

Sigrid Hunke (1913-1999)

Europe's New Religion and its Old Stereotypes

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1. Introduction

Sigrid Hunke is a well-known literary figure in Germany. She has written several books dealing with the subject of European identity. Especially her publications about the relation between Europe and the Arab world have achieved great success. In addition to her activities as an author, Hunke played, and still plays, an important role in the religious movement of the German Unitarians, the *German Unitarianism* of Hunke criticizes Christianity as totally alien to the European mind. The „Judeo-Christian“ world view is accused of having brought into the world an unnatural segregation of the Holy and the profane, leading to materialism and the debasement of all spiritual values. The only possibility for Europe to overcome this profanation is to return to its pagan tradition and to strip off the foreign rule which is seen as the result of Christianization.

2. Voelkish Grounding

Born in 1913 in Kiel, the daughter of the publisher Heinrich Hunke, Sigrid Hunke studied psychology, philosophy, and journalism at the universities of Kiel, Freiburg, and Berlin from 1934 on. She was a leading member of the *National Socialist German Student Union* (NSDStB) and worked for its public relations office, first on a local level and then, until 1938, within the Berlin „Gaustudentenführung.“ Here she acquired contact with the press and the public, developing a quite fluency in her style of expression. These capabilities promoted her literary success after the war too. On May 1, 1937 Hunke joined the NSDAP.¹

Hunke's main academic teachers had been Hermann Mandel (1882-1946), a Protestant Theologian, and Ludwig Ferdinand Clauss (1892-1974). Besides Hans F. K. Günther, Clauss became one of the most influential race theorists in Nazi Germany. He wrote numerous books on racial topics, with a huge number of copies sold. Clauss, lecturing from 1936 on at the Berlin university, was a good-looking, wealthy and traveled young scholar who frequently impressed his female students. The German historian Helmut Heiber mentions an attempt of Hunke from December 1937 to meet Adolf Hitler personally in order to call the „Führer's“ attention to her inspiring teacher and, according to Heiber, she was hindered only by Hitler's adjutant Wilhelm Brückner in so doing.²

¹ No. 5279618, membership applied on October 16, 1937 in Berlin. The quoted data are taken of Hunke's personal files at the Federal Archives Berlin (the former Berlin Document Center) and the Archives of the Berlin Humboldt-University. Information concerning her curriculum vitae is also to be found in Munzinger's biographical calendar, in the Kürschner-manual, and in the appendix to her dissertation.

² Helmut Heiber, *Universität unterm Hakenkreuz*, Teil 1 (München, 1991), p. 482f.

Using the title of a „Rassenseelenkunde,“ Clauss developed his *mimetic* method to be the genuine National Socialist race-theory, since it was – conversely to the natural sciences – able to reach the depth of the human soul. Therefore, he lived as a Bedouin under Bedouins, and for this reason he kept a Jewish assistant to study her racial characteristics as a living object, so to speak.³ Despite his interpretation after the war, Clauss did not intend any kind of racial (or other) equality between Aryans and Jews. He claimed to be the founder of the Third Reich’s race-psychology and he never questioned its anti-Jewish policy at all. In a letter to the dean of the Berlin philosophy department he stated that his books are rightly esteemed as antisemitic. Clauss accused Jews and Liberals having hindered him of becoming a professor in Berlin.⁴ It is naïve to concede to Clauss, as Weingart does, the status of an oppositional figure. His „Rassenseelenkunde“ was an important variety of National Socialist racism and not a counterpart. Clauss never argued or acted against National Socialism. He held his introductory lecture in the „brown shirt“ and during the war he became a collaborator of the secret service of the SS where he worked as a specialist for the Middle East in the department VI C 13 of the *Reich Security Main Office* (RSHA).⁵

In October 1936, Sigrid Hunke wrote an article in which she tried to explain her teacher’s psychological race-science as the organic counterpart of anthropological „Rassenkörperkunde“ taught by biology, physical anthropology, and genetics.⁶ Echoing the thoughts of Clauss, Hunke followed him in his attempt to apply Edmund Husserl’s phenomenology to the field of racial studies. Only the Nordic race seemed her capable of comprehending the true essence, the famous „Wesen,“ of racial phenomena because of a specific ability to exclude the researcher’s point of view and by reason of a genuine Nordic unity between science and metaphysics. Even to learn and to live in a foreign language, Hunke reserved to the geniuses of Nordic *style*.⁷ At the end of the 1930s, Hunke continued this approach in her doctoral dissertation on the „Origin and Influence of Foreign Models on the German people⁸,“ where she dealt with the effectiveness of models in conformity with one’s race. Beginning with a eulogy on Adolf Hitler and the moral obligations represented by him, she investigated the relation between alien („artfremd“) and intrinsic („arteigen“) models and how they function. Hunke concluded that racial laws always remain the same, although time and space may lead to some modifications.⁹ What may happen is that the inner patterns of perception could be overrun by alien models, ergo races. Together with the Christian missionar-

