Moshe Sluhovsky and Aya Elyada

Introduction

The year 2017 marked the five-hundredth anniversary of the eruption of the Protestant Reformation. Among the thousands of events commemorating the occasion was a conference that took place in Jerusalem, dedicated to 500 years of interactions between Protestants and Jews. The conference was organized by the Leo Baeck Institute Jerusalem, together with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the Martin Buber Chair in Jewish Thought and Philosophy at the Goethe University in Frankfurt as well as the Frankfurt research hub "Religious Positioning: Modalities and Constellations in Jewish, Christian and Islamic Contexts," the Evangelical Church in Germany, the Center for the Study of Christianity at the Hebrew University, the Institute for the History of the German Jews in Hamburg, the Stephen Roth Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism and Racism, Tel Aviv University, and the Minerva Institute for German History, Tel Aviv University. Some of the papers that were first presented at the conference comprise the core of this volume.

Since 1996, discussions of Protestant-Jewish relations, the impact of the Reformation on the history of Germany, Jews, and German-Jews, and, in fact, European history *tout court*, have been shaped by Daniel Jonah Goldhagen's best-selling and controversial *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust.* While many, if not most, historians reject the book's main thesis, that, in its own way, revived the *Sonderweg* explanation of German history, in public opinion and the media Goldhagen's book reaffirmed the alleged persistence, in German history, of an eliminationist German type of antisemitism. Martin Luther stands at the beginning of this uniquely German and German-Protestant trajectory, a straight historical path that led from Luther's call to destroy the material presence of Jews in the Holy Roman Empire to Hitler's actual destruction of the Jews in modern Germany. In tracking the spread of modern antisemitism in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Germany, Goldhagen reminds his readers of the reluctance of some segments of the Catholic Church under Nazism to adopt racist theories while positioning Protestant churches, the Protestant media, and espe-

¹ Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust (New York: Random House, 1996).

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cially the Protestant *Sonntagsblätter*, the weekly Sunday newspapers, as active agents in shaping antisemitic public opinion.²

There is no denying Luther's own antisemitism, nor the immense influence of his antisemitic writings on Protestant theology and theologians in later periods. Lutheran theology concerning Jews and Judaism was, in its turn, molded by the Pauline theology of supersession, and by Luther's own trajectory from hoping to bring about a mass conversion of the Jews following his purported purification of Christianity of foreign pagan elements, to the vicious and even exterminatory theology of his later years. It is equally self-evident that Luther's personal struggle with the Jewish refusal to accept his purified theology had an inestimable impact on later generations of Lutheran theologians. This was true throughout the past half a millennium and even more so since 1945. In fact, as Thomas Kaufmann rightly observes, "[Luther's] attitude to the Jews has become a sort of pivotal issue in understanding his character and theology."

Just as Luther's own virulent antisemitism should not be whitewashed, one ought never to dismiss or forgive the brutal, racist, and in many cases eliminationist antisemitism of large segments of the Protestant hierarchy in the modern period. Nonetheless, the articles in this volume posit that there was no direct line leading from Luther to Hitler. And while some papers in the collection address Luther's antisemitism as well as the Glaubensbewegung Deutsche Christen, we have sought to broaden the scope of the investigation. Protestant-Jewish theological encounters shaped not only antisemitism but also the Jewish Reform movement and Protestant philosemitic post-Holocaust theology; interactions between Jews and Protestants took place not only in the German-speaking sphere but also in the wider Protestant universe – in Poland, Bohemia, the Low Countries, England, and the United States; theology was crucial for the articulation of attitudes toward Jews, but music and philosophy were additional spheres of creativity that enabled the process of thinking through the relations between Judaism and Protestantism. Generally speaking, Luther and Lutheranism spelled trouble for the Jews, but there were times that they constituted an attractive model of 'purified' Christianity that could potentially lead to a rapprochement between the faith communities. For a few generations of secularized Jews in Germany, conversion to Protestantism was a means of acculturation into Deutschtum, Protestantism's essence as a belief system brushed aside. Thus, rather than a single history of Protestant-Jewish relations and a single history of the theological mis/under-

² Ibid., 106–10; 284–5, among other places.

