

RelBib

Bibliography of the Study of Religion

<https://relbib.de>

Dear reader,

This is a self-archived version of the following review:

Author: Schuster, Dirk
Title: "Sachslehner, Johannes: Bischof Alois Hudal. Hitlers Mann im Vatikan. Ein dunkles Kapitel in der Geschichte der Kirche "
Published in: Religion in Austria
Wien: Praesens-Verlag
Volume: 6
Year: 2021
Pages: 395 - 411

The article is used with permission of [Praesens-Verlag](#).

Thank you for supporting Green Open Access.

Your RelBib team

EBERHARD KARLS
UNIVERSITÄT
TÜBINGEN



UNIVERSITÄTSBIBLIOTHEK

Bischof Alois Hudal. Hitlers Mann im Vatikan. Ein dunkles Kapitel in der Geschichte der Kirche.

By Johannes Sachslehner. Wien and Graz: Molden Verlag, 2019. Pp. 288. ISBN: 978-3-222-15040-1. Hardback, €28.00.

*Dirk Schuster*¹

The Austrian bishop's name Alois Karl Hudal (1885–1963) is still synonymous with the involvement of Catholic Church representatives with the Nazi regime. Even if much is known about Hudal's life, the titular bishop of Ela and former Rector of the Pontifical Teutonicum Santa Maria dell'Anima is still the subject of diverse research.² Nevertheless, a scholarly biography of Hudal has hitherto not been published,³ a gap Johannes Sachslehner (b. 1957) seeks to fill. As will be shown, however, despite its pleasant readability, Sachslehner's book comprises a number of formal flaws to the extent that, ultimately, my review cannot arrive at a positive conclusion.

Although Protestant Church representatives in Germany and Austria had shown themselves to be far more open to National Socialism and agreed to openly co-operate with the Nazi extermination policy, Hudal is a reminder that there were such ambitions on the part of Catholic Church representatives as well.

Sachslehner structures his book according to the classic biographical model. It starts with Hudal's childhood and relevant personal, social, and cul-

1 I would like to thank Lukas Pokorny and Hans Gerald Hödl for their advice in writing up this review as well as Patricia Sophie Mayer for her logistical support.

2 See, more recently, for example, the 2020 conference *Zwischen Kronen und Nationen. Die zentraleuropäischen Priesterkollegien in Rom vom Risorgimento bis zum Zweiten Weltkrieg* (In-between Crowns and Nations: The Central European Colleges of Priests in Rome from the Risorgimento to the Second World War), which involved a paper on Hudal by Karl-Joseph Hummel (<https://www.ikgs.de/veranstaltungen/kronen-nationen>; accessed October 7, 2020). See also, Rohrbacher 2015 and Burkard 2007.

3 In 1995, Markus Langer presented a biography of Hudal in his doctoral thesis (Langer 1995), which, however, contains the restriction "attempt" (*Versuch*) in its title. Langer's thesis has not been published.

tural influences, and continues with his personal and professional development and a detailed description of the most important works and achievements up to the end of his life. This is followed by a final overall assessment of Hudal's personality and life's work, with an outlook on the social, political, and media-related aftermath of his actions. This structure may seem somehow ordinary at first glance, since most of the biographies of more or less important people presented in the last few decades follow this basic layout. However, I believe it is the right choice for a presentation and assessment of Hudal's life. Yet, astonishingly, the book's structure shows a striking resemblance to Markus Langer's doctoral thesis of 1995, as will be discussed in more detail further below.

Hudal came from a simple background, but it was more the origins and political activities of his father that Hudal tried to disguise his entire life. Hudal's ancestors from his father's side were Slovenian farmers, and his father was an avowed and active social democrat. Hudal tried to hide or even correct this biographical "flaw" due to his racist prejudices. Shortly before his death, Hudal applied for a new birth certificate to be issued in which he personally changed his mother's maiden name from "Wiser" to the more "German-sounding" "Wieser." Already at this point, one is witnessing the racist thinking that occupied Hudal until his death: even seventeen years after the end of the Third Reich and all of its crimes, Hudal tried to present himself as "Aryan" in a racial sense.

After finishing school, young Hudal decided to become a priest, which he accomplished as one of the best in his class. On the young priest's own initiative, the Catholic Church sent him to the papal college of Santa Maria dell'Anima in Rome in the autumn of 1911. Such a post can already be seen as an indication that, in terms of the corresponding positions he assumed in Austria, Hudal could definitely be considered for later management positions in the Catholic Church of the Habsburg Empire, as Sachslehner correctly assesses (p. 33).

When Italy entered the war in 1915, the now thirty-year-old Hudal had to offer his service to his homeland. He registered as a war volunteer and served as a chaplain in the Habsburg army. His sermons were shaped by the *völkisch* style of that time: the war was not just a fight against their opponents; it was also a fight against the moral and ideological upheavals of modernity, such as atheism and materialism. Thus, fallen soldiers were to be seen as martyrs of the faith. Unfortunately, Sachslehner fails to place Hudal's sermons from the World War I within the overall *völkisch* context of the time. This would have clearly demonstrated that Hudal was already moving within a space of ideas permeated by anti-Semitism, Germanness, and extreme racism.

