

„*Semper Apertus*“  
Pastor Hermann Maas, the Theological Faculty,  
and the Re-opening of the University of Heidelberg in 1945<sup>1</sup>

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for  
Herrn Rektor Prof. Dr. Bernhard Eitel  
and the University of Heidelberg  
on the occasion of its 625<sup>th</sup> anniversary

On 5 August 1947, two years after the occupying American army had shut it down, the University of Heidelberg recognized Prälat Hermann Ludwig Maas (1877–1970) on his seventieth birthday with a doctorate *honoris causa*. The document which the Rektor, Prof. Hans Freiherr von Campenhausen, presented to Maas supported the honor with half a dozen reasons why he was worthy of the title Doktor, but the *laudatio* made no mention of the university's debt to Hermann Maas that arose in the summer of 1945.<sup>2</sup> Years later, when Maas was a walking, living legend in his own city, the popular press remembered that Maas and members of the Theological Faculty taught uninterruptedly during the Summer Semester of 1945 while other faculties slumbered.<sup>3</sup> Maas and his colleagues helped the university live up to its heralded motto: *semper apertus*.

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was originally presented to His Magnificence Herrn Rektor Bernhard Eitel on the occasion of Milligan College's congratulating Ruprecht-Karls-Universität on its 625<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Subsequent to presenting the paper to Rektor Eitel in June 2011 additional, valuable information came to light, resulting in this substantial revision.

<sup>2</sup> The language of the diploma reads in part, [...] *qui et orationibus et piis curis tot homines omnis aetatis generis officii ad evangelium adduxit [...] qui temporibus illis periculosus atrocibusque non solum suae ecclesiae sed omni populo heidelbergensis egregium exemplar vitae christianae fuit [...] qui cum christianis judaicae nationis in defessus tutor fidelisque defensor esset [...] qui ex multis annis inter eos stat qui ut ecclesiae christianae in omni orbe terrarum inter se concilientur [...] in hunc virum veri amoris strenuae fidei laboris religiosi iura et privilegia doctoris theologiae honoris causa [...]*. The original document is held as Depositum of the Hermann-Maas-Archiv (Landeskirchliches Archiv Karlsruhe) by the Dekanat of the Protestant Church of Heidelberg.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, the Rhein-Neckar-Zeitung Heidelberg (5 August 1952), *Dekan D. Hermann Maas Ehrenbürger von Heidelberg – Eine Würdigung zum 75. Geburtstag des großen Theologen*, in which the writer notes, *Während die Universität noch geschlossen war, gründete er von sich aus eine neue theologische Fakultät*. See also *Prälat D. Hermann Maas feiert morgen 85. Geburtstag* in an unattributed, undated (from the context it must be 4 August 1962) newspaper clipping in the archive of the Heiliggeistkirche, Heidelberg, number 71 in the Thomas Registry. The Thomas Registry is a collection of manuscripts, newspaper clippings, photographs and other sundry documents held by the Heiliggeistkirche in Heidelberg. The collection was presumably gathered by Frau Cornelia Maas.

Maas's legendary contributions to Heidelberg, and especially to its Jewish community, began in 1915 when he assumed the pulpit of the venerable Holy Spirit Church, the city's largest. Because of Maas's close association with Heidelberg's Jewish community, in 1943 his own Protestant Church of Baden bent under the pressure of the Gestapo and forced him into a muzzled retirement; but with the collapse of the Third Reich in 1945, Maas was quickly back at work, and labored tirelessly for the next quarter century to repair the institutions and inter-personal relationships that had suffered during the National Socialist nightmare. This accounting of Maas, the Theological Faculty, and the University of Heidelberg is a brief chapter of eight months, April to November 1945, in a remarkable career that spanned sixty-four years – a record! – in the Protestant Church of Baden.<sup>4</sup>

The City of Heidelberg surrendered to the 63rd Infantry Division of the United States Army on 30 March 1945, Good Friday, without sustaining any appreciable



Abb. 17:  
Hermann Maas in hohem Alter (Landeskirchliches Archiv Karlsruhe, Hermann-Maas-Archiv)

damage. The major destruction that took place in the hours leading up to occupation by American troops was not the result of American shelling. Instead, retreating German forces senselessly blew up the Neckar River bridges, ostensibly to slow the Allied advance. Undeterred, the Americans built a pontoon bridge and crossed into the Old City of Heidelberg from the northern suburbs of Handschuhsheim and Neuenheim. They encountered almost no resistance as they rolled into a city full of houses displaying white bed-sheets as signs of surrender.

