

University of Oxford
Faculty of History

Religion in the wake of 'total war': Protestant and
Catholic communities in Thuringia and Saxony-
Anhalt, 1945-9.

Luke Fenwick
University College
University of Oxford

In fulfilment of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Trinity 2011

Abstract

Religion in the wake of ‘total war’: Protestant and Catholic communities in Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt, 1945-9.

Luke Fenwick, University College

In fulfilment of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Trinity 2011

By May 1945, most major German cities lay in ruins, and a largely demoralised population struggled for subsistence in many areas. National Socialist remnants, Christian faith and communist ideology met in the rubble of the Third Reich. The Protestant and Catholic Churches attempted to ‘re-Christianise’ the *Volk* and reverse secularisation, while the German communists sought to inspire dynamism for their socialist project in Eastern Germany. This thesis recreates the religious world of Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia in the Soviet zone, 1945-9, and analyses ‘religio-politics’ (the interactions between the secular authorities and the Churches), the affairs of the priesthood/pastorate, and the behaviours, mentalities and emotions of ‘ordinary people’ amongst the pews. After the American withdrawal in July 1945, the Soviet authorities occupied the entirety of Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt, and they proclaimed a ‘freedom of religion’. The realities of this policy were different in each state, and the resolution or non-resolution of local-level disputes often determined Church and State relations. At the grassroots, though, many people engaged in a latent social revolt against all forms of authority. The Churches’ hopes of ‘re-Christianisation’ in 1945 were dashed by 1949, despite a brief and ultimately superficial ‘revival’. The majority of people did not attend church services regularly, many allegedly practiced ‘immorality’, and refused to adopt ‘Christian neighbourly love’ in helping often-destitute refugees. ‘Re-Christianisation’ also did not incur

comprehensive denazification or a unified pastorate, and there was even a continuation of the Third Reich *Kirchenkampf* in some areas. Christian ideas of guilt for a popular turning from God, much less for Nazism and its crimes, rarely resonated amongst the population and some sections of the pastorate. This mentality encapsulated the popular rejection of authority, whether spiritual or political, that endured up to and beyond the foundation of the German Democratic Republic in October 1949.

Long Abstract

Religion in the wake of ‘total war’: Protestant and Catholic communities in Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt, 1945-9.

Luke Fenwick, University College
In fulfilment of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Trinity 2011

This thesis offers top-down and bottom-up analyses in presenting the ‘religious world’ of the Soviet Zone of Occupation (SBZ), 1945 to 1949, as a substantive fulcrum upon which much turned. It aims to explore the impact and claims of macro-historical events on the congregation and the individual, and to examine the consequences of popular mentalities and ‘Eigen-Sinn’ for the hopes and policies of church hierarchs. Only with an investigation of three levels – ‘religio-politics’, the priesthood/pastorate and people on the ground – can we reconstruct and fully understand the Churches in the Soviet zone. This account shall, therefore, excavate political, religious and personal spheres to present a ‘pew level history’ of faith communities in the states of Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt without neglecting macro-historical processes.

At the fall of the Third Reich in May 1945, and as the Red Army pulled into areas of Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia in July 1945, there were competing claims on German society from various quarters. While National Socialist ideas died-hard in some areas, the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) – the Socialist Unity Party from April 1946 (SED) – and the Protestant and Catholic Churches all sought to realise their respective societal blueprints. The Soviet Military Administration in Germany (SVAG) held the reins of power in the zone, and, while it fostered the political rise of the KPD/SED, it also provided for a general freedom of religion at the outset of occupation. The

Churches took advantage of this policy, which was largely founded on pragmatism, and were no insignificant players in the post-war environment. The only independent mass institutions to escape *Gleichschaltung* in the Third Reich, the Churches were intricately engaged in the maelstrom of the German collapse. The church aid organisations, for example, were especially active in providing critical material and spiritual succour to many destitute persons. The population, for its part, enjoyed the proclaimed religious freedom in many places, and a number of clergy reported high attendance at church services in the immediate post-war months. Such were the expectations generated by the fall of Nazism and religious participation in 1945 that church hierarchs harboured hopes of a 're-Christianisation' of Germany that would overcome long-term secularisation and bring the *Volk* back to the bosom of the Christian Church. Following the census figures of October 1946, over 90 percent of the population in the Eastern zone identified as 'Christian', being subscribed to either the Protestant or the Catholic Church.

German communists in the KPD/SED, however, pushed for a Marxist society – with the means of production manipulated by the vanguard of the proletariat. This was to be a society where the 'illusions' of religion would dissipate before the full consciousness offered by scientific materialism. The communist-led 'antifascist-democratic transformation' of the zone made the first steps toward achieving this, especially with the Stalinisation of the SED from late 1947. The Soviet authorities in Germany, whatever Stalin's actual intentions, allowed and promoted the increasing control of the SED over public life. Given developments in the Western zones also, a two state solution was almost inevitable by early 1949. This was realised with the establishment of the Federal Republic of Germany on 23 May 1949 and the German Democratic Republic on 7 October 1949.

This thesis examines 'religio-politics', the priesthood/pastorate and people at the grass roots in three areas. Firstly, chapters one and two investigate 'religio-politics', or the interactions of the secular authorities – the Soviet occupiers and the German state governments – with the Catholic and Protestant Churches at the highest level and amongst parishes. The relationship was considerably different according to confession and church. The Catholic Church was wholly independent of the State in Imperial Germany, the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich, concentrating inwards on its particular milieu and way of life. This focus endured after 1945, and the Church largely withdrew from the political sphere. The Protestant Church, however, had enjoyed a partnership with the State up until 1918, when the fall of *Kaiserreich* brought an end to *summus episcopus*. Alienated further by the constitutional separation between Church and State in the Weimar Republic, the regional Protestant churches then suffered a turbulent *Kirchenkampf* in Nazi Germany, which pitted the heterodox German Christians against the orthodoxy of the Confessing Church.

After 1945, the three individual Protestant churches in Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt blazed their own trails, and interacted with the secular authorities in different ways. These relations are explored in chapter one. The Thuringian church (TheK), led by Bishop Moritz Mitzenheim, enjoyed an often-collaborative relationship with the head of the Soviet Military Administration in Thuringia, Major-General Ivan Kolesnichenko. The General even intervened in favour of the TheK when lower level officers and state functionaries interfered in church life. There was no comparable accommodation in the Protestant Church of the Church Province of Saxony (KPS), and relations between Church and State grew progressively worse as anti-clerical officials meddled in religious affairs often without reprimand. The relatively small State Church of Anhalt (LKA), lastly, reached an early *modus vivendi* with the secular

authorities that was not compromised in the period of the Soviet zone. It seems that the resolution or non-resolution of conflicts amongst parishes often played a significant role in determining relations at the highest level. This is further apparent in the second chapter, which examines perhaps the most important issue at stake for both the Churches and the KPD/SED: influence over the next generation. This would secure long-term survival and, for the Protestant Church and the party at least, ideological hegemony over society. Significant local conflicts developed, though increasing secular regulation in the late 1940s was decisive in limiting church influence amongst young people.

The second section, chapters three and four, analyses the religious and social project of the Churches: 're-Christianisation'. Both Churches desired the reestablishment, in their view, of the 'Christian society' of an allegedly more pious era. Chapter three deals with the religious obligation that clergymen laid upon parishioners to attend church services regularly. Chapter four discusses the social obligation of each believer to exhibit 'Christian neighborly love' (*christliche Nächstenliebe*). In the post-war 'moral vacuum', the Churches – often quick to cast judgement and castigate perceived dissipation amongst society – wished to lay Christian love as the foundation of a new order in Germany. Ideally, native Germans would embrace the influx of refugees from the East, and all persons would abstain from 'dissolution', particularly theft. Set against the violence and death of the war years, and the fear and anxiety of the post-war period, this blueprint was no less revolutionary than the SED's own societal designs.

However, despite an apparently superficial religious 'revival' in 1945, the hoped-for 're-Christianisation' of the German population had not occurred by 1949. People at large did not attend church regularly, and often only participated in certain religious

festivals and rites of passage to lend a certain solemnity and gravitas to life's milestones. The project of 're-Christianisation' was frustrated, above all, by long-lived secularisation that was largely contingent on the post-war material deprivation in many areas of Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia. Many people were only concerned with daily existence. The KPD/SED achieved no greater echo; it was unable to counter the need, and functionaries were often identified with feared Red Army personnel. The war, the widespread deprivation and the Soviet occupation dislocated society in a way that led to a 'latent social revolt'. The post-war material conditions, and their emotional and spiritual effects, led to a rejection of grand narratives and the promotion of religious individualisation. Many people rejected the traditional theological redemptive process that invested crisis with ultimate meaning: the disaster was God's punishment, which demanded human repentance, which in turn was acknowledged by the gift of grace – an act of divine benevolence. Religious strictures received little echo, and this lack of resonance was interpreted by the Churches as 'nihilism'.

The often-harsh material conditions, however, did not alone condemn the 're-Christianisation' project. In 1945, in the wake of the German Christian heresy, the Protestant churches reverted to, or persisted with as the case may be, the traditional pattern of worship. Habit shaped by upbringing was often the only motivation to church involvement amongst the minority of native Thuringians and Saxons who attended church. As a number of reports attested, furthermore, elderly persons populated the councils of many congregations, and few of these people were animated by the Holy Spirit. Churchmen themselves admitted that such conditions were not ideal for a religious 'revival'.