After the end of the war, Hudal assumed the position of Professor of Bible Studies of the Old Covenant (*Bibelstudium des alten Bundes*) at the University of Graz. When he was appointed rector of the Anima in 1923, the University of Graz put him on leave, but Hudal continued to receive his professorial salary until the end of World War II. In Rome, Hudal used the opportunities available to him to interfere in the politics of the Vatican. He thus became the central figure in the negotiations on the Concordat between Austria and the Holy See, which was to come into force in 1934. Despite such efforts, Hudal completely rejected the Republic of Austria as a state. For him, this was merely a construct directed by Communists and Jews, whose existence he deemed to be based solely on the will of the Allies and had nothing to do with the old idea of Austria (p. 80). By this time, however, Hudal was so well-established in Catholic circles that he was considered to be a promising candidate for becoming Vienna's Archbishop in the summer of 1932. Hudal seemed quite sure of his election, as he ordered a crosier while Archbishop Friedrich Gustav Piffl (1864–1932) was still alive. The fact that after Piffl's death Theodor Innitzer (1875–1955) was ultimately appointed as the new Archbishop of Vienna was for Hudal the sole fault of Vienna's "Jewish press," which he claimed was invested in blocking him and supporting Innitzer.

After this defeat, Hudal focused on his duties at the Anima, where he was solemnly committed to the rise of Adolf Hitler (1889–1945) and described himself as "the German Bishop" even though he had not received the episcopal ordination at that time. His emphasis on "German" indicates that Hudal saw the Nazi seizure of power as the resurrection of "Germanness," to which he thereafter devoted all of his energy. Both his view of the existence of divine providence in National Socialism (p. 103) and his attempt to fully offer his services to the Church and National Socialism are illustrated in Hudal's main work *Die Grundlagen des Nationalsozialismus* (Foundations of National Socialism). Hudal's goal was to position himself as the main point of contact in the Vatican for questions in regard to National Socialism. With the publication of his book in 1935, in which the language and terminology of the National Socialists were explicitly adopted, Hudal wanted to achieve a reconciliation between the Church and the Third Reich and establish inter-connections and rules in the "joint war." Despite the defensive attitude of the Pope and the Curia towards the National Socialists, Hudal's book failed to achieve all of his anticipated goals. The Vatican eventually kept its distance from Hudal, and his book was even subject to a sales ban in Nazi Germany. In this difficult moment for Hudal, it was Cardinal Innitzer of all people who supported him by praising the book's content as being "honest" and constituting a "mission," ultimately even issuing a publishing permit for Austria.

Sachslehner takes a clear position on Hudal's anti-Semitic worldview (pp. 159–160). He argues that Hudal was shaped by the anti-Semitic prejudices that had spread throughout Styria—including among the Catholic clergy—towards the end of the nineteenth century. Moreover, Sachslehner intelligibly demonstrates that Hudal's image of the Jews corresponded to that of the *völkisch* view. Hudal knew how to express his hostility towards Jews more discreetly in his theological works. Nevertheless, in his statements on current politics, one can clearly detect the *völkisch* worldview, which understood the Jews as a separate race and in which they were solely to be blamed for all allegedly undesirable developments. It is important to note that, for in particular a person like Hudal, Sachslehner makes a clear and unambiguous statement at this point in order to prevent subsequent relativisation. Fortunately, Sachslehner also refuses to make the unspeakable distinction between modern anti-Semitism and Christian anti-Judaism that is sometimes adopted in research circles. Hatred of Jews remains hatred of Jews regardless of the reasons behind it. Moreover, a religiously argued anti-Semitism does not become any "better" because it is not argued racially—although it is basically impossible to draw any boundaries between the two at any case.

The last part of the book is devoted to Hudal's post-war activities, mainly characterised by his assistance to escaping war criminals. At this point, too, Sachslehner clearly shows that Hudal's thinking had not changed at all despite knowledge about the Shoah. Hudal saw himself as a helper for defenceless victims on the basis of Christian charity. He did not care that these alleged victims were wanted Nazi war criminals, given that he had dismissed the search for Nazi criminals by the Allies as "Jewish vengeance." Even years later, Hudal never considered his criminal activities as wrongdoing. Rather he saw his assistance to murderers as an "outflow of God's grace" (p. 181). At this point, Sachslehner summarises it succinctly:

The fact that—in his perfidious line of argument in the foreword to his "life confession"—Hudal wanted to bring God into play as a judge was a cynical mockery of the actual victims; and his view of the "accused," whom he stylised as "innocent" victims, is characteristic of this cynicism. Likewise, he could not fail to include an anti-Semitic swipe at the judges allegedly driven by Jewish "Talmudic hatred." In doing so, Hudal confirmed the earlier allegations of the Roman Curia—yes, he was *troppo tedesco*, "too German," and a "Nazi, fascist Bishop" (*ibid.*).⁴

4 "Dass Hudal in seiner perfiden Argumentation den lieben Gott als Richter ins Spiel bringen wollte, war eine zynische Verhöhnung der tatsächlichen Opfer, bezeichnend für diesen Zynismus auch sein Blick auf die 'Angeklagten', die er zu 'schuldlosen' Opfern

With the help of detailed accounts of Nazi war criminals, most of whom Hudal helped flee to South America, Sachslehner is able to demonstrate the scope of the criminal machinations of the “fascist bishop.” These activities were so well-known during Hudal’s lifetime that he was given the role of one of the most prominent escape helpers in the 1972 novel *The ODESSA File* by Frederick Forsyth (b. 1938), which was made into a film two years later.

It is noteworthy that Pope Pius XII (1876–1958; p. 1939–1958)—who is to this day known for his ambivalent attitude towards National Socialism and the Shoah—let Hudal continue with his actions for a long time. It was not until 1952 that the Vatican forced him to resign from his post as Rector of the Anima. Until his death in 1962, Hudal saw himself as a fighter for the “German cause” who never received recognition for his alleged achievements. Rather, in his self-perception, he was always exposed to attacks from Communists and the “Jewish press.” Sachslehner thus aptly characterises Hudal as caught up in the *Ewiggestriger*, totally insulating himself from the ideas of the post-war period (p. 249).