3 This was Clauss’ own argument, uttered in his party trial in 1940. How would it be possible to do research on the Jewish race amongst Aryans, he said, and demanded to pass by the Nuremberg laws. Nevertheless, Clauss lost his university position because he did not give up the relationship with his friend and co-worker Margarete Landé whom he hid until the end of the war. For that reason, he was honored with a tree in Yad Vashem in 1979. See Peter Weingart, *Doppel-Leben. Ludwig Ferdinand Clauss: Zwischen Rassenforschung und Widerstand* (Frankfurt/M., 1995). Later, Yad Vashem withdrew the honor.

4 Letter of Clauss from October 28, 1937 (Archives of the Berlin Humboldt-University, personal file L. F. Clauss).

5 See Peter Weingart, *Doppel-Leben*, p. 125, and Horst Junginger, *Von der philologischen zur völkischen Religionswissenschaft* (Stuttgart, 1999), p. 243.

6 Sigrid Hunke, „Verstehen,“ *Rasse* (1936): 86-91. „Rasse,“ the monthly of the Nordic Movement, was edited by R. v. Hoff, L. F. Clauss, and H. F. K. Günther. A lot of its contributors had connections with the Nordic and also with the *German Faith Movement*. Clauss left the journal in 1938. See Hans-Jürgen Lutzhöft, *Der nordische Gedanke in Deutschland 1920-1940* (Stuttgart, 1971), p. 47.

7 Sigrid Hunke, „Verstehen,“ *Rasse* (1936): 88.

8 Sigrid Hunke, *Herkunft und Wirkung fremder Vorbilder auf den deutschen Menschen* (Berlin, 1941). Her dissertation was not published.

9 Sigrid Hunke, *Herkunft und Wirkung fremder Vorbilder*, p. 79 and p. 103.

ies the spirit of the dessert came to Europe, which, in the vocabulary of Clauss is, the *prophetic style* („Offenbarungsstil“) invaded the German territories. In fact, this foreign infiltration could only partly and temporarily occupy the German soul, in its center it remained untouched. As a consequence of her approach, Hunke deduced a *voelkish* cleansing as the urgent duty of the day, not sparing any corner and zone of life.¹⁰

Here in her doctoral dissertation, the critique of Christianity predominates. But Hunke had expressed her positive religious conception some years before in a script written for the racial schooling within the *German Faith Movement* that she sent to its „Führer“ Jakob Wilhelm Hauer on August 31, 1935.¹¹ Hunke illustrated in this „Schulungsbrief“ how race and religion, from the viewpoint of Clauss, hang together. However, she just asserted a different experience of the religious reality depending on one's racial lineage without giving any kind of proof. In conformity with the arbitrariness of any race theory, Hunke collected a phenomenological choice of examples simply declaring that each people has its own racial shaping. Race unifies a people and outside race no truth is possible: „Alle Wahrheitserkenntnis ist rassegebunden,“ she stated.¹² Especially in the sphere of religion it is impossible to act independently of one's racial determination because the religious identity forms the core of the folk. Race and folk inseparably belong together. One has to study the different ways to the Holy in order to understand what is alien and what is one's own. The „Rassenseelenkunde“ of Clauss would not only lead to a better understanding of Christianity as alienation of the German soul but also support the emergence of a Nordic religion.

Hunke did not become prominent in the *voelkish* religious movement. She was too young, and the *German Faith Movement*, founded in July 1933 as umbrella organization of various *voelkish* religious groups, came to an early end in 1936.¹³ After the demise of Germany's main pagan association, Hunke then sought the company of another important organization that promoted a Nordic world view, the *Ahnenerbe* of the SS. Like her sister Waltraud Hunke, she contributed to its journal *Germanien* and she too received a *Ahnenerbe*-scholarship in the 1940s for further research on the racial influence on models.¹⁴ Under the aegis of the SS, Himmlers's semi-official brain trust *Das Ahnenerbe* endeavored to search for Germany's *ancestral heritage* and turned close attention to trace back the religious and cultural roots of the ‚Indogermanic‘ race. Hunke and her sister were affiliated with the ‚Germanic studies‘ of the SS, an operation for the Germanization of the Nordic countries. The commander of this enterprise Hans Ernst Schneider changed his name after 1945 into Schwerte and became a respected Ger-

¹⁰ Sigrid Hunke, *Herkunft und Wirkung fremder Vorbilder*, p. 159.

