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German Historical Perspectives/XV

The Divided Past Rewriting Post-War German History

Edited by

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INA MERKEL

*Sex and Gender in the Divided
Germany: Approaches to
History from a Cultural
Point of View*

The metaphor of marriage has frequently been used to describe the unification of the two German states. In so doing, the FRG is invariably portrayed as a man and the GDR as a woman. The exact form taken by the metaphor extends over a broad spectrum, from the long-sought and ultimately successful result of marriage-brokering to forced wedlock or even to rape. Leaving aside those interpretations arising from specific political persuasions, the usual connotations within our cultural milieu make for a clear chain of associations. The man represents economic and political strength, superiority and dominance. The woman embodies something in need of economic support, something politically inexperienced, helpless and weak. Despite the women's movement in the West and socialist emancipation in the East, this gender-specific categorisation has evidently lost none of its evocative power. Semantic categories continue to function in time-honoured ways. They refer here to the way in which the German-German unification process has taken place, a process which thus appears to be marked by structural inequality and consequently means something very different for the two parties involved.

Rather than belabour this comparison unnecessarily, I wish only to make a single point: the portrayal of the GDR as female could be given a different interpretation, namely that the East German woman was the hallmark of the socialist German republic. 'Nothing was more typical of the GDR than the "GDR woman",' concluded Jaqueline

Henard in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*.¹ Considerable attention has been devoted to the subject of 'women in the GDR', and not only since the borders opened. Furthermore – and herein lies the special quality of the subject – it runs counter to the East–West discourse at large.

While the approach of the two German societies and cultures to each other has thus far proceeded largely in a single direction – with East German society conforming and virtually completely assimilating to its West German counterpart – it appears that the emancipatory effects of widespread, long-term and qualified employment in East Germany are continuing to be felt. The history of women in the GDR also controverts the prevailing historical accounts which place the relation of the GDR to the FRG into categories such as traditional versus modern and dictatorship versus democracy. The value judgements behind these categories are modelled entirely on West German experience and solutions. With her self-determined lifestyle, the East German woman does not fit into this schema particularly well. East German gender relations appear more modern than those in West Germany, despite attempts to depict the massive scale of female employment in the GDR as forced emancipation from above.

In this chapter I would like to pose the question as to what extent women's and gender studies might be uniquely qualified to controvert the prevailing historiography and thus to prompt new queries, objects of study and even methodological approaches. As a prelude to this, the interpretative frameworks governing East–West discourse are briefly sketched, which form the background against which gender studies could prove different and innovative.

Prevailing Interpretative Frameworks in East–West Discourse

We are flooded these days with articles, images and commentaries describing the profound discrepancies in lifestyle and value systems between East and West Germans. Ten years after the fall of the Wall, differences are what occupy the public imagination.

Extraordinarily tedious stereotypes are generally cultivated. East Germans are considered greedy, conforming and eternally dissatisfied, while also quite sincere, friendly and helpful. West Germans, in contrast, are perceived as power-hungry, cocksure and egotistical,

although it is generally recognised that they are capable of taking responsibility for their own lives. Unsatisfactory election results lead journalists to assert that East Germans have still not yet learned to live in a democracy. Critiques of the state are dismissed as stemming from entrenched ideas of equality. At the core of such representations and images is the implication that East Germans suffer from dispositions or habits that are blocking the current transformation to a social-welfare-oriented market economy and civil society, and therefore represent obstacles to modernisation. East Germans are thus seen, for example, as a backward, whining burden weighing down the effective and productive West Germans, or as a bottomless pit into which the Westerners are pouring all their resources.

Images such as these are especially interesting in one respect, namely as evidence of West German representational praxis. They give us an indication of the self-image of West German culture, which is evidently marked by a deeply rooted feeling of superiority. This self-image has hardly changed since 1989; it only uses new surfaces upon which to project itself. When talking about East Germany, a West German norm(al)ity forms the unreflected background.