³ Thomas Kaufmann, Luther's Jews: A Journey into Anti-Semitism (2014; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 5.

standings between the two religions, it is, in fact, multiple histories and engagements that have helped to fashion both the religions and their peoples over the past 500 years. The collection aims to disentangle some of the intricate perceptions, interpretations, and emotions that have characterized contacts between Protestantism and Judaism, and between Jews and Protestants. As the presence of Dr. Martin Hauger, the *Referent für Glaube und Dialog* of the Evangelical Church in Germany, at the conference in Jerusalem, and some of the articles below make clear, Jewish-Protestant relations are an on-going project, a project to which this collection hopes to contribute.

In 1523, Martin Luther published his first major tract on the 'Jewish Question' under the title That Jesus Christ was Born A Jew.4 Considering the anti-Jewish stance advocated by Luther in earlier theological writings,⁵ and particularly in light of the deeply rooted anti-Jewishness that characterized medieval society and culture, the new treatise of the young reformer was marked by a surprisingly tolerant tenor, and even evinced a certain congenial tone toward the Jews. To be sure, Luther did not promote any tolerance toward the Jewish religion itself, nor did he call to accept Jews as Jews. The explicit aim of this work was to encourage mission among the Jews, with the goal of bringing about their conversion to the new Protestant Church. Yet, some of the main notions Luther presented in the text clearly broke from the hitherto prevalent attitudes toward the Jewish minority. To begin with, Luther laid the blame for the Jews' persistent refusal to convert to Christianity squarely at the feet of the Catholic Church. It was the centuriesold Catholic perversion of Christianity that had kept the Jews from joining this corrupt, half-pagan religion, he maintained. Moreover, the Catholic Church had treated the Jews so badly, persecuted and exploited them, "that anyone who wished to be a good Christian would almost have had to become a Jew. If I had been a Jew and had seen such dolts and blockheads govern and teach the Christian faith," Luther admonished, "I would sooner have become a hog than a Christian."6

Recommending the termination of the harsh and obviously futile traditional methods used by the Catholic Church to achieve Jewish conversion, Luther en-

⁴ Martin Luther, "Daß Jesus Christus ein geborner Jude sei" (1523), in D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe. 120 vols. (Weimar: Böhlau, 1883–2009), vol. 11: 307–36 (henceforth: WA). English translation in Luther's Works. 55 vols. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press; and Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955–1986), vol. 45: 199–229 (henceforth: LW).

⁵ See especially his first and second lectures on the Psalms (*Dictata super psalterium*, from 1513/14, and *Operationes in psalmos*, from 1518).

⁶ LW 45, 200.

dorsed a fresh, twofold strategy. Christians would instruct the Jews kindly and carefully in Scripture, according to its 'true Christian' (namely, Lutheran) understanding, and allow the Jewish minority to integrate into Christian society, as a means of exposing them to Christian belief and way of life.⁷ Luther was certain that, when offered the option of converting to a pure, correct, and unadulterated form of Christianity, and after existing barriers and obstacles had been removed, many Jews, if not all, would choose to convert to the new confession.

Yet Luther's hopes for Jewish conversion did not materialize, and from the late 1530s we witness the publication of several anti-Jewish tracts from the pen of the aging reformer, the most notorious of which was *On the Jews and Their Lies* from 1543, three years before Luther's death.⁸ In this work, which became a hallmark of Luther's – and Lutheran – antisemitism, Luther warns his Christian readers of their most dangerous, indeed devilish, eternal enemy – the Jews residing among them. "Therefore, dear Christian," Luther writes, "be advised and do not doubt that next to the devil, you have no more bitter, venomous, and vehement foe than a real Jew who earnestly seeks to be a Jew." And elsewhere he writes,

They are real liars and bloodhounds who have [...] continually perverted and falsified all of Scripture with their mendacious glosses [...] The sun has never shone on a more bloodthirsty and vengeful people than they are who imagine that they are God's people who have been commissioned and commanded to murder and to slay the Gentiles.¹⁰