¹¹ Sigrid Hunke, „Schulungsbrief ‚Rassenseelenkunde‘“ (literal remains of J. W. Hauer, Tübingen). Hauer wrote on September 27, 1935 to Clauss, Hunkes's „Schulungsbrief“ would be used „as soon as possible“ (literal remains of J. W. Hauer, Federal Archives Koblenz, vol. 87, p. 368). To Hauer see the biography, more a hagiography, of Margarete Dierks, Jakob Wilhelm Hauer 1881-1962 (Heidelberg, 1986); my critique of Dierks: *Von der philologischen zur völkischen Religionswissenschaft*, p. 7 and p. 189f.

¹² Sigrid Hunke, *Herkunft und Wirkung fremder Vorbilder*, p. 2.

¹³ Cf. Ulrich Nanko, *Die Deutsche Glaubensbewegung* (Marburg, 1993), pp. 278-281.

¹⁴ See Hunke's letter to the *Ahnenerbe* from March 21, 1940 where she recommended her studies to fulfill important tasks within the educational system of National Socialism in binding people to their racial obligations (Federal Archive Berlin, NS 21, vol. 360). The exact title of Hunke's research project was „Rasse und Vorbild in Deutschland“ (*Ahnenerbe*-note from October 8, 1943 „Betr.: Einstufung von Dr. Waltraut[d] Hunke und Dr. Si[e]lgrid Schulze,“ Federal Archive Berlin, NS 21, vol. 51). Her sister Waltraud worked on the German matriarchy, an important issue with regard to the status of women in the SS, as Hans Ernst Schneider (alias Schwerte) wrote by hand on a letter of her to prolong the sisters' scholarships in January 10, 1945 (*ibid.*, NS 21, vol. 51).

manist and even the rector of a German university in 1970.¹⁵ Schneider's co-worker Alarich Augustin joined the German Unitarians after the war where he closely associated himself with Sigrid Hunke. Another collaborator of the „Germanischer Wissenschaftseinsatz“ with *voelkish* pagan aspirations was Otto Huth. Huth (* 1906), who still lives in Tübingen, headed a branch of the *Ahnenerbe* named „Abteilung für Indogermanische Geistes- und Glaubensgeschichte.“ Supported by Himmeler and the *Ahnenerbe*, Huth was appointed professor for science of religion at the „Reich“-university of Strasbourg in 1942.

In stark contrast to the alleged spirituality of its goals, the political and military strengthening of Germany's rule over Europe stood in the fore of these endeavors of the SS to implement the ideology of National Socialism outside Germany among the so-called Nordic or Germanic countries. There can be no doubt that such a spiritual fascism, as it was sponsored by the SS, had been part of the ideological warfare of the Third Reich and even a fertile ground from which criminal activities emerged.

3. Spiritual Renewal

Due to the fact that Hunke was only a small figure in the *Ahnenerbe* and that she was less involved in its policy, she had no great problems establishing herself in the post-war era. From the midfifties on, Hunke began to publish books calling for a spiritual renewal of Germany after its military defeat. Avoiding any mention of the National Socialist period, she took up the program of the former *German Faith Movement* for a religious revival of Germany's pagan tradition outside and against the Christian churches. To keep distance from the taboos of a Germanic ergo Nazi heathendom, Hunke called her pagan approach *Europe's new or Europe's own religion*. However, a lot of items of the old *voelkish* program arise once more in new clothing. For example, the attitude of anti-dogmatism, a direct approach to the Holy without mediator, a polytheistic tolerance instead of Jewish-Christian monotheism, the preference for mysticism, the adoption of monistic elements, the veneration of nature with a forced reclaiming of sacred sites and holy festivals, the protection of the environment against unbridled technology, a female principle of the Divine, pantheistic equation, and an *organic* („organizistisch“) religious world view found a new setting. Hunke's life-long search for a lineage of heretics which should build the backbone of Europe's new pagan religion exactly followed the ancient genealogy of the *German Faith Movement*. It was primarily Hauer who had undertaken great efforts to list such a genealogy of forefathers of non-Christian belief. Even the selection of Hunke's examples coincides with a choice that Hauer partly published in 1940.¹⁶

¹⁵ See Gerd Simon, „Ihr Mann ist tot und lässt sie grüßen“ – Hans Erns Schneider alias Schwerte im Dritten Reich,“ *Sprache und Literatur* 77 (1996): 82-100, *Germanistik im 2. Weltkrieg*, eds. Joachim Lerchenmüller and Gerd Simon (Tübingen, 1997), pp. 62-71, and in general Michael H. Kater, *Das 'Ahnenerbe' der SS 1935-1945* (Stuttgart, 1974). The Germanization-policy in one of these countries is documented at full length in *De SS en Nederland. Documenten uit SS-Archieven 1935-1945*, 2 vols. ('S-Gravenhage, 1976).