All this is not to say that there was no church community, nor did the Churches, or values traditionally associated with Christianity, pale into insignificance in the post-war period. As shown by the statistics, the development from religious indifference to secession from the Churches and/or outright atheism was gradual and increased only in the course of the German Democratic Republic. For some, church tradition was the attraction and the one consolation in a world beyond personal control. In fact, the Churches did show some adaptation in the post-war world: services were often held according to the traditions of refugees, and *Heimat* religious texts were printed and distributed. As the Catholic sub-culture evolved after 1945, it often centred on the particular piety of refugees from the East. The arrival of these people invigorated religious life in many locales and they, along with local women's groups, provided the backbone of church life. Women especially responded to church calls to exhibit 'Christian neighbourly love' and self-sacrifice. They comprised the metaphorical heart of many congregations. Volunteers were grouped in the Protestant *Frauenhilfe*, of which chapters were established in many communities throughout Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt. These women offered 'sisterly love', giving of their time to visit parishioners, organise events, gather donations and help in the *Bahnhofsmision*. Church authorities recognised their contribution, and, as in Anhalt, women were sometimes promoted to leadership positions in what was a traditionally patriarchal world.

Finally, the third section explores the role and place of the Nazi past in the post-war Protestant churches. There is a general silence on the period of the Third Reich in Catholic documents in Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia after the war. As shown in chapter five, the TheK, KPS and LKA all undertook denazification processes against 'compromised' pastors and church hierarchs. The TheK and the KPS, however, faced

secular criticism about 'inadequate' denazification. The LKA had permitted the political parties representation on its denazification commission, and therefore largely avoided secular critiques. The reality was that denazification was lenient in all three churches, and was conditioned by alleged church resistance in the Third Reich, an emphasis on 'de-German-Christianisation' and forgiveness. This 'de-German-Christianisation' of the pastorate was premised more on membership in the former German Christian movement than on Nazi party membership, as the state authorities had prescribed and undertaken in their denazification process. German Christianity was a heterodox movement heavily influenced by Nazism; it sought a rapprochement with the State and assumed Nazi racial prejudices that, for example, led to the bowdlerisation of the bible, including the entire Old Testament and the de-judisation of sections of the New Testament. Still, apart from 'de-German Christianisation', there was also a certain pragmatism that sought a strong and unified pastorate capable of pastoral care throughout the population. Mitzenheim, furthermore, desired a close working relationship with the secular authorities that guaranteed 'living space' for the church. In all, the policy of 'de-German-Christianisation' left most former German Christians in office, and this did not provide for pastoral unity. It led, in some places, to recrimination and a perpetuation of the Third Reich *Kirchenkampf* that had pitted German Christians against members of the Confessing Church.

Chapter six, lastly, addresses people's personal dealings with the Nazi past, with an particular focus on the issue of guilt. The TheK, KPS and LKA all spoke of guilt, although there were some important qualifications and differences between them. The population at large refused any imputations of guilt. Many people blamed Hitler and his cronies, while present worries overwhelmed people and drew a shroud over the past. 'De-German-Christianisation' and the post-war ill will amongst the pastorate

inevitably had an alienating effect on a number of the former German Christian clergy. While they were deemed guiltier than other churchmen, most rejected imputations of guilt, and many cast themselves and their actions in a morally laudable light. As German Christians in Anhalt wrote about themselves and their life histories, for example, there was almost a heroic, tragic romance about it all: witnessing the failure of the Protestant Church after 1918 and not seeing evangelising possibilities for traditional religion, they fought as idealistic Christian storm troopers against secularisation after 1933. They bore the cross in faith (often in the face of persecution), until undergoing a 'de-conversion experience', which at last unveiled the true face of Nazism. Disappointment, reservation and selective memory, not remorse, were predominant mindsets after 1945. Perhaps in this one respect alone, the secular authorities, many churchmen and most people were united: the vilification of the Nazi past.

This investigation of the three levels, 'religio-politics', the pastorate/priesthood, and the population at the grass-roots, shows that people on the ground were no passive objects who meekly received top-down directives. Instead, many 'ordinary people' engaged in a latent social revolt against authority, and did not acknowledge the claims of either the party or the Churches. In the end, the decisive social dislocation of 1945 and the difficulties of subsequent years disrupted German society in significant ways that, as posterity has proven, have lent themselves to the process of secularisation. Many people fell into an ideological apathy that ignored both the Churches and the SED, though ultimately the political power of the party, promoted by the Soviet occupation authorities and manifested in anti-clerical policies after 1949 especially, trumped the spiritual claim of the Churches.

Acknowledgements

There are so many people who have collaborated in this project through materials, advice, discussions and informal conversations. All have enriched my life in numerous ways. At Oxford University, I warmly thank Professor Hartmut Pogge von Strandmann, and owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to Professor Jane Caplan for her forbearance and penetrating intelligence. At Canterbury University, Assistant Professor Victor Parker and Dr. Gareth Pritchard inspired me and planted the academic seed. I am also thankful to those people who provided me with documentation and manuscripts, including Dr. Benjamin Ziemann, Dr. Thomas Seidel, and Dr. Sean Brennan.

The ten months I spent in Germany in the course of this project, honestly, have changed my life. Such is the number, I simply cannot list all those people who contributed and helped me, including archivists (Herr Kessler and Frau Dr. Schneider in Eisenach come immediately to mind), questionnaire respondents and interviewees. To the latter, I have heartfelt gratitude: for speaking with me, a stranger, and often opening a vein, talking of enduring personal traumas. I am also especially grateful to those who supported me with astonishing grace and hospitality. Some moments are salient in my memory: staying a weekend in Frankenheim – and drinking schnapps with Herr Pfarrer Spekker and the men of the town – spending a few days in the delightful company of Frau Pastorin Krüger in the Harz, and enjoying the hospitality of Herr Pfarrer Fritsch in Tiefenort. An anecdote near the end of my time in Germany encapsulates my debt of gratitude. I took a train from Magdeburg to Wolfsburg one

sunny morning to conduct an interview. The husband of my interview partner picked me up from the train station, took me to meet his wife at their house, and we all ate a hot lunch. I conducted the interview afterwards, and then we went for a drive on the *Autobahn* and around Wolfsburg. At some point, I mentioned that I needed to buy a suit for a wedding the following week; my hosts took me to a shop, bought me the suit, and took me back to the train station in time for the 1740 ICE to Berlin.

Finally, I thank the Rhodes Trust, the Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst and University College, Oxford, for providing funds and resources that made this project a reality. Oxford had promised much and it has delivered much more: new experiences, a rugby blue and, especially, exceptional friendships that I will always treasure. These are friends for life: my housemates at the University College Boathouse in second year, colleagues on the Rhodes program, and sports teammates. Thanks for the memories and the education. To my family lastly and above all: I love you Mum and Dad, Ruth and Timothy. My strengths I owe to your devotion; my weaknesses are personal flaws.

Luke Fenwick
The Clubroom, University College Boathouse
The Isis, Oxford
May 2011

Table of contents

Acknowledgements	1
Table of Contents.....	3
List of abbreviations and conventions	5
List of figures and maps	8
Introduction	9
The existing historiography	16
The parameters of the study and the historical background.....	21
Sources and methodology	31
Chapter 1:	
The Soviet leviathan, the German communists and the Churches.....	35
The Churches, the Americans, the Soviets and the German communists	38
Local conflict and accommodation: clergymen, soldiers and the communist cadre.....	53
Secular authority, personalities and church theologies.....	63
Conclusion	80
Chapter 2:	
The struggle over the next generation: religious education, youth and the	
<i>Jugendweihe</i>	84
Religion and the school	86
Religious and secular youth work	100
Confirmation and the <i>Jugendweihe</i>	116
Conclusion	122
Chapter 3:	
The project of ‘re-Christianisation’ in the ‘seelische Trümmerfeld’.....	127
Variations in religious observance.....	130
Refugees, men, youth, church festivals and rites of passage	142
The failure of ‘re-Christianisation’	157
Communism, difficult existential conditions and church inadequacies	163
Conclusion	183
Chapter 4:	
The Churches and the Christian ethic in the post-war world: ‘dissolution’,	
refugees and the faithful.....	191
Post-war ‘dissolution’	193
The Churches, native Germans and refugees.....	202
The divide between churchmen and their flock	216
Followership in the church community	225
Conclusion	239

Chapter 5:

The Protestant churches in the shadows of German Christianity and National Socialism.....	245
Denazification in the churches	248
The secular authorities and denazification in the churches.....	254
Church resistance, ‘de-German-Christianisation’, forgiveness and pragmatism	262
‘De-German-Christianisation’ on the ground: pastors in changing times.....	273
Conclusion	293

Chapter 6:

Protestant Christianity and the question of German guilt.....	298
Church theologies of the Nazi past	300
Guilt and the population at large	310
Former German Christians in Anhalt	322
Nazism, parishioners, clergy and the church authorities.....	333
The <i>Führerprinzip</i> , and the ‘good’ and ‘bad’ times dichotomy	338
Conclusion	346

Conclusion:

Religion and the people in the Soviet zone	349
‘Religio-politics’	349
The priesthood and pastorate.....	351
Amongst the population at the grass-roots.....	354
Looking ahead at developments after 1949	360

Maps	364
-------------------	------------

Bibliography	370
Manuscript and archival sources	370
Interviews (deployed in the thesis)	382
Questionnaires (deployed in the thesis).....	382
Unpublished manuscripts.....	383
Published primary sources	384
Published secondary works.....	388
Unpublished theses	411

