversion and religious indifference could comfortably exist in a single family. Cathrin was born near Hamburg in 1926 to Jewish parents, who married in 1923. A conversion took place prior to her parent’s marriage. But as opposed to most instances of conversion and mixed marriage, this case involved the

²⁰ Pincus-Wieruszowski, 22.
²¹ Pincus-Wieruszowski, 29.
²² Pincus-Wieruszowski, 25.
conversion of Cathrin’s Christian mother to Judaism. Her father’s family pressured Cathrin’s mother to convert. “The Christian parents of the bride,” Cathrin recalled, “were suspicious about the conversion.” Thus, Cathrin was not born to an intermarried couple any more than Martin Drucker was. Yet, some members of Cathrin’s paternal family did not recognize her mother as Jewish. Cathrin stated that “one part of my father’s family did not totally recognize her as Jewish. Others did.” At the same time, some members of her mother’s family viewed her conversion quite differently. A sister of Cathrin’s mother, for instance, held animus toward Cathrin and her father. Her antipathy was based in antisemitism. This aunt later went on to join the Nazi Party. “She was not exactly my favorite aunt,” Cathrin indicated.23 According to Cathrin, her mother situated herself in an entirely different position, where she did not fully belong to either side of the boundary between Jews and non-Jews. Notably, this is something she attempted to pass on to Cathrin. Cathrin claimed that “religion had no practical meaning for daily life” when she was growing up. Her father was not at all religious, which meant that Cathrin’s parents left her with the agency to eventually decide her religious affiliation. Cathrin narrated a particularly telling example of her future possibilities. These possibilities existed in the 1920s, were cut off in the 1930s, and reclaimed at the time of her narration in the 1980s: “I can remember, I believe I was in my first year of school, that I really wanted to play with a Christmas angel. So my mother said: ‘Well, which religion would you like to have? Jewish or Christian?’ To which I replied: ‘I really just want to play with an angel.’”24

Conversely, two additional cases, from the families von Ameln and Schiele, show families that actively attempted to hide a family member’s Jewish heritage. Elsbeth von Ameln’s case is compelling because her assertion over the authority of her past, conveyed in her 1985

23 Quoted in Meyer, „Jüdische Mischlinge,“ 320-321.
24 Quoted in Meyer, „Jüdische Mischlinge,“ 321.
memoir, laid claim to a Jewish heritage she did not even knew she had until April 1933. Rather than allowing it to symbolise marginalization and persecution during the Third Reich, she took ownership of it as an integral part of her identity. Von Ameln did not know she had Jewish lineage until 1933, when she was 28 years old, because her converted father and her Protestant mother, whose marriage became mixed only in 1935, hid her Jewish lineage from her. Von Ameln’s assertion of authority over her Jewish heritage combatted the National Socialist revision of her family history. Rather than the categorization of Jews and Aryans according to natural racial constants, von Ameln claimed her Jewishness as a choice she made to belong.

Elsbeth’s parents married in 1903 in Cologne. Her mother came from a strictly observant Protestant family. Elsbeth’s maternal grandfather was a minister, and “besides the Bible hardly any other book was read” in her mother’s household. “What the Pastor said and preached,” she related in her memoir, “was accepted unconditionally—he was an authority.”

It therefore may have been difficult, for religious reasons, when a Jewish acquaintance began courting Elsbeth’s mother around 1902. By the following year, Elsbeth’s father wrote a formal letter to his future parents-in-law asking for Elsbeth’s mother’s hand in marriage. Her father converted and married her mother in 1903. Elsbeth interpreted her father’s conversion as personal act that emerged from religious conviction. Afterwards, the theme of Judaism was totally marginalized in her family. She wrote that “my parents celebrated Christian holidays with me. I didn’t know about my father’s conversion.”

Elsbeth portrays the discovery of her father’s Jewish heritage as an origin story. Indeed, it could not but change her life in Nazi Germany. Elsbeth uncovered her Jewish roots independently and accidentally. While training as a lawyer in Cologne in the early 1930s, she

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26 Von Ameln, 14.
studied a murder case with a colleague. It was a familiar case—in fact, her father had told her stories about it because the culprit was a distant relative, her paternal grandmother’s cousin. She never had a reason to further pursue information about the person, and she was certainly disinterested regarding whether or not he was Jewish. Upon telling her colleague about the family tie in the case, her interlocutor revealed the connection. He “looked at me with an impish smile,” Elsbeth related, “and responded that the culprit was also related to him.” Her colleague, who was Jewish, continued: “you didn’t know that we are related [as well]? . . . Clearly you got your legal smarts from somewhere.” For Elsbeth, his statement clicked. “I still hear his words,” she wrote, “from 50 years ago.”

The subsequent conversation Elsbeth had with her family reveals her father’s motives for hiding his Jewish descent, and Elsbeth’s telling of it highlights her assertion of authority over her family’s history. Elsbeth inquired about the connection shortly after her conversation with her colleague. Her father, with her mother also present, observed her with a “deeply serious face” and proceeded to detail his family history and Elsbeth’s kinship with her colleague. She then asked, “‘and they were all avowed Jews?’ . . . my father nodded silently. Then with a painfully distraught voice: ‘I wanted to know that we’d finally be free of perpetual discrimination.’ He left the room, my mother followed him. I remained alone.”

But, according to Elsbeth’s narrative, she was not alone in the spiritual sense. She remembered the date she learned that her paternal grandparents were Jewish: “On that Friday—a day pregnant with memory—April 7, 1933,” Elsbeth wrote, she “experienced the shared fate of [her] father.” Far from melancholic, she regarded the revelation “without protest or doubt, as an indescribable calm and intimacy overcame me. What had always lain dormant in unconsciousness, came to light—an internal

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27 Von Ameln, 68.
28 Von Ameln, 69.
identity and the concealment of a shared psychological make-up.” Regarding Judaism, Elsbeth remarked that at that point she “now knew where [she] belonged.”

Most children of putative mixed marriages who were made aware of their family lineage in the first years of the Third Reich were not adults like Elsbeth von Ameln, but were still small children. One such instance of a child discovering Jewish heritage in the midst of the Third Reich was Lydia Schiele’s (b. 1931). Her case provides a contrast to Elsbeth’s because her mother converted from Judaism to Protestantism in 1935. Her motivation for conversion was to protect her family. In this respect, the Nazi revision of family histories also changed the terms of negotiation. While Elsbeth’s father converted out of both religious conviction and the desire to leave Jewish persecution behind, Lydia’s mother, who belonged to the Jewish community but did not practice, converted out of urgent necessity. Despite clear differences, Germany’s new racial taxonomy classified the von Amelns and the Schieles in the exact same way. Lydia was the second child to a mixed marriage that probably took place in the mid-1920s. As a child born just two years prior to the Nazi seizure of power, she grew up in a context were Jewish prejudice was a part of daily life. It was not until 1938 that Lydia became aware of her Jewish background. While living at her maternal grandparents’ apartment in Hamburg, Lydia recalled playing outside with neighborhood children. They stated that a Jewish family lived in the apartment house. When Lydia and her sister inquired as to who, the children identified their grandparents. They took that information to their grandparents: “the kids outside said you’re Jewish!” she told her grandmother. Lydia remembers that her grandmother responded with a single word, revealingly inflected with Yiddish: “Nebs!”

Lydia’s discovery of her externally imposed identity shaped

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29 Von Ameln, 69-70.
30 Quoted in Meyer, „Jüdische Mischlinge,“ 309.
her life. But her retelling of the story, especially the affirmation of dignity on behalf of her grandmother, also make the story a way for Lydia to assert authority over her family history.

The reinvention of intermarriage in the 1930s did more than revise family histories, it also had an immediate effect on budding relationships. The statistical spike of mixed marriages between Jews and non-Jews from 1932 to 1933 covered in chapter four attests to this. And the relationship between Robert Breusch (b. 1907) and Käte Dreyfuss, who ended up getting married in Chile rather than Germany, stands as an example of how individuals who wanted to intermarry were forced to re-negotiate their future during the Third Reich because of the imposition of a racial wedge between the two individuals. Breusch, a Protestant, met Dreyfuss, who was Jewish, while on a ski trip around Frankfurt am Main in 1929. They saw one another from time to time in Freiburg, including an awkward meeting at a New Year’s celebrations where, Robert wrote in his 1939 memoir, he fawned over “the cute girl with the short ski-skirt and the brown Bubikopf.”31 They soon developed an intimate relationship. Travel and skiing were among their favorite activities. On a trip to Austria in January, 1933, they became engaged. Returning to Freiburg on January 14, they started to plan their wedding, but kept their engagement secret from their families, with the exception of Käte’s mother. The timing was auspicious, as they returned just sixteen days prior to Hitler being named Chancellor of Germany. “That was wise” to delay announcing the engagement, Robert recalled.32 Robert and Käte did not let the new regime alter their plans to marry, but they also acknowledged that their union was, suddenly, a problem. Moreover, it was not just marriage that was a problem, but their intimacy in general. Because they were unmarried, they risked accusations of Rassenschande. Robert and Käte maintained their relationship in increasing levels of secrecy over the following two years. During the

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31 Robert Breusch, MLiG 38, 26.
32 Breusch, 35.
summer of 1935, they ventured away from Freiburg and crossed the border, separately, into France for meetings. While in Freiburg, Robert went to Käte’s house only at night. Then, in September of 1935, the regime announced the Nuremberg Laws. “Finally,” he remarked, “what had previously been practically impossible was now legally forbidden: we could neither marry nor be seen together.” Their lives changed—but they still got married. Käte and Robert left Germany and married in Chile in July 1936.\(^{33}\) In their case, both the narration of courtship and marriage itself stood as proclamations of agency.