¹⁶ *Urkunden und Gestalten der Germanisch-Deutschen Glaubensgeschichte*, ed. Jakob Wilhelm Hauer (Stuttgart, 1940). Compare it with Sigrid Hunke, *Europas andere Religion im Bild* (Bonn-Bad Godesberg, 1973, ed. by the *Sigrid Hunke society*) which is the catalogue of an exhibition „Vorfahren unitarischen Denkens“ that was shown for the first time in Detmold during the annual meeting of the *Deutsche Unitarier Religionsgemeinschaft* in 1973. Hauer and Mandel themselves had now the honor to be incorporated to the forerunners of *German Unitarianism* (*ibid.*, pp. 67-69).

As a matter of course, the former attempt for a fusion of fascism and religion had to change its appearance after the war. That mainly meant giving up the vocabulary of National Socialist race ideology and cutting the eminent link between blood and spirit. Hunke succeeded quite well in so doing but some residues remained in her thinking. You can see this very well at the starting point of her conception of history. The evil, that is, the splitting of the religious union between God and mankind, came into the world by the „Churri“ or *Hurrites*. This people about which we do not know very much settled two or three thousand years ago in the Middle East, originally coming from Armenia. Whereas the „Churri“ did not belong to the Semites, Hunke amalgamated them with Israel and „Jewishness.“¹⁷ Irrespective of historical facts, Hunke cited passages from the Jewish Bible (the Old Testament) on large scale to describe the pretended „Churri“ spirit. So the „Churri“ had to display the bad inception of Judaism and to represent the negative Jewish influence on Christianity, seeming to be without any racial connotation. In spite of this camouflage, the whole range of Hunke's negative clichés stem from the former antisemitic polemic. Stereotypes of that sort are: intellectual exaggeration, restlessness, superficiality, positivism, a twofold bolshevist and capitalist materialism, the lack of a connection to one's soil and history, the striving for unbounded equality, a relationship with nature (God, women etc.) tainted by the Jewish-Christian conception of sin, any kind of disunion and profanation. Hunke removed these antisemitic patterns of thought from their previous context and used them again and again to describe Europe's estrangement from its religious identity. Though Hunke paid attention to her vocabulary and avoided a direct use of anti-Jewish phrases, this is to be found with reference to Hunke and with a strong antisemitic sense in the so-called New Right.¹⁸

Hunke could emerge as an intellectual leader of the New Right because she did not only express a negative criticism but had also a comprehensive religious program. Not totally without reason, some people view her in the tradition of the German cultural philosopher Oswald Spengler.¹⁹ Hunke stands for a common right-wing critique of culture, collecting the usual arguments of moral and social decay including the disintegration of family values, an increasing irreverence against the authorities as well as drug abuse and the long hair of the youth.²⁰ Yet her program reached further and was not confined to the critique of those striking deformities of modern life seeming her characteristic of Western societies in general. Hunke was a restless preacher against – rather: for – the decline of Western civilization, because only the Christian West will and has to end. A pagan rebirth will come into existence and supersede the predominance of mediocrity in a frail Occident, leading Europe to a new and powerful future. It is the task of a spiritual elite to fight against the tyranny of the American way of life and to rejuvenate a decrepit Europe.

¹⁷ See Hunke's main work *Europas andere Religion* (Düsseldorf, 1969), p. 30ff., or, in a newer edition, *Europas eigene Religion* (Bergisch Gladbach, 1981), p. 25ff., the chapter „Dualismus und der biblische Sündenfallmythos.“

¹⁸ See for example *Mut zur Identität. Alternativen zum Prinzip der Gleichheit*, ed. Pierre Krebs (Struckum, 1988), Alain de Benoist, *Heide sein (Comment peut-on être païen?)*, Tübingen 1982), the Internet-pages of the „Thule-Seminar,“ or other publications of the *Groupement de Recherche pour une Civilisation Européenne* (GRECE). Cf. here also Tomislav Sunic, *Against Democracy and Equality. The European New Right* (New York, 1990), especially chapter 8 „The Pagan Right.“

¹⁹ See Johannes Zerger's and Wahid Wahdatehagh's article „Ein 'positiver' Spengler. Die bekannte Orientalistin Sigrid Hunke als Theoretikerin der Neuen Rechten,“ *Frankfurter Rundschau* (March 30, 1994): 8.

²⁰ See for instance Hunke's article „Doch der Mensch, der ist nicht ein Ding unter anderen Dingen,“ *Die Welt* (November 22, 1980).