List of abbreviations and conventions

ACDP – Archiv für Christlich-Demokratische Politik
AEKA – Archiv der evangelischen Kirche Auferstehung, Dessau
AEKE – Archiv der evangelischen Kirche Eisenberg
AEKF – Archiv der evangelischen Kirche Frankenheim
AEKM – Archiv der evangelischen Kirche Mihla
AEKO – Archiv der evangelischen Kirche Ohrdruf
AEKT – Archiv der evangelischen Kirche Tiefenort
AEKR – Archiv der evangelischen Kirche Rohr
AEKZ – Archiv der evangelischen Kirche Zeulenroda
AEKZeit – Archiv der evangelischen Kirche Zeitz
AKKL – Archiv der katholischen Kirche Lüderode
AKKS – Archiv des Kirchenkreises Stendal
AKW – Abteilung für Kirchenwesen
AKPS – Archiv der Kirchenprovinz Sachsens
AVB – Abteilung für Volksbildung
BAE-M – Bischöfliches Amt Erfurt-Meiningen
BAM – Bischöfliches Archiv Magdeburg
BArch – Bundesarchiv, Lichterfelde
BDM – Bund deutscher Mädel
BDVP – Bezirksbehörde der Deutschen Volkspolizei
BEA – Bistum Erfurt Archiv
BFA – Bistum Fulda Archiv
BGVE – Bischöfliches Generalvikariat Erfurt
BGVF – Bischöfliches Generalvikariat Fulda
BGVP – Bischöfliches Generalvikariat Paderborn
BK – Bekennende Kirche
BL – Bezirksleitung
BM – Bürgermeister
BMP – Büro des Ministerpräsidenten
BP – Bezirkspräsident
BK – Bekennende Kirche
BKE – Bischöfliches Kommissariat Erfurt
BKM – Bischöfliches Kommissariat Meiningen
BRD – Bundesrepublik Deutschland
BV – Bezirksvorstand
CDU – Christlich-Demokratische Union
CVJM – Christlicher Verein der Jungmänner
DAW – Diözesan Archiv Würzburg
DC – Deutsche Christen
DDR – Deutsche Demokratische Republik
DWK – Deutsche Wirtschaftskommission
EJMdW – Evangelisches Jungmädchenwerk
EJMw – Evangelisches Jungmännerwerk
EKD – Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland

EOKR – Evangelischer Oberkirchenrat (Berlin)
EZAB – Evangelisches Zentralarchiv in Berlin
FDGB – Freier Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund
FDJ – Freie Deutsche Jugend
GBVP bzw. Fulda – Bischöfliches Generalvikariat Paderborn bzw. Fulda: Pfarreien, Dekanate, Stiftungen, Einrichtungen etc. auf dem Gebiet der heutigen Diözese Erfurt
Gestapo – Geheime Staatspolizei
GKR – Gemeindekirchenrat
GuH – *Glaube und Heimat*
HJ – Hitlerjugend
JCH – Journal of Contemporary History
KH – *Kirchliches Handbuch: amtliches statistisches Jahrbuch der katholischen Kirche Deutschlands*
KJ – *Kirchliches Jahrbuch für die Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland*
KL – Kirchenleitung
Kons. – Konsistorium der Kirchenprovinz Sachsens
KOP – Kreisoberpfarrer
KPD – Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands
KPS – Evangelische Kirche der Kirchenprovinz Sachsen
KR – Kreisrat
Krsverw. – Kreisverwaltung
KV – Kreisvorstand
KZ – Konzentrationslager
KZG – Kirchliche Zeitgeschichte
LA Magd. – Landesarchiv Magdeburg
LDPD – Liberal-Demokratische Partei Deutschlands
LHASA, DE – Landeshauptarchiv, Abteilung Dessau
LHASA, MAG – Landeshauptarchiv, Abteilung Magdeburg
LHASA, MER – Landeshauptarchiv, Abteilung Merseburg
LKA – Landeskirche Anhalts
LKAD – Landeskirchenarchiv Dessau
LKAE – Landeskirchenarchiv Eisenach
LKR – Landeskirchenrat der Thüringischen evangelischen Kirche
LKRA – Landeskirchenrat Anhalts
LNA – Landesnachrichtenamt
LVB – Landesamt für Volksbildung
LR – Landrat
LV – Landesvorstand
LVB – Landesamt für Volksbildung
MBK – Menschen begegnen-Bibel entdecken-Kirche gestalten
MdI – Ministerium des Innern
MGB – Ministerstvo Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti
MVB – Ministerium für Volksbildung
NKE – Nationalkirchliche Einung
NKFD – Nationalkomitee Freies Deutschland
NL – Nachlaß
NSDAP – Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei
OBM – Oberbürgermeister
Pfr. – Pfarrer
POW – Prisoner of War

RM – Reichsmark
SA – Sturmabteilung
SBZ – Sowjetische Besatzungszone
SED – Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands
SPD – Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands
SS – Schutzstaffel
SR – Stadtrat
Sup. – Superintendent
SVAG – Sovetskaia Voennaia Administratsiia v Germanii
SVAS-A – Sovetskaia Voennaia Administratsiia (Saksonia-Angal't)
SVATH – Sovetskaia Voennaia Administratsiia (Tiuringiai)
TheK – Thüringer evangelische Kirche
ThHStAW – Thüringisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Weimar
TRE – Theologische Realenzyklopädie
VELKD – Vereinigte Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirchen in Deutschland
VGL – Vorläufige Geistliche Leitung der Kirchenprovinz Sachsen (till 10/46)

Conventions:

In the interests of consistency, I have kept all titles, terms and names in the original language. E.g. SVAG: Sovetskaia Voennaia Administratsiia v Germanii; DDR: Deutsche Demokratische Republik. I also keep German quotations in the original language, but have translated Russian quotations into English. I capitalise ‘Churches’ to refer to the Protestant and Catholic Churches, and use ‘churches’ to refer to the Protestant regional churches. The ‘Christian Church’ in general is capitalised. Lastly, all bible quotations are rendered according to the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV).

List of figures and maps

Figure I: Secessions from and conversions to the TheK, 1946-1949 (Dähn).....	159
Figure II: Secessions from and conversions to the TheK and the LKA, 1945-1949 (KJ, 1951).....	160
Figure III: A request for volunteers in the Bahnhofsmission at Zeitz, 18/4/46	244
Figure IV: The altar of the <i>Auferstehungskirche</i> in the Nazi period.....	275
Figure V: The hand-written dedication on the inside cover of a copy of Erich Elster's <i>Deutsches Herz im Kampf</i> (1935)	276
Map I: The Kirchenprovinz Sachsen before 2009	364
Map II: The Landeskirche Anhalts in 1945	365
Map III: Thuringia in 1918.....	366
Map IV: The Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) after 1945	367
Map V: The Catholic Church in Germany after 1945	368
Map VI: The Thuringian section of the Fulda diocese after 1945	369

Introduction

Seit der letzten Eintragung durch Pfarrer B. im Jahre 1930 sind 25 Jahre vergangen. Jahre von ungeahntem Wandel im inneren und äusseren Leben deutscher Menschen. Was haben diese 25 Jahre allem an uns herangebracht? Den Nationalsozialismus mit seinem Versuch, auch die Glaubens- und Gedankenwelt des Einzelnen zu reglementieren; den Krieg mit seinen tiefeingreifenden Ereignissen; den Zusammenbruch 1945 mit dem Ausgeliefertsein an militärische und politische Gewalten; und dann die Zeit seit 1945 mit der immer mehr annehmenden Gewaltherrschaft des Kommunismus. 10 Jahre der kommunistischen Herrschaft haben aus äusseren Gemeinden in Mitteldeutschland Gemeinden gemacht mit unfrohen Herzen, mit Misstrauen, mit lähmenden Gedanken. Und wann wird wieder einmal Freiheit und damit Lebensfreude sein?¹

So wrote a Protestant pastor from a small Thuringian village in the vicinity of Eisenberg in 1955. This entry in the chronicle of the Sassa parish presents the significant political and social changes in the lives of Germans from 1930 to 1955. More than that, it illustrates the effects of macro-political events on individual lives with significant pathos. This thesis offers top-down and bottom-up analyses in presenting the ‘religious world’ of the Soviet zone (Sowjetische Besatzungszone, SBZ), 1945 to 1949, as a substantive fulcrum upon which much turned.² It aims to

¹ AEKE, Chronik von Sassa, 1930-55.

² There is a significant amount of literature on structural, personnel and *mentalité* continuities and ruptures in the Protestant Church after 1945. See, for example: M. Greschat, ‘Kontinuität und Neuanfang in der evangelischen Kirche in den ersten Jahren nach 1945’, *Zeichen der Zeit*, 40 (1986), 85-94; idem, ‘Zwischen Aufbruch und Beharrung. Die evangelische Kirche nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg’, in V. Conzemius/M. Greschat/H. Kocher (ed.), *Die Zeit nach 1945 als Thema kirchlicher Zeitgeschichte* (Göttingen, 1988), 99-126; K. Herbert, *Kirche zwischen Aufbruch und Tradition. Entscheidungsjahre nach 1945* (Stuttgart, 1989); J. Kocka, ‘1945: Neubeginn oder Restauration’, in C. Stern/H.A. Winkler, *Wendepunkte deutscher Geschichte 1848-1990* (Frankfurt, 1994), 141-68; C. Vollnhals, ‘Im Schatten der Stuttgarter Schulderklärung. Die Erblast des Nationalprotestantismus’, in M. Gailus/H. Lehmann (ed.), *Nationalprotestantische Mentalitäten. Konturen, Entwicklungslinien und Umbrüche eines Weltbildes* (Göttingen, 2005), 379-431; D. Pollack ‘Abbrechende Kontinuitätslinien im deutschen Protestantismus nach 1945’, in *Nationalprotestantische Mentalitäten*. 454-66; see also the essays in M. Broszat/K.-D. Henke/H. Woller (ed.), *Von Stalingrad zur Währungsreform: Zur Sozialgeschichte des Umbruchs in Deutschland*, 3rd Edn (Munich, 1990); M. Gailus/W. Krogel (ed.), *Von der babylonischen Gefangenschaft der Kirche im Nationalen. Regionalstudien zu Protestantismus, Nationalsozialismus und Nachkriegsgeschichte 1930 bis 2000* (Berlin, 2006). There is, otherwise, the controversial argument regarding the role of disadvantageous economic conditions during the period of

explore the impact and claims of macro-historical events on the congregation and the individual, and to examine the consequences of popular mentalities and ‘Eigen-Sinn’ for the hopes and policies of church hierarchs.³ Only with an investigation of three levels – ‘religio-politics’, the priesthood/pastorate and people on the ground – can we reconstruct and fully understand the Churches in the Soviet zone. This account shall, therefore, excavate political, religious and personal spheres to present a ‘pew-level history’ of faith communities in the states of Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt without neglecting macro-historical processes.