East Germans, in contrast, feel like second-class citizens despite all of the advantages they enjoy as citizens of the Federal Republic. This has generated the construction of two opposite identities, as recently described by Wolfgang Thierse in *Die Zeit*:

In the first extreme, and 'East German' identity becomes distinguished from a pan-German identity, in the second one the identification as German serves to prove that the East German origins have been outgrown. As long as East German identity and the identification with the whole of Germany are seen as contradictory, they will be a fertile ground for nostalgic or nationalistic identifications. One of the reasons for this can be found in the public sphere itself, in which the East German is a foreigner and figures largely as the object, not the subject, or self-enquiry.²

The focus on the contrast between East and West might appear somewhat bold and wooden, but even in more complex analyses it forms a fundamental pattern which re-emerges and becomes active in subtle ways. Tensions and rifts that run through East as well as West German society remain hidden behind those constructs. The newly unified federal German society clearly has a problem: the idea of democracy and freedom clashes with the reproach of discrimination. The current situation is in great need of explication.

A Matter of Situation or of Socialisation?

Explanations for this situation are currently sought in one of two areas: the influence of the current situation or the outcome of a particular form of socialisation. The former approach comprises a thorough critique of the process of transformation. It argues that the transformation process is not proceeding along truly modern lines, i.e. being open to new development, but has had the fixed aim of transferring West German structures from the very beginning. Or as Karl Ulrich Mayer once stated, 'The target society is factually and normatively not "modern society" nor a "developed form of late capitalism" nor "civil society", but rather the old Federal Republic'.³ Moreover, unification took place against the background of a huge discrepancy in state power, wealth, private resources and familiarity with the workings of Western society. East German society did not take on the new state order and the associated values via a process of debate and consent – the West offered something and expected acquiescence and jubilation.

In the short autumn of 1989, however, East Germans had raised some central questions regarding 'modernising the modern', as Rainer Land put it.⁴

Failure let us know what doesn't work, but the agenda once again contains all the questions pertaining to the future of modern society: What exactly is the democratic public in a modern mass society? How can an economy based on the self-centred utilisation of capital serve humanity and preserve the environment? How can competitive societies ensure social equality? Which institutional conditions ensure secure livelihood and individual development?⁵

In the space of only a few months, East Germans developed their own democratic structures and forms of communication. They were capable of political reflection *vis-à-vis* their own situation, interests and capacity for exerting influence, above and beyond all political differences. But they did not succeed in transforming this newly acquired public forum into political power.

The process of working to attain goals, which took quite innovative forms and produced new types of argumentation, broke off with reunification. The development of skills necessary for civil society in the East was thus aborted. There was and is no room for scrutiny, for a process-based acquisition of Western values. In effect these values

have simply been assumed, and therefore remain as distant as ever. They remain the values of the West.

In the meantime there is talk of a veritable 'transformation dilemma'⁶ (Wolfgang Zapf) to describe a renewal of society that has come not from within but rather from outside and above. Mere imitation, as we know, generally does not suffice when it comes to acquiring institutions and modes of behaviour. Rather, invention and reinvention are crucial – although the process also takes time. This is, incidentally, not only a matter of discrimination with respect to East Germans. The main issue is that negating the potential for development of the East rebounds onto the modernisation problems of the West. 'The problems of the East are none other than those of modernisation in the West. The difference, however, is the history leading up to them.'⁷

The claim that East Germans have little say in the main reorganisational processes and that 'their role consists of playing catch-up, of pursuing the special interests of the intransigent, of calling for a transfer of resources and engaging in regional development instead of participating in the international economy'⁸ is derived primarily from their previous history – and with this I come to the second interpretative framework. In essence, they are explained being the result of the GDR's political and economic system: a repressive system, an unlawful state, the state security apparatus, a bankrupt economy, and a society of shortages – these are the popular clichés – is said to have produced 'defeated and stunted individuals'.

The difference between the two clearly delineated societies within the German state can be described, explained and defined predominantly from a historical perspective. The humanities thus play an extremely important role in the unification and transformation process, and care must be taken that they are not instrumentalised for the purpose of legitimising certain decisions. In their treatment of GDR history, they have entered into a systematic dilemma: the devastating critique of the East German system has meant a return to Cold War positions and is linked to the preservation of historical approaches and methods which might be considered outmoded, (e.g. the dominance of political issues in histories of states and systems, the study of dictatorial and totalitarian features, history of repression and opposition, and a small amount of economic history primarily understood as that of a command economy).