The stories of these individuals and families demonstrate a range of experiences with intermarriage in Germany. The multitude of stories alone combats the Nazi regime’s simplified revision. The actors in the families analyzed above built identities based on the mutually recognized, porous, and often unimportant boundary that existed in the home. That might have meant marginalization of Judaism, as took place in the von Ameln case, but it also might have meant conversion to Judaism, as the Schiele example attests. Regardless, these families and lives were unsettled by the way the Nazis attempted to rewrite their histories. But the stories did not remain in the hands of the Nazis. Indeed, the very act of recollection and description found in the words they expressed are interventions and reclamations of the past.

**Familial Responses**

German families had to negotiate intermarriages from the time of courtship, to the union, and to daily life afterward, including the appearance of children. National Socialism attempted to erase this complexity, which is one reason why these matters are thematized in postwar recollections. Memoir writers portrayed the variety of ways families, particularly parents of intermarrying couples, addressed the possibility of a mixed marriage. The opinions ranged from

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\(^{33}\) Breusch, 55-56.
blasé acceptance to outright condemnation. The cases contain humanizing details of the reactions, which offered the narrators a way to assert authority over family histories.

Although the boundary between Jews and non-Jews in marriage was made into the most significant distinction in Germany, when the unions commenced more prosaic matters such as economics had to be negotiated. This could also be the case in a religious family that ostensibly rejected mixed marriage on religious grounds. The details within Guenther Berger’s (b. 1909) story reveal a parent who rejected a putative intermarriage for one of his children but accepted another mixed marriage for a different child. The difference had to do with finances. Guenther was the child of a Jewish father and a Christian mother. His father came from a traditional Jewish household. For them, “it was considered an unwritten rule for a Jewish man to marry a Jewish woman. Whoever violated that condition experienced the ostracism of his family.” Such a convention, however, was subject to change depending on economic circumstances. Prior to his parents’ union in 1908, his paternal grandparents consented to the marriage of their son to a non-Jewish woman. But it was only “because my father was economically independent from the family, so he did not meet with their contempt.”34 Conversely, the family cut off all ties with his father’s brother, who in 1918 married a non-Jewish woman from Magdeburg. The difference between his father and his uncle was that his father’s future appeared economically sound, while his uncle’s did not. According to Guenther, economic factors outweighed the religious discrepancy, even though religious concerns were present. Guenther himself married in 1940—by that time he had been saddled with the designation of Mischling, as was his wife. Both were living products of the way the Nazis revised their family histories and also their present. As two Mischlinge of the first degree, they were legally sanctioned to marry one another, although they

were quite rare. Regarding their union, Guenther reported that they entered into it “stranded and in fear of the future.”

More historical wrinkles appear in the Freudenthal case. Heinz Freudenthal’s 1978 memoir serves as a reclamation in three ways. First, Heinz added color to his family history by narrating the problems his parents faced when they married. He was a Jewish German from Jewish German parents, but that does not mean that the marriage of his parents was uncomplicated. The other two assertions have to do with his marriage to a Catholic woman, Elsbeth Hippeli. Heinz showed degrees of rigidity and flexibility both he and Elsbeth’s parents had toward their engagement. He also recounted the mostly failed negotiation he and Elsbeth had with their respective parents due to their marriage. In this final act, Heinz not only reclaimed the vivid life the Nuremberg Laws revised, but he also asserted the historical agency he and Elsbeth expressed by acting against their parents’ wishes. It is notable that Heinz felt it important to dwell on tension and negotiation within his family. Family conflict existed prior to 1935, but it was precisely that type of complex family history that the Nazi regime attempted to paper over and reduce to a binary interaction between Jews and Aryans.

Heinz Freudenthal was born in 1904. His father, Max Freudenthal, was the noted Reform rabbi and co-editor of the Zeitschrift für die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland. Max met his future wife, Else, in Breslau in the mid to late 1890s. He was an instructor of Judaism there, and she was one of his students. Their marriage was the first to foster familial conflict because Max was far more religious than Else’s mostly secular Jewish family. Most of the tension was between Else’s mother Julia and Max. Heinz’s grandmother Julia, according to Heinz, was tender yet acerbic. She reserved her sharpest barbs for Max, mostly because he was religious. Despite his active participation in German letters and membership in the Reform community,

35 Berger, 3.
Max’s religiosity caused Julia to interpret his attachment to Judaism as antiquated; yet she remained a supportive part of her daughter’s life, despite Julia’s misgivings. Heinz, writing his memoirs from Munich, remembered that “grandmother Julia held little regard for religion, or rather confession, and even less for representatives of it.” Singling out Max, Julia also advised her daughter to “see to it not to have too many children—ministers have too much time on their hands!” She was comfortable showing her distaste for religion. After procuring kosher meat for the first time in preparation for welcoming Max into her home, Julia found the meat too dry and garnished it with cheese. Max, keeping a kosher diet that strictly separated dairy from meat products, remained hungry for the evening, Heinz noted.36

Heinz’s portrayal of the tension and negotiation that took due to his parents’ intramarriage served to normalize the conflicts he and Elsbeth had to deal with in their own relationship. Both musicians, Heinz and Elsbeth met at a conservatorium in Würzburg in 1926 and ultimately married in 1927. Heinz’s parents and Elsbeth’s parents expressed different degrees of rigidity and flexibility regarding their union. First, Heinz had to contend with his father. “Owing to my marriage with a Catholic, I fell into disfavor with my family,” Heinz recalled, and “at the same time my wife clashed with her parents because of her marriage with a Jew.”37 Heinz’s father went so far as to seriously consider giving up his post as a rabbi due to his son’s mixed marriage, although the doyen of Reform Judaism in Germany, rabbi Leo Baeck, convinced him not to. In an effort to reconcile difference, both sets of parents attempted to convince their child’s betrothed to convert to their religion. They were rigid in their stance. Julia, Heinz’s maternal grandmother, was much more flexible regarding the marriage. She advised Elsbeth, Heinz reported, to “just convert to Judaism a little bit so that the old fool [Max] can

36 Heinz Freudenthal, “‘Dichtheit und Wahrung’ – Mein Lauf durchs Leben,” MM 24, 12.
37 Freudenthal, 13.
have some peace—you can always backpedal!” But Elsbeth did not want to convert, and Heinz was uninterested in persuading her, even if it meant a damaged relationship with his own parents. Prior to the marriage, Heinz recalled, his father called him to his rabbinic office in Nuremberg. Max received Heinz “with the words: ‘me or this woman!’ I left the office and my parental household silently. All ties with him were now cut.”

While the result was the same between Elsbeth and her parents, Elsbeth’s father was slightly more flexible in that he demanded either conversion to Catholicism or the conversion from the life of a musician to what he viewed as a more suitable profession. He perceived religion and profession as equally fluid categories. Elsbeth’s father, according to Heinz, “declared categorically” that he “wanted neither a Jew nor a musician for a son-in-law” and that “for a union with his daughter to be considered at all, [Heinz] would have to convert to Catholicism or else choose a ‘respectable’ profession.”

Ostensibly, Elsbeth’s father would have accepted a Jewish son-in-law who was, for example, a lawyer, or a Catholic musician for a son-in-law—but not a Jewish musician. The couple did not see Elsbeth’s father again after he provided his strict religious and professional demands, neither of which Heinz ever considered following. Elsbeth’s father did not attend their wedding and died shortly after in 1927.

Both families cut ties with Heinz and Elsbeth because of their intermarriage, but that did not mean that there was an impermeable boundary between Judaism and Catholicism, or between the Jewish and Catholic families. Indeed, the marriage brought the families together, at least for a moment. Heinz and Elsbeth’s engagement caused each set of parents to collude in an attempt to prevent the marriage from taking place. A few days prior to their marriage in Bad Harzburg, Heinz met a friend of his father’s from Nuremberg. During their conversation, the family

38 Freudenthal, 13-14.
39 Freudenthal, 78.
40 Freudenthal, 78.
acquaintance revealed that Heinz’s parents and Elsbeth’s parents, “who until then had no personal relationship, had met in Marienbad. The collective purpose was to find a way to prevent our marriage.” The remembrance of this meeting, even if the purpose was unwelcome from Heinz’s perspective, is the reclamation of a German past. It was a rich past where a Jewish family and a Catholic family could do something as banal as trying to work together to impede the choices of their children.