At the fall of the Third Reich in May 1945, and as the Red Army pulled into areas of Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia in July 1945, there were competing claims on German society from various quarters. While National Socialist ideas died-hard in some areas, the Communist Party of Germany (Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands, KPD) – the Socialist Unity Party from April 1946 (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands, SED) – and the Protestant and Catholic Churches all sought to realise their respective societal blueprints.⁴ The Soviet Military Administration in Germany (Sovetskaia Voennaia Administratsiia v Germanii, SVAG) held the reins of power in the zone, and, while it fostered the political rise of the KPD/SED, it also provided for a general freedom of religion at the outset of occupation. The Churches took advantage of this policy, which was largely founded on pragmatism (see below, pp. 41-4), and were no insignificant players in the post-war environment. The only independent mass

the SBZ in explaining the lag of the DDR economy behind that of the Federal Republic of Germany: H. Barthel, *Die Wirtschaftlichen Ausgangsbedingungen der DDR* (Berlin, 1979), 170; J. Roesler/V. Siedt/M. Elle, *Wirtschaftswachstum in der Industrie der DDR 1945-1970* (Berlin, 1986).

³ On the concept of Eigen-Sinn, see: A. Lüdtkke, *Eigen-Sinn. Fabrikalltag, Arbeitererfahrungen und Politik vom Kaiserreich bis in den Faschismus. Ergebnisse* (Hamburg, 1993); idem (ed.), *Herrschaft als sozialer Praxis. Historische und sozio-anthropologische Studien* (Göttingen, 1991).

⁴ On instances of persistent Nazi sympathies, see chapter six below and: P. Biddiscombe, *The Last Nazis: SS Werewolf Guerrilla Resistance in Europe 1944-1947* (Stroud, 2004).

institutions to escape *Gleichschaltung* in the Third Reich, the Churches were intricately engaged in the maelstrom of the German collapse. The church aid organisations, for example, were especially active in providing critical material and spiritual succour to many destitute persons. The population, for its part, enjoyed the proclaimed religious freedom in many places, and a number of clergy reported high attendance at church services in the immediate post-war months. Such were the expectations generated by the fall of Nazism and the initially high religious participation in 1945 in many places that church hierarchs harboured hopes of a ‘re-Christianisation’ of Germany that would turn back long-term secularisation and bring the *Volk* back to the bosom of the Christian Church. Following the census figures of October 1946, over 90 percent of the SBZ population identified as ‘Christian’, being subscribed to either the Protestant or the Catholic Church.⁵

German communists in the KPD/SED, however, pushed for Marxist society – with the means of production manipulated by the vanguard of the proletariat. This was to be a society where the ‘illusions’ of religion would dissipate before the full consciousness offered by scientific materialism. The communist-led ‘antifascist-democratic transformation’ of the Soviet zone made the first steps toward achieving this, especially with the Stalinisation of the SED from late 1947. The Soviet authorities in Germany, whatever Stalin’s actual intentions, allowed and promoted the increasing control of the SED over public life. Given developments in the Western

⁵ On the Churches after the war, in general, see: M. Greschat, ‘Die Kirchen in den beiden deutschen Staaten nach 1945’, *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht*, 42/5 (1991), 267-84; R. Mau, *Der Protestantismus im Osten Deutschlands (1945-1990)* (Leipzig, 2005); M. Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship. Inside the GDR 1949-1989* (Oxford, 1995), 87-125; K. Repgen, ‘Die Erfahrung des Dritten Reiches und das Selbstverständnis der deutschen Katholiken nach 1945’, in *Die Zeit nach 1945 als Thema kirchlicher Zeitgeschichte*, 127-79; A.M. Birke, ‘Katholische Kirche und Politik in der Phase des Neubeginns 1945-1949’, in *Die Zeit nach 1945 als Thema kirchlicher Zeitgeschichte*, 180-93. On the role of the Thuringian Protestant Church and aid, see: *Ein Lebensraum für die Kirche. Die Rundbriefe von Landesbischof D. Mitzenheim 1945-1970*, ed. T. Björkman (Lund, 1991), 23, 29; *Die evangelische Kirche nach dem Zusammenbruch. Berichte ausländischer Beobachter aus dem Jahre 1945*, ed. C. Vollnhals (Göttingen, 1988), 11, 14-15.

zones also, a two state solution was almost inevitable by early 1949. This was realised with the establishment of the Federal Republic of Germany (Bundesrepublik Deutschland, BRD) on 23 May 1949 and the German Democratic Republic (Deutsche Demokratische Republik, DDR) on 7 October 1949.⁶

This thesis examines the Churches and ‘religio-politics’, the priesthood/pastorate and people at the grass roots in three areas. Firstly, chapters one and two investigate ‘religio-politics’, or the interactions of the secular authorities – the Soviet occupiers and the German state governments – with the Catholic and Protestant Churches at the highest level and amongst parishes. What were the realities of the Soviet freedom of religion? The Church and State relationship was considerably different according to confession and church. The Catholic Church was wholly independent of the State in Imperial Germany, the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich, concentrating inwards on the cultivation of its particular milieu and way of life. This focus endured after 1945, and the Church largely withdrew from the political sphere. Otherwise, the Protestant Church had enjoyed a partnership with the State up until 1918, when the fall of the *Kaiserreich* brought an end to *summus episcopus*. Alienated further by the constitutional separation between Church and State in the Weimar Republic, the regional Protestant churches then suffered a turbulent *Kirchenkampf* (‘Church Struggle’) in Nazi Germany, which pitted the heterodox German Christians (Deutsche Christen, DC) against the largely orthodox Confessing Church (Bekennende Kirche,

⁶ On the early period of the KPD/SED, see, in general, the works of Andreas Malycha: *Auf dem Weg zur SED. Die Sozialdemokratie und die Bildung einer Einheitspartei in den Ländern der SBZ*, ed. A. Malycha (Bonn, 1996); idem, *Die SED. Geschichte ihrer Stalinisierung* (Paderborn, 2000); A. Malycha/P.-J. Winters, *Die SED. Geschichte einer deutschen Partei* (Munich, 2009). On the establishment of SED hegemony and use of repression, as well as popular resistance to the party, see: G. Bruce, *Resistance with the People. Repression and Resistance in Eastern Germany, 1945-1955* (Lanham, 2003). On Soviet intentions in Germany, see an earlier discussion: L. Fenwick, *Catholic and Protestant Faith Communities in Thuringia after the Second World War, 1945-1948* (Canterbury Univ. M.A. thesis, 2007), 70-5.

BK). After 1945, the three individual Protestant churches in Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt blazed their own trails, and interacted with the secular authorities in different ways. These relations are explored in chapter one. The Thuringian church (Thüringer evangelische Kirche, TheK), led by Bishop Moritz Mitzenheim, enjoyed an often-collaborative relationship with the head of the Soviet Military Administration in Thuringia (Sovetskaia Voennaia Administratsiia, Tiuringiai, SVATh), Major-General Ivan Kolesnichenko. In the Church Province of Saxony (Evangelische Kirche der Kirchenprovinz Sachsen, KPS), however, there was no comparable accommodation and relations between Church and State grew progressively worse after 1946. The relatively small State Church of Anhalt (Landeskirche Anhalts, LKA) reached an early *modus vivendi* with the secular authorities that was not compromised in the period of the Soviet zone. What, then, were the reasons for the differences in Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt? It seems that the resolution or non-resolution of parish level conflicts played a significant role in determining relations. This is further apparent in the second chapter, which examines perhaps the most important issue at stake for the Churches and the KPD/SED: influence over the next generation. This would secure long-term survival and, for the Protestant Church and the party at least, ideological hegemony over society. Significant local conflicts developed, while increasing secular regulation in the late 1940s was decisive in limiting church authority amongst young people. These developments, in all, provide significant explanatory power in fully understanding events in the early DDR.

The second section, chapters three and four, analyses the religious and social project of the Churches: 're-Christianisation'. Both Churches desired the reestablishment, in their view, of the 'Christian society' of an allegedly more pious era. Chapter three deals with the religious obligation that the church authorities laid upon parishioners to

attend services regularly. Chapter four discusses the social obligation of each believer to exhibit ‘Christian neighborly love’ (christliche Nächstenliebe). In the post-war ‘moral vacuum’, the Churches – often quick to cast judgement and castigate perceived dissipation amongst society – wished to lay Christian love as the foundation of a new order in Germany. Ideally, native Germans would embrace the influx of refugees from the East, and all persons would abstain from ‘dissolution’, particularly theft. Set against the violence and death of the war years, and the fear and anxiety of the post-war period, this blueprint was no less revolutionary than the SED’s own societal design. However, the greatest problem for the Churches in realising ‘re-Christianisation’, as for the SED’s Marxist society, was widespread material deprivation in the Soviet zone, which often frustrated popular participation in church services and manifestations of ‘neighbourly love’. This incurs a further question: was there at all a faith community that heeded and exhibited the love of which the Churches spoke?