Among the thousands who displayed white flags was retired Pastor Hermann Maas, nearly 68 years old, who was in the city again. He had been away briefly in the Fall of 1944 when the Reich had drafted him into service to dig ditches in France. The hard physical labor that the armed S.A. guards would require of him, and the primitive prison-camp conditions under which he would live, were all but a death sentence; but he survived. The eastward advance of the British,

French, and American armies made it possible for him to escape and make his way home to Heidelberg-Handschuhsheim as early as mid-October 1944, when the records

<sup>4</sup> Maas was ordained in the Protestant Church of Baden in November 1900. The Church and the Nazi Party forced him into retirement in July 1943. In 1945 the Church called him back into service as Kreisdekan (Regional Dean) and later Prälat for North Baden until a second retirement on 1 January 1965.

indicate that he baptized his own granddaughter, Kornelie Hartmann.<sup>5</sup> Maas continued to live in quiet domestic banishment. His enforced retirement barred him from any public pastoral functions, so when the Americans rolled through his Handschuhsheim neighborhood, Maas welcomed the development as „freedom, redemption, the end of tyranny.“<sup>6</sup>

The Americans knew about Maas before they entered Heidelberg, having conferred with ecumenical leaders in England about whom they could rely on to help them establish a new order in Germany. For several impressive reasons the name Hermann Maas was on the Americans' White List.<sup>7</sup> They knew him as a victim of Nazi injustice, a man with international connections in the peace-promoting European ecumenical movement, and as the man whom Bernhard Rust, the Nazi Propaganda Director of Heidelberg had vilified as the „Judenpfarrer“ in 1933 because of his close association with the Heidelberg synagogue.<sup>8</sup> In the confusion of a city in capitulation, the Americans turned to Maas as a reliable liaison between the Protestant Church of Baden and the occupation forces.<sup>9</sup>

Under the circumstances Maas felt no longer constrained by his retirement agreement. In the difficult weeks and months immediately following the surrender, he found opportunities to minister to his people, and to carry the concerns of his Heidelberg parishioners to the American officials. For example, on 6 May 1945 Maas preached again in the Peterskirche.<sup>10</sup> The appointed lectionary text for the day was Romans 12.11-12: *Seid nicht träge in dem, was ihr tun sollt. Seid brünstig im Geiste. Schicket euch in die Zeit. Seid fröhlich in Hoffnung, geduldig in Trübsal, haltet an am Gebet.* Maas's intent was not to comfort his people, but to prepare them for the „hunger, thirst, heat, and cold“ that lay ahead.<sup>11</sup> He drew a comparison between what awaited them, and what the Children of Israel had faced during their forty years of wilderness wandering. The serious message emphasized the help that prayer affords.<sup>12</sup> Hundreds turned out for that service. Though some could not find seats, Marie Baum, who was there, reported an atmosphere of gratitude within the congregation: their missing pastor had returned.<sup>13</sup>

Times did, indeed, become difficult. In the spring and summer of 1945 hunger plagued the people of Heidelberg even though the fields of Neuenheim and Handschuhsheim abounded with vegetables. Professor Hans Freiherr von Campenhausen,

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<sup>5</sup> Taufbuch für den I. Bezirk der Heiliggeistkirche Nr. 2 (1930–1949), 213.

<sup>6</sup> Hermann Maas, Der 8. Mai 1945, in: Weg und Ziel. Unabhängiges demokratisches Organ und das einzige Organ für die Vertretung aller Naziopfer, Jg. 13 (1965), Nr. 146, 5. Mai 1965.

<sup>7</sup> Jörg Thierfelder, Transatlantische historische Studien 5) Stuttgart 1996, 283. Hereafter cited as Thierfelder, Hermann Maas.

<sup>8</sup> A letter which Rust wrote using the word „Judenpfarrer“ – Jewpastor – is reproduced in: Werner Keller et al.(eds.), Leben für Versöhnung: Hermann Maas – Wegbereiter des christlich-jüdischen Dialoges, Karlsruhe 1997, 81. Hereafter cited as Leben für Versöhnung.

<sup>9</sup> Thierfelder, Hermann Maas (as cited note 7), 283.

<sup>10</sup> Maas's former Holy Spirit Church had been closed since June 1938 for substantial repair. It was not open for use again until after the war. See Maas's Gemeindeblatt of 19 June 1938, 199 in the archives of the Heiliggeistkirche, Heidelberg.

<sup>11</sup> Marie Baum, Rückblick auf mein Leben, Heidelberg 1950, 342. Hereafter cited as Baum, Rückblick. Marie Baum was one of those who lost her university position in 1933 because of her Jewish ancestry, which included the musician Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy. Her autobiography describes her close working relationship with Maas during the difficult years 1933–1945.