At the first reading of the book, I came to the conclusion that Sachslehner has presented an impressive work about an extremely dark (maybe better: “brown”) chapter in the history of the Catholic Church. Sachslehner’s fluid writing style and clear positioning, which are always comprehensible and supported by appropriate arguments and evidence, keeps the reader’s attention. As already mentioned, it would have been desirable if Sachslehner had taken a broader perspective in some places. A brief comparison between Hudal’s thought patterns and those of the *völkisch* Right would have shown even more persuasively that Hudal was not only a man of conviction in the gown, but that he also based his worldview on an anti-Semitic ideology that prepared the ground for the Shoah. Furthermore, locating Hudal’s assistance activities to Nazi escapees within a more detailed context of the Catholic Church’s role in the post-war period would have painted a clearer picture of how Hudal was part of a larger, internal church network.

In defence of Sachslehner, however, it should be said that such broader frameworks do not necessarily belong to the corpus of classical biographies. I do hope that the book will serve as a basis for future research, since Catholic Church historiography at the time of the Third Reich—apart from biographical studies and the classic, apologetic “master narratives”—still has large lacunae to fill.

stilisierte. Der antisemitische Seitenhieb auf die angeblich von jüdischem ‘Talmudhaß’ getriebenen Richter durfte da nicht fehlen. Hudal bestätigte mit diesen Sätzen im Vorwort seiner ‘Lebensbeichte’ noch im Nachhinein die Vorwürfe der römischen Kurie – ja, er war *troppo tedesco*, ‘zu sehr deutsch’, ein ‘nazistischer, faschistischer Bischof’.”

However, this first reading assessment does not hold, having subsequently engaged more closely with Langer's doctoral thesis other sources. As already noted, Langer submitted a biographical study of Alois Hudal in 1995. This unpublished doctoral thesis is accessible at the University of Vienna Library. To my disappointment, in a first rough comparison of Sachslehner's book to Langer's thesis, I noticed clear similarities, and thus subsequently carried out a more thorough comparison. Some of the initial results of this comparison are presented in what follows.

The works of Sachslehner and Langer follow the same structure, but this may be due to the chosen style of chronologically tracing the life of the bishop using key milestones. Notably, the two works hardly differ from each other in terms of content. Only in the evaluation of Alois Hudal can a difference be established, whom Sachslehner evaluates—rightly so—far more critically than Langer does. Sachslehner uses the same sources as Langer, only supplemented by more recent research and other examples of Hudal helping Nazi war criminals escape. The striking similarity in structure shall only be illustrated using a few chapter examples. Langer has titled Chapter 3 of his work “Hudal und die österreichischen Konkordatsverhandlungen.”⁵ Sachslehner writes: “Eine echte Pfingstgabe an Österreich. Das Konkordat.”⁶ The fourth chapter in Langer is entitled “Die Grundlagen des Nationalsozialismus,”⁷ compared to Sachslehner's “Hudals politisches Bekenntnis. Das Buch ‘Die Grundlagen des Nationalsozialismus’.”⁸

In Chapter 6 Langer examines Hudal's work in light of the *Anschluss*, that is, the annexation of Austria by the Third Reich. Section 6.2 reads accordingly “Hudal und der ‘Anschluss’.”⁹ Sachslehner uses the very same designation for the corresponding section. Langer titles Sections 6.3 and 6.4 “Neuerliche Verhandlungen mit den Nationalsozialisten”¹⁰ and “Abbruch der Verhandlungen.”¹¹ In Sachslehner they are entitled “Verhandlungen in der Villa Bürckel”¹²—which was the place of negotiations between Hudal and other church representatives and the National Socialists—and “Endgültiges Scheitern der Verhandlungen.”¹³

5 “Hudal and the Austrian Concordat Negotiations.” Sachslehner does not use chapter numbering, which is why only the individual headings of main and sub-chapters are mentioned here.

6 “A Real Pentecostal Gift to Austria: The Concordat.”

7 “The Basics of National Socialism’.”

8 “Hudal's Political Confession: The Book ‘The Basics of National Socialism’.”

9 “Hudal and the ‘Anschluss’.”

10 “Renewed Negotiations with the National Socialists.”

11 “Breaking Off the Negotiations.”

12 “Negotiations in Villa Bürckel.”

13 “Final Failure of the Negotiations.”

Chapter 9 in Langer reads “Das österreichische Komitee in Rom”;¹⁴ the corresponding chapter in Sachslehner is entitled “Eine unglaublich traurige Zeit. Das ‘Österreichische Komitee’.”¹⁵ Similarly, Chapter 10 in Langer is “Hudal als Fluchthelfer der Nazis”;¹⁶ and in Sachslehner “Die Strada del Sole der Nazi-Kriegsverbrecher. Hudals Fluchthilfe-Aktivitäten.”¹⁷ Langer’s Sections 10.6 and 10.7 are entitled “Fluchthilfe am Beispiel Franz Stangl”¹⁸ and “Die Emigrantenzeitung ‘Der Weg’.”¹⁹ Sachslehner’s sub-chapters are entitled “Fluchthilfe für Franz Stangl”²⁰ and “Mitarbeit am NS-Journal *Der Weg*.”²¹

In section 10.8—“Hudals Fluchthilfe im Licht der Presse”²²—Langer chiefly discusses the case of the notorious Austrian SS member and governor of Cracow and Galicia, Otto Gustav Wächter (1901–1949).²³ Sachslehner also takes up the case and titles this section in his book “‘Man verteidigt keinen nazistischen Bischof!’ Der Fall Wächter.”²⁴ In terms of content, there are no obvious differences between Langer and Sachslehner in these chapters. With respect to the details in the body of the text, there are many points that need to be addressed. I should emphasise that the following comprises only random examples.