We see here an old ideology concealing its imperial aspirations once more behind a European frame. The spiritual mode of its expression is the old *ancestral heritage* of Nazi Germany that is returning on a European level.²¹ Its racial focus has shifted to concepts of ethnic-religious identity (Turkey for the Turks) which are directed against the democratic cosmopolitanism and the ideology of the human rights. Conversely, a right for regionalism and vernacular diversity is declared, that, together with a romantic love for nature, can lead to a close connection with leftist grass root movements. Conventional distinctions between right and left often lose their meaning under such circumstances, particularly after the end of the Soviet Union. Thus we should not be surprised to find blots of brown color in the green movement since the brown movement had a ‚green‘ preference for a natural environment and healthy behavior from the beginning on.

Besides Hunke's paganism, her contribution to the ideology of the New Right is related to two other important issues. First, a women's movement which originated in the old *voelkish* ‚feminism‘ of the *German Faith Movement*.²² The second matter concerns her activity for a rightist Arab nationalism and is of greater importance in the context of our workshop. Like Alain de Benoist and François Genoud, Hunke belonged to the philo-Arab wing of the New Right.²³ She wrote highly influential books on Arab culture and its relation with Europe. Best known is *Allahs Sonne über dem Abendland. Unser arabisches Erbe (Allah's Sun upon the Occident. Our Arab Heritage)* which first appeared in 1960. Thirteen non-German editions followed and a television feature made out of her best-seller was shown in all Arab countries. In 1990, a new paperback-edition was published in Germany.

Without mentioning her former teacher, Hunke continued in her post-war publications the racial studies on the Semites of Clauss. She resumed her former research program on foreign models and adapted it to the new political conditions. The topics and examples given there return in many variations in her books written after 1945. Hunke's ‚new‘ interest in Islam and Arab culture was not really directed to the Arabs themselves. Hunke wanted to expound the Arab influence on Europe as a step in Western history on its way to gain independence from Christianity. She therefore glorified the policy of Frederic II in the 13th century who had enlarged the German Reich to European size, reaching from Burgundy to Sicily. A special number of the *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte* from May 1941, dedicated to the reign of the Hohenstaufen, has to be mentioned here since it was widely plagiarized by Hunke. It included a picture of Frederic II's overcoat, his „Kaisermantel,“ that became the motto of Hunke's book *Kamele auf dem Kaisermantel*.²⁴ In her opinion, the leading position of the German Reich was based at that time, to some extent, on the relationship with Arab culture and goods. Hunke was interested in a resurgence of this ‚philo-Arab‘ tradition in

²¹ The turning of the Nazi-ideology to ‚Europeanness‘ started already with the war and was intensified after the defeat of Stalingrad. Its heroes were the soldiers of the Waffen-SS, seen as the followers of the order of the *German Knights*.

²² Cf. Hunke's book *Am Anfang waren Mann und Frau* (Bonn, 1980, 1955) and her article „Die Zukunft unseres unvergänglichen Erbes in Mann und Frau,“ *Elemente zur Metapolitik* 2 (1987): 27-34. Of course, Hunke's reactionary and backward-looking views had nothing to do with a real women's emancipation.

²³ To François Genoud (*Le banquier noir*), who was not only the financier of the Eichmann- and Barbie-defense but supported also the Algerian FLN, see Karl Laske's book *Ein Leben zwischen Hitler und Carlos: François Genoud* (Zürich, 1996).

²⁴ *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte* (Mai 1941) between p. 464 and p. 465; Sigrid Hunke, *Kamele auf dem Kaisermantel* (Stuttgart, 1976).

order to strengthen the idea of an independent and powerful European identity.

Utilizing nationalist *Arabism* together with the old strategy of the Third Reich to form an alliance with the Arabs against Western (British) imperialism, it becomes clear that Hunke's intellectual grounding and her love for the Islamic culture were embedded in the ideology and political scenery of National Socialism. From 1942 until 1944, Hunke lived together with her husband Peter H. Schulze, a member of the *consulat générale*, in Tangier, Morocco.²⁵

Due to the enormous success of Hunke's books about Arab themes, she was esteemed as an expert on oriental affairs. Although lacking any scholarly accomplishment and even the necessary knowledge of the Arab language,²⁶ the German government sent her on a good will tour through several Arab countries after the war of 1967. Hunke held lectures at the universities of Algiers, Tunis, Tripoli, Aleppo, and became honorary member of the *Supreme Court for Islamic Affairs* in Cairo. The Arabs were glad about anybody from Europe who seemed to have a real interest in their culture and did not only intend to exploit their oil fields. More than that, many welcomed Hunke as potential ally in their struggle against Western predominance. The fact that her friendship originated in the ideology of the Third Reich did not irritate them. Even the leaders of an Arab Socialism tended to overlook her *voelkish* nationalist background, or agreed with it. An article of Hunke published in 1970 includes a picture of her in the moment of handing over the Arab translation of *Allahs Sone über dem Abendland* to the Algerian president Houari Boumedienne.²⁷ The article clearly displayed her message. Only if the Arabs return to the old *ancestral heritage* of their cultural tradition, they will be able to overwhelm the foreign occupation and to build up a real national and socialist – in other words: a genuine *voelkish* – community. Unfortunately, some Arabs repeated the mistake of giving faith to such a renewed form of German anti-imperialism once again. But on the other hand would it be rather unfair to ignore the right of the Arab nations for political independence as a matter of course and to disregard the relation between anti-Islamic stereotypes and Western aggressions negating this right and a religious fundamentalism directed against the West in general.