<sup>12</sup> Baum, Rückblick (as cited note 11), 342.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 341.

who returned to Heidelberg in June 1945, recalled the misery of the Heidelberg population:

*Mit Abstand das Schlimmste war aber natürlich doch der Hunger. Er wurde auch von den Amerikanern – nur weniger lang und hart als z.B. bei den Engländern – bewusst gefördert, um zu strafen und zur Buße zu bringen, während an den Straßenecken scheußliche Plakate hingen mit Bildern verhungerner Lagerinsassen mit der dicken Unterschrift: „Eure Schuld.“ Man lebte vom Hamstern – und es gab wahrhaftig nicht mehr viel, was sich gegen Laken, Geschirr und andere Dinge auf dem Land gegen ein paar Kartoffeln oder Beeren einzutauschen ließ. Wir sind einzeln, zu zweit, mit oder ohne einen Jungen in die umliegenden Dörfer gezogen, um nur etwas einzuhandeln, Obst am Wegrand auflesen zu dürfen oder irgendetwas ernten oder pflücken zu dürfen.<sup>14</sup>*

*Die Amerikaner gaben grundsätzlich nichts her – nur Kindern glückte es hie und da, von einem Posten etwas Frühstück abgebrochen zu bekommen. Vor allem die Neger zeigten sich gutmütig. Ein freundlicher Neger tat sich dadurch hervor, daß er in irgendein himmlisch belegtes Brot hineinbiss, und dann – um die Vorschrift nicht zu verletzen – das abgeessene Brot beiseite legte auf einen Platz, wo es Kinder abholen konnten.<sup>15</sup>*

The sunken Neckar River bridges made it nearly impossible to transport produce into the city, or to bring food in by barges from Mannheim. Pastor Maas worked through the American Army chaplaincy to plead for alleviation of the misery, convincing the Americans to use their military vehicles to bring produce from the countryside into the city markets.<sup>16</sup> When CARE<sup>17</sup> packages started arriving, Maas organized their distribution from his own home, and typically carried them to the homes of the hungry with his own hands.<sup>18</sup> When The United States Army in Europe (USAREUR) decided to make the picturesque university town its permanent headquarters, it contemplated evicting as many as ten thousand Heidelbergers from their homes in order to provide housing for the occupying G.I.s. Prälat Maas intervened on behalf of the local citizenry.<sup>19</sup> Instead of mass evictions, USAREUR constructed Patrick Henry Village east of Kirschheim, and Mark Twain Village in Rohrbach. Maas communicated the people's alarm when the Americans considered banning from the public schools all teachers who had been Nazi Party members. Maas argued that the conquerors could instead work through these teachers to establish a new political and

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<sup>14</sup> Ruth Slenczka (ed.), Die „Murren“ des Hans Freiherr von Campenhausen: „Erinnerungen dicht wie ein Schneegestöber“. Autobiographie, Norderstedt 2005, 260. Hereafter cited as Slenczka, Die Murren.

<sup>15</sup> Slenczka, Die Murren (as cited note 14), 261.

<sup>16</sup> Thierfelder, Hermann Maas (as cited note 7), 283.

<sup>17</sup> CARE – Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe – After June 5, 1946 American citizens could purchase for \$10 a box of food that had originally been intended for American soldiers in the ground invasion of Japan – which never materialized. The food parcels, which typically included macaroni, cornmeal, nonfat dried milk, canned meat, powdered eggs, lard, apricot preserves, honey, raisins, margarine, sugar, and coffee, could be sent to family and friends in Europe. The first CARE packages for distribution in Germany arrived in August 1946. See <http://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/object.cfm?key=35&objkey=245>, accessed 5 August 2011.

<sup>18</sup> „Großes Verdienstkreuz für Kreisdekan Maas“, in: Rhein-Neckar-Zeitung (Heidelberg), 1 February 1954.

<sup>19</sup> Thierfelder, Hermann Maas (as cited note 7), 283.

social orientation for German youth.<sup>20</sup> When the last Jews of Heidelberg to be freighted off to the concentration camp at Theresienstadt in February 1945 returned to Heidelberg in June, Maas was there to greet them, the only one who had the moral standing to welcome them home, and to urge them not to succumb to the temptation of revenge.<sup>21</sup> Because he had been the *de facto* rabbi of Heidelberg from 1936 on, because he had so identified with them, because he, too, had rendered slave labor under armed guard, they listened – listened to a German, listened to a Christian.<sup>22</sup>

After the Protestant Church in Baden had reinstated him into service, and had elevated him to Dean of North Baden,<sup>23</sup> Maas increasingly found ways to exploit his sterling reputation with the Americans. One day might find him intervening with the military authorities to facilitate the return of a Jewish refugee to her home.<sup>24</sup> On another he would be helping to re-open a private school and have it named after the headmistress whom the Nazis had murdered.<sup>25</sup> For the decade following the war he interceded for the Displaced Persons who were, because of the war and Nazi terror, without a homeland to which they could return. As late as 1955 Heidelberg still had twenty thousand residents described as Displaced Persons,<sup>26</sup> for whose care the city had an annual budget of only DM 600.000.<sup>27</sup> Maas was for years the chair of the Coalition for Victims of the Nazi Regime.<sup>28</sup>

And it was because the Americans trusted Maas that he could help the university live up to its motto, *Semper apertus*, „always open“, even during the months when the university appeared to be closed. Ruperto-Carola had buckled under the pressures of Nazi anti-Semitism when in 1933 it fired nearly a third of its faculty: Jewish professors and lecturers, those teachers who had Jewish spouses or ancestors, and academicians who were otherwise deemed politically unreliable.<sup>29</sup> A number of these, like

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 284.