Right at the beginning, Sachslehner describes how Hudal applied for a new birth certificate shortly before his death and tried to delete all references to his father’s Slovenian origin. He also mentions the handwritten changes Hudal made to the document (p. 15). The same account one finds in Langer (1995: 6), who, however, is not mentioned by Sachslehner up to this point. It is poor form to not mention a researcher who figured this out before. Without referencing Langer, it gives the impression that Sachslehner discovered this first.

14 “The Austrian Committee in Rome.”

15 “An Incredibly Sad Time: The ‘Austrian Committee’.”

16 “Hudal as the Nazis’ Escape Agent.”

17 “Strada del Sole [street of the sun] of the Nazi War Criminals. Hudal’s Escape Aid Activities.”

18 “Escape Aid with the Example of Franz Stangl.”

19 “The Emigrant Newspaper ‘Der Weg’.”

20 “Escape Aid for Franz Stangl.”

21 “Collaboration on the Nazi Journal *Der Weg*.”

22 “Hudal’s Escape Aid in Light of the Press.”

23 Hudal had tried to enable Wächter to escape to South America. When Wächter was dying in Rome from an infection, Hudal stayed by Wächter’s side to the end. The Italian press became aware of the case as early as 1949 and reported on Hudal’s role and his support of the war criminal and murderer Wächter.

24 “‘You Don’t Defend a Nazi Bishop!’ The Case of Wächter.”

In the chapter on Hudal's work *Die Grundlagen des Nationalsozialismus* (Hudal 1937), Sachslehner sums up the bishop's goal by writing: "Ja, Hudal hatte eine große Vision: den christlichen Nationalsozialismus"²⁵ (p. 103). The section in Sachslehner reads as though he summarised Hudal's basic idea in his own words employing the distinct term "Christian National Socialism," since he provides no references. However, Langer has already used the same term in connection with Hudal's basic idea when he writes: "Von der Idee ergriffen, einen christlichen Nationalsozialismus zu gestalten, ist sein [i.e., Hudal's] Buch ergriffen"²⁶ (1995: 76). Plagiarism clearly must be suspected here. Sachslehner has adopted Langer's summarising interpretation without indicating the source, so that readers get the impression that Sachslehner himself conceived the notion of "Christian National Socialism" with regard to Hudal's ideal. Later (p. 170), for example, Sachslehner writes about the former Austrian Foreign Minister Egon Berger-Waldenegg (1880–1960):

[Von] 1936 bis 1938 war Berger-Waldenegg, der die Todesurteile vom Februaraufstand 1934 und vom Naziputsch bestätigt hatte, Österreichs Gesandter in Rom. Nach dem 'Anschluss' war Berger-Waldenegg in Rom geblieben und hatte 1939 die italienische Staatsbürgerschaft angenommen; während der Besatzung Roms durch die Deutschen hatte er sich in der Wohnung von Kurienkardinal Enrico Sibilila, dem ehemaligen Apostolischen Nuntius in Wien, verborgen gehalten.²⁷

Sachslehner does not provide a source, although Langer's (1995: 192) text reads:

1939 nahm Berger-Waldenegg die italienische Staatsbürgerschaft an, um sich vor der Verfolgung durch die Gestapo [Geheime Staatspolizei] zu schützen. [...] Beim Einmarsch der deutschen Truppen in Rom Anfang August 1943 flüchtete Berger-Waldenegg mit seiner Frau in die Wohnung des Kardinal Sibilila und entkam so der Verfolgung.²⁸

25 "Yes, Hudal Had a Great Vision: Christian National Socialism."

26 "His [Hudal's] book is seized by the idea of creating a Christian National Socialism."

27 "[From] 1936 to 1938, Berger-Waldenegg, who had confirmed the death sentences from the February uprising in 1934 and the Nazi coup, was Austria's envoy in Rome. After the 'Anschluss,' Berger-Waldenegg stayed in Rome and obtained Italian citizenship in 1939; during the occupation of Rome by the Germans, he hid in the apartment of Cardinal Enrico Sibilila, the former Apostolic Nuncio in Vienna."

28 "In 1939, Berger-Waldenegg obtained Italian citizenship in order to protect himself from persecution by the Gestapo [Secret State Police]. [...] When the German troops

What makes all the above particularly suspicious is that Sachslehner has not included the Langer volume in his bibliography as if he wanted to obscure his evident indebtedness to Langer's research.