A few academics and institutes have used social history and biography in their search for alternatives. Those who had not already

been marginalised within the historical field came under huge political pressure, especially from the former GDR opposition in the independent *Historikerverband* who disapproved of the lenience shown towards the illegitimate system. The GDR historians, however, whom one might expect to engage with their own history and historiography, have been almost completely sidelined from academia – mostly on the grounds of political accusations. In the few instances when they do speak out it is under an enormous pressure to justify themselves because their lives have been closely intertwined with the socialist system that is now under radical scrutiny. Any attempt to stay close to the facts is bound to turn into a political discussion in this kind of atmosphere.

I cannot tell the story of the *Abwicklung* of GDR historiography in detail here but will raise one important point: nowadays GDR history is mostly written by people who have not lived through it themselves. This is not necessarily a shortcoming because historians always have to imagine past times. However, the ethnological principle of understanding a past culture as ‘other’ and looking closely at its incomprehensible elements is hardly ever applied to German–German history. Most descriptions take up the well-known interpretation and simply add more and more new evidence to it. The opening of the archives did not provide new ways of access but unearthed much material to confirm the old viewpoints.

Apart from the question of whether East Germans would accept such accounts, it seems clear that there is no room in this scenario for them to write their own history. . . . And so the scholars participating in the current campaign have therefore largely consolidated their own political ideas, but have hardly been able to generate intellectual debate in the East on recent history. At the very least, the impression should have been given that this is a shared matter for all Germans,⁹

as the East German cultural historian Dietrich Mühlberg recently wrote.

The standard against which GDR society is measured is not questioned by West German society, either in its heterogeneity or with all of historical breaks, but is rather stylised as an ideal portrayal of modern civil society. Public opinion, moreover, is shaped by a presentation of the past directed by the state which thoroughly overlooks daily reality and the experiential horizons of individuals. A hypertrophied focus on the system of government and insufficient illumination of day-to-day life and its interfaces with the system have

contributed to the fact that an equally problematic ‘interpretation from below’ has arisen which is often associated with the term ‘ostalgia’ and has long since degenerated into a commercial phenomenon.

Citizens of the former GDR are left with the two alternatives of having lived in opposition or in conformity. But what if they were in agreement with the system? If for extended periods of their lives there were points of agreement with socialism as a blueprint for society and the social utopias embodied therein? And if in spite of that, they criticised the rigidity and absurdities of the centrally organised planned economy? If they had nothing but cynical jokes for the gerontocrats in the Politburo? The GDR was complex in a myriad of different ways. It cannot be dissolved into flat contrasts.

Past reality is always grasped with the terms and images of current thought. Historiography provides a society with reflections on the past which serve to assure it of its place in the present.¹⁰ But what happens if these categories, terms and images arise from only one subsection of society? The epistemological question therefore is not whether West Germans should be applying their questions and categories stemming from a Western European context to the study of GDR history (it is not a matter of political correctness), but rather whether viable results can be expected when the intellectual and cultural processes of other societies and cultures are addressed in such a manner.

This is a question of self-reflection above all else. How developed is the awareness, that the categories used come from another culture and value system and do not necessarily apprehend a differently structured society (in terms of career and family, for instance)? A major weakness of previous accounts appears to be that elements of consent and utopia, in particular, have been obscured. This makes it difficult to construct a terminology for East Germany as a society with its own features and special qualities, and impedes an understanding of the East German value system which underpinned socialisation processes and defined a series of actions as valid and legitimate.

The problem on a second level is the extent to which historiography manages to take into account the differences and ruptures within its own culture in order to build a bridge to new historical insights.

Ten years after the *Wende*, the humanities in Germany have clearly reached a point where it is necessary to think about new approaches, new questions and above all new terminologies and categories. For there are hardly any opposing accounts in public discussion; the necessary

sources of contention and points of debate about the Federal Republic and its own culture and society are also lacking.

Opposing Accounts: Women's and Gender Studies

Women's and gender studies might acquire a special significance in this context. In various respects they appear uniquely qualified to develop contrary accounts to the prevailing historical treatment of the GDR. Beyond the simple question of one sex discriminating against the other, in every culture gender relations in general and sexuality in particular constitute a field laden with enormous symbolic import. As the East German cultural historian Dietrich Mühlberg wrote,

Gender relations have served as an indication of the state of a society since Fourier; since Feuerbach, we know that a community can only come from that which exists between you and I . . . thus [it is] an excellent object of cultural historical studies: those who have decoded desires and love as worlds of cultural symbols (among others) and are thus able to investigate and also interpret the sexual behaviour of a society in its entanglements and dependencies may well have gained access to the core of the culture.¹¹

The difficulty in interpreting East German relationships is revealed *par excellence* in the variety of changes that the view of gender relations and sexuality in the GDR has undergone. This inconstancy shows that interpretations from a Western perspective miss the essence of the matter when efforts are not made to assess and define the categories employed.