<sup>21</sup> Frank Moraw, *Die nationalsozialistische Diktatur (1933–1945)*, in: Peter Blum (ed.), *Geschichte der Juden in Heidelberg*, Heidelberg 1996, 554–555, citing „Begrüßungsworte des Herrn Stadtpfarrer Maas an die in Theresienstadt evakuiert gewesenen Heidelberger,“ maschinenschriftlich im Nachlass Dora Busch, Heidelberg.

<sup>22</sup> Heidelberg’s Rabbi Fritz Pinkuss, who emigrated to Brazil in 1936, described Maas as having assumed the role of rabbi for the Jewish community. See Fritz Pinkuss, *Rabbiner in Heidelberg 1930 bis 1936*, in: Norbert Giovannini and Frank Moraw (eds.), *Erinnertes Leben: Autobiographische Texte zur jüdischen Geschichte Heidelbergs*, Heidelberg 1998, 133–134.

<sup>23</sup> Maas officially became „Kreisdekan für Nordbaden“ on 1 August 1946 after an unsuccessful bid to become bishop of the Protestant Church of Baden. As Kreisdekan Maas did not have the administrative responsibilities nor the power of the bishop, but served instead as a „pastor to pastors.“ The Protestant Church in Baden later changed the title „Kreisdekan“ to „Prälat“.

<sup>24</sup> See, for example, the case of Rositta Oppenheimer in: *Die Oppenheimer – eine Heidelberger Familie vor dem Holocaust*, in: Giovannini/Moraw, *Erinnertes Leben* (as cited note 22), 152.

<sup>25</sup> Baum, *Rückblick* (wie Anm. 11), 345. The reference here is to the Elisabeth-von-Thadden-Schule in Heidelberg-Wieblingen.

<sup>26</sup> „Heidelberg hat 20 000 Heimatvertriebene“, in: *Rhein-Neckar-Zeitung* (Heidelberg), 10 August 1955.

<sup>27</sup> Approximately € 75,000 at the time.

<sup>28</sup> Apparently two such similar organizations existed, both involving Maas. One was the Heidelberger Hilfskomitee für die Opfer des Nationalsozialismus. See Norbert Giovannini, Claudia Rink and Frank Moraw (eds.), *Erinnern, Bewahren, Gedenken: Die jüdischen Einwohner Heidelbergs und ihre Angehörigen 1933–1945 – Biographisches Lexikon mit Texten*, Heidelberg 2011, 125. The other was Die Vereinigung der Verfolgten des Naziregimes. See Jo-Hannes Bauer, ‚Stadtbekannter Judenpfarrer‘ wird geehrt: Gedenkfeier für Prälat Hermann Maas am 17. Juli, in: *Rhein-Neckar-Zeitung Heidelberg*, 14 July 1988.

<sup>29</sup> Dorothee Mussnug, *Die vertriebenen Heidelberg Dozenten: Zur Geschichte der Ruprecht-Karls-Universität nach 1933*, Heidelberg 1988, 111.

philosopher Karl Jaspers, were Maas's friends;<sup>30</sup> others, like physician and biochemist Otto Meyerhof<sup>31</sup> and ophthalmologist Martin Zade,<sup>32</sup> were the parents of his confirmation pupils; some were members of his Heiliggeistkirche. The Nazified university paid a price, then, when the Americans entered Heidelberg right at the beginning of the Summer Semester of 1945. Under normal circumstances lectures would have commenced after Easter in 1945, but the Americans intended to do some major housecleaning before they would allow the politically and intellectually compromised University of Heidelberg to reopen its doors. The conquerors insisted that professors, administrators, and students alike report on their degree of involvement with the Nazi Party. American judges would determine who was politically fit to study and teach in the re-opened university.

On 11 July 1945 Prof. Dr. Karl Heinrich Bauer,<sup>33</sup> Dekan of the medical faculty and acting Rektor of the University of Heidelberg, instructed his colleagues, the chairs of the other faculties, how to go about the de-nazification process.<sup>34</sup> The Theological Faculty was not exempt. Beginning on July 14, New Testament scholar Prof. Dr. Martin Dibelius<sup>35</sup> worked with his colleagues to weed out from their numbers the several theologians who had been too cozy with Nazi philosophy and practice. It was an awkward, painful procedure. Dibelius called on his colleagues to make plans for re-opening the purged Theological Faculty on November 1, according to a directive of the American authorities.<sup>36</sup>

In the meantime, the idea that the university, and especially the Theological Faculty, should be completely passive did not sit well with two students. According to a memoir by Hannelis Schulte, who in the mid-1940s did summer semesters in Heidelberg and winter semesters in Halle, the Theological Faculty of the University of Heidelberg opened far earlier than the other faculties because of the initiative of a theology/philosophy student named Hanns Jakobs.<sup>37</sup> Jakobs was a Christian communist who, during the war, had at his party's request infiltrated the ranks of the Hitler Youth. After the war, Jakobs became privy to the plans of so-called Werewolves – the never-say-die Nazis who refused to accept the capitulation of the Third Reich – to blow up a Heidelberg gas plant in order to destabilize the general population and create havoc for the occupying Americans. Jakobs conveyed this information to an American army officer at the Rathaus, which was staffed with American military

<sup>30</sup> According to 97-year old Kornelie Hartmann, Maas's daughter, as related in an interview in November 2008, Jaspers was Maas's best friend: *Dem bin ich auf dem Schoß gesessen!*

<sup>31</sup> Correspondence with Dr. Bettina Emerson, daughter of Prof. Otto Meyerhof. Letters in the author's files.