What is more, also a quick glance at other sources used demonstrates Sachslehner's extremely poor formal skills if not to say wilful negligence. For example, Hansjakob Stehle (1927–2015) published an article in the weekly German newspaper *Die Zeit* in 1984, in which he addresses the so-called "rat line," that is, the assistance by church officials in the escape of war criminals to South America (Stehle 1984). A passage in the article reads:

In dessen Genfer Zentrale entstand im Februar 1945 – drei Monate vor Kriegsende – ein ganz ungewöhnliches Reisedokument; es durfte nicht 'Paß,' sondern nur 'Reise-Titel' (titre de voyage), heißen; sein 'Erfinder' war der österreichische Fürst Johannes von Schwarzenberg, der – mit schweizerischer Staatsangehörigkeit – während des Zweiten Weltkrieges beim Genfer Internationalen Roten Kreuz zuständig für Zivilinternierte gewesen war und nun auch das Flüchtlingselend mildern wollte. Das Papier sollte 'allen Personen ausgestellt werden, die der Krieg auf diese oder jene Weise gezwungen hat, ihr reguläres Aufenthaltsland zu verlassen, unter der Bedingung, daß ihnen ein gültiger Paß fehlt, ein neuer nicht beschaffbar ist, das Land ihres Aufenthaltes sie ausreisen und das Land, wohin sie sich zu begeben wünschen, sie einreisen läßt'²⁹ (Stehle 1984).³⁰

In Sachslehner (p. 182), in contrast, one reads:

Dazu kam eine zweite, unvermutete Hilfestellung: Drei Monate vor Kriegsende, im Februar 1945, entstand in der Genfer Zentrale des Internationalen Roten Kreuzes ein ungewöhnliches neues Reisedokument. Es war kein 'Paß', sondern nur ein 'Reise-Titel' (titre de voyage); erfunden wurde es vom österreichischen Fürsten Johannes von Schwarzenberg, der – mit schweizerischer

marched into Rome in early August 1943, Berger-Waldenegg fled with his wife to Cardinal Sibilina's apartment and thus escaped persecution."

29 "In February 1945—three months before the end of the war—a very unusual travel document was issued at its Geneva headquarters; it could not be called "Paß" [*passport*], but only "travel title" (titre de voyage); its 'creator' was the Austrian prince Johannes von Schwarzenberg, who—with Swiss nationality—had been responsible for civil internees at the Geneva International Red Cross during the Second World War and now wanted to alleviate the misery of refugees. The paper was to 'be issued to all persons who the war has forced in one way or another to leave their regular country of residence, on the condition that they lack a valid passport, that a new one cannot be obtained, and that their country of residence allows them to leave and the country to which they wish to go allows them to enter'."

30 I am referring to the online version of the article that does not include pagination, available at <https://www.zeit.de/1984/19/passe-vom-papst> (accessed: January 27, 2021).

Staatsangehörigkeit – während des Zweiten Weltkrieges beim Genfer Internationalen Roten Kreuz zuständig für Zivilinternierte gewesen war und damit ein Instrument schuf, mit dem das Flüchtlingseleid gemildert werden sollte. Das Papier sollte [quote start by Sachslehner; D.S.] allen Personen ausgestellt werden, die der Krieg auf diese oder jene Weise gezwungen hat, ihr reguläres Aufenthaltsland zu verlassen, unter der Bedingung, daß ihnen ein gültiger Paß fehlt, ein neuer nicht beschaffbar ist, das Land ihres Aufenthaltes sie ausreisen und das Land, wohin sie sich zu begeben wünschen, sie einreisen lässt [quote end by Sachslehner; D.S.].³¹

Sachslehner refers to Stehle in the following endnote to substantiate his quotation, but:

1. Stehle only reproduces the text that was printed on the travel document. At this point, Sachslehner should at least have added “quoted from ...” in his reference, as otherwise it appears that the original quotation comes from Stehle.

2. It is obvious that Sachslehner has copied the entire paragraph from Stehle word by word, but it seems to the readers as though Sachslehner only quoted the source given by Stehle (without naming it exactly). At this point, general sloppiness clearly transitions to plagiarism, as Sachslehner does not point out that the entire section is taken verbatim from Stehle with only minor adjustments.

3. Sachslehner uses the new German orthography in his book and therefore writes the German word *Pass* with “ss” at the end (e.g., see p. 190) and not with a “ß” as was used in the older German orthography. In the paragraph above, which is not marked as a direct quote, he suddenly uses the spelling according to the older German orthography with a “ß,” as Stehle did. Since Stehle’s article was written in 1984 following the then German orthography, it is understandable why Stehle used the spelling *Paß*. Sachslehner has apparently—in line with my suspicions—copied the entire paragraph from Stehle, since the article is accessible online via the archive of the newspaper *Die Zeit*. Although he changed a few words to disguise the direct borrowing,

31 “In addition, there was a second, unexpected form of help: Three months before the end of the war, in February 1945, an unusual new travel document was issued at the Geneva headquarters of the International Red Cross. It was not a ‘Paß’ [*passport*], just a ‘travel title’ (titre de voyage); it was invented by the Austrian prince Johannes von Schwarzenberg, who—with Swiss nationality—was responsible for civil internees at the Geneva International Red Cross during the Second World War and thus created a means with which the misery of refugees should be alleviated. The paper should [quote start by Sachslehner; D.S.] be issued to all persons who the war has forced in one way or another to leave their regular country of residence on the condition that they lack a valid passport, a new one cannot be obtained, and that the country of their residence allows them to leave and the country to which they wish to go allow them to enter [quote end by Sachslehner; D.S.]”

he forgot to change the word *Paß* to the new German orthography used in his book.