Fortunately, Luther states, they lack the power to do so. Yet the threat posed to Christian society by the Jewish minority is no less real: since the Jews habitually lie and blaspheme, they might implicate the entire society – both Jews and Christians – in their depravity. If we tolerate the Jews and their calumnies, Luther exhorts his readers, the wrath of God shall be upon us all.¹¹

What do we do then, asks Luther, with the Jews? We are unable to convert them, yet we cannot tolerate their presence among us. The solution he now suggests to the Christian authorities is the mirror opposite of the one he offered twenty years before. Instead of integrating the Jews into Christian society and

⁷ Ibid., 200 – 201, 229.

⁸ Martin Luther, "Von den Juden und ihren Lügen" (1543), WA 53, 417–552. English translation from LW 47, 137–306. Two other important works in this respect are *Wider die Sabbather (Against the Sabbatarians*, 1538) and *Vom Schem Hamphoras (On the Ineffable Name*, 1543).

⁹ LW 47, 217.

¹⁰ Ibid., 156 – 57.

¹¹ Ibid., 268.

approaching them with compassion, Luther advocates applying to them "sharp mercy": burning their synagogues and schools, destroying their homes, confiscating their books and forbidding their rabbis to teach, denying them safe conduct, prohibiting their dealing with finance and putting them to hard labor. But the best solution, Luther advises, would be to follow in the footsteps of other European countries and expel the Jews from the German lands altogether.¹²

Scholars have long attempted to account for what seems to be Luther's dramatic change of heart regarding the Jews and the 'Jewish Question.' First and foremost, Luther's disappointment concerning the continued refusal of the Jews to convert to his new confession clearly drove him to the conclusion that they were entirely under the wrath of God. Thus, as he makes explicit at the beginning of *On the Jews and Their Lies*, it is impossible – and therefore useless – to try and convert them. Indeed, considering the anti-Jewish stance he advocated already in his early writings, the 1523 text would seem to be the exception, as though Luther had 'suspended' his animosity toward the Jews in order to give their conversion a chance.¹³ Once this opportunity was not partaken of, the old animus could make a horrifying comeback.

But the rancor of Luther's attacks from the 1540s, which were considered exceptionally severe even in the anti-Jewish atmosphere of the sixteenth century, also merits inquiry. Here scholars have proposed, alongside Luther's conversionary letdown, his increasing decrepitude; his bitterness in the face of Reformation setbacks; his apocalyptic set of mind; and the fact that during those years Luther spoke ruthlessly about all his enemies – the 'papists,' the Anabaptists, the Turks, and basically anyone who did not affirm his theology as the one and only true understanding of Christianity. Specifically, with regard to the Jews, it has been suggested that what Luther perceived as 'Judaizing' tendencies within the Protestant camp (Sabbath-observing sects, certain circles within Protestant Hebraism, etc.) sharpened his view of the 'Jewish danger' that he perceived as placing his Reformation in peril. Finally, it is important to note the influence of the book Der gantz Jüdisch glaub (The Entire Jewish Faith, first published in Augsburg, 1530) on the stance taken by the older Luther toward the Jews. Written by Antonius Margaritha, the son of a rabbi and a convert from Judaism, the book claimed, among other things, to expose the Jewish blasphemies and anti-Christian

¹² Ibid., 268-72.

¹³ It is important to note, in this respect, the last sentence of *That Jesus Christ was Born A Jew*, where Luther makes the following statement: "Here I will let the matter rest for the present, until I see what I have accomplished" (LW 45, 229). This concluding sentence should probably be taken as a kind of warning made by Luther, suggesting that the advocated tolerance toward the Jews was entirely conditional, and clearly had an expiry date.

sentiments allegedly contained in their religious books and daily prayers. Luther referred to Margaritha's influential and highly popular book on several occasions as a crucial source of knowledge for contemporary Judaism. It appears that the work contributed to the reformer's view of the hostility of the Jews toward the Christians and of their outrageous blasphemies against God and the Christian religion – two prominent motifs in his 1543 antisemitic tract.