<sup>32</sup> Marie Baum in: Hermann Maas, *Den Unvergessenen: Opfer des Wahns 1933 bis 1945*, Heidelberg 1952, 103.

<sup>33</sup> Karl Heinrich Bauer (1890–1978), Dekan of the medical faculty, first Rektor of the University after November 1945.

<sup>34</sup> Universitätsarchiv Heidelberg B-1540, „Wiedereröffnung der theologischen Fakultät“, letter of 11 July 1945. The Universitätsarchiv Heidelberg henceforth cited as UAH.

<sup>35</sup> Martin Dibelius (1883–1947).

<sup>36</sup> UAH B-1540 (as cited note 34), letters of 14 and 16 July and 25 October 1945.

<sup>37</sup> The following account was published as Hannelis Schulte, *Die Theologische Fakultät der Universität Heidelberg nach der Befreiung 1945*, in: Christian Moeller (ed.), *Kleine Geschichte der Heidelberger Theologischen Fakultät von Marsilius von Inghen bis Gottfried Seebaß. Festgabe des Dekanats zum 60. Geburtstag von Prof. Dr. Gottfried Seebaß* (verfielfältigtes Manuskript, 1997), 85-87. Some details in this account that are not included in the published version are from an interview with Frau Dr. Schulte on 21 July 2011. Hereafter cited as Schulte, *Theologische Fakultät*.

personnel. Grateful for the information, the major continued to chat with Jakobs, who in the course of the conversation asked if the university's Theological Faculty might be allowed to teach during the summer, even though the university itself was closed for de-nazification. The major agreed to the idea, as long as the classes were conducted in churches, not in university buildings. The military government at the time forbade the gathering of more than four or five people without specific permission – but the law did not apply to church meetings! Jakobs, Schulte reports, gained the cooperation of Dekan Heinrich Kamp, who was simultaneously the pastor of the Johanneskirche in Neuenheim. Kamp placed the sacristy of his church at the disposal of Jakob's plan. The Neuenheim church, whose spacious sacristy could easily accommodate forty or more people, was on HandschuhsheimerLandstraße on the north side of the Neckar River, somewhat distant from the university's Altstadt buildings.

The next step was for Jakobs to ask Schulte to go along with him to recruit a faculty. They biked first to Bergstrasse 115 in Handschuhsheim, the home of New Testament Professor Martin Dibelius who, when he heard of the plan, immediately and enthusiastically declared his support for it.<sup>38</sup> Just a few yards away, up the hill and down to the left, was Kapellenweg 8, the home of Old Testament scholar Professor Gustav Hölscher.<sup>39</sup> Hölscher was ambivalent. The idea of teaching was appealing, especially as the demand for classes was rising. Wounded soldiers were being released from Heidelberg's several military hospitals, and veterans were returning home, eager to start studying. However, the university was, after all, not open. Should the theologians act so independently? And would the Americans really allow it? *Kein Ja und kein Nein* from Hölscher, reported Schulte.<sup>40</sup> Pushing their bikes further up the hillside to Rolloßweg 21 the pair rang the doorbell of Professor for Practical Theology Rhenatus Hupfeld, who rejected the idea out of hand. *Wozu denn überhaupt?*<sup>41</sup> With only one-and-a-half votes, Jakobs and Schulte despaired of success; but the conversation with Hupfeld continued, including talk about the situation of the Church in general; and while they were talking, the doorbell rang. Professor Hölscher came in. *Da sind die beiden ja noch. Ich habe es mir überlegt*, he said. *Ich mache mit.*<sup>42</sup> Schulte asks, *Was blieb Rhenatus Hupfeld nun anderes übrig, als auch zuzusagen?*<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Dibelius, who had been the university Rektor in 1927, was a theologian of international reputation. He preached occasionally in Maas's Heiliggeistkirche. Throughout the German Church Struggle he had identified with the Confessional Movement which opposed the efforts of the „German Christians“ to control the Protestant Church of Baden.

<sup>39</sup> Gustav Hölscher (1877–1955), served as Deputy Dean of the Theological Faculty after November 1945. Also a member of the Confessing Church, Hölscher had suffered a Nazi student boycott of his classes because he taught Hebrew Scripture. Jakobs and Schulte intentionally did not approach members of the faculty who stood close to the „German Christian“ movement, such as Theodor Odenwald and Robert Jelke (Schulte, *Theologische Fakultät* [as cited note 37], 85).