The 'philo-Arabism' of Nazi-Germany and later of right wing intellectuals has, without any doubt, a vigorous antisemitic undertone. In the stupid logic of intermingling language and race it becomes possible to be anti-Jewish without being an antisemite because of a friendship with the Semitic Arabs. This rightist Western 'philo-Semitism' seems to me not only a simple jugglery but moreover a psychological phenomenon and an attempt to recall negative projections on Jews. In a *voelkish* point of view, the Jewish people could be taken for a good example of a successful *voelkish* self-determination. Maintaining strong anti-miscegenation laws, the Jews preserved their ethnic (racial) identity throughout the ages. With such a picture in mind, German *voelkish* nationalists thought to repulse the Jewish threat with a higher degree of racial purity and tried to punish offenses against the prohibition of intermarriages („Rassenschande“) as hard as possible. We have here to remember that Hunke concluded her dissertation with a *voelkish* demand

²⁵ Peter Schulze published several books on old-Egyptian mythology after 1945. Their son, Hagen Schulze, became a well-known historian in Germany.

²⁶ This in contrast to her former statement (see above p. 152) that only the Nordic race has the ability to understand a foreign language thoroughly.

²⁷ Sigrid Hunke, „Wiederfinden der algerischen Persönlichkeit,“ *Zeitschrift für Kulturaustausch* 2 (1970): 130-132.

for racial cleansing and declared, with regard to models, the prevention of racial alienation as the main task of the day. In the case of *Arabism*, the negative model of Jewish identity changes into a positive mode of perception. Since any wholesome *voelkish* development depends on a deep and uncorrupted relation to religion, Islam is expected to take over the task of focusing national-Arab identity as Orthodox Judaism and the Torah did it for the Jews. This would explain why such a predilection for Islam and its values is to be found on the right wing, contrary to the usually ardent anti-Muslim xenophobia there. Summarizing the correlation of Hunke's pagan religion and her concept of *Arabism*, one has to pay attention to earlier ideas of a *voelkish*-national rebirth associated with forms of religious revitalization.

The ideological origins of Hunke's *voelkish* program, now proposed to the Arabs as an adequate solution to achieve independence from Western supremacy, lay in the last third of the 19th century when the arising *voelkish* movement searched for answers to the challenges of a belated capitalist modernization process in Germany. Some of the *voelkish* groups of that time developed a pagan alternative to oppose the religious monopoly of the Christian state church. Their alternative religious model focused on a spiritual community of the whole German folk in order to overcome the antagonistic struggles splitting the nation into a number of interest groups. Christianity, closely connected with all reactionary forces influential in the Second Reich, had lost its cohesive force and was not able to integrate the masses of a growing working-class. It is understandable that a competing religious movement put the idea of a real „Volksgemeinschaft“ in the center of its program and linked it with the emerging race question. At the end of the 19th century, the pagan awakening merged with the racialism of the *voelkish* movement into a new religion that went back, as it was said, into the history of the old Aryans or ‚Indogermans‘. In the following decades, however, pagan-ism was limited to a very small segment of the German society but was then expected to become the dominant religion of the Third Reich. The early breakdown of the *German Faith Movement* provides evidence that those *voelkish*-pagan hopes could not be realized, or at least did not succeed as intended.²⁸ Regardless of its failure, Sigrid Hunke tried to export the ideological model of the *German Faith Movement* to the Arabs. She advertised it as efficient means to reach political self-domination and cultural sovereignty. Perhaps Hunke did not openly refer to the racial core of her old *voelkish* program when she traveled through the Arab world praising its congeniality with Islamic values. But the attractiveness of her message certainly depended on its racial, its anti-Jewish impetus.