Another “borrowing” by Sachslehner, again without referencing, is found on page 171:

Die tägliche Arbeit im ‘Österreichischen Büro’ habe “Viktor (von) Frölichsthal (1899–1971) [übernommen], der bis zum ‘Anschluss’ der Sekretär Schuschnigg gewesen und vor den Nazis nach Rom geflohen war. Eine Unterkunft hatte die Familie Frölichsthal im Kloster der ‘Schwestern der Schmerzhafte Mutter’ in der Nähe des Vatikans gefunden.”³²

In Stehle (1984), the corresponding passage reads:

Frölichsthal, bis zum ‘Anschluss’ Österreichs Sekretär des Bundeskanzlers Schuschnigg, war 1938 vor den Nazis aus Wien geflohen, hatte mit seiner Familie in Rom Zuflucht gefunden und sich zuletzt bei den Addolorata-Schwestern [...] vor den Schergen Hitlers verstecken müssen.³³

Particularly worrying is the fact that Sachslehner had already borrowed a passage from Langer one page earlier without indicating it (see above). Sachslehner’s plagiarism is even more evident in the chapter about Hudal helping the Nazi war criminal Otto Wächter. Without giving any references, Sachslehner writes:

Hudal versuchte die Presseberichte über seine ‘Betreuung’ Wächters in einem Brief vom 12. September 1949 an das vatikanische Staatssekretariat als die verleumderische Aktion eines Journalisten jüdischer Rasse und protestantischer Konfession darzustellen, der ‘im sowjetischen TASS-Büro in Rom’ arbeite. Als sich die Vatikanzeitung *L’Osservatore Romano* anschickte, Hudal zu verteidigen, legte Monsignore Giovanni Montini angeblich ein energisches Veto ein: ‘Man verteidigt keinen nazistischen Bischof!’ (p. 226).³⁴

32 “The daily work in the “Austrian office” was done by Viktor (von) Frölichsthal (1899–1971), who was Schuschnigg’s secretary until the ‘Anschluss’ and who fled to Rome from the Nazis. The Frölichsthal family had found accommodation in the monastery of the ‘Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother’ near the Vatican.”

33 “Frölichsthal, Austria’s secretary to Federal Chancellor Schuschnigg until the ‘Anschluss,’ fled Vienna from the Nazis in 1938, found refuge with his family in Rome and finally had to hide at the Addolorata Sisters [...] from Hitler’s henchmen.”

34 “In a letter from September 12, 1949, to the Vatican State Secretariat, Hudal tried to portray the press reports about his ‘care’ for Wächter as the defamatory action of a journalist of Jewish race and Protestant denomination who worked ‘at the Soviet TASS office in Rome.’ When the Vatican newspaper *L’Osservatore Romano* prepared to defend Hudal, Monsignor Giovanni Montini allegedly vetoed: ‘You don’t defend a Nazi bishop!’”

In Stehle's article, published thirty-five years earlier, one reads:

Hudal versuchte die Presseberichte über seine 'Betreuung' Wächters in einem Brief an das vatikanische Staatssekretariat (vom 12. September 1949) als die verleumderische Aktion eines Journalisten jüdischer Rasse und protestantischer Konfession darzustellen, der 'im sowjetischen TASS-Büro in Rom' arbeite. Als aber die Vatikanzeitung *Osservatore Romano* Hudal verteidigen wollte, untersagte es Monsignor Montini (der spätere Paul VI.) mit dem Hinweis: 'Man verteidigt keinen nazistischen Bischof!' (Stehle 1984).³⁵

There is no doubt that this passage is plagiarised. Below is another example from Stehle, who wrote:

Eben dies hat Hudal auch zu nutzen verstanden, wenn er für seine dubiosen Schützlinge Papiere brauchte, und umgekehrt wurde er selber benutzt, wenn andere – auch zu harmloseren Zwecken – bischöfliche Unterstützung benötigten. Nur im Vatikan selber wollte man aus gutem Grund möglichst wenig mit ihm zu tun haben. Auf Hudals schriftliche Bitte an den Papst, er möge ihn offiziell mit der Betreuung der Deutschen in den Lagern betrauen, entschieß [sic] Pius XII. am 1. November 1944: 'Wenn Monsignor Hudal den bedürftigen Deutschen in Rom und Italien helfen will, soll er es nur tun, aber im eigenen Namen und auf eigene Kosten – die, [sic] 'Anima' (Hudals Kolleg) hat dazu sicher beträchtliche Finanzmittel' (Stehle 1984).³⁶

From Sachslehner we read, with a footnote referencing Stehle but without labelling it as a direct quote:

Eben dies hat Hudal auch zu nutzen verstanden, wenn er für seine dubiosen Schützlinge Papiere brauchte, und umgekehrt wurde er selber benutzt, wenn andere – auch zu harmloseren Zwecken – bischöfliche Unterstützung benötigten. Nur im Vatikan selber wollte man aus gutem Grund möglichst wenig

35 "In a letter to the Vatican State Secretariat (from September 12, 1949), Hudal tried to portray the press reports about his 'care' for Wächter as the defamatory action of a journalist of Jewish race and Protestant denomination who worked 'at the Soviet TASS office in Rome.' But when the Vatican newspaper *Osservatore Romano* wanted to defend Hudal, Monsignor Montini (later Paul VI) forbade it with the remark: 'You don't defend a Nazi bishop!'"