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 85. Hupfeld's reticence might have been rooted in the experience of the Theological Faculty in 1935 when the Reich government had specifically forbidden theologians to participate in illegal examinations, working groups, theological courses, and retreats that were associated with the Confessing Church. When such special events appeared about to emerge, Theological Dean Theodor Odenwald had nipped them in the bud (*im Keime erstickt*). See Gerhard Besier, *Die Theologische Fakultät*, in: Wolfgang U. Eckart, Volker Sellin and Eike Wolgast (eds.), *Die Universität Heidelberg im Nationalsozialismus*, Heidelberg 2006, 218. Hence cited as Besier, *Theologische Fakultät*.

<sup>42</sup> Schulte, *Theologische Fakultät* (as cited note 37), 85.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 85

So they had professors for Old Testament, New Testament and Practical Theology. On the way back they went by the home of Pastor Hermann Maas at Beethovenstraße 64 to ask if he would teach Hebrew. His answer: *Wie gerne!*<sup>44</sup>

Enlisting Maas in this endeavor was probably crucial to his success, a point that von Campenhausen makes: [N]atürlich konnte das nicht geschehen, ohne dass der amerikanische Universitätsoffizier dazu seine Zustimmung gegeben hatte. Kirche war ja damals Trumpf, und Pfarrer Maas, der verfolgte Judenfreund, war überall der erste Mann.<sup>45, 46</sup>

In the midst of de-nazification in the summer and fall of 1945, the American military government had full confidence in Pastor Maas, but this was not the case with two of the other men to whom Jakobs and Schulte spoke. Rhenatus Hupfeld, for example, was suspicious of democracy in general, and had been unhappy with the Weimar Republic in particular. He had welcomed the National Socialist seizure of power in 1933, including its anti-Semitism. Though he was a member of the Confessing Church, Besier describes him as the faculty member who stood closest to Dean Theodor Odenwald, a „Deutscher Christ.“ Hupfeld was one for whom „Theologie und Parteipolitik zusammengehörten,<sup>47</sup> and, according to Karl-Heinz Fix, was an example of „wie gering der theologische und politische Abstand zwischen Bekennender Kirche und Nationalsozialismus sein konnte.“<sup>48</sup>

Martin Dibelius' commitment to democracy and his opposition to National Socialism on a number of fronts are well attested, but before clearing him to continue to teach at the university the American de-nazifiers had to take into consideration Dibelius's unfortunate 1940 publication of „Christentum und britische Weltmacht“, which in the eyes of some readers constituted a compromise with National Socialist foreign policy.<sup>49</sup> Though the Americans might have wondered why Dibelius was not a „card-carrying“ member of the Confessing Church, they had to recognize his „support [of] the cause of the ‚Confessing forces‘ in a local context.“<sup>50</sup>

The Americans had nothing against Gustav Hölscher, an „überzeugter Demokrat mit positiver Einstellung zur Weimarer Republik und in der Bekennenden Kirche

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 85

<sup>45</sup> Slenczka, Die Murren (as cited note 14), 258-259.

<sup>46</sup> The experience of another educator in Heidelberg underlines how necessary it was to have American support. Gladys Fischer, the British-born wife of a German prisoner of war, found herself a displaced person in Heidelberg in the summer of 1945. Her primary marketable skill was mastery of English, the language that so many now wanted to learn. She had no shortage of pupils, but the American military government initially forbade the gathering of more than four or five people for any purpose without written permission. Mrs. Fischer had to appear at the courthouse every day to get American officers to sign off on her requests to teach English to a handful of students. Mrs. Fischer's efforts eventually resulted in the establishment of Heidelberg's well-regarded *Englisches Institut*. Related to the author by Gladys Fischer in September 2008.

<sup>47</sup> Besier, *Theologische Fakultät* (as cited note 41), 203.

<sup>48</sup> Karl-Heinz Fix, *Universitätstheologie und Politik. Die Heidelberger Theologische Fakultät in der Weimarer Republik*, Heidelberg 1994, 198, as cited by Besier, *Theologische Fakultät* (as cited note 41), 204.

<sup>49</sup> Martin Dibelius, *Christentum und britische Weltmacht*, Berlin 1940. See Besier, *Theologische Fakultät* (as cited note 41), 208; Gerhard Besier, Martin Dibelius – an Internationally Renowned German New Testament Scholar under National Socialism, in: *Kirchliche Zeitgeschichte* 17 (2004), 339-351. Hence cited as Besier, Dibelius.

<sup>50</sup> Besier, Dibelius (as cited note 49), 341.



engagiert.<sup>51</sup> Schulte reports that Hölscher *hatte mit großer Tapferkeit allen Versuchen des NS-Studentenbundes widerstanden, die ihn aus dem Amt vertreiben wollten*.<sup>52</sup> Like Maas, Hölscher had suffered professionally at the hands of the Nazis when in 1934 the Prussian Minister of Culture suspended him from office.<sup>53</sup>

So of the three faculty members who first joined Maas in the sacristy-classroom of the Johanneskirche, the Americans would have accepted Hölscher unconditionally, Dibelius with minor reservations, and Hupfeld only after some scrutiny. The Americans eventually cleared all three of any significant attachment to Nazism.