While the Freudenthal case shows a break with family ties on both sides, the story Martin Doerry told of his grandparents and great-grandparents in the 1990s illustrates initial skepticism followed by reluctant acceptance of a mixed marriage. The marriage of Lilli Jahn (née Schlüchterer, 1900-1943), whose parents were practicing Jews, and Ernst Jahn (1900-1960), who was raised Protestant but came from a Protestant-Catholic intermarriage, provides a characteristically complicated example of such a negotiation. Like Heinz Freudenthal’s parents, Lilli’s both came from Jewish backgrounds, but they did not profess the same degree of religious or cultural allegiance to Judaism. Lilli’s mother, Paula (née Schloss, 1875-1972), came from a middle-class Jewish household that maintained strong ties to Judaism as a religion and a cultural tradition. But her father Josef Schlüchterer (1863-1932)—according to Doerry, Lilli’s grandson—only “tolerated his wife’s religious sensibilities,” despite participating in the liberal Jewish community of Cologne, where they made their home and where Lilli was born. Lilli’s relationship to Judaism evolved over the course of her life. She was initially impressed more by her father’s secular Jewish outlook, but she always considered it essential to maintain ties with Judaism and would never consider conversion. Ernst, Lilli’s future husband, was born in Bielefeld and raised Protestant. He was the child of a Catholic-Protestant intermarriage that

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41 Freudenthal, 80.
likely took place sometime in the 1890s. His parents’ relationship represented more conflict than compromise. Ernst’s parents clashed regarding their respective confessional affiliations. He was baptized Protestant, but his parents never reconciled how they would impart their respective Christian affiliations on to Ernst as he grew up. Ernst’s Catholic mother, for example, “had secretly, and against his Protestant father’s wishes, taken him and his sister to Catholic mass” as a young child. Over the course of Ernst’s life, he became increasingly attracted to Catholicism’s pageantry and what he viewed as its moral inflexibility. Ernst’s mother died when he was just five years old, and his father passed away in 1913, when he was still a young boy.\footnote{Doerry, 10.}

In terms of negotiating an intermarriage, Lilli and her parents acknowledged the divide between Judaism and Christianity, but the degree to which they invested importance in that boundary was changeable. Lilli’s were involved in the negotiation of her marriage to a nominal Protestant that evolved from their initial disapproval to unenthusiastic acceptance. Additionally, Lilli’s intermarriage contrasted with the way her parents addressed her sister’s potential marriage to a non-Jew. In 1923, Ernst and Lilli met as medical students in Cologne. They quickly developed a relationship that continued in epistolary form once Ernst moved to the nearby town of Immenhausen to try and establish a medical practice. As a doctor, Ernst’s profession was acceptable to Lilli’s parents. The letters Lilli and Ernst exchanged reveal that Lilli was always more taken with Ernst than he was with her. In addition to other love interests at Immenhausen, Ernst was affixed to melancholy and self-loathing. While negotiating her future with Ernst, Lilli kept in mind the potential problems a marriage to a non-Jew might have on her relationship with her parents. Compounding the problem, Lilli’s younger sister Elsa became engaged to a non-Jewish man in 1925. “Well,” Lilli wrote to Ernst, the man “was here and asked for her hand. Apart from the fact that my parents like him as little as I do, he doesn’t make a living . . . my
mother thinks it awful that he isn’t a Jew, and she’s been on at me for days now: ‘Just as long as you don’t do the same.’” While her mother’s words conflicted with Lilli’s desires, she empathized with the sentiment. For Lilli, an intermarriage was unacceptable if she were ever asked to abandon Judaism. “Nothing will ever be able to uproot or wrest me away from the community of my forefathers,” she noted in another letter. But because “it’s ‘the person’ that matters, not his ‘religion,’” mixed marriage was not beyond the pale. It was also perfectly acceptable for Ernst. His reservations regarding Lilli had more to do with his skepticism regarding her professional ambitions, which he found unbecoming for a woman.

Lilli’s parents raised various objections to Lilli and her sister’s marriages with non-Jews. Some of them were religious in nature at the time, but those were not necessarily the most important roadblocks. It turned out that the idea that it was “the person” that mattered also guided Lilli’s parents, or at least her more secular father. Josef rejected the proposal for Elsa, Lilli’s sister, evidently because the man was a philanderer, had poor job prospects, and was not Jewish. Notably, each component contributed to the rejection, but her father weighed the former two characteristics, while Paula focused on the latter one. Indeed, that was how the parental negotiations went when it came to Lilli’s courtship of Ernst. When broaching the topic of marriage directly to her parents, Lilli’s father indicated that he would “have to think it over.” He mostly considered their financial prospects, as Ernst’s medical practice sputtered as the German economy was just overcoming the hyperinflation of the mid 1920s. “Our difference in religion,” Lilli wrote to Ernst, “was the last impediment he cited.” Conversely, her mother was

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44 Doerry, 20.
45 Doerry, 22.
46 Doerry, 20.
47 Doerry, 25.
“very upset” and “raised all kinds of objections [and] tried to draw my attention to the dangers of a mixed marriage.”\(^48\)

Lilli faced a complicated set of tensions regarding her marriage that cannot be reduced to religious difference. While Nazi revision made the matter about race, Doerry’s narration of his grandmother rightly disregarded it because in the 1920s it was not even a concern worth mentioning for the family. Doerry painted a complex picture of his family’s past. To convince her parents to sanction her marriage, Lilli first had to convince her father that their medical practice could succeed in a small town. Inflation had wiped out her family’s savings, so her parents could offer no financial assistance in the form of a gift or a dowry.\(^49\) She also had to persuade her father that “a big-city child like me, with all my intellectual and cultural pretensions,” could “feel at home” in a small town such as Immenhausen.\(^50\) Second, she had to assure her mother, who had “made it very clear . . . that she wasn’t reconciled to the idea of a mixed marriage and could never be so,” that sustained religious difference would not interfere with her success or happiness.\(^51\) Third, she had to mollify Ernst’s worries that her professional life would distract from her role as a mother. She welcomed a maternal role, but asserted to Ernst that “you can’t . . . turn me into a simple, uncomplicated person.”\(^52\) Moreover, she attempted to convince Ernst that while she would forever remain Jewish, that did not suggest interpersonal incompatibility. “If my God is squeezed into the form of a religion, no matter which,” she told her future husband, “I can’t find him. . . . To me there’s no god of the Jews, any more than

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\(^48\) Doerry, 31.
\(^49\) This was common for most marriages in the 1920s, but the shift was especially felt in the German-Jewish community because prior to 1918 the majority of Jewish marriages were arranged and included dowries. See Kaplan, 85-116.
\(^50\) Doerry, 31.
\(^51\) Doerry, 34.
\(^52\) Doerry, 23.
there’s a god of other peoples. To me there’s only ‘the divine per se.’”53 Finally, she also alluded to the internal conflict that she confronted. Lilli’s religious detachment is belied by her own statements that attempted to subtly goad Ernst into at least empathizing with Judaism—“on Friday evening I’m going to the synagogue with my parents, then I’ll tell you about it.”54 In the end, Lilli convinced Ernst to propose to her by asking Lilli’s father for her hand in marriage, and Josef accepted Ernst’s request, as did Paula. Paula even offered an invitation to Ernst to stay with the family in Cologne over Christmas time in 1925.55 They married in 1926 in the Schlüchterer home in Cologne, where they had a Jewish ceremony that Ernst, ignorant of Jewish convention, awkwardly bumbled his way through.56 But Lilli never really resolved her internal negotiation of personal, professional, and spiritual ambitions. In the end, she sacrificed her professional aims for her personal ones, and found a middle ground regarding her spirituality. Her children were baptized Protestant, and every year she adorned the family door with a Christmas wreath. Yet, she would regularly travel, alone, to the nearby city of Kassel, which housed the nearest synagogue.

Other cases demonstrate religious difference playing an even smaller role in the negotiation of a putative intermarriage. The family ties evident in the marriage between Hans and Brigitte Steiner (b. 1900 and 1910 respectively) offer a telling example. In the first volume of Brigitte Steiner’s three-volume memoir (completed in 1995 and covering the years 1932-1949, in all), she showed her and her husband’s experience living in a small German town from 1932 to 1934, before leaving for the United States in 1935. Though Hans, her husband, was Jewish, Brigitte suggested that neither she nor her husband conceptualized their marriage as an

53 Doerry, 36-37.
54 Doerry, 34.
55 Doerry, 39.
56 Doerry, 45.
intermarriage. The word does not appear in her memoir, and on the very first page she indicated that “his being Jewish posed no problem” when they married in 1932. She then moved on to what she viewed as the important matters of daily life. In addition to the assertion that her marriage was not what the Nuremberg Laws said it was, Brigitte worked to reclaim her complicated past by detailing the acrimony and good will between the two families, as well as between the couple and their respective families. The family members included supportive parents, a disgruntled mother-in-law, and committed National Socialists.