While the aforementioned factors may well have contributed to Luther's antisemitic attacks, one thing is certain: his existential fear of the Jews, and his profound conviction that they must be converted or otherwise banished entirely from Christian Germany, persisted up to his very final days. On February 7, 1546, less than two weeks before his death, Luther added to one of his last sermons, preached at St. Andrew's Church in his hometown of Eisleben, *An Admonition against the Jews.* As he noted in two letters to his wife from February 1 and 7,¹⁵ Luther was quite upset by the presence of a small Jewish community in Eisleben and in a small town close by. He decided to encourage Count Albrecht in their expulsion – by advocating it from the pulpit. "More than others, you still have Jews in your land who do great harm," he warned his listeners, emphasizing again the great sin of tolerating Jewish slander and blasphemy, as well as the eternal enmity of the Jew toward the Christian religion and its adherents. In conclusion to his final will with regard to the Jews Luther wrote:

This is the final warning I wanted to give you, as your countryman: [...] If the Jews will be converted to us [...] we will gladly forgive them. But if not, then neither should we tolerate or endure them among us.¹⁶

Luther died in 1546, leaving his newly founded Church with a Janus-faced legacy concerning the Jews and their prospective conversion. The legacy of the younger Luther, advocated most clearly by the Pietist movement of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, emphasized the responsibility of Christians to convert Jews via friendly engagement. The legacy of the older Luther, by contrast, which characterized Lutheran Orthodox circles from the mid-sixteenth until the early eighteenth century, denied the possibility of converting the Jews through human efforts and stressed the need for Christians to defend themselves in the face of the Jewish threat.

¹⁴ Martin Luther, "Warnung vor den Juden" (1546), in WA 51, 195–96; English translation in LW 58, 458–59. See also Brooks Schramm and Kirsi I. Stjerna (eds.), Martin Luther, the Bible, and the Jewish People: A Reader (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 200–202.

¹⁵ For English translation of the letters see ibid., 198-99.

¹⁶ Ibid., 201, 202.

As the eighteenth century drew to a close and the nineteenth century opened, the anti-lewish part of Luther's legacy seems to have fallen into oblivion. The Pietistic roots of German Enlightenment contributed considerably to the diffusion of a relatively pro-Jewish stance among German theologians of the time, and to the image of Luther as a proponent of tolerance toward the Jews. Anti-Jewish writings from this period and throughout the nineteenth century tended to cite the sinister work of the Calvinist scholar Johann Eisenmenger, Entdecktes Judentum (Judaism Unmasked, 1700) as their source of inspiration and authority, rather than Luther's later works. Only in the 1830s, following the first modern edition of Luther's writings, ¹⁷ did Luther's anti-Jewish writings gain renewed attention. While some Lutheran scholars condemned the reformer's hostility to the Jews, others utilized his work to propagate antisemitic notions. This was especially the case toward the end of the nineteenth century, when the formation of the Second Reich propagated a new image of Luther as a German national hero who mobilized his people against external enemies. Soon enough, and under the influence of racially based ideologies, Luther was also mobilized against internal enemies. His antisemitic writings enjoyed a growing popularity in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and, usually stripped of their theological message, were often integrated into a new völkisch-racist understanding of German-ness.

By the early twentieth century, the later Luther, the author of vitriolic antisemitic sermons and treatises, came to dominate scholarship on Luther. The impact of this antisemitic reading of Luther's theology was such that even the Munich edition of Luther's writings, which was closely linked to the Confessing Church (*Bekennende Kirche*), sang the praises of Luther's *On the Jews and their Lies*'s antisemitism.¹8 By the 1930s, Luther's writings were used to justify the exclusion of Jews from public life, the burning of synagogues, and the promotion of ethnic and racist notions of German-ness. After *Kristallnacht*, the publication and circulation of Luther's antisemitic writings increased dramatically, the most popular compendium of the genre being Martin Sasse's *Martin Luther über die Juden: Weg mit ihnen!* (*Martin Luther on the Jews: Away with Them!*). Sasse was a leading Lutheran theologian who merged world Jewry, Catholicism, liberal Protestants abroad, and western democracies into a vast conspiracy

¹⁷ Erlangen Edition, 1826-1886. The volume with the late writings on the Jews appeared in 1832. In the Weimar Edition (WA) this volume saw light only in 1919.