Hermann Maas had professional and personal interests in the health of the Theological Faculty, so he was eager to cooperate in the effort to keep the theologians teaching in the Johanneskirche. The accounts of Schulte and von Campenhausen attest to the faculty's activity that summer, but no documents have come to light to indicate that Maas and the others undertook this academic activity in any official university capacity.<sup>54</sup> The Americans preferred to regard it as a „Church“ undertaking, rather than something associated with the university; and von Campenhausen reports that he got his salary from the Church, not from the university. How could the university have paid him? It was closed. Nevertheless, when the Theological Faculty started teaching officially in November, the university recognized von Campenhausen's involvement retroactively to June of that year, attestation that the university regarded the Johanneskirche activity as university-related.<sup>55</sup> Pastor Maas himself taught Hebrew. Hölscher read in Old Testament, Dibelius in New Testament, Hupfeld taught Practical Theology. Prof. Hans Freiherr von Campenhausen arrived later, on June 5, with a seminar on Luther and the Peasants' War.<sup>56</sup> Among the students were twenty theologians and approximately forty others who attended the *ad hoc* Johanneskirche sessions.<sup>57</sup>

The conditions under which the students gathered were remarkable. Retired pastor Bruno Willnauer reported the impressions of an eye-witness in a letter as recent as August 2011:

*Ich stieß am 10. Juni dazu.*<sup>58</sup>  
*Ich hatte mich schon während des Krieges „fernimmatrikulieren“ lassen für Theologie. Mein Vater tat es für mich. Der Pedell sagte meinem Vater, das ist*

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<sup>51</sup> Besier, Theologische Fakultät (as cited note 41), 205.

<sup>52</sup> Letter of H. Schulte to the author, 31 July 2011.

<sup>53</sup> Besier, Theologische Fakultät (as cited note 41), 205.

<sup>54</sup> „The others“ included Walther Köhler, long since emeritus and deaf, teaching Church History; „Dr. Hiedell“ (so Schulte, Theologische Fakultät [as cited note 37], 85) who taught Latin and Greek, and Ernst Köhnlein, who greeted von Campenhausen when the latter reported to teach on 5 June. See Slenczka, *Die Murren* (as cited note 14), 258.

<sup>55</sup> See von Campenhausen's dispute with Ernst as to whether theology or medicine was the first faculty to resume teaching in: Slenczka, *Die Murren* (as cited note 14), 258; see Dagmar Drüll, *Heidelberger Gelehrtenlexikon 1933–1986*, Berlin, Heidelberg 2009, 144 for confirmation that the university recognized von Campenhausen's activity in June 1945 as university-related.

<sup>56</sup> Slenczka, *Die Murren* (as cited note 14), 258-259.

<sup>57</sup> Thierfelder, Hermann Maas (wie Anm. 7), 284. See also CvJ, *Um die Versöhnung bemüht: Prälat D. Hermann Maas tritt in den Ruhestand*, in: *Handelsblatt Düsseldorf*, 11 January [1965] in the archive of the Heiliggeistkirche, Number 14 in the Thomas registry. In a letter of 8 August 2011 retired Pastor Bruno Willnauer offers thirty-one names („u.a.m.“) of students who studied in the Johanneskirche in 1945.

<sup>58</sup> Letter from Pastor Bruno Willnauer, dated 19 September 2011. Letter in this author's files.

*die einzige Im[matrikulation] für Theologie in diesem Semester. [...] Aber was nun tun? Die Universität war von den Amerik. Arme [sic!] beschlagnahmt. Da hörte ich von Dekan Maas, dass er Studenten, die Theologie studieren wollten, in des [sic!] Sakristei der Johanneskirche sammelt. Ich ging hin und wurde von Dekan Maas in herzlichster Weise empfangen. Nach den harten Kriegsjahren war dieser brüderliche Empfang für mich überwältigend. Wir kamen in der Sakristei der Johanneskirche zusammen. Wir waren zuerst insgesamt 8 Studenten, davon 5 Studentinnen! Das war der Anfang meines Studiums! Aber mit was sollte man schreiben? Mein Elternhaus war ausgebombt in Mannheim. Ich hatte nur meine Uniform, die dann umgefärbt wurde. Auch das brachte Dekan Maas mit, Papier und Schreibstifte! So war ER! Mit der Zeit kamen auch Professoren dazu. Die Studentenzahl erhöhte sich durch Heimkehrer aus dem Kriege.<sup>59</sup>*

At the same time Dibelius and the faculty worked to accommodate the Americans. By 1 October 1945 they had satisfied American Col. Clifton Lisle, Senior Military Government Officer in Mannheim, who wrote to Rektor Bauer that the Military Government had cleared without reservation Professors Georg Beer, Martin Dibelius, Hans Erich Freiherr von Campenhausen,<sup>60</sup> Pastor Friedrich Hauß,<sup>61</sup> Ernst Hoffmann,<sup>62</sup> Gustav Hölscher, Renatus Hupfeld, Karl Jaspers,<sup>63</sup> Robert Jelke,<sup>64</sup> Walther Köhler,<sup>65</sup> Ernst Köhnlein,<sup>66</sup> Pastor Carl Krieger,<sup>67</sup> Hermann Poppen,<sup>68</sup> Gerhard Rosenkranz,<sup>69</sup> and Edmund Schlink.<sup>70, 71, 72</sup> Hermann Maas's name was not on the list, of course, because Maas was never a member of the Theological Faculty.