Brigitte and Hans likely met sometime in 1931, and they married in 1932 after a short engagement. Brigitte’s memoir begins in 1932, on a train, as the newlyweds traveled to Rottweil in southwest Germany, where Hans was set to begin his first appointment as a physician. Brigitte’s parents lived in Stuttgart, about 100 kilometers from Rottweil, and visited frequently. According to Brigitte, her parents adored Hans as much as she did, and evidently his being Jewish was never anything they had to “overcome” during their short courtship. Brigitte’s brothers, however, objected to her relationship precisely because Hans was Jewish. Both were sympathetic to National Socialism, although one was more committed than the other. Hans’s parents lived in Muensingen, a small town in Baden-Württemburg, where they were the only Jewish family and where Hans’s father had been the town’s physician since 1887. While Brigitte did not have a smooth relationship with her mother-in-law, it was not because she was a Christian. It was because his mother, according to Brigitte’s telling at least, was a flawed human being who was perhaps too controlling regarding her son and his wife. If their relationship exemplifies a reductive stereotype, it is one between a young bride and her mother-in-law.

Brigitte made an effort to illustrate the varied opinions her family held regarding her marriage to Hans. They ranged from happiness to antisemitic rejection. Her parents expressed

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the former and her brothers Ernst and Hanni the latter. Ernst’s (14 years her senior) and Hanni’s (10 years older than Brigitte) reactions to Brigitte and Hans’s marriage illustrate two familial responses to intermarriage that were both couched in antisemitism, though even these were not quite the same. Upon hearing of Brigitte’s marriage to a Jewish doctor, Ernst responded to the news with a “letter of outspoken antisemitism.” Ernst’s ostensible rejection, however, did not prevent him from attending their engagement dinner in Stuttgart, although he arrived from Berlin unannounced. Ernst was the more compromising sibling. Brigitte described him as “amiable” and “impressed with Hans,” which caused him to, “at least in this personal case,” overcome his antisemitism.58 Around March 1933, Ernst visited the recently married couple in Rottweil. Prior to his stay, Ernst is reported to have met Hermann Göring. During the visit, Hans asked Ernst with interest if Göring was “a decent man.” Hans hoped that behind Nazi posturing there existed a sentiment that it would be unproductive to interfere in the daily and professional lives of German citizens, such as Hans. He was letdown when Ernst called Göring a “disgusting blob of fat” who believed the ideology he espoused and would seize the opportunity to implement that same ideology.59 Upon Ernst’s departure, he confided in he and Brigitte’s mother and asked her to urge Brigitte and Hans to leave Germany the first opportunity they get.

Brigitte’s other brother, Hanni, was less accepting, and in Brigitte’s memoir he represents the ill effects the Third Reich had on the Steiner family. For instance, Hanni attempted to prevent Brigitte’s marriage to Hans, just as the National Socialist regime attempted to undermine the marriage’s legitimacy by revising its meaning in 1935. Brigitte’s memoir stands as a testimony that neither succeeded. Brigitte described Hanni as her favorite brother when she was growing up. “When Hans entered my life,” however, “Hanni, to my shocked surprise, turned to ugly

58 Steiner, 25.
59 Steiner, 26.
antisemitism in the guise of protecting me against a ‘flighty womanizer’ . . . he fought fiercely to break up our young relationship, but did not succeed.” Brigitte indicated that she was “deeply wounded” by his actions and false characterizations. Additionally, Hanni symbolised Hans’s professional plight. Hanni was an unsuccessful law student with scant future prospects prior to 1933. By 1934, however, by virtue of his Aryanness and membership in the Nazi Party, Hanni began to advance toward a professional future in law. His advancement took place at precisely the same time that Hans was dismissed from his position as a doctor for being Jewish. “Two events,” Brigitte observed, “based on a common denominator,” because “on the very same day when Hans was discharged from his position because he was a Jew, we received a joyous letter from mother, telling us that Hanni had just passed the final exam which would open the door to a law practice.”

Hans’s mother Sara was another actor in Brigitte’s story. Most notably, Brigitte remembered a rocky relationship with Sara, which included an objection to Brigitte’s marriage to her son. In her memoir, Brigitte attributed the animosity to difference. “I knew of Antisemitism,” she wrote, “but I had never heard of the reverse.” However, based on the anecdotes Brigitte provided, the tension appears to have hinged on matters of control and authority over the marriage between Hans and Brigitte. As an only child, Hans was very close to his parents, he maintained a strong relationship with them, and contact between the couple and Sara was frequent. Based on her telling, Brigitte desired to have a good relationship with Sara, but their clashes seemed to have made it impossible. Yet, underneath Brigitte’s lamentations are terms of endearment that suggest the closeness of family: “it was bitter disappointment to realize that

60 Steiner, 75.
61 Steiner, 76.
warm relationship with Mama was impossible to achieve.”62 Additionally, their conflicts do not evoke rejection due to the crossing of an all-important boundary that supposedly separated the families of Brigitte and Hans. Rather, their clashes can be interpreted as nettlesome annoyances of everyday life. Sara, for example, disapproved of Brigitte’s choice to name her daughter Ursula—she preferred Anni’Liesie.63 One gets the sense that if Brigitte had wanted to name her child Anni’Liesie, Sara would have preferred Ursula. Indeed, Hans’s relationship with his mother was also not without tension. When “Mama came to the phone” during Hans’s Sunday conversation with his parents, for example, Brigitte recalled that it was “quite often . . . followed by some bickering, in which case Hans ended quickly by saying ‘and here is Brigitte.’ For me, this meant a very short conversation with an irritated mother-in-law.”64

Brigitte and Hans had to negotiate life in a marriage that led to social isolation, attack on their finances, and family division. Their respective family members played various roles, some positive and some negative, as they addressed their situation. Brigitte, Hans, and their young children Ursula (b. 1933) and Nicholas (b. 1934) emigrated to New York in early 1935. Even abroad, the links between the two families persisted. After Hans’s father died in 1937, Brigitte’s father visited Sara often. Hans’s marriage provided an avenue of solace for Sara. It did not, however, establish a channel for surviving the Third Reich—she was later killed in a concentration camp.65

In 1939, Eva Wysber wrote that “nobody thought twice that [her husband] was Aryan—my family was liberal, and for us an intermarriage was nothing special. I could build my life as I

62 Steiner, 42.
63 Steiner, 42.
64 Steiner, 70.
65 Steiner, 51. Brigitte Steiner does not indicate at which concentration camp Sara was killed.
wished. While Eva claimed that something called “intermarriage” did not exist for her family, her use of a Nazi vocabulary—she married an “Aryan”—illustrates the way external factors shaped her life, as did the fact that she wrote these words abroad after fleeing Germany. Yet by writing, Eva, like the other authors analyzed here regarding family responses to marriage, also reclaimed the terms that defined her and her family. The state’s definition of intimacy was the anomaly and the scandal. The familial responses to intermarriage demonstrate a spectrum of interpretations, from non-acknowledgement and casual acceptance, to denouncement. The common feature is that each story adds texture to a past that the Third Reich attempted to distill into absolute and binary racial categories. Religion sometimes mattered to parents who had a child who intended to enter into a mixed marriage. Sometimes, religion was irrelevant. In other cases, religion was one among many factors—it could be the least or most important thing. It is also notable that most of the individuals viewed any barrier to marriage as fixable. Religion could be changed just as professional outlook could be improved. Yet for others, such as Heinz and Elsbeth Freudenthal, intermarriage was the foundation for a total break between parents and children.

**Relationships across Generations**

Children from mixed marriages had an acute awareness of separate sets of grandparents, even if they were not alive long enough for the writer to remember them. Indeed, grandparents were particular sites of reclamation. Concepts such as “heritage” and “lineage” mean different things depending on context, and during the Third Reich, they assumed heightened importance for families that included both Jews and non-Jews. According to the Nuremberg Laws, grandparents represented the zero hour of every person’s racial heritage because they were all either purely Aryan or purely Jewish. Rather than continuing to dwell on Jewish grandparents as

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66 Eva Wysber, MLiG 250, 4.
markers of purity and impurity in German history, the voices analyzed below demonstrate that grandparents were also complex individuals who negotiated intimacy and social boundaries. They were not reducible to the racial “Jews” and “Germans” the Nuremberg Laws attempted to make them.