36 "This is exactly what Hudal was aware of when he needed documents for his dubious protégés, and conversely he was instrumentalised himself when others—also for more harmless purposes—needed episcopal support. Only the Vatican did want as little to do with him as possible, for good reason. Upon Hudal's written request to the Pope that he should officially entrust him with the care of the Germans in the camps, Pius XII decided on November 1, 1944: 'If Monsignor Hudal wants to help the needy Germans in Rome and Italy, he should do it, but in his own name and at his own expense—the 'Anima' (Hudal's college) certainly has considerable financial resources'."

mit ihm zu tun haben. Auf Hudals schriftliche Bitte an den Papst, er möge ihn offiziell mit der Betreuung der Deutschen in den Lagern betrauen, entschied Pius XII. am 1. November 1944: ‘Wenn Monsignor Hudal den bedürftigen Deutschen in Rom und Italien helfen will, soll er es nur tun, aber im eigenen Namen und auf eigene Kosten – die ‘Anima’ (Hudals Kolleg) hat dazu sicher beträchtliche Finanzmittel’ (Sachslehner 2019: 184).³⁷

Once again, we find a case of plagiarism on page 175, where Sachslehner correctly references Stehle (footnote 366) but then continues to write without any reference added:

Als Nachweis der Staatsbürgerschaft genügte eine eidesstattliche Erklärung des Antragstellers. Das Dokument, das er erhielt, war vor den italienischen und den alliierten Behörden zeitlich unbegrenzt gültig und konnte für Reisen zwischen Österreich und Italien benutzt werden, und zwar auch dann noch, als sich das ‘Österreichische Büro’ schon aufgelöst hatte und eine reguläre österreichische diplomatische Vertretung in Rom eingetroffen war (Sachslehner 2019: 175).³⁸

In Stehle, we read:

Als Staatsbürgerschafts-Nachweis genügte eine eidesstattliche Erklärung. Weil aber die Gültigkeit des Dokuments ‘vor den italienischen und den alliierten Behörden’ zeitlich unbegrenzt war, konnte es zum Reisen zwischen Österreich und Italien auch noch benutzt werden, nachdem sich das Büro Anfang Mai 1946 (nach Eintreffen des ersten Wiener diplomatischen Vertreters in Rom) aufgelöst hatte (Stehle 1984).³⁹

37 “This is exactly what Hudal was aware of when he needed documents for his dubious protégés, and conversely he was instrumentalised himself when others—also for more harmless purposes—needed episcopal support. Only the Vatican did want as little to do with him as possible, for good reason. Upon Hudal’s written request to the Pope that he should officially entrust him with the care of the Germans in the camps, Pius XII decided on November 1, 1944: ‘If Monsignor Hudal wants to help the needy Germans in Rome and Italy, he should do it, but in his own name and at his own expense—the ‘Anima’ (Hudal’s college) certainly has considerable financial resources.’”

38 “An affidavit by the applicant was sufficient as proof of citizenship. The document he received was valid indefinitely for the Italian and Allied authorities and could be used for travel between Austria and Italy, even after the ‘Austrian office’ had already dissolved and a regular Austrian diplomatic Representation had arrived in Rome.”

39 “An affidavit was sufficient as proof of citizenship. But because the validity of the document ‘for the Italian and Allied authorities’ was unlimited in time, it could still be used to travel between Austria and Italy after the office had dissolved in early May 1946 (after the first Viennese diplomatic representative had arrived in Rome).”

Finally, a few more examples related to other sources: for the quote on page 31—a letter from Hudal to Prince-Bishop Alois Schuster, dated February 13, 1911—Sachslehner does cite the correct source in the Graz diocesan archive. Rupert Klieber cited the same passage in 2010 (Klieber 2010: 3), which Sachslehner does not mention, although Sachslehner lists Klieber’s contribution in his bibliography.

What is also surprising is an alleged quote by Alfred Rosenberg (1893–1946), which Sachslehner cites on p. 89. After the quote, Sachslehner’s added commentary ends with the words “[...] Rosenberg wrote in May 1934 in the foreword of the 150th thousand.” In the previous footnote (173) the *Grazer Volksblatt* is cited, footnote 174 marked with “Ebda, p. 124.” In the following text, Sachslehner refers to Dominik Burkard (b. 1967), who also appears in the bibliography. The corresponding footnote 175 refers again to the *Grazer Volksblatt*, there allegedly p. 32 (“Ebda, p. 32”). What is actually meant is Burkard, from whose work *Häresie und Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts. Rosenbergs nationalsozialistische Weltanschauung vor dem Tribunal der Römischen Inquisition* (Burkard 2005: 32) Sachslehner borrowed the quote, and not from the *Grazer Volksblatt* as stated in the footnote.

This makes it possible to find out where Sachslehner got his information about Rosenberg: Sachslehner never picked up the work of Alfred Rosenberg but rather copied the passage from Rosenberg’s book that Burkard actually cites and references in full (Burkard 2005: 124)—not the *Grazer Volksblatt*. Here, it appears to be an oversight that Sachslehner mixed up the order in the footnotes. However, it is surprising that a historian would indirectly cite an easily accessible work such as Rosenberg’s *Mythos* for his remarks, using Burkard’s citation. Particularly with such sensitive topics it is expected that an author will use the original (Rosenberg) and not blindly copy it from other colleagues.

Another case of plagiarism comes from Burkard’s (2005: 34) book:

Das Dekret, welches das Sanctum Officium, die ‘Heilige Römische und Universale Inquisition’, am 9. Februar 1934 erließ, begann mit den Worten: ‘Damnatur liber A. Rosenberg, cui titulus Der ‘Mythus’ des 20. Jahrhunderts’.⁴⁰

40 “The decree issued by the Sanctum Officium, the ‘Holy Roman and Universal Inquisition,’ on February 9, 1934, started with the words: ‘Damnatur liber A. Rosenberg, cui titulus Der ‘Mythus’ des 20. Jahrhunderts.’”

In Sachslehner, we read:

Am 9. Februar 1934 erließ das *Sanctum Officium* ein feierliches Dekret. Es begann mit den Worten: ‘Dammatur liber A. Rosenberg, cui titulus ‘Der ‘Mythus’ des 20. Jahrhunderts’ (p. 87).⁴¹

Sachslehner does not provide a footnote reference. And here too we can see that Sachslehner simply copied, because the original decree does not use the abbreviation ‘A.’, but the Latin genitive ‘Alfredi’ (Esztergomi Főegyházmegeye 1934, p. 18f.).