<sup>59</sup> Letter from 89-year old Pfarrer i. R. Bruno Willnauer, Heidelberg. The undated letter, received in late August 2011, remains in this author's files.

<sup>60</sup> Hans Erich Freiherr von Campenhausen, Church historian (1903–1989).

<sup>61</sup> Friedrich Hauss (1893–1977).

<sup>62</sup> Ernst Hoffmann (1880–1952), philosophy. Hoffmann was, according to Nazi terminology, a „Mischling,“ half Jewish, and had resigned from the university in 1935. See [http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ernst\\_Hoffmann\\_\(Philosophiehistoriker\)](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ernst_Hoffmann_(Philosophiehistoriker)), accessed 13 May 2011.

<sup>63</sup> Karl Jaspers (1883–1969), better known as a philosopher than a theologian, an especially close friend of Hermann Maas.

<sup>64</sup> Robert Jelke (1882–1952), a highly controversial member of the faculty. Most of the theological faculty, and Hermann Maas himself, who was not a member of the theological faculty, explicitly opposed Jelke's reinstatement. He nevertheless enjoyed the endorsement of the United States Military Government, because he was never technically a member of the Nazi Party. Though he was a member of the theological faculty on 1 November 1945, within two weeks he asked for *emeritus* status.

<sup>65</sup> Walther Köhler (1870–1946).

<sup>66</sup> Ernst Köhnlein had worked as a counselor for the Protestant Student Congregation. See a brief reference to him at Evangelische Studierende Gemeinde Heidelberg <http://www.esg-heidelberg.de/uber-uns/geschichte/>. Accessed 14 May 2011.

<sup>67</sup> Letters of 11 October 1945 signed by Col. Clifton Lisle. University of Heidelberg, Generalia, „Studien“, Wiedereröffnung der theologischen Fakultät. UAH B-1540 (as cited note 34), Jahr: 1945.

<sup>68</sup> Hermann Mainhard Poppen (1885–1956), a church musician who played frequently in Maas's Heiliggeistkirche.

<sup>69</sup> Gerhard Heinrich Richard Walter Rosenkranz (1896–1983), missiologist.

<sup>70</sup> Edmund Schlink (1903–1984), systematic theology.

<sup>71</sup> Denied admission to the faculty were Theodor Odenwald, Andreas Duhm and Otto Soellner, who had been associated with the „German Christian“ theo-political party; and Erwin Kiefer, who had woven anti-Semitic remarks into his lectures. In these cases the military officials followed the recommendation of the Preparation Committee of the Theological Faculty of the University of Heidelberg, chaired by Dibelius. See UAH B-1540 (as cited note 34), Jahr: 1945, Generalia, „Studien“, Wiedereröffnung der theologischen Fakultät.

When the members of the Theological Faculty of the university officially began teaching again in November, they could with justification maintain that the book of learning had remained open – *semper apertus*. Teaching the Scriptures had gone on uninterrupted. Several of the faculty had lectured throughout the summer semester in the Johanneskirche, and that with the cooperation, help, encouragement and support of Prälat Hermann Maas. Years later, as legends began to build up around the person of the aging churchman, the story got better. On his seventy-fifth birthday a popular account in the Rhein-Neckar-Zeitung reported that *Während die Universität noch geschlossen war, gründete er von sich aus eine neue theologische Fakultät*. That is of course overstated, but it indicates how closely involved Prälat Maas worked with the Theological Faculty.<sup>73</sup>

As a young man in 1900, a recent graduate of the University of Heidelberg, Maas would gladly have pursued a doctorate, which would allow him to become someday, perhaps, a member of a Theological Faculty, perhaps even Heidelberg's Theological Faculty. His father's illness and the family's consequent financial condition forced him to make other plans.<sup>74</sup> He instead entered the ministry. When the university bestowed the doctorate *honoris causa* on him forty-seven years later, it recognized the man who had helped keep the University of Heidelberg *semper apertus*.

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<sup>72</sup> Two letters of 13 October 1945 signed by Gustav Hölscher, Deputy Dean of the Theological Faculty. UAH B-1540 (as cited note 34), Jahr: 1945.

<sup>73</sup> Rhein-Neckar-Zeitung Heidelberg, 5. August 1952.

<sup>74</sup> Hermann Maas, Anwalt der Verfolgten – Rückblick eines 75jährigen, in: Keller, Leben für Versöhnung (as cited note 8), 14.