Before the *Wende*, public opinion in the West held that East Germans had very conservative ideas about sexuality and partnership.

Marxism-Leninism reduced sexuality to the reproduction of human life almost as rigidly as the moral teachings of the Catholic Church. The state practised 'constant sexual repression', according to the Bremen sociology professor Rüdiger Lautmann. The considerable 'need to fuel fantasies', however, explains why demand is so high in the GDR for pornographic material and erotic literature. In Lautmann's expression, 'The people are starved for it'.¹²

Such reports gave Easterners the idea that matters were much freer in the West. A sexual revolution had taken place there by 1968 at the latest, which they now had to catch up with. After the Wall came

down, entire families are said to have stormed sex shows without the slightest inhibition and blithely cleared the stock of Beate Uhse shops near the borders. The press reacted enthusiastically:

Whereas many Westerners pull their hats down over their eyes or take furtive looks over their shoulders to make sure no one is watching, the visitors from 'over there' are less inhibited. Heide Schmöser, manager of the sex shop near Hamburg's central railway station, noted that her new clientele were 'without inhibitions, very open'. The inhabitants of the GDR asked for specific items without hesitation (Got anything with suspender belts?) and were glad to receive tips and advice.¹³

Prudery dominated the picture of the East before the *Wende*, with the image of the overly disciplined, excessively monitored and consequently frustrated functionary lacking a private life. As a result of surprise, at the uncomplicated attitude that East Germans showed towards pornography, the interpretation then changed to one of uncivilised savages who are amazingly naive and open when it comes to nudity and shame and thus display something like an as yet untamed natural instinct. The discovery that nudism, pursued in modest form in associations in the West, was widespread to the point of being a mass phenomenon in the GDR only strengthened the image of savages exhibiting proletarian lower-class culture.

Functionaries, savages and proles are not realistic historical figures of the actual socialist attitude to sexuality and sensuality, but rather foils for the civilised, modern, self-reflective and liberated individual from the West. Academic studies, such as those carried out before the *Wende* by the Leipzig Institute of Youth Studies which demonstrated that there were a large number of single mothers, an early start to sexual activity by young people, nearly as many sexual partners on the part of women as of men, and a more casual attitude to the body, have had no part in this discussion.

Beyond the superior status of West Germans and the claim to the universal nature of their own culture (democracy, liberty, constitutional state, market economy) that is expressed in such accounts, the polarisation of East and West Germans is also reflected in actual cultural differences. They have disparate ideas about family and career, they have a dissimilar relationship to money, to their bodies and to work, and they have different conceptions of law and justice.

Via the programme of mass employment, women in the GDR made the transition from discontinuous work to lifelong qualified employment in the 1950s and 1960s. This doubtless changed their relationship

to men as providers, fathers and heads of households. Yet the structure of gender-specific distribution of labour was not thereby called into question in any decisive sense, and typical role behaviour continued on even into modern partnerships. The basic contradiction in the lives of East German women lies in the utopian idea of liberation on the one hand and the actual socialist women's policies on the other, between emancipation and tradition. But it was lived out on the foundation of changed property relations, which led to 'softer' relations between the sexes and the generations. 'Because of equality in social terms, economic independence and a guaranteed standard of living, both commitment and separation were largely free of extra-relational considerations . . . Love has seldom been less laden in terms of social welfare. And it has seldom raised more problems', writes Wolfgang Engler.¹⁴

Thus in the GDR the necessary but not sufficient conditions for women's liberation were created (economic independence, assumption of societal responsibility for raising children, equality of partnership before the law, social acceptance of single mothers, etc.). Certainly, the mass inclusion of women in production was based on pragmatic economic concerns, but it was also accompanied by emancipatory considerations. A parallel contradictory and ambivalent nature marked the image of women in socialist propaganda.

