

Preface

As of 1990, when this book was first published in German, there had been no comparative sociological treatment of fundamentalist movements. The present work, therefore, can neither offer a synthesis of previous work nor attempt to conclude a debate, but must first clear the way for such a scholarly discussion. The goal of the book is accordingly modest. It seeks, through its definition of the subject, methodology, and results, to lay a basis, offer hypotheses, and stimulate questions for further universal historical, comparative research on fundamentalism.

Even if the preparation of the present work was a rather lonely affair on the whole, numerous institutions and individuals nevertheless contributed to it through their encouragement and discussions. But for a one-year stay at the Center for European Studies at Harvard University, I would never have selected the topic. I thank Abby Collins, Guido Goldman, and Stanley Hoffman for their hospitality at the Center, and Harvey Goldman for his active efforts on my behalf. My further thanks are due the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft for a two-year *Habilitation* fellowship, Harvard's Sociology Department for six months of hospitality, the Research Institute of the Humanities at Dartmouth College for a three-month stay, and the Fundamentalism Project of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, organized in Chicago by Martin Marty and Scott Appleby, for the opportunity to present and discuss my results in public.

Walter Bühl provided me the opportunity to complete my *Habilitation* in unsettled times. His openness, fairness, and enormous scholarly

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Thanks also to Naomi Schneider, Valeurie Friedman, and Mark Pentecost from the University of California Press and to the translator, Don Reneau. I am particularly grateful to Stephanie Fowler for editing the text and improving its readability considerably.

I thank my wife for her generosity in putting her own interests aside for several years. That she did so consistently without reproach was of particular help to me. The manuscript was read in part or in whole by Walter Bühl, Friedrich Graf, Horst Jürgen Helle, Gangolf Hübinger, Mark Juergensmeyer, Hans Kippenberg, Bruce Lawrence, and Bernd Ostendorf. I am grateful to all of them for their critical assistance. They are responsible for all of the errors and weaknesses in the work; the good insights came from me. Or do I have this backward?