Martin Drucker’s relationships with the grandparents he did and did not know as a child demonstrate generational links that did not rely upon religious categories. Martin, the son of a Jewish convert to Protestantism and a Protestant woman, only knew two of his grandparents, and only one of them well. Martin’s paternal, Jewish, grandmother died before he was born, as did his maternal, Christian, grandfather. For him and his six siblings, his maternal grandmother was the “caretaker of our childhood years” until she died in 1887. Martin remembered her fondly, as he did his Jewish grandfather, who died when he was five. Martin’s memories of both were about daily life. He recalled nothing about the way his grandfather practiced Judaism, nor did he care to write about his grandmother’s Christianity. He reduced both relationships to affection. The ease in which Martin remembered the vivid “characterizations of the daily lives of people” that constituted his Christian grandmother’s oft-told stories, or sitting on his Jewish grandfather’s knee and looking out of his flat window at the bustling activity below, demonstrate the ties he maintained across generations, but they say nothing about ties to either a Christian or a Jewish heritage. Furthermore, it is significant to note that just because his paternal family can be termed his “Jewish side,” his grandparents’ marriage was not normative. His grandfather had Sephardic heritage with ties to the Netherlands while his grandmother had an Ashkenazic background from Germany’s border regions with Poland. “Pure” marriages between “pure” individuals were complex, as Martin demonstrated when writing his memoir.

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67 Drucker, 3, emphasis added.
Martin evoked the impressions left by his grandparents. In order to accept the lasting guidance his grandparents left, he separated their qualities from their Christian and Jewish backgrounds. And by doing so, he also placed distance between himself and his background, as well as the value of heritage in general. Martin’s negotiation of descent is notable because it demonstrates engagement and reinterpretation of personal and family history based on the context of marginalization. “Concerning mental abilities and disposition,” he claimed, “ancestry does not come into consideration.” Martin separated inherited traits from those that a person formed given particular environmental experiences that the person may or may not control. His environmental interpretation of human nature as opposed to a biological one was a challenge to the way the Nazis interpreted race and the Drucker family history. Drucker maintained that little of value could be inherited. “I say that with great resolve,” Martin wrote,

> if it were otherwise, then the descendants of lyricists or composers must exhibit poetic or musical merit [and] the children and grandchildren of thieves and crooks must be inclined toward stealing and forgery. . . . Which ostensible ‘Jewish’ mentality manifests in the descendants of someone from a family that had lived in Germany for a hundred years, converted to Christianity, went through school and university, and had been invested as a professor in mathematics or literature? The intellectual and moral personality of a person is formed by environment and fortune, not by ancestors.

Like Martin’s grandparents, Elsbeth von Ameln’s grandparents lived different Jewish lives. Her grandfather “adhered to Jewish convention, observance of the Sabbath, [and] Jewish holidays; he attended synagogue and allowed four sons to be educated by a Rabbi in Hebrew in preparation for bar-mitzvahs.” In contrast, her grandmother “was thoroughly assimilated, after completing secondary school she had enjoyed an interconfessional boarding school for

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68 Drucker, 1-2.
69 Drucker, 2.
supplemental life instruction under Christian leadership, and after the death of her husband did not offer the least of objections against the conversion of her son Paul (Elsbeth’s father).” Her grandparents, while making a life together, were individuals irreducible to any notion of purity. When Elsbeth felt a deep connection to Judaism after she discovered that she had Jewish ancestors, she experienced a sense of belonging that transcended the complex and different Jewish lives that her grandparents lived.

Grandparents had a more immediate effect on children who were born in the 1920s and 1930s because they actively shaped and, in one case analyzed below, saved the lives of their grandchildren. In 1935, for example, Horst Hartwich (b. 1924) expressed despair to his non-Jewish mother upon learning that his parents’ mixed heritage excluded him from the ability to join the Hitler Youth. In response, Horst’s mother tied his sense of exclusion to the experience of his Jewish grandparents and Jewish father. Her evocation of emotional links solidified his Jewish heritage as a lens through which he navigated daily life. “Just think what papa and your grandparents would say if they knew what you wished,” Horst’s mother prompted, “don’t you think it would cause them great anguish?” Arnswald Krueger (b. 1918) similarly terminated ties with the Hitler Youth in 1934 because he realized he was situated “in the wrong community” given that his mother was Jewish. As opposed to Horst and Arnswald’s initial inclinations to belong to the Hitler Youth, Arnswald’s brother, Helmut Krueger (b. 1913), interpreted his Jewish lineage “with pride.” Krueger proudly recalled a school essay he wrote in 1929 in which he celebrated the religious and national diversity of his background: his Christian family from Saxony-Anhal, his Jewish mother from Vienna, and his maternal grandparents, a Jewish man from the Netherlands and a Jewish woman from Hungary. He closed his essay with these words:

70 Von Ameln, 15.
71 Horst Hartwich, „Untitled, 1933-1945,“ LBI MM III, 10.
72 Hartwich, 16.
“thus, I am a *Mischling* of many races and nations.” After the Nazis announced their taxonomy of race in 1935, this sentence took on an entirely new meaning. After 1935, “*Mischling*” no longer meant hybridity in the general sense (frequently used by botanists), but it was a designation of a specific identity. Despite Helmut’s emotional connection to his expansive family network, there was distance between Helmut and his Jewish family. “I had little contact with Jews, neither in my childhood nor later,” Helmut observed. He also noted that it was fortunate because the closer one was with his or her Jewish family, the closer one was to persecution. In 1929, he did not know that part of his lineage would be used as evidence against his rights of citizenship, and possibly life. Like Horst, Helmut perceived in himself the convergence of lines of ancestry of what he perceived to be an individualized heritage. According to their narrations, their grandparents stood as emotional exemplars of what that heritage meant.

The actions of grandparents could also mean survival. Margit Korge (b. 1928), the daughter of a Jewish mother and a Christian father, survived the war in Germany directly as a result of the intervention of both sets of her grandparents. In 1935, Margit’s parents divorced, and her mother emigrated to the United States and her father relocated to Romania. Upon departure, Margit’s mother left her in the hands of Catholic nuns. Her maternal grandparents Anita and Soloman Kalman—“Jewish in belief and Jewish in their worldview”—paid for her education at the exclusive order where Margit’s mother deposited her. She stayed afloat there until her grandparent’s money ran out, after which she survived the war hidden in her paternal, Christian, grandfather’s house. Margit, therefore, literally owed her life to both sets of her

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73 Helmut Krueger, „Der Halbe Stern. Die Geschichte eines Mischlings ersten Grades im Dritten Reich und seiner Eltern, der Mischehe eines deutschbluetigen Theaterleiters und seiner juedischen Ehefrau, 1933-1945,” LBI MM II 2, 4-5.
grandparents. Prior to waiting out the conclusion of the war with her paternal grandfather, she met her maternal grandmother for one final time in 1942. In Margit’s telling of this final meeting, she portrayed her grandmother as someone with a great deal of humility. Margit’s grandmother symbolically referenced Christianity, or at least the mask of Christianity, as the thing that saved her life. But Margit’s narrative clarified that it was persons rather than symbols that saved her from death. At the final meeting, Margit wrote that her grandmother “bought me a gold cross on a delicate gold necklace. She laid it around my neck and said: ‘now people will think that you are a Christian child.’” Not long after this meeting, her grandparents were transported to the Lodz Ghetto, where they died shortly thereafter.

Finally, one remarkable document demonstrates that even in the midst of the Third Reich, the grandparents of a child from a mixed marriage could claim the past for their grandchildren’s future. Max Mayer’s (1873-1962) 1938 letter to his grandson Peter (b. 1935) is an example of this assertion of authority over family history. Peter was the child of Lotte (1910-2000) and Ernst Paepke (1898-1963), she Jewish and he Christian. Max was Lotte’s father. Max wrote the letter to Peter the day after his Protestant baptism in 1938. Max’s letter stands as an example of a grandparent attempting to maintain generational and familial bonds with a child who he might never see grow up, and who might be unduly impressed not by his Jewish grandparents, but by the nature of being “mixed” in a racial state that had rewritten Peter’s family history.

“A young person,” Max wrote, “cannot be guided by his grandfather in questions to be posed and answered by a new generation.” The questions involved family trees. Max’s first task was to explain what the union of Peter’s parents meant. Peter’s “Aryan” father, Max

75 Korge, 38.
76 Doerry, 78. Olga, Max’s wife, was Lilli Jahn’s cousin. Lilli and Charlotte Paepke, Peter’s mother, were great friends. Paepke references Lilli’s marriage in her 1952 memoir Unter einem Fremden Stern: Geschichte einer deutschen Jüdin (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder Verlag, 2004).
77 Doerry, 77.
intoned, “requires no advocacy.” But that did not mean that the union, which took place after 1933, was accepted without protest. Max wrote that “when your father announced his decision to marry our beloved daughter Lotte, we dutifully and urgently drew attention to its gravity and to the manifold burdens he would be shouldering through his union with a Jewish wife.” Max envisioned problems not just for Lotte and Ernst, but also for their children, of whom Peter was the first.