Particular attention was paid to those contradictions and problems arising from the uninterrupted employment of women that resulted directly in problematic consequences for society: the sinking birth rate and the rising divorce rate. After the Pill was finally made available to women in the GDR in 1968 and the unrestricted right to abortion was guaranteed by the Volkskammer in 1972, debate naturally became more heated as to why professional women were unenthusiastic about having children. The wave of social policy measures instituted in the 1970s – increased child benefits, housing programmes, massive expansion of day-care and pre-school facilities, interest-free loans for newly married couples who could be 'milked for children', birth premiums of 1,000 marks for the first child and more for those following, year-long maternity leave and continued income for absence caused by children's illnesses, etc. – was aimed directly at this problem and also had the desired effect, namely the baby boom of the 1970s. This was accompanied by a propaganda campaign depicting the ideal socialist nuclear family, which assigned a traditional role to mothers. Yet even then this picture did not correspond to a reality increasingly marked by alternative lifestyles.

Starting in the early 1970s, every third child was born to an unmarried woman. Without intending it, the social policy measures promoted living together without a marriage certificate. Along with providing financial advantages to single mothers with sick children, they also granted special privileges to single mothers in the allocation of living space.

Reconciling employment and motherhood, which was the aim of the social policy measures, shifted the perception of working women in the direction of maternity and private life. This meant that formerly unchallenged positions in female professional careers were called into question once again. The 'Mutti' became a type of problem case in an already problematic production system. Paradoxically, the social policy measures had two unexpected and contrary effects: on the one hand, they confirmed the traditional gender roles and on the other, they led to previously unknown levels of acceptance for single mothers.

Because of employment rates approaching 90 per cent, women were essential in shaping the lifestyle and mentality of the GDR, in contrast to West German society whose 50 per cent employment rate for women almost brings up the rear in European statistics.¹⁵ East German women married earlier on average and had more children, also at an earlier age. They did not stop working, but rather returned to their workplaces shortly after the birth. The East German 'Mutti' – who attempted to reconcile work and children and in so doing received moral and material support from society – stands in marked contrast to the West German 'Rabenmutter', a pejorative term denoting a career-oriented and self-serving working mother. Both terms are ideologically formed and historically defined. They refer to a social context, in which female labour is either wanted or unwanted.

And yet the structures of gender-specific distribution of labour, power relations and basic patriarchal patterns did not undergo fundamental change in the GDR either. It is precisely this obvious contradiction on the systemic level between utopia and propagandistic hero-worship on the one hand and real-life marginalisation on the other, as well as its counterpart on the private level between the deeply rooted feeling of independence (emancipatory effect) on the one hand and the inequality in income, development and decisional opportunities on the other, which raise the question, beyond all dichotomising interpretations, of whether there is perhaps a connection between high levels of employment, economic independence for women and sexual permissiveness.

Moreover, the question arises of how the actually existing socialist conditions, the radical break in social structures (workers' society, loss of cultural hegemony on the part of the bourgeoisie, etc.) affected the shaping of gender relations. To what extent was the communist utopia and its promises for the future able to provide meaning and orientation? What influence did the fundamental changes in property relations have on living relations and on notions of law and justice?

These questions should be central to future enquiry because they open up a clearer definition of the relationship between utopia, politics and everyday life and thus provide access to the intrinsic logic of GDR society.

This relation is not solely a matter of repressive implementation of utopian ideals by policies ordered from above, but rather displays a much more contradictory character. Utopian ideals could serve to influence policies, but they were also instrumentalised by policies as promises for the future, suppressed and displaced when no longer suitable. Utopian ideals could provide orientation in terms of meaning for daily life, but they could also be rejected as not feasible. The emancipatory effects that were attained contrary to the intentions behind the policies, moreover, testify not simply to obstinacy and *Eigensinn* but rather to an unpredictable capacity for innovation in the society as well as to the invention and institutionalisation of new cultural forms.

The field of cultural practices is proving to be an increasingly important dimension of social and cultural studies because it does not present us with a completed chapter of contemporary history in many political or institutional fields. Continuity in intellectual views is juxtaposed with changes in the areas of labour and daily life. This encounter is especially clear in gender relations. The modernising head start in East German gender relations is being undermined by the demands of transformation (e.g. economists criticise the desire of East German women to work as one of the causes of high unemployment), but it cannot be turned back.