4. Pagan Unitarianism

To promote her religious goals after 1945, Hunke joined the German Unitarians, a religious association that had been founded directly after the war.²⁹

²⁸ See Horst Junginger, „Völkische Religionen,“ Metzler Lexikon Religion, vol. 3 (Stuttgart, 2000), pp. 578-580. In the last years several important books on the subject of *voelkish* religions appeared. Cf. the Handbuch der deutschen Reformbewegungen, eds. Diethart Krebs and Jürgen Reulecke (Wuppertal, 1998), Handbuch zur ‚völkischen Bewegung‘ 1871-1918, eds. Uwe Puschner e.a. (München, 1999), Völkische Religion und Krisen der Moderne, eds. Stefanie von Schnurbein and Justus H. Ulbricht (Würzburg, 2001), and Uwe Puschner, Die völkische Bewegung im wilhelminischen Kaiserreich (Darmstadt, 2001).

²⁹ To Hunke and the German Unitarians see Hans-Dietrich Kahl, Strömungen. Die Deutschen Unitarier seit 1945 – ein kritischer Rückblick, Unitarische Hefte 4 (München, 1989), Wolfgang Depert, Religion und Toleranz. Die Deutschen Unitarier in der öffentlichen Auseinandersetzung – ei-

This movement, named *Deutsche Unitarier. Religionsgemeinschaft* (DUR), gathered former pagan groups of the Nazi era as well as members of the *German Christians* and people affiliated with the freethinking movement which partly was persecuted during the Third Reich. Being to some extent the follower of the *German Faith Movement*, the same heterogeneity and similar conflicts characterized *German Unitarianism* by its attempt to gain political acknowledgment. Together with other former adherents of National Socialism, Sigrid Hunke formed the right wing of the *Deutsche Unitarier*. Among them, the already mentioned Alarich Augustin, Hans Ernst Schneider's *Ahnenerbe*-representative in the Flanders, took an active part. Two other prominent members of the DUR with a zealous Nazi-past were Lothar Stengel von Rutkowski, a leading specialist for eugenics („Rassenhygiene“) in the SS *Main Office for Race and Settlement* (RuSHA), and Eberhard Achterberg, the former editor-in-chief of Rosenberg's *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte*. Ludwig Ferdinand Clauss participated in the early Unitarian discussion circles too. Between 1971 and 1983, Hunke functioned as vice-president and became honorary president of the DUR in 1985. A Sigrid Hunke society was established in 1973 to enlarge her influence in and outside the Unitarian movement.

Though Hunke's books do not meet scholarly requirements they were intended to formulate a systematical (scientific) conception for a pagan theology. Hunke's literary success brought her into the position of one of the DUR's foremost theologians. She indeed had a good ability to generalize its religious goals in terms of common sense and to impart the heathenish sectarianism of the *German Faith Movement* with a modern appearance. But her achievement depended to no small degree on simplification and on her method to refrain from any complexity in the realm of philosophy and religion. Hunke called her program *Dialektischer Unitarismus* which simply meant the unification of all contrarities she discovered at large scale in history. Just repeating the tripartite idiom of Hegelian dialectics thesis-antithesis-synthesis, Hunke reclaimed having synthesized the „dualistic principle“ of the world on the higher level of Unitarian religion. Moreover, her *Dialectical Unitarianism* alleged to be the overcoming of Hegel himself, a synthesis of Hegelian Marxism and Freudian psychology all in one.³⁰

The key-word of Hunke's philosophical and religious system is unification. Without asking for the reasons of the previous split in the world, paganism is declared to have the capability of unifying any kind of disunion. Because her so called „dualistic“ principle has the quality of a religious *datum*, Hunke does not need to care for historical conditions and circumstances. She just recognizes a total disruption of the world, a religious crisis that prevails all over the society, and every political, social, or economical antagonism is producing proof of her „dualistic“ doctrine. Since Christianity is not only incompetent to solve the dilemma but is seen as the main cause of it, solely paganism is embodying an adequate way out of the crisis.

ne Stellungnahme, *Unitarische Hefte* 5 (München, 1992), Elke Lazarraga, *Eine kosmische Religion für ein neues Zeitalter. Geschrieben für alle, die dem Christentum entwachsen sind, besonders für Atheisten* (Frankfurt/M., 1995), and several articles from and about Hunke in the periodical *Unitarische Blätter*, for instance the laudations to Hunke's 65th, 70th, and 75th birthday (i-bid., no. 6, 1978, pp. 154-155, no. 4, 1983, pp. 108-109). These statements are coming from inside. The Protestant viewpoint of the *Evangelische Zentralstelle für Weltanschauungsfragen* is to be found in Wolfgang Seibert, *Deutsche Unitarier Religionsgemeinschaft. Entwicklung, Praxis, Organisation* (Stuttgart, 1989), and Friedrich Heyer, „Deutsche Unitarier und Freie Akademie,“ *Materialdienst der Evangelischen Zentralstelle für Weltanschauungsfragen* 8 (1978): 204-212.

³⁰ See Hunke's article „Der dialektische Unitarismus,“ *Jahrbuch 1 der Philosophinnen* (Mainz, 1982), pp. 10-20.