Peter was born in the momentous year 1935, and Max felt obligated to explain the state of things in Germany after the introduction of the Nuremberg Laws. Max remarked on the absurd effects the laws had on their family. But even when doing so, Max insisted that Peter ultimately had the agency to either acknowledge or disavow the system into which he was born. Max, by writing the letter, was assuming the same authority. “As things stand now, you are unavoidably subject to the new German legislation that brands you a half-breed because your mother is of Jewish blood. This puts you half a rung above your mother, and your mother is classified as inferior to you in terms of human merit. You are legally subject to these regulations.” Regarding the choices Peter would make, Max assumed that he would side with his mother over the system that named her inferior. Indeed, Max wanted Peter to perceive his family’s Jewishness as a point of strength rather than a reason for marginalization. He was therefore somewhat disappointed upon hearing that Peter would be baptized. “It came as a shock to me in my Jewishness,” Max asserted, because his sense of being Jewish that he had previously viewed as “no more than an accident of birth” had become his “stronghold during these last few years of persecution.” It was only at this point that Max realized, or at least articulated, that the foregrounding of Jewishness in Germany meant many things, but it likely could not act as a bulwark against

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78 Doerry, 79.
79 Doerry, 77.
chauvinism for a child like it could for Max. Rather, Peter “had reached a point in [his] journey from which [he] will henceforth make [his] own way towards a sphere of life in which the chorus of hatred will quickly come within earshot.” Max understood himself as a “dissenting voice” for Peter that stood as an “affirmation of [Peter’s] family tree.”

Max also singled out his wife and Peter’s grandmother Olga as a living testimony of Peter’s family history. In a state where everyone had a family tree used to determine worth, Max offered his grandson a vision that was rooted in a hostile environment. “Control of one’s racial alloy,” Max wrote, “is vested in the person of the grandmother. In order to establish the German people’s Aryan exclusivity and expel the Jewish element, the German government employs the grandmother as a trigonometrical point.” Max focused on the manner in which the state invested new meaning into lineage, to the point where the “grandmother acquires fateful significance” and where “she devalues her grandchildren—unless, like you, they have one Aryan parent.” He navigated through racial classifications that resulted from the Jewishness of Max, Olga, and Peter’s mother Lotte, and used the system of percentages and hierarchy as a springboard to “introduce [Peter’s] Jewish grandmother to [him],” just in case they never got the chance to meet. “She confronts life’s difficulties with courage, but Germany’s persecution of the Jews is gnawing at her heart,” Max said to his grandson. He concluded: “you can be proud of your Jewish grandmother, and have no need to feel that she is the weak spot on your certificate of descent. You may regard her inclusion with total confidence; no nobler grandmother is inscribed in any Aryan certificate.”

According to the Nuremberg Laws, every individual’s grandparents determined where she or he landed amidst Germany’s racial taxonomy. Grandparents could not be mixed, but they

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80 Doerry, 78-79.
81 Doerry, 80-81.
could be the source of mixture, depending on the intimate lives they and their offspring lived. Memoirs from the children of intermarriages, however, reject this reduction. The writing of lives and family histories analyzed above serve as reclamations of the lives grandparents lived. In some instances, children of intermarriages esteemed Christian and Jewish grandparents, but their influence could only be articulated once they were distanced from Christian and Jewish identifications and regarded as humanizing figures. In other cases, couples cultivated emotional ties between grandparents and grandchildren by emphasizing that the child’s familial inheritance had to include the burdens family members bore at the time. Finally, in Max Mayer’s letter to his grandson Peter we see the co-existence of worry and confidence regarding how a grandchild might live under a regime that attempted to rewrite his family’s past.

Webs of Mixed Intimacy

Not everyone who experienced mixed marriage wrote about it, and even those that wrote about their lives did not necessarily focus on intermarriage. Family members of those who intermarried were affected by the presence of mixed marriage even if they did not take part in it. Additionally, of all of the mixed marriages that did take place, there were likely just as many encounters that, for whatever reason, did not lead to marriage.82 The documents analyzed in this chapter contain second-hand glimpses into other histories that assumed new meaning in Nazi Germany. The constellation of voices that speak directly about mixed marriage shade into obscured, yet historically present, instances of withheld or silenced experience by peripheral actors. Yet the stories themselves are not marginal. Indeed, the webs of mixed intimacy broaden the scope of family histories to include acquaintances similarly situated in German history.

In a context where family and kinship was redefined—particularly for families that fit neither exclusively in the “Aryan” nor the “non-Aryan” camps—webs of mixed intimacy were thrown into sharp relief. Horst Hartwich was only able to complete his high school education with the private assistance of a cousin. “Dr. Schäfter,” Horst wrote, “could not teach anymore because his wife was Jewish.”\(^83\) Dr. Schäfter helped Horst either because he had been dismissed from his teaching post, or because he was a family member by marriage—two reasons that were in any case intertwined. Of course, family ties did not always entail positive interaction. Karl Sorkin—the son of Russian Jewish parents born in Switzerland but a longtime resident of Rheinfeld, Baden—recalled that in 1935 his Protestant wife’s cousin Fritz visited them. A state employee, Fritz’s position was in danger, despite the fact that he was a Nazi Party member. The reason was that prior to the introduction of the Nuremberg Laws in September, his daughter had been engaged to a Jewish man. “Cousin Fritz,” Karl stated, “had an alternative set before him: either abandon his post or force his daughter to cancel the engagement; and if that fails, then to expel his daughter from the household.”\(^84\) Fritz hemmed and hawed, but his unwillingness to give up his job caused his daughter to leave the household independently and keep to her engagement.

The Nuremberg Laws created mixture from the material of family histories, which in turn dramatically altered the trajectory of individuals who lived in erstwhile marriages turned into intermarriages. Alfred Oppler (b. 1893) did not speak directly about intermarried acquaintances and family members when he wrote his memoir in 1939. However, his account is telling because he considered what the experience of his daughter might be as a product of him and his wife’s putative intermarriage. Raised Protestant but born to Jewish parents, Alfred’s remembrance of

\(^83\) Hartwich, 27.
\(^84\) Karl Sorkin, MLiG 217, 34.
his life was guided by two discoveries. First, his 1905 discovery that his parents were Jewish, and second, the 1935 realization, upon learning of the Nuremberg Laws, that he was “Jewish.” “It was our most trying hour,” he wrote regarding the second discovery, as he listened to the news with his Protestant wife. They “laughed at the gallows humor” of it all, even as he immediately recognized that “in the face of the blood theory” he would be subject to disadvantages. Their marriage immediately transformed: “my wife and I therefore lived, as the racial theory called it, in a mixed marriage.” Perhaps more difficult, Alfred and his wife had to deal with the fact that their child was from that point on a Mischling of the first degree because she had two Jewish grandparents.

Ironically, while the Nuremberg Laws ostensibly stultified potential future webs of mixed intimacy, it also established the possibility that some racial categories were fluid. Historian Beate Meyer recounts multiple attempts of people appealing their racial classification in Hamburg. Many of these instances involved the claim that a non-Jewish widow of a Jewish man gave birth to a child out of wedlock, naturally to an Aryan. Even if such appeals were unsuccessful, and they were more often than not, historian Thomas Pegelow-Kaplan argues that such action also allowed families to buy time while planning a way to flee Germany. Alfred Oppler referred to such alterations as the “alchemy of race” (Blutsarithmetik), and he was familiar with a specific example of such a case. An acquaintance of his who had a Jewish father attempted, “with the authority of verification,” that she had a different father. She argued that her deceased mother had an extramarital affair, of which she was a living product. “In opposition to the

85 Alfred Oppler, MLiG, 172, 41.
86 Meyer, 113-137; Burr Bukey cites similar cases that took place in Vienna while it was subject to the Nuremberg Laws.
unpleasantness of being a *Mischling,*” Alfred indicated, “she preferred to sully the memory of her mother.”\(^{88}\) This was not a choice subject to condemnation, as the environment was such that it was better to have been born out of wedlock than to be non-Aryan, or to have a prostitute for a mother rather than a Jewish woman.\(^{89}\) In another instance, similar only in that it demonstrates awareness that the formulas that determined race could be manipulated, an Aryan man in Frankfurt am Main attempted to change his status from Aryan to *Mischling* first degree. The reason was that his intimate, but unsanctioned and non-nuptial, relationship with a Jewish woman after 1935 could only be legitimized if he too had Jewish lineage. Otherwise, he was subject to the crime of *Rassenschande.* Eva Wysber, aware of but not a participant in the case, wrote that the man’s mother argued that her son was not produced from her marriage, but was the result of an affair with a Jewish man. “As a result, the son was half-Jewish” and was not subject to laws prohibiting his relationship with a Jewish woman.\(^{90}\)

Self-narrators only tell part of the story of mixed marriage in Germany. The accounts here are extremely valuable partly because of the other instances of mixed marriage they reference. By expanding the scope of analysis to include the intimate and casual webs experienced by the narrators and those around them, a more complete picture of the history of intermarriage in Germany emerges. It is a picture in which supportive figures and spaces, distinct familial experiences, and exceptional challenges to racial status, are interwoven into stories that were themselves entwined with the course of intermarriage in German history.