Finally, the third section explores the role and place of the Nazi legacy in the post-war Protestant churches. Many historians have devoted a considerable amount of ink to how the post-war Catholic Church treated the National Socialist past.⁷ In Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt, the greatest issue is perhaps the lack of evidence, as there is general silence on the period of Third Reich and its legacy in Catholic documents after the war. In contrast, much evidence exists in Protestant archives. The TheK, KPS and LKA undertook denazification processes against ‘compromised’ pastors and

⁷ See, for example: Repgen, 127-79; J. Schmid, ‘Verdrängungen, Instrumentisierungen und einzelne Einsichten: Die frühe Schulddebatte’, in *Der Neubeginn. Deutschland zwischen 1945 und 1949* (Hamburg, 2005), pp. 146-55; L. Bendel-Maidl/R. Bendel, ‘Schlaglichter auf den Umgang der deutschen Bischöfe mit der nationalsozialistischen Vergangenheit’, in R. Bendel (ed.), *Die katholische Schuld? Katholizismus im Dritten Reich zwischen Arrangement und Widerstand* (Münster, 2002), 245-71. I have also discussed the Nazi past and the Catholic Church in Thuringia: Fenwick, 153-5, 162-3, 174.

church hierarchs from 1945. The TheK and the KPS, however, faced secular criticism for ‘inadequate’ denazification. Why then did only the LKA receive state approval of its ‘purification’ process? The reality was that all three churches pursued, in effect, a ‘de-German-Christianisation’ of the pastorate rather than denazification, as the state authorities had prescribed and undertaken throughout most secular offices. German Christianity was a heterodox movement heavily influenced by Nazism; it sought a rapprochement with the State and assumed Nazi racial prejudices that, for example, led to the bowdlerisation of the bible, including the entire Old Testament and the de-judisation of sections of the New Testament.⁸ The post-war process of ‘de-German Christianisation’, nonetheless, left many former German Christians in clerical office. This policy did not provide for pastoral unity, and led in some places to a perpetuation of the Third Reich *Kirchenkampf*. Chapter six, lastly, addresses people’s personal dealings with the Nazi past, with a particular focus on the issue of guilt. The TheK, KPS and LKA all spoke of German guilt, although there were some important qualifications and differences between them. The population at large refused any imputations of guilt. Former German Christian pastors in the Anhalt church also often denied the burden of guilt pressed upon them by the members of the leadership council (Landeskirchenrat Anhalts, LKRA), and this yields a final question: why did so many people, including both laity and clergy, reject any ideas of responsibility?

The existing historiography

⁸ In general, see: H.-J. Sonne, *Die politische Theologie der Deutsche Christen. Einheit und Vielfalt deutsch-christlichen Denkens, dargestellt anhand des Bundes für deutsche Kirche, der Thüringer Kirchenbewegung ‘Deutsche Christen’ und der Christlich-deutschen Bewegung* (Göttingen, 1982); R. Lächele, ‘Religionsfreiheit und Vergangenheitsbewältigung. Die Deutschen Christen und die Besatzungsmächte nach 1945’, *Evangelische Theologie*, 51/2 (1991), 131-54; D. Bergen, *Twisted Cross. The German Christian Movement in the Third Reich* (London, 1996).

There is no study that excavates the political and social milieu of any regional church in post-war Germany, reaching from Church and State relations at the *Land* level to congregations and to the individual ‘on the ground’. There are a great number of studies on the four zones of Germany after the Second World War, and, since 1989 and the opening of the East German archives, the availability of records has catalysed research on the Soviet zone and DDR. The present work has intersections with three broad currents of historiography: church-political accounts, milieu studies and *Alltagsgeschichte*.

Firstly, there is a considerable number of church-political histories that analyse Church and State (SVAG and KPD/SED) relations and policies at the highest country and regional levels, while largely neglecting circumstances at the grass roots.⁹

Thomas Seidel has written multiple articles on the post-war TheK, and his 2003 monograph, *Im Übergang der Diktaturen*, is an in-depth history with a particular

⁹ A good overview of the existing literature as of 2000 is: G. Besier, *Kirche, Politik und Gesellschaft* (Munich, 2000). General surveys include: W. Knauff, *Katholische Kirche in der DDR. Gemeinden in der Bewährung 1945-1980* (Mainz, 1980); H. Dähn, *Konfrontation oder Kooperation? Das Verhältnis von Staat und Kirche in der SBZ/DDR 1945-1980* (Opladen, 1982); R. Goeckel, *The Lutheran Church and the East German State: Political Conflict and Change under Ulbricht and Honecker* (Ithaca, 1990); D. Pike, *The Politics of Culture in Soviet-Occupied Germany, 1945-1949* (Stanford, 1992); V. Stanke, *Die Gestaltung der Beziehungen zwischen dem Land Sachsen und der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Landeskirche Sachsens von 1945 bis 1949* (Frankfurt am Main, 1993); G. Besier, *Der SED-Staat und die Kirche. Der Weg in die Anpassung* (Munich, 1993); T. Raabe, *SED-Staat und Katholische Kirche. Politische Beziehungen 1949-1961* (Paderborn, 1995); M.G. Goerner, *Die Kirche als Problem der SED* (Berlin, 1997); M. Allinson, *Politics and Popular Opinion in East Germany 1945-68* (Manchester, 2000); C. Ross, *Constructing Socialism at the Grass-roots. The Transformation of East Germany, 1945-65* (Hampshire, 2000); G. Pritchard, *The Making of the GDR, 1945-53: From Anti-Fascism to Stalinism* (Manchester, 2000); M. Schwartz, *Vertriebene und “Umsiedlerpolitik”. Integrationskonflikte in den deutschen Nachkriegs-Gesellschaften und die Assimilationsstrategien in der SBZ/DDR 1945-1961* (Munich, 2004); M. Hockenos, *A Church Divided: German Protestants Confront the Nazi Past* (Bloomington, 2004); A. McDougall, *Youth Politics in East Germany: the Free German Youth Movement, 1946-1968* (Oxford, 2004); S. Brennan, *The Politics of Religion in Soviet-Occupied Germany: the Case of Berlin-Brandenburg 1945-1949*, (Notre Dame Univ. revised Ph.D. thesis, 2010).

focus on the Nazi legacy in the church.¹⁰ Christine Hallas-Koch has also published on youth in post-war Thuringia and, recently, a church-political monograph of the TheK from 1945 to 1961.¹¹ Susanne Böhm's *Deutsche Christen in der Thüringer evangelischen Kirche* only devotes a couple of pages to the post-war church.¹² The KPS and the LKA have received scant attention from historians. While there are a couple of political surveys on Saxony-Anhalt, little has been written on religion and society. In an evaluation of the historiography of the region since World War II, Thomas Klein noted that almost all studies focus on politics, and leave the 'broad course of life unheeded'.¹³ Martin Onnasch received his doctorate on the basis of a dissertation on the *Kirchenkampf* in the KPS between 1932 and 1945 (published in 2010), while one of the few post-war treatments is an article by Thomas Großbölting.¹⁴ Thomas Friebel pays significant attention to the theological and church-political positioning of the KPS towards the State, and Harald Schultze has reproduced the reports from post-war KPS synods in a glossed sourcebook.¹⁵ Otherwise, perhaps the only academic work focussed on the post-war LKA is an article of Christoph Schröter, 'Die (innere) Situation der Pfarrerschaft unmittelbar

¹⁰ T.A. Seidel, *Übergang der Diktaturen: eine Untersuchung zur kirchliche Neuordnung in Thüringen 1945-1951* (Stuttgart, 2003).

¹¹ C. Koch-Hallas, *Die junge Gemeinde der evangelischen Landeskirchen in Sachsen und Thüringen 1945–1953: dargestellt unter der besonderen Berücksichtigung des Konfliktes zwischen Staat und kirchlicher Jugendarbeit* (Regensburg, 2000); idem, *Die Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Thüringen in der SBZ und der Frühzeit der DDR (1945-1961): eine Untersuchung über Kontinuitäten und Diskontinuitäten einer landeskirchlichen Identität* (Leipzig, 2009).

¹² S. Böhm, *Deutsche Christen in der Thüringer evangelischen Kirche* (Leipzig, 2008).

¹³ T. Klein, 'Ein halbes Jahrhundert Forschung zur neueren Geschichte Sachsen-Anhalts', *Sachsen und Anhalt. Jahrbuch der Historischen Kommission für Sachsen-Anhalt*, 18 (1994), 153.

¹⁴ M. Onnasch, *Um kirchliche Macht und geistliche Vollmacht: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Kirchenkampfes in der Kirchenprovinz Sachsen 1932-1945* (Frankfurt am Main, 2010); T. Großbölting, 'Evangelische Christen im Nationalsozialismus und in der frühen DDR. Die Kirchenprovinz Sachsen', in *Von der babylonischen Gefangenschaft*, 197-221.

¹⁵ T. Friebel, *Kirche und politische Verantwortung in der sowjetischen Zone und der DDR 1945-1969: eine Untersuchung zum Öffentlichkeitsauftrag der evangelischen Kirchen in Deutschland* (Gütersloh, 1992); *Berichte der Magdeburger Kirchenleitung zu den Tagungen der Provinzialsynode 1946-1989*, ed. H. Schultze (Göttingen, 2005).

nach 1945 in Anhalt', which appeared in volume 20 of *Herbergen der Christenheit* in 1996.¹⁶ Jürgen J. Seidel's survey texts devote some pages to the three churches in Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt, though with an emphasis on the political history of the clerical administrations and the vicissitudes of formal denazification.¹⁷ Regarding the Catholic Church, church political studies include works on Eichsfeld, Rudolf Joppen's expansive 13-volume history of the Magdeburg Commissariat, Wolfgang Tischner's work on the church in the Soviet zone up to 1951, and Birgit Mitscherlich's study on the Meißen diocese. The latter two largely ignore people at the grass roots, and primarily explore the reconstitution of the church after the war with attention to church aid work, youth work, developments in the church hierarchy and relations with the Soviets and the SED.¹⁸

Secondly, this thesis incorporates aspects of milieu and regional surveys. There has been an increasing interest in religious social history and the Protestant and Catholic milieux since the mid-1990s. The Third Reich, perhaps the most researched period of twentieth century history, is largely the focus of this historiographical trend. For example, Manfred Gailus' book *Protestantismus und Nationalsozialismus* offers an interesting insight into the social milieu of churches in Berlin, Thomas Fandel has worked on churches in the Pfalz, Björn Mensing in Bavaria and Wolfhart Beck in

¹⁶ C. Schröter, 'Die (innere) Situation der Pfarrerschaft unmittelbar nach 1945 in Anhalt', *Herbergen der Christenheit*, 20 (1996), 77-86.