¹⁸ Kaufmann, Luther's Jews, 7.

against the Führer's sacred struggle. He also did not fail to point out the expiatory symbolism of *Kristallnacht* taking place on Luther's birthday.¹⁹

This being said, one ought to bear in mind that Luther's antisemitism was rather akin to the antisemitism of his contemporaries, Catholics and Protestants alike. Luther did not call for an annihilation of the Jews, and while he talked about the degeneration of Jews since Jesus' time, he - unlike the Nazis never denied Jesus' Jewish ethnicity. Nor should one forget that German Lutherans' engagement with Luther's antisemitic writings and with Jews did not end in 1945. In fact, Lutheran theology of the second half of the twentieth century became the core of a reckoning and a fundamental departure from a stained past. Already in 1950, the synod of the Protestant Church in Germany (EKD) in Berlin-Weissensee declared that God's selection of the Jews was not revoked with the crucifixion of Christ, a theological novelty without precedent that abrogated 1700 years of supersessionist theology. Since then, the covenant with Israel has become a crucial component of German and non-German Lutheran theology. In 1983, as is well known, on the 500th anniversary of Luther's birth, the council of the EKD pronounced Luther's late texts on the Jews "calamitous," and a few years later the EKD recognized the implication of the Protestant Church in the crimes of the Nazi state against the Jews. In 2017, in conjunction with the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, the synod published a new declaration concerning the EKD's relations to Jews. Recognizing the mistakes made by reformers and by the Reformation churches, the EKD expressed its regrets that the Reformation failed to put an end to medieval antisemitism, and that Luther's antisemitism, in fact, contributed to Nazi antisemitism. Furthermore, unlike previous discourse on Luther's theology, which emphasized the break between the early and the late Luther, the EKD stated that "Luther's early statements and his late writings from 1538, with their undisguised hatred of Jews, show continuity in his theological judgment." The declaration attributed to the founding father irrational fear of and stereotypical thinking about Jews and draws a direct line between his writings and the

justification of hatred and persecution of Jews, in particular with the emergence of racist antisemitism and at the time of National Socialism. It is not possible to draw simple continuous lines. Nevertheless, in the 19th and 20th century, Luther was a source for theological and ecclesial anti-Judaism, as well as for political antisemitism.

¹⁹ Martin Sasse (ed.), Martin Luther über die Juden: Weg mit ihnen! (Freiburg/Br.: Sturmhut-Verlag, 1938), 2.

Last, but not least, the EKD declared that "Luther's judgment upon Israel therefore does not correspond to the biblical statements on God's covenant faithfulness to his people and the lasting election of Israel."²⁰

DEAN PHILLIP BELL's article looks at the impact of the Reformation on German Jewry and the development of Jewish historiography of the topic. Bell warns against a teleological perspective that ignores Lutheran-Jewish moments of interaction and collaboration. He recalls the role of lews in the development of Lutheran Hebraism, the growing interest of theologians in Hebrew texts and traditions, and the Jewish support of the idea of a godly community. Using the concept of Confessionalization, which denotes the early modern processes that reshaped relations between state and church after the Reformation, Bell demonstrates how these processes also influenced Jewish communities in the Holy Roman Empire. Bell concludes that even if German Iews totally rejected the theological message of the Reformation, its organizational and political transformations of society still had a significant impact on Jewish communities. MARKÉTA KABŮRKOVÁ explores the large and diverse body of Jewish views on Luther, and on the Reformation as it unfolded. She shows that the Jewish reaction to the religious upheavals in Christianity was far from monochromatic: while some Jewish authors saw the Reformation as a purification of Christianity and its return to Jewish roots, others were more apprehensive, fearing the impact of Luther's Reformation on the fate of the Jews in the German lands. Still other Jewish authors, especially those of Sephardi origin, viewed Lutheranism as the Catholic Church's comeuppance for its mistreatment of the Jews. All agreed, however, that the reformers misunderstood Scripture.