**Conclusion**

Else Fleissner (1900-1987), a German, emigrated to the United States in 1924. Likely influenced by two sons who married American Jews, Else wrote an unpublished novella titled

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\(^{88}\) Oppler, 45.  
\(^{89}\) Evan Burr Bukey, 54.  
\(^{90}\) Wysber, 22.
“German and Jew: A Love Story.”⁹¹ Set in 1933 Germany, it is a story about a non-Jewish German woman, Mary, who was wed to a Jewish German man named Walter. It opens with Mary reading an invitation to dinner her parents sent, but with the request that she attend alone: “you know,” her mother intones, “how [your brothers] feel” about Walter.⁹² The outspoken antisemitism of her brothers constitutes one of the two examples of Jewish prejudice in the story. The other involves Walter’s brother-in-law, whose is divorcing Walter’s sister because she is Jewish—an act that, in fiction as in reality, frequently consigned the Jewish divorcee to death.⁹³ Lilli Jahn was killed at Auschwitz in 1944, and her deportation and death was directly linked to Ernst succumbing to the pressure to divorce her.⁹⁴

Else Fleissner’s fictional account contains other familiar themes of family life: the brothers, who do not like to “mix with Jews” and want their sister to divorce Walter because it could impede their careers. Meanwhile, the parents are conflicted between their warmth with Walter and the underlying hope that Hitler will improve Germany. And, as was common, Mary prods Walter to leave Germany, but he resists because his training as a scholar of German literature is not a transferrable skill.⁹⁵ Fleissner also narrated the violence of Nazi Germany. Walter’s sister commits suicide after her husband divorces her; Walter is sent to a concentration camp, where he begins for the first time in his life to practice Judaism; and Walter is killed during the Kristallnacht pogrom in 1938. This novella is Fleissner’s alternate life, and it was one lived in some fashion by most of the writers analyzed herein. The experience was not due to the action of intermarrying but the transformation of what intermarriage meant. It was the

⁹¹ The memoir is also reminiscent of Brigitte Steiner’s three volume memoir. They came from similar backgrounds and lived in upstate New York, and it would not be surprising at all the two authors knew one another and Fleissner modeled her fictional story after Steiner’s experience.
⁹³ See Kaplan, Dignity and Despair, 88-93.
⁹⁴ Doerry, viii, 245-254.
⁹⁵ Fleissner, 6. Regarding the different experiences of Jewish men and women during the Third Reich, see Kaplan, Dignity and Despair, 50-73.
reinvention of mixed marriage that placed individuals “between the races,” reordered social boundaries, and commenced the rewriting of family histories.\textsuperscript{96}

Historian Marion Kaplan argues that “the mere continuation of [mixed] marriage” during the Third Reich “was a form of defiance.”\textsuperscript{97} Similarly, the voices analyzed above push back at the simplified versions of German family histories that reduced them to a binary encounter. The Nuremberg Laws provided the foundation for the supposed historical struggle between Aryans and Jews that was central to Nazi ideology. And the readings of the voices in this chapter affirm that the act of writing memoirs, as much as the content of them, was both an assertion of mastery over one’s own family history and a denial of the Third Reich’s claim to authority.

\textsuperscript{96} Fleissner, 14.
\textsuperscript{97} Kaplan, \textit{Dignity and Despair}, 89.
Conclusion

There is no German or West European Jewish question. Whoever recognizes one, only adopts or conforms the false thesis of the NSDAP and serves its cause. Until 1933 and for at least a good century before that, the German Jews were entirely German and nothing else. Proof: the thousands upon thousands of half and quarter, etc. Jews and of Jewish descent, proof that Jews and Germans lived and worked together without friction in all spheres of life. The anti-Semitism, which was always present, is not at all evidence to the contrary. Because the friction between Jews and Aryans was not half as great as that between Protestants and Catholics, or between employers and employees or between . . . Rhinelanders and Bavarians.

– Victor Klemperer, January 10, 1939

The evolution of German identity from the late nineteenth century to the Third Reich has to be understood in the context of boundary crossing. For this, intermarriage is an optimal site of investigation. Boundaries shape—if not define—identity because they delineate belonging. In and of themselves, boundaries do not pose threats to those that live one side, the other, or anywhere in between. The active hierarchization of different boundaries and their subsequent crossing, however, does. Mixed marriage in Germany is particularly significant in this regard. As an act of boundary crossing that begins with intimacy but has implications for the public articulation of German identity, intermarriage, as I have argued in this dissertation, vivifies the boundaries that contributed to transformations of German identity from the last quarter of the nineteenth century to the Third Reich. This transformation meant the state and popular authorization of one boundary as German and the other as a German threat. Any study of German identity needs to pay heed to these boundaries, their permeability, and their policing.

1 Klemperer, 1933-1941, 291.
From the time of the Reformation until the late eighteenth century, identity and belonging mostly meant the boundaries separating Lutherans, Calvinists, and Catholics in German speaking Europe. Intermarriage was only common between Lutherans and Calvinists. In the early nineteenth century, based on initiatives from below and above, Lutherans and Calvinists became Protestants. The boundary between the two remained, but its significance faded over time, partly as a result of frequent mixed marriage. In the new political map of nineteenth century Germany, the identity-forming boundaries were between Protestants, Catholics and Jews. In this moment, intermarriage between Protestants and Catholics became the common occurrence, and it normalized coexistence between the two confessions on the ground. The boundary between Protestants and Catholics remained crucial and contributed to making Germany a bi-confessional nation-state after political unification in 1871. At the turn of the century, the normalized unions between Protestants and Catholics received state sanction. At the same time, the German state declared marriages between Jews and Christians as different from those between Protestants and Catholics. The state placed a religious boundary between the former and a confessional one between the latter. Then, the difference between the boundaries as seen through intermarriage was mostly horizontal, but the foundation was in place to make the difference of difference vertical.

The turn of the twentieth century saw the introduction of the racial boundary, which changed the nature of mixed marriage and, in the end, was a basis of disentangling Judaism from Christianity religiously. German Zionists used the racial boundary, and its violation in the event of intermarriage, to advance a specific idea of Jewish identity, although this agenda appealed only to a small minority of Jewish Germans. At the same time, a particular brand of German antisemitism that appealed to racial and religious difference mobilized the racial boundary as a
means to articulate Germanness as specifically non-Jewish. After the First World War, this form of antisemitism constituted a central aspect of National Socialist ideology. Significantly, it involved not only the strict separation of Jews and “Aryans,” but it also admitted and even embraced the boundary between Protestants and Catholics. In order to remake Germany in a National Socialist image, National Socialism needed what made Germany Germany: the boundary between Protestants and Catholics. When in power, the Nazis officially de-problematised intermarriage between Protestants and Catholics without infringing upon the confessional boundary or institutional autonomy. The regime isolated Protestant-Catholic intermarriage as a matter for the churches, while at the same time it isolated Jewish-Aryan mixed marriage as a problem for the state to handle. This was a foundation of future violence. The Nazi state elevated mixed marriage between Jews and Aryans as the fundamental problem in Germany not only in the German present in 1935, but also in German history. The Blood Law and the persecution that followed altered the lives of thousands. After the Second World War and the Holocaust, those that survived wrote their own histories as a way to combat the Third Reich’s posthumous authority over the lives and histories of Jewish Germans. The individuals who told these stories insisted that Jews in Germany prior to 1935 formed their identities based on a historical boundary that was just as German as the one that stood between Protestant and Catholic Germans not of Jewish descent.

From 1935 to the conclusion of the Second World War in 1945, the boundary separating Protestants and Catholics continued to exist, as did intermarriage between Protestants and Catholics. But the boundary posed no threat to National Socialism. Indeed, the division facilitated state power. Members of the German Christian movement continued to bandy for a supraconfessional national church. But the aim did not take hold for anti-Catholic Protestants,
Catholics, or for Nazis. Anti-Jewish prejudice provided common ground for the churches during the Third Reich, but it was not a basis for institutional or political cooperation. For the Nazis, it did not need to be. Historian Doris Bergen writes, “two traditions had shaped the life of the churches in Germany since the time of Luther and even before. One was hostility toward Jews and Judaism, the other, confessional strife. Both of them thrived in the Third Reich.” That is to say that confessional conflict assisted in turning hostility toward Jews into violence because the Christian rivalry was a persistent context that enabled the Nazi assumption of power in Germany.