¹⁷ J.J. Seidel, 'Neubeginn' in der Kirche?: die evangelischen Landes- und Provinzialkirchen in der SBZ/DDR im gesellschaftspolitischen Kontext der Nachkriegszeit (1945-1953) (Göttingen, 1989); idem, *Aus den Trümmern 1945. Personeller Wiederaufbau und Entnazifizierung in der evangelischen Kirche der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands. Einführung und Dokumente* (Göttingen, 1996).

¹⁸ D. Klenke, *Das Eichsfeld unter den deutschen Diktaturen. Widerspenstiger Katholizismus in Heiligenstadt* (Duderstadt, 2003); R. Joppen, *Das Erzbischöfliche Kommissariat Magdeburg: Geschichte und Rechtsstellung bis zur Eingliederung in den Diözesanverband Paderborn*, 13 vols. (Leipzig, 1965-91); W. Tischner, *Katholische Kirche in der SBZ/DDR 1945-1951. Die Formierung einer Subgesellschaft im entstehenden sozialistischen Staat* (Paderborn, 2001); B. Mitscherlich, *Diktatur und Diaspora. Das Bistum Meißen 1932-1951* (Paderborn, 2005).

Westfalia.¹⁹ With Wolfgang Krogel, Gailus has also recently published a significant volume of regional studies on Protestant nationalism from 1930 to 2000.²⁰ There are, moreover, many Catholic milieu studies, though most of these deal with the inter-war period. Those encompassing the post-war period largely deal with West Germany and, in general, rarely deal with the ‘ordinary people’ on the ground.²¹

Thirdly, this project uses the techniques of *Alltagsgeschichte* in reconstructing everyday life through memoirs, diaries, local reports and oral histories. Martin Broszat, in some measure, pioneered this approach with his work on Bavaria under National Socialism from the late 1970s.²² Since the 1980s, Alexander von Plato, Dorothee Wierling, Lutz Niethammer and Wolfgang Meinicke, for example, have explored oral histories of post-war Germany.²³ Von Plato, Wierling and Mary Fulbrook have also examined the so-called ‘Hitler Youth’ generation after the Second World War, and studies of memory and generation have expanded, especially in the

¹⁹ M. Gailus, *Protestantismus und Nationalismus. Studien zur nationalsozialistischen Durchdringung des protestantischen Sozialmilieus in Berlin* (Köln, 2001); T. Fandel, *Konfession und Nationalsozialismus. Evangelische und katholische Pfarrer in der Pfalz 1930-1939* (Paderborn, 1997); B. Mensing, *Pfarrer und Nationalsozialismus. Geschichte einer Verstrickung am Beispiel der evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche in Bayern* (Göttingen, 1998); W. Beck, *Westfälische Protestanten auf dem Weg in die Moderne: die evangelischen Gemeinden des Kirchenkreises Lübbecke zwischen Kaiserreich und Bundesrepublik* (Paderborn, 2002).

²⁰ M. Gailus/W. Krogel (ed.), *Von der Babylonischen Gefangenschaft*.

²¹ See, for a summary on work on the Catholic milieu as of 2009: M.E. O’Sullivan, ‘From Catholic Milieu to Lived Religion: The Social and Cultural History of Modern German Catholicism’, *History Compass*, 7/3 (2009), 837-61. On the post-war period, see: L. Rölli-Alkemper, *Familie im Wiederaufbau. Katholizismus und bürgerliches Familienideal in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1945–1965* (Paderborn, 2000). A slightly different and fascinating study is the ‘lived history’ of Mark Ruff: *The Wayward Flock, Catholic Youth in post-war West Germany* (Chapel Hill, 2005).

²² M. Broszat et al (ed.), *Bayern in der NS-Zeit*, 6 vols. (Munich, 1977-83). See also the work of Alf Lütke, for example: ‘What happened to the “Fiery Red Glow”? Workers’ experiences and German Fascism’, in A. Lütke (ed.), *The History of Everyday Life. Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life* (Princeton, 1995), 198-251.

²³ L. Niethammer/A. von Plato/D. Wierling, *Die volkseigene Erfahrung: Eine Archäologie des Lebens in der Industrieprovinz der DDR* (Berlin, 1991); A. von Plato/W. Meinicke: *Alte Heimat - neue Zeit, Flüchtlinge, Vertriebene, Umgesiedelte in der SBZ und DDR* (Berlin, 1991).

2000s.²⁴ Furthermore, historians have recently explored other strands of social and cultural investigation in post-war Germany, including histories of emotions, mentality, sex, and death. Such practitioners include Richard Bessel, Frank Biess, Hartmut Lehmann, Dagmar Herzog, Stephan George, Christian Goeschel, Mary Fulbrook and Alan McDougall.²⁵ Little work, however, offers a ‘pew-level history’ that systematically focuses on the lived experiences of religious communities, while also taking cognisance of the inter-relation of micro- and macro-historical developments.

In sum, historians’ picture of religion after the war is largely unfinished. This thesis seeks to incorporate the best perspectives of church-political, milieu, social, cultural and oral histories to present a comprehensive picture of the Churches and religion in Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia from 1945 to 1949. The Christian Church was, after all, the people rather than the buildings, the followers *and* the leaders. I examine the

²⁴ A. von Plato, ‘The Hitler Youth Generation and Its Role in the Two Postwar German States’, in M. Roseman (ed.), *Generations in Conflict: Youth Revolt and Generation Formation 1770-1968* (Cambridge, 1995), 210-26; D. Wierling, ‘The Hitler Youth Generation in the GDR: Insecurities, Ambitions and Dilemmas’, in K. Jarausch (ed.), *Dictatorship as Experience: Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR* (Oxford, 1999), 307-24; M. Fulbrook, ‘Changing States, Changing Selves: Generations in the Third Reich and the GDR’, in M. Fulbrook (ed.), *Uncivilizing Processes? Excess and Transgression in German Society and Culture: Perspectives Debating with Norman Elias* (New York, 2007), 255-94; idem, ‘Demography, Opportunity or Ideological Conversion? Reflections on the Role of the “Second Hitler Youth Generation”, or “1929ers”, in the GDR’, in P. Corner (ed.), *Popular Opinion in Totalitarian Regimes. Fascism, Nazism, Communism* (Oxford, 2009), 184-207; A. McDougall, ‘A Duty to Forget? The “Hitler Youth Generation” and the Transition from Nazism to Communism in Postwar East Germany, c. 1945-49’, *German History*, 26/1 (2008), 24-46.

²⁵ See the essays in: R. Bessel/D. Schumann (ed.), *Life after Death. Approaches to a Cultural and Social History of Europe during the 1940s and 1950s* (Cambridge, 2003); R. Bessel, ‘The Shadow of Death in Germany at the End of the Second World War’, in A. Confino/P. Betts/D. Schumann (ed.), *Between Mass Death and Individual Loss. The Place of the Dead in Twentieth-Century Germany* (New York, 2008), 51-68; idem, ‘Hatred after War: Emotion and the Postwar History of East Germany’, *History and Memory*, 17/1-2 (2005), 195-216; F. Biess, ‘Feelings in the Aftermath: Toward a History of Postwar Emotions’, in F. Biess/R. Moeller (ed.), *Histories of the Aftermath. The Legacies of the Second World War in European Perspective* (New York, 2010), 30-48; idem (ed.), ‘The History of Emotions’, *German History*, 28/1(2010), 67-80; S. George, *Bestattung und katholische Begräbnisliturgie in der SBZ/DDR. Eine Untersuchung unter Berücksichtigung präskriptiver und deskriptiver Quellen* (Würzburg, 2006); C. Goeschel, ‘Suicide at the End of the Third Reich’, *JCH*, 41/1 (2006), 153-73; D. Herzog, *Sex after Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Princeton, 2005); H. Lehmann/M. Gailus (ed.), *National-protestantische Mentalitäten*; H. Lehmann, *Säkularisierung. Der europäische Sonderweg in Sachen Religion* (Göttingen, 2004).

‘Church’ in this sense: the people who often dealt with existential problems and significant hardships, and the clergy charged with their pastoral and spiritual care. In this way, the form of social history attempted here will extend existing historiographical knowledge ‘lower’ and advance our understanding of the Soviet zone without ignoring the key macro-historical and church-political developments.