Moving chronologically, the next papers examine various aspects of Protestant-Jewish relations during the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. ALEXANDER VAN DER HAVEN investigates the changing relations between notions of conversion and eschatological expectations in the aftermath of the Thirty Years' War. While eschatological thinking typically prompts exclusivist notions of conversion, insisting that there is only one true religion, Van der Haven suggests that early modern eschatology also had the potential to bring different religious groups together. To support this claim, he analyzes two letters written by a convert to Judaism in Amsterdam in 1682, in which the author presented a scenario of an imminent eschaton that assigned positive roles to more than one religious group. This was done, however, without relinquishing a clear line of demarcation between the forces of light and darkness. LARS FISCHER's discussion

of the antisemitic nature of Bach's sacred cantatas brings us back to the theme of anti-Jewish inclinations within German Lutheranism. Arguing that this attitude was to be expected in light of Bach's adherence to Lutheran orthodoxy and his position as cantor in the Lutheran Church of the early eighteenth century, Fischer asks how, and to what extent, did the anti-Jewish sentiment of the time find expression in Bach's oeuvre. With Cantata 42 as a central case-study, he wishes to raise awareness of these troubling aspects in Bach's music, awareness that he finds to be lacking among Bach scholars and fans of our time.

Questions of mission and conversion, especially in the context of the Pietist and the Evangelical movements within Lutheranism, come to the fore in the next two papers. YAAKOV ARIEL discusses the rise of the Pietist mission to the Jews, its underlying assumptions, and the way it was carried out at the Institutum Judaicum, the great Pietist missionary center founded in 1728 in the Prussian city of Halle. Ariel highlights the use of Yiddish in the missionary endeavors of the Halle Pietists, first and foremost for the missionary publications produced in Halle. He also shows how eighteenth-century Pietism helped shape the agenda and methods of Evangelical missions to the Jews which emerged in Englishspeaking countries at the beginning of the nineteenth century. AYA ELYADA tackles the project undertaken by the Halle Pietists during the first half of the eighteenth century, of publishing missionary works in Yiddish for distribution among the Jews. In particular, Elyada attempts to explain why the Pietists found it important to publish Yiddish versions of biblical books despite the centuries-long availability of such translations among Ashkenazi Jews. Elyada raises the possibility that the Pietist missionaries, like earlier Lutheran theologians from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, rejected the existing Jewish, Yiddish versions of the Bible on the basis of both style and content. These publications, she suggests, were then to be replaced by 'decent' - that is, Protestant and Germanized - versions of the holy text.

The vagaries of Protestant-Jewish relations in the modern period are the second focus of the collection. From the eighteenth century on, these relations were often also related to different configurations of the nation and the *Volk*. Ofri Ilany traces the trajectory of the notion of the 'Hebrew Republic' in legal theory and theology in the German-speaking lands. This concept was central to numerous authors, among them the most prominent theologian of the German Enlightenment, Johann David Michaelis. In Michaelis' writings, Moses the Lawgiver is portrayed as the man who, in his republican-theocratic innovations, overcame the division of the Hebrews into tribes, thus enabling the creation of a nation. The Hebrew Republic could thus serve as a model for a hopeful unification of the German people. Johannes Gleixner probes the position of Jews and Protestants in relation to the political changes in the Czech-speaking parts of the Habs-