The boundary between Jews in Germany and non-Jews signified the difference between life and death. Jews were increasingly isolated prior to the war, leading one quarter of Germany’s half of a million Jews to flee before 1938 and another quarter after, though doing so was never easy. On January 1, 1939, the state mandated that Jewish men take the name “Israel” and Jewish women the name “Sara” to establish fully who they were in Germany. “On the tenth [of March] I collected my identity,” Victor Klemperer wrote about his new passport, which identified him as Victor Israel. Things got worse in the context of the war. Just over two years after being obligated to assume new names, Jews in Germany were forced to wear their difference. Jews within Germany’s pre-war borders as well as newly annexed territories were compelled to wear identifying patches that read “Jew” inside of a yellow six-pointed star. And not long after that, the deportations to ghettos and concentration camps began. In early 1943, Germany was declared “free of Jews” (Judenrein).

For Jews married to non-Jews, social and economic isolation was just as bad; however, the situation was slightly better for them and their children. Jews married to non-Jews accounted

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2 Bergen, Twisted Cross, 348.
3 Kaplan, Dignity and Despair, 73.
4 Klemperer, 1933-1941, 296.
for 98 percent of the very few who survived the Third Reich inside Germany’s pre-war borders.\(^6\) Victor Klemperer was one, though as a not very religious convert to Protestantism, he only began thinking of himself as Jewish after 1933. But too great a focus on the survival of Jews who intermarried shrinks the history of intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews in Germany. It also places too much emphasis on “privileged” intermarriages, which constituted the means of survival.\(^7\) Furthermore, any privilege the Nazis gave was temporary. In early March 1943, Klemperer astutely wrote about the situation of Jews in Dresden: “Left behind are only those protected by mixed marriage. Protected for how long?”\(^8\)

In particular, the Rosenstrasse protests of early 1943, when the Aryan women from privileged intermarriages protested the arrest of their husbands and spurred their release, casts pre-1933 intermarriages as unwitting triumphs. The protests also elide the temporary nature of “privilege” and “protection” that Klemperer recognized. In a way, focus on privileged intermarriages places emphasis on endurance without acknowledging that the ability to survive in Germany during the Third Reich relied on the effacement of Jewishness. Non-religious Jews and women who could not reproduce for the Aryan race fell into privilege. Framing intermarriage as exceptional acts is an example of accepting the Nazi’s revisionist history. The couplings and their problems were more mundane. Another way Nazi language can come to dominate is if Rosenstrasse serves as the endpoint of the history of intermarriage in Germany. If historians speak of “Germans” marrying “Jews,” they lose the depth of the issue and reproduce

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\(^7\) The distinction between privilege and non-privilege had to do with religion and gender. Privileged couples were those wherein the woman was Jewish—when the woman could not advance the Aryan race—or the couple had Christian baptized children. Nonprivileged couples were those who had children who belonged to a Jewish community or childless couples where the man was Jewish—the Aryan wife still had an opportunity to bear children for the racial community. Stoltzfus, 102.

the strict binary the Nazis pursued. “Who were the Germans married to Jews,” one historian asks of Rosenstrasse protestors, “and why did they openly disobey one of history’s most ruthless regimes?” These Germans had not married their partners because they were Jewish, but unlike some other Germans, they had no prejudice against Jews,” the same historian observes. When 1935 is the endpoint, however, the focus is on the factors that contributed to the construction and separation of “German” and “Jew” into a binary that did not previously exist.

Immediately after the Second World War and the Holocaust, confession continued to be a basis of German identity. Like many other aspects of German life, it was not the same after. It is ironic that, in the end, the Nazis did augur the decline of bi-confessional Germany and propel interconfessionalism in an institutional sense; but it took place only once the regime was out of power. In occupied Germany, while the Social Democrats and the Communists worked to reconstitute their political parties, the mostly Catholic members of the former Center Party pursued a different goal. Motivated by anti-Marxism, anti-materialism, and the “rechristianization” of Germany, former Center Party members and a small cadre of religious and conservative Protestants sought the politics of Christian democracy. It took the form of the Christlich Demokratische Union (CDU) and the Christlich-Soziale Union (CSU) in Bavaria. The CDU/CSU was, in historian Maria Mitchell’s words, an “avowedly interconfessional political party” that “embodied . . . the transformation of confessional relations” in postwar West Germany. As in intermarriages between Protestants and Catholics since the late nineteenth century, a boundary between Protestants and Catholics remained even in the midst of forming an expressly interconfessional political party. Also like intermarriages, the boundary did not hinder

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9 Stoltzfus, xxiv-xxv.
10 Stoltzfus, 18.
cooperation during the party’s founding and its first rounds of political success in the 1950s.

Interconfessional cooperation within the CDU/CSU peaked in the 1960s, the evidence of which is the fading of interconfessionalism as a tenet of the party. For instance, the CDU/CSU removed the demand for confessional schools from its platform. The story of the CDU/CSU, the most influential political party in postwar West Germany, is one of deconfessionalization. The boundary separating Protestant and Catholic Germans transformed.

Political deconfessionalization involved Jews in an indirect way. The Third Reich extinguished Jewish life in Germany. In 1945 and 1946, there were about 250,000 Jews in Germany, but most of them were returning émigrés and East European Jews liberated from Nazi concentration camps. Only about 15,000 were German. The re-founding of Jewish life in Germany took place in 1950 as Jews worked alongside Jewish representatives from abroad in displaced person camps to found the Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland (Central Council of Jews in Germany). As of 2010, the Central Council counted only about 104,000 Jews in Germany, which is 0.13 percent of the population and 0.21 percent of the declining Christian population. But that does not mean Jewish absence from postwar German life. Jewish culture, still in the form of the Central Council, had reasserted itself. Additionally, a Jewish presence in Germany is unavoidable; one cannot navigate any city, large or small, in Germany without coming across a memorial to Germany and Europe’s murdered Jews.

A Jewish presence might have manifested in still another way, and it has to do with boundaries in postwar Germany. In this case, however, it involves the boundary between migrant

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14 Brenner, After the Holocaust, 77.
workers in Germany, mostly from Turkey, and a new normative idea of German identity. Whereas from the turn of the century throughout the Second World War Germany was about two-thirds Protestant and one-third Catholic, today it is about two-thirds Christian and one-third non-Christian.\(^{16}\) “The centuries-old confessional divide in German history,” posits historian Maria Mitchell, “has been subsumed by a larger gulf between Christians and non-Christians.”\(^{17}\) But in addition to atheists and secularists, Germany’s sizable Turkish population belong in the “non-Christian” camp, many of whom practice Islam. It is crucial to remember that Jews in Germany in the early twentieth century also represented a non-Christian population with a supposedly greater chasm between it and Christians than between Protestants and Catholics. In an overview of religion in German history from 1870 to 1945, historian Rebekka Habermas writes, “in Germany today, the denomination considered ‘religious’ in the same negative sense of traditionalist and full of archaic irrationalism that applied to Catholicism, Awakened, and Orthodox Jews in the Wilhelminian Empire, is a faith that at the same time of that empire was known only from the reports of missionaries: Islam.”\(^{18}\) In other words, the new boundary in Germany might exist not just between Christians and non-Christians, but also between Christians and Jews and non-Christians, especially “Muslims.”

My aim is not to suggest that the conditions of Germany’s contemporary Turkish population—frequently cast as “Muslims” whether they are religious or not—can be equated to the conditions of Jews in Germany in the early twentieth century.\(^{19}\) Rather, it is to speculate that the separation between Jewish and Christian Germans has diminished to the point that they might

\(^{16}\) “Bevölkerung.”

\(^{17}\) Mitchell, 203.


now be inextricable. Namely, the demands placed for Germany to reconcile its past persecution of the Jews and to integrate its growing Turkish population might have led to the emergence of a concept resembling “Judeo-Christianity” in the 1960s. “Judeo-Christianity” has to be understood as a construction that is applicable religiously and nationally. The concept currently flourishes in the country where it first originated: the United States. In the 1930s, partly as a response to Jewish persecution in Germany, Jewish, Protestant, and Catholic leaders in the United States began cooperating to cast each religion as equally American. After the Second World War, the previously powerful idea that the United States was a “Protestant nation” was replaced by the idea of religious equality in the form of Judeo-Christianity.20 A result was the casting of Judeo-Christianity as the new national norm. A variation of this might have taken place in Germany because the Holocaust has become a foundational component of German identity. “Germans are those who define themselves in terms of belonging by rejection of the Nazi past,” historian Dan Diner writes, “a German citizen of Turkish background can hardly belong to such a collective.”21 In a deconfessionalized context, the identity-forming boundary in postwar Germany was the one separating Germans and Jewish Germans, past and present, which was different from the one separating those two groups from Turkish migrant workers.

The continuity of German history that runs throughout this dissertation—the evolution of boundaries and boundary crossing in the form of intermarriage that contribute to the making of German identity—continues after its conclusion. Now as then, it is not the mere act of belonging and recognizing the different belonging of others that leads to self-identification. Instead, it is the

acknowledgement, violation, and policing of the separating boundaries that do. These boundaries do not exist in isolation.

Of course, it is in the relationship of one boundary to another that ultimately has meaning—that is what makes a difference.
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