In another example, Sachslehner writes:

Angeblich, so Hudal, war es Kardinalsekretär Francesco Marchetti-Selvaggiani (1871–1951), ein Vertrauensmann von Eugenio Pacelli und ehemals Nuntius in Österreich, der vor einem offenen Kampf gegen die Nazis zurückscheute, den er ‘wegen seiner Rückwirkung auf Italien, dessen faschistische Partei in eine immer gefährlichere Abhängigkeit von Berlin geriet’, nicht ‘für opportun’ hielt (p. 102).⁴²

Later, Sachslehner introduces a Hudal quote that he cites indirectly from Hubert Wolf (b. 1959) (Wolf 2008: 122). At this point it is unclear why Sachslehner does not use the original by Hudal, since this passage comes from Hudal himself, from his memoirs, which Sachslehner cites repeatedly before and after. In Hudal we read:

[...], da Kardinalsekretär Marchetti-Selvaggiani einen offenen Kampf gegen den NS wegen einer Rückwirkung auf Italien, dessen faschistische Partei in eine immer gefährlichere Abhängigkeit von Berlin geriet, nicht für opportun hielt (Hudal 1976: 121).⁴³

Without specifying this, Sachslehner quotes Hudal directly and word for word. When Sachslehner pretends to quote only certain parts from Hubert Wolf (“[...] in eine immer gefährlichere Abhängigkeit von Berlin geriet”,

41 “On February 9, 1934, the *Sanctum Officium* issued a solemn decree. It started with the words: ‘Dammatur liber A. Rosenberg, cui titulus ‘Der ‘Mythus’ des 20. Jahrhunderts’.”

42 “Allegedly, according to Hudal, it was Cardinal Secretary Francesco Marchetti-Selvaggiani (1871–1951), a confidante of Eugenio Pacelli and former nuncio in Austria, who shied away from an open fight against the Nazis, which he considered not ‘opportune,’ ‘because of its retroactive effect on Italy, whose fascist Party became more and more dangerously dependent on Berlin’.”

43 “[...] because Cardinal Secretary Marchetti-Selvaggiani did not consider an open fight against the NS to be opportune because of a retroactive effect on Italy, whose fascist party was becoming more and more dangerously dependent on Berlin.”

nicht ‘für opportun’ hielt”), the impression arises that Hudal’s original quote sounds different, which is not the case. Hudal was taken verbatim and subsequently changed by Sachslehner, but with reference to Hubert Wolf as the source.

Based on the selected examples presented, I have to state that Sachslehner’s book is not merely sloppy in formal terms, but also contains plagiarised portions, such as with respect to the article by Stehle. I very much assume that a more in-depth examination would produce additional evidence to support my assessment.

Overall, its fine and enjoyable prose notwithstanding, Sachslehner’s work is characterised by an extreme lack of care in dealing with the sources used. In addition, the evident contributions of other scholars to his own research are not sufficiently acknowledged and occasionally deliberately obscured. This especially concerns Markus Langer’s doctoral thesis, which, as previously mentioned, is not even listed in the bibliography.

References

- Burkard, Dominik. 2005. *Häresie und Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts. Rosenbergs nationalsozialistische Weltanschauung vor dem Tribunal der Römischen Inquisition*. Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh.
- Burkard, Dominik. 2007. “Alois Hudal – ein Anti-Pacelli? Zur Diskussion um die Haltung des Vatikans gegenüber dem Nationalsozialismus.” *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte*, 59 (1), pp. 61–89.
- Esztergomi Főegyházmegye. 1934. *Circulares Litterae Dioecesanæ anno 1934. Ad Clerum Archidioecesis Strigoniensis Dimissæ*. Budapest: Gustav.
- Hudal, Alois. 1937. *Die Grundlagen des Nationalsozialismus. Eine ideengeschichtliche Untersuchung von katholischer Warte*. Leipzig and Vienna: Verlag Günther.
- Hudal, Alois. 1976. *Römische Tagebücher. Lebensbeichte eines alten Bischofs*. Graz and Stuttgart: Leopold Stocker Verlag.
- Klieber, Rupert. 2010. “Der Grazer Diözesane und Anima-Rektor Alois Hudal (1885–1963) und seine Verortung im österreichischen Katholizismus der Jahre 1900 bis 1950.” Online: http://piusxi.univie.ac.at/fileadmin/user_upload/p_pi-usxi/Klieber-Hudal-2010.pdf (accessed: February 12, 2021).
- Langer, Markus. 1995. “Alois Hudal. Bischof zwischen Kreuz und Hakenkreuz. Versuch einer Biographie.” Ph.D. thesis, University of Vienna, Austria.
- Rohrbacher, Peter. 2015. “‘Habent sua fata libelli’. Das ‘Rassenproblem’ im Spiegel der nachgelassenen Privatbibliothek Bischof Alois Hudals.” *Römische Historische Mitteilungen*, 57, pp. 325–364.
- Stehle, Hansjakob. 1984. “Pässe vom Papst?” *Die Zeit*, 19/1984, pp. 9–12. Online: <https://www.zeit.de/1984/19/paesse-vom-papst> (accessed: January 27, 2021).

Wolf, Hubert. 2008. *Papst & Teufel. Die Archive des Vatikan und das Dritte Reich.*
München: C. H. Beck.