Probably as a consequence of the anti-Christian attitude of her approach, the pagan unification of good and evil seemed something new for Hunke, newly discovered by intellectuals such as Hauer, Mandel, Clauss, and herself. Nonetheless, Hunke dealt with the old Christian conception of *sin* and the *covenant* between God and mankind enabling men to live on albeit their sinful behavior (*simul iustus et peccator*). Without regard to the Jewish-Christian origin, Hunke added a pagan supplement to the old call for a new treaty with God.³¹ The irony here is that, despite the anti-Christian and anti-Jewish disposition of Hunke's *voelkish* paganism, her struggle against Christian supremacy uses structural parts taken from its theology where they served, among other things, to consolidate Christian ascendancy over heathendom. Such an amalgamation in the case of ardent religious enmity supports our thesis that the rise of paganism took place not only in opposition to Christianity but also in analogy and correspondence with some of its main tenets. A religious point of view instead, may it be Christian or pagan, has a natural tendency to overstate doctrinal differences and vice versa to underestimate a programmatic unanimity and common religious features which we normally describe in terms of syncretism.

One cannot say that the pre-war misfortune of the *German Faith Movement* to found a „third confession“ in order to compete with the Christian churches changed after 1945. Far away from being a menace to Christianity, Hunke's pagan unionism even failed within the little group of the German Unitarians when she ruptured the fragile unity of its five or six thousand adherents in the 1980s. Together with about 200 followers Hunke seceded from the DUR in 1988 and formed a religious group called *Bund Deutscher Unitarier. Religionsgemeinschaft europäischen Geistes*.³² It is really impossible to derive a peril from this tiny religious minority for the German society, as some people do. In behalf of fighting for the good cause of anti-fascism many an author are apt to exaggerate the inclination of *German Unitarianism* towards Nazism and right wing ideology.³³ Their deficiencies in understanding and analyzing religious traditions apart from the Christian mainstream often result in oversimplification and sometimes even in hysteria, ignoring different developments and changing orientations within new religious movements. Moral arrogance usually compensates here for a superficial and trivial understanding of the old National Socialist paganism as well as of the role religion plays within neo-fascist groups or *voelkish* circles at present.

5. Conclusion

Yet to stress religious freedom as a basic law and constitutional right of deviant religious groups does not mean to undervalue the political implications

³¹ Of course, the Christian origin is a Jewish one. The new Christian covenant depends on the old Jewish *B'rith*, the New Testament on the 'Old' (cf. 2 Cor. 3: 6, 14).

³² See number one of its „Deutsch-Unitarische Bausteine. Schriften zur Grundlegung einer Religion europäischen Geistes“ with articles of Hunke on „Der Ursprung der unitarischen Religion“ and Alaraich Augustin „Ad fontes – hin zu den Quellen“ (1991): 9-19. See also Hermann Ruttmann, *Vielfalt der Religionen* (Marburg, 1995), pp. 51-56: „Bund Deutscher Unitarier – Religionsgemeinschaft europäischen Geistes.“

³³ See for instance Peter Kratz, *Die Götter des New Age. Im Schnittpunkt von 'Neuem Denken', Faschismus und Romantik* (Berlin, 1994) and the web sites of his *Berliner Institut für Faschismusforschung*. Following Kratz, several anti-fascist readers treat the German Unitarians as neo-heathen Nazi sect. Cf. here an 'Avanti-Script' „Völkischer Rassismus bei den Deutschen Unitariern. Zur Weltanschauung einer nazistischen Tarnorganisation“ (no. 2, July 1991).

of Hunke's European paganism. Her religious program became an important factor of the ideology of the New Right. Hunke herself must be regarded as one of the main propagandists of the New Right in Germany. The far reaching success of her publications yields possibilities for a linkage of the extreme Right with individuals not interested in policy and people representing to some degree the political establishment. With its cultural criticism („Kulturpessimismus“) in the tradition of the *Conservative Revolution*, Hunke's pagan approach is participating rightist attacks on Western democracy in an exceptional manner. It fits very well as religious substructure for a strategy called *metapolicy* or *Gramscism of the Right*, which means the attempt to attain political power by occupying pre- or metapolitical clusters of cultural ideas prevailing in the dominant groups of the society. Hunke's books are important not only to the religious movement of *German Unitarianism* but to the whole scenery of the European right. Besides Julius Evola (1898-1974) and his pagan imperialism,³⁴ Hunke probably is the most important figure contributing to a new form of paganism in Europe.

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³⁴ To Evola and his pagan fascism see Steven M. Wasserstrom, „The Lives of Baron Evola,“ Alphabet City IV/V (1995): 84-89.

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