burg Empire at the turn of the twentieth century. During that time, Gleixner argues, the two communities were pressured in a similar manner to assimilate into mainstream, Catholic society, and there are strong parallels in the ways in which both of these minorities responded to the challenge, while struggling to maintain their own religious and cultural identity. Gleixner also signals the political achievements of the Czech Jewish-Protestant alignment and its impact on the discourse surrounding the foundation of the new Czechoslovak republic in 1918. CHRISTIAN WIESE analyses the way Jewish historians and philosophers in Germany interpreted Luther's significance for contemporary debates on Jewish emancipation and integration, either praising him as a forerunner of freedom of thought and Enlightenment or criticizing his contribution to Protestantism's submissiveness towards the authoritarian state. Those who referred to the reformer's Judenschriften between 1917 and 1933, he argues, insisted on a strong discontinuity between the early and the later writings, in a desperate attempt to counter nationalist or völkisch readings and to convince non-Jewish Germans to embrace the attitude of the – idealized – young Luther and, as a consequence, reject antisemitism. Wiese demonstrates that, unfortunately, this narrative of a 'tolerant' creator of Germanness remained without an echo among the majority of Protestant theologians of the time.

Entering deeper into the twentieth century, DIRK SCHUSTER and KYLE JANT-ZEN both address Lutherans' responses to Aryan racism during the period of National Socialism. Schuster considers how ideas of racial purity influenced the theological as well as practical stance of certain movements in the German Protestant Church towards Jews, Judaism, and Jewish converts to Christianity. He shows how these movements perceived Protestantism as an exclusive Aryan religion, and how racial considerations became for their adherents a precondition to belonging to the Protestant Church. Thus, they not only aimed to 'de-Judaize' Christianity, but also denied the Jews the only possibility, in their eyes, to reach salvation. Turning our gaze to the other side of the Atlantic, Kyle Jantzen's paper examines how U.S. Protestants perceived Hitler, Nazism, and the persecution of Germany's Jews in the prewar era, and what kinds of responses they proposed. Analyzing a sample of Protestant publications and journals, he contends that prior to the Second World War, American Lutherans did not ignore the danger of Nazism, but were primarily concerned with the Nazi persecution of Christians. Above all, Jantzen claims, they identified Nazism as an enemy of religion. As far as the Jews were concerned, American Protestants both condemned and perpetuated forms of antisemitism in the United States. Over time, they developed an anti-antisemitic attitude, which did not prevent them from adhering to supersessionist and conversional attitudes toward Jews.

Post-Holocaust reckoning is crucial for Lutheran theology of the second half of the twentieth century, and it is the main concern of the last pair of articles. URSULA RUDNICK addresses the impact of the Holocaust in her discussion of the process undertaken by the Lutheran church in condemning the antisemitic writings of Martin Luther, while at the same time renewing theological dialogue between Jews and Lutherans after the Shoah. She offers a detailed chronology of the activities and pronouncements of the Lutheran Commission on Church and Judaism over the 40-year period which led to the Declaration of Driebergen in the year 1990. The article scrutinizes pan-European and pan-Lutheran developments and declarations, reminding us that the process of reckoning and rethinking Jewish-Lutheran relations after the Holocaust took place across the globe. Finally, JOHANNES BECKE analyzes contemporary attitudes of Lutherans toward Judaism and the reconfigurations of theology in the shadow of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Studying the history of Aktion Sühnezeichen Friedensdienste (ASF) in Israel from the 1960s onwards, Becke presents both theological and sociological evidence for shifting notions of guilt, responsibility, and atonement among different generations of German Lutheran youth. After situating the history of the organization within the conceptual frameworks of Philosemitism and Philozionism, Becke spotlights the rupture in the long history of Protestant-Jewish relations brought about by the foundation of a Jewish state.

As can be seen from this brief overview, the present volume aims to shed light on various chapters in the long history of Protestant-Jewish relations, from the Reformation to the present day. Spanning five centuries and a vast geographical area, it demonstrates the manifold manifestations of these complex relations in ever-shifting historical contexts. The volume brings together the work of scholars who differ not only with respect to religious, national, and institutional backgrounds, but also in their methodological approaches and fields of expertise. By this, we hope to showcase current trends in present-day scholarship on Protestant-Jewish relations, and to open up directions for future research on this intricate topic, which bears both historical significance and evident relevance to our own time.