Gender relations are proving to be a field in which the transformation process is endured, carried out, comprehended and examined in daily life, with failed relationships the penalty for not succeeding. In these relations (especially in east-west couples), new cultural forms of cooperation have to be invented and tried out. In so doing, cultural difference has to be viewed as an opportunity, as the potential for development and evolution. The precondition for this is an equal relationship based on mutual acceptance, because otherwise difference

always has the tendency to confirm and deepen social discrepancies, hierarchies, and so on. Because they represent the most immediate level for practising cooperation, communication and interaction, gender relations could become especially significant cultural precursors for the process of German–German cooperation.

In this context, historical research should rise to the challenge of explaining cultural differences based on a more profound understanding of their genesis and justification. For what is it that characterises modern societies? That people are being called upon, to an extent previously unknown, to develop capacities to work productively within cultural differences. The aim should not be to condemn differences and ultimately to make them vanish. Rather, the focus of our research interests should be the question of how they can lead to new opportunities and the potential for development.

Notes

1. *FAZ* of 8 August 1992.
2. Wolfgang Thierse, 'Fünf Thesen zur Vorbereitung eines Aktionsprogramms für Ostdeutschland', cited by Christoph Dieckmann in: *Die Zeit* 2/2001, p. 5.
3. Mayer, K. U., 'Vereinigung soziologisch: die soziale Ordnung der DDR und ihre Folgen', *Berl. J. Soziol.*, vol. 3 (1994), pp. 307–21, p. 308.
4. Land, R., 'Der Herbst 1989 und die Modernisierung der Moderne', *Berliner Debatte/Initial*, vol. 11, no. 2, (2000), pp. 31–8.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 38.
6. Zapf, W., 'Die Transformation in der ehemaligen DDR und die soziologische Theorie der Modernisierung', *Berl. J. Soziol.*, vol. 3 (1994), pp. 295–305.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 38.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
9. Mühlberg, D., 'Gemeinsame Problemlagen – verschiedene Antworten. Von der Nachkriegsnot und der Arbeitsgesellschaft in die Konsum-, Freizeit- und Erlebnisgesellschaft – Bedürfniswandel als Herausforderung an die politischen Systeme', unpublished MS, p. 1.
10. Cf. De Certeau, M., *Das Schreiben der Geschichte*, (Frankfurt/Main, 1991).
11. Mühlberg, D., 'Ostdeutscher Alltag zwischen Sex und Politik', *Mitteilungen aus der kulturwissenschaftlichen Forschung*, vol. 36 (1995), pp. 8–38, citation on p. 9f.

12. "Ham'Se was mit Strapsen? Westdeutsche Porno- und Sexhändler wollen die DDR erobern", *Der Spiegel* 16-1990, pp. 47-56.
13. *Ibid.*
14. Engler, W., *Die Ostdeutschen. Kunde von einem verlorenen Land*, (Berlin, 1999), pp. 257f.
15. Percentage of women (15 to 64 years of age) employed in selected countries, 1986.

Sweden	78.3	
USA	64.9	
France	55.3	
FRG	50.3	
Italy	42.1	(<i>Sonderbulletin des ZiF</i> , Berlin 1992, p. 38)

DETLEF POLLACK

Secularisation in Germany after 1945

Secularisation theories show that the relationship between religion and the modern world is one of tension and contrast: the more society modernises, the more religion loses its social significance.¹ The functional diversification of modern society into a number of segments such as economy, politics, law, education, science or indeed religion has had mainly negative consequences for religious life, since the increasing trend towards social differentiation and pluralisation has deprived religion of its monopoly for interpreting the world. The last fifty years of Christianity in Germany would seem to confirm this hypothesis. In 1949, when the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic were established, more than 90 per cent of the German population belonged to one of the two mainstream churches; today, this proportion has dropped to about two-thirds. During the same period, both Germanies also went through an extensive process of modernisation, social mobilisation and cultural pluralisation, so that it can easily be assumed that there is a correlation between modernisation and alienation from the church.

There are, however, significant differences between the old and the new German states. In the western German states, more than 80 per cent of the population are still members of one of the two major churches, their number being divided almost evenly between the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran churches.² That is to say, the number of those not belonging to any denomination has trebled in the course of fifty years, having risen from 5 to well over 15 per cent.³

In the eastern German states, by contrast, today's membership in the Lutheran Church or the Roman Catholic Church does not even account for 30 per cent of the population: just under 25 per cent