The parameters of the study and the historical background

This is a chronologically limited ‘thick’ study that evaluates an enormous amount of evidence. The thesis follows the period from the American and British arrival in the western areas of Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt in March 1945 to the establishment of the DDR on 7 October 1949. A great deal of evidence, especially that deployed in chapters one and two, stems from 1948, when the domestic and international political situation changed radically as the SED undertook a transformation into a ‘party of a new type’ that was more centralised and disciplined.²⁶

Geographically, the states of Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia were selected as case-studies for two primary reasons. Firstly, they had similar occupation experiences. Although Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia were assigned to the Soviet zone, the majority of both states was occupied for approximately three months by American and British forces. Secondly, the three regional Protestant churches under investigation had distinct traditions and histories, which enables an investigation of

²⁶ On the period 1945 to 1948 see: U. Wengst, ‘Zwischen Aufrechterhaltung der Einheit und Teilung der Nation: Das Jahr 1948 in der deutschen Geschichte’, in D. Hoffmann/H. Wentker (ed.), *Das letzte Jahr der SBZ. Politische Weichenstellungen und Kontinuitäten im Prozess der Gründung der DDR* (Munich, 2000), 25-38; J. Foitzik, ‘Zum Verhältnis zwischen SED und Besatzungsmacht: Konkordanz und Dissens’, in *Das letzte Jahr der SBZ*, 55.

similarities and contrasts. Regarding the Catholic Church, the two major clerical administrations in Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia belonged to dioceses administered in the American zone.

In order to understand the area fully, it is necessary to examine the background demography, the administrative structures and the historical background.²⁷ Of the 17.3 million people who lived in the Soviet zone in 1946, 93.8 percent were members of the two major Christian confessions: 14.1 million (81.6 percent) belonged to the Protestant Church, and 2.1 million (12.2 percent) to the Catholic Church.²⁸ Of the 1,713,849 people who lived in the area of the TheK in 1946, 1,493,291 (87.2 percent) were officially members of the Protestant Church.²⁹ The membership of the Catholic Church in the Thuringian section of the Fulda Diocese in 1946 was the second highest in the Soviet zone at 397,400.³⁰ Within the administration boundaries of the State of Thuringia in October 1946, 76.5 percent of the 2,927,497 inhabitants belonged to the Evangelical Church and 16.7 percent belonged to the Catholic Church.³¹ As for Saxony-Anhalt, 80 percent of the 4.14 million inhabitants in October 1946 were members of the Evangelical Church, whilst 15 percent were Catholic.³² Saxony-Anhalt soon accommodated the largest number of Catholics in the Eastern zone with

²⁷ Some material from this section comes from Fenwick, 14-22.

²⁸ H. Dähn, 'Kirchen und Religionsgemeinschaften', in M. Broszat et al (ed.), *SBZ-Handbuch. Staatliche Verwaltungen, Parteien, gesellschaftliche Organisationen und ihre Führungskräfte in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands 1945-1949* (Munich, 1990), 1072.

²⁹ Koch-Hallas, *Die Junge Gemeinde*, 240-1.

³⁰ Dähn, 'Kirchen und Religionsgemeinschaften', 849.

³¹ *KH*, 1944-51, 236. Cf. 76.6 percent in H.A. Welsh, 'Thüringen', in *SBZ-Handbuch*, 168.

³² D.M. Schneider, 'Sachsen-Anhalt', in *SBZ-Handbuch*, 147-8.

the arrival of vast numbers of Catholic refugees, 615,299 according to the October 1946 census.³³

The Catholic and Protestant authorities demarcated and administered Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt differently. In this study, ‘Thuringia’ is understood according to the demarcation of the TheK – which largely corresponded to the area of the Thuringian State defined in 1920 – and the Thuringian section of the Fulda diocese with the Meiningen Commissariat in addition. ‘Saxony-Anhalt’ is understood as the territory of the KPS created after the Second World War, which encompassed the former Prussian state of Saxony, and the comparatively small LKA in the former Free State of Anhalt. This area largely corresponded to the political state of Saxony-Anhalt ratified on 27 July 1947.³⁴

In 1945, the authorities of the Würzburg diocese (which oversaw Meiningen), the Fulda diocese and the Paderborn Archbishopric administered much of Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt, though all three were separated from the East by the zonal frontiers.³⁷

To ease administration, the provost of Erfurt, Joseph Freusberg, was promoted to Generalvikar of the Thuringian section of the Fulda diocese in 1946, which encompassed Obereichsfeld and the majority of the political area of Thuringia.³⁸ In July 1945, the predominantly Catholic district of Eichsfeld was entrusted to the Bischöflicher Kommissarius in Heiligenstadt, Josef Streb, who was subordinate to

³³ BAM, Statistik: Seelenzahl des Erzbischöfl. Komm. Generalia 1946-1948/1951/1954/1955/1957, ‘Katholiken nach der Volkszählung vom 29 Oktober 1946 in der Ostzone.’

³⁴ Schneider, 147.

³⁷ Tischner, *Katholische Kirche*, 52; Dähn, ‘Kirchen und Religionsgemeinschaften’, 818; KH, 1944-51, 24; Dähn, ‘Kirchen und Religionsgemeinschaften’, 818, 824; Tischner, *Katholische Kirche*, 49-50; E. Gatz, *Die Bischöfe der deutschsprachigen Länder, 1945-2001. Ein biografisches Lexikon* (Berlin, 2002), 174; B. Opfermann, *Das bischöfliche Amt Erfurt-Meiningen und seine Diaspora: Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Leipzig, 1988), 3ff.

³⁸ H. Siebert, *Das Eichsfeld unter dem Sowjetstern* (Duderstadt, 1992), 11-3; B. Opfermann, *Die kirchliche Verwaltung des Eichfeldes in seiner Vergangenheit* (Leipzig, 1958), 13-4; Gatz, 175; Knauff, *Katholische Kirche*, 15.

Freusberg but enjoyed significant independence from Erfurt and Fulda.³⁹ In early 1945, the Archbishop of Paderborn, Lorenz Jäger, anticipated Allied plans to divide Germany into separate zones and so made advance preparations. He appointed Provost Wilhelm Weskamm in February 1945 as his commissar in Magdeburg with full authority to oversee the eastern section of the diocese. Weskamm's powers were extended in March 1946, entitling him to speak, negotiate and conclude treaties with the state authorities in the name of the Archbishop. The autonomy of the Magdeburg Commissariat was confirmed in October 1949 when Weskamm was appointed as a saffragan bishop. In May 1949, he had also received authority over the eastern territories of the Hildesheim Bishopric (which oversaw an area centred around Blankenburg).⁴⁰

The collapse of Imperial Germany in 1918 brought the abolition of *summus episcopus* and the State Protestant Church of Germany. The churches of the small Thuringian principalities of Sachsen-Weimar-Eisenach, Sachsen-Meiningen, Gotha, Sachsen-Altenburg, Schwarzburg-Sondershausen, Schwarzburg-Rudolstadt and Reuss combined to form the TheK on 5 December 1919.⁴¹ Given the diverse confessional and theological emphases amongst the churches, the TheK constitution of 10 October 1923 was predominantly Lutheran, but ultimately a compromise; with this latitude, a number of movements sprang up within the church, including the future German

³⁹ Siebert, 29-31.

⁴⁰ Dähn, 'Kirchen und Religionsgemeinschaften', 823-4; *BAM*, Geschichte des Kommissariats: Geschichtsschreibung 1950/1956/1957, 'Kurzgefasste Geschichte der Katholischen Kirche in Mittelsachsen', 1962; Joppen, vol.10, 123ff; idem, vol. 11, 13-7.

⁴¹ See, in general: D.R. Hermann, *Thüringische Kirchengeschichte. Band II* (Waltrop, 2000); E. Stegmann, *Der Kirchenkampf in der Thüringer evangelischen Kirche 1933-1945: ein Kapitel Thüringer Kirchengeschichte* (Berlin, 1983); T. Seidel, *Im Übergang der Diktaturen*, 34ff.

Christians who would dominate the leadership during the Third Reich.⁴² In May 1945, Pastor Moritz Mitzenheim displaced the former German Christian Bishop, Hugo Rönck, assumed the title of Landesoberpfarrer and created a provisional church council (Landeskirchenrat, LKR), which was superseded by a permanent council on 14 February 1946.⁴³ On 12 December 1945, Mitzenheim was named Landesbischof.⁴⁴ The TheK, renamed the Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Thüringen after the synod of 17-19 October 1948, was divided into twelve superintendencies encompassing the districts of Apolda, Arnstadt, Eisenach, Gotha, Sondershausen, Weimar and part of the Sömmerda district.

In the ashes of the First World War, Protestant jurisdiction in the Prussian province of Saxony was entrusted to the Evangelische Kirche der Altpreußischen Union (1922), which combined aspects of both Lutheran and Reformed traditions. After the fall of the Third Reich, the superintendent of Heiligenstadt, Ludolf Müller, created a provisional clerical leadership (Vorläufige Geistliche Leitung, VGL) with the approval of the church administration office of the KPS, the Konsistorium. On 10 January 1946, the VGL was expanded and renamed as the Vorläufige Kirchenleitung (VKL). The KPS in the Third Reich had had a balance of German Christians, BK and neutrals, and the *Kirchenkampf* largely amounted to a stalemate during the war. The post-war leadership, therefore, comprised clergy from diverse backgrounds and of

⁴² J.J. Seidel, 'Abkehr vom "Deutschen Christentum"', Die "Thüringer evangelische Kirche" im Jahre 1945', *Kirche im Sozialismus*, 6 (1983), 39. See, on the particular radicalism of the 'Thuringian German Christians' (Nationalkirchliche Einung): *ThHStAW*, MVB Nr. 210, Bl. 30-40r, Regierungsrat H. to Landesdirektor LVB Wolf, 27/12/45; G. Lautenschläger, 'Der Kirchenkampf in Thüringen', in D. Heiden/G. Mai (ed.), *Nationalsozialismus in Thüringen* (Weimar, 1995), 463-486; K. Meier, *Der evangelische Kirchenkampf. Band 3: Im Zeichen des Zweiten Weltkrieges* (Göttingen, 1984), 474-94.

⁴³ *LKAE*, A155, 59, 'Die rechtliche Neuordnung der Thüringer evangelische Kirche', Oberkirchenrat Lotz; *LKAE*, A239/III, Mitzenheim to Lau (Sachsen), 20/7/45; The new, provisional LKR was not entirely free of German Christian influence: *LKAE*, A130/II, Pfr. Käferlein to Pfr. Oskar Ziegner, 14/5/45.

⁴⁴ Mau, *Der Protestantismus im Osten Deutschlands*, 23.

various emphases (though none were ‘compromised’ by German Christianity), and there was a relatively smooth transition. In October 1946, the first post-war synod was elected (to end the provisional church leadership), and Müller was appointed bishop in June 1947. Prussia was legally dissolved by mid-1947, and the Evangelische Kirche der Kirchenprovinz Sachsen was formally established. The KPS was initially divided into 78 church districts (Kirchenkreise) overseen by seven provosts based at Magdeburg, Stendal (Altmark), Halberstadt, Halle/Salle-Merseburg, Wittenberg, Naumburg/Saale and Erfurt. A provost was installed at Südharz in 1947.⁴⁵

Though surrounded by the Prussian province of Saxony, the duchy of Anhalt (the Free State of Anhalt after 1918) was independent. The church was uniate according to the constitution of 1920, though German Christians dominated the leadership in the Third Reich. These men, including Church President Rudolf Wilkendorf, were forced out of office from May 1945. Control then passed to a reconstituted Church Council (LKRA) comprised of moderates and Confessing Church members. The two leaders were the lawyer Dr. Udo Müller, who was responsible for church administration and ‘secular affairs’, and Pastor Georg Fiedler, who oversaw pastoral and theological concerns.⁴⁶ The council was legally recognised in February 1946 by church synod. The LKA was, in all, a comparatively small church comprising fewer than 50,000 registered parishioners grouped in five church districts (Kirchenkreise) headed by Kreisoberpfarrer: Ballenstedt, Bernburg, Dessau, Köthen and Zerbst.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Dähn, ‘Kirchen und Religionsgemeinschaften’, 822, 846; H. Schultze, ‘Kirchenprovinz Sachsen’, *TRE*, 29 (1998), 582-4; J.J. Seidel, *Aus den Trümmern*, 205.

⁴⁶ On the hierarchical relations within the church, see I. Tempel, *Bischofsamt und Kirchenleitung in den lutherischen, reformierten und unierten deutschen Landeskirchen* (Munich, 1966), 88-9, 134-7.

⁴⁷ H. Kars, ‘Anhalt’, *TRE*, 2 (1978), 734-41; Dähn, ‘Kirchen und Religionsgemeinschaften’, 821, 846.

The Western Allies advanced into areas of Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia from March 1945.⁴⁸ Most large cities had endured fearful bombing raids. Magdeburg, above all, had experienced significant destruction, and post-war life in that city almost exclusively played out in the outlying suburbs.⁴⁹ Creuzburg in Thuringia was also largely destroyed in the course of an engagement between American and German troops between 1-3 April 1945; the local pastor wrote that 83 percent of the town lay in ruins, many people had lost their lives and ‘viele standen vor dem Nichts’ when the gunfire ceased.⁵⁰ While a number of church towers and windows, stained glass especially, had suffered under the Allied bombing campaign and shelling, the majority of smaller towns in both states escaped largely unscathed.⁵¹ There were certainly widespread fears though amongst the populace about local confrontations. As Pastor Martin Irgang of St. Petri in Stendal (Altmark) reported, there was often great relief – and praising of God in the church community – once the threat of local fighting had passed. Still, Irgang wrote about an ‘indescribable tumult of feelings’ at the end of the Third Reich. He felt conflicted at the Allied victory:

Einerseits das Gefühl der Befreiung doppelter Art, vom fast 6 jährigen
Kriegsdruck und vom 12 jährigen Gewissensdruck durch den

⁴⁸ On the military taking of Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt see: E. Ziemke, *The U.S. Army in the Occupation of Germany 1944-1946* (Washington D.C., 1975); E. Fritze, *Die letzten Kriegstage im Eichsfeld und im Raum Mühlhausen vom 3. bis 10. April 1945* (Bad Langensalza, 2002).

⁴⁹ BAM, Caritas: Caritasverband Magdeburg 1947-1952/1954-1970, ‘Bericht über die Arbeit der Stadt-Caritas in Magdeburg, 1947’. Dessau, Eilenburg and Halberstadt had also suffered significant damage: Joppen, vol. 10, 142.

⁵⁰ “...wir sahen nur einen roten Feuerball...” *Das Kriegsende in Creuzburg. Zeitzeugen berichten*, ed. S.M. Breustedt (manuscript, 2005). Struth was also decimated: E. Fritze, *Struth am 7. April 1945 – die letzten Kriegstage im Eichsfeld* (Witzenhausen, 1995).

⁵¹ The Stendal Cathedral had been destroyed in bombing raids in early April 1945: AKKS, Chronik Dom St. Nikolaus, ‘Die Zerstörung unseres Domes’, Sup. Alberts, 81-8; At Gebesee; F. Steiger, *Geschichten aus Gebesee im Thüringer Land*, ed. F. Steiger (Bad Dübren, 2004), 7. Elsewhere: A. Schaefer, *Lebensbericht. Landrat im Eichsfeld. Zeuge der Besatzungszeit* (Heiligenstadt, 1993), 47; Tischner, *Katholische Kirche*, 65; Welsh, ‘Thüringen’, 168; T. Mehlhase, *Flüchtlinge und Vertriebene nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg in Sachsen-Anhalt: ihre Aufnahme und Bestrebungen zur Eingliederung in die Gesellschaft* (Münster, 1999), 234-5; AEKR, miscellaneous documents compiled by Pfr. Hoffmannbeck, Dillstädt, 11/9/58.

christenfeindlichen Mythos; andererseits aber: So sieht nun das Ende unsres lieben deutschen Vaterlandes aus, für das ich einst blutete, für das soviel edles junges Blut, unsere Neffen, unser Hilfsprediger H. und all die andern in ferne östliche Erde sinken müssten.⁵²

The Red Army relieved the American and British occupation of areas of Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia from early July 1945, often to the widespread trepidation of the German populace.⁵³ The realities of the Soviet occupation certainly varied according to locale, though there were multiple reports of criminal activities, not least instances of rape.⁵⁴ As for the Christian Church, many parishes reported greater freedom of religion than that accorded in the Third Reich.⁵⁵

The situation of deprivation in many places throughout Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia in the wake of total war caused great strife. The state apparatus ceased to provide for even the most basic needs, and post-war society, even beyond 1945, was often defined by fear and anxiety about basic survival.⁵⁶ The ‘hunger years’ of the post-war period in East Germany are seared in the memories of those who endured them.⁵⁷ One eyewitness noted:

In der Stunde Null war Deutschland ein politischer und wirtschaftlicher, ein geistiger und moralischer Trümmerhaufen. Das Vorstellungsvermögen der

⁵² *AKKS*, St. Petri, ‘Die Besetzung Stendals durch die Amerikaner’, Pfr. Irgang, undated. Similarly at Mihla where Moritz Mitzenheim was pastor at the war’s end: *AEKM*, Pfarrchronik, B103, Mitzenheim, 1945.

⁵³ For example: in Gebesee: Steiger, 39-40. In Prettin: K. Hennig, “‘In eine Kinderseele eingebrannt’”. *Erlebnisse 1945*, *Heimatkalender für das Jeseener Land* (2006), 101-2; idem, “‘In eine Kinderseele eingebrannt’”. *Erlebnisse 1945 (Fortsetzung)*, *Heimatkalender für das Jeseener Land* (2007), 43.

⁵⁴ See below, pp. 169, 194; also N. Naimark, *The Russians in Germany. A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945-1949* (Cambridge [Mass.], 1995), 69-140.

⁵⁵ *ACDP*, 03-031-243, ‘Bericht’, Heiligenstadt, 24/10/1945; *ibid.*, ‘Bericht’, Erfurt, 26/10/1945; *ibid.*, ‘Bericht’, Eisenach, 26/10/1945; *AKKS*, St. Petri, ‘Bericht für den Turmknauf der Petrikirche vom 23.6.47’.

⁵⁶ *AKPS*, B1, 189, Pfr. R. (Magdeburg) to Konsistorialrat A. (Magdeburg), 13/9/47; *AEKR*, miscellaneous documents compiled by Pfr. Hoffmannbeck, Dillstädt, 11/9/58; M. Mitzenheim, *50 Jahre im Dienste der Kirche. Festgabe zum Gold. Ordinationsjubiläum (18.10.1964)* (Berlin, 1964), 91.

⁵⁷ W. Franck, *Familienchronik Franck*, manuscript, 65-6.

Menschen von heute reicht kaum aus, um sich das ganze Ausmaß der Misere vor Augen zu führen. Die Überlebenden standen vor einem Abgrund.⁵⁸

Demoralisation was prevalent, and pessimistic rumours swept through towns and cities exacerbating a general *Zeitgeist* of mistrust. As late as 1947, one pastor in Halle reported that one received ‘information’ with some detachment and wariness, ‘da man ja nie wissen könne’. He went on to describe various sections of society: few youth believed in the realisation of their dreams, and many felt at least partly abandoned by their parents: the nervous, enervated father or the single mother who assiduously sought fuel for the fire and food for the stomach. The intelligentsia kept their opinions to themselves, while many former party members attempted to regain their former positions after denazification processes. Single women often fought ‘desperately’ for able-bodied men, while married women waited on their husbands to return from captivity. In general, of indigenous Thuringians and Saxons, women and workers – particularly in the cities – experienced the greatest privations.⁵⁹ There were also returning prisoners of war. According to Dr. Kunisch, the head of the *Abteilung Kirchenwesen* (AKW) in the Saxon-Anhalt state government from early 1946, these men cut apathetic, wretched and ragged figures.⁶⁰ Lastly, the vast number of refugees who entered Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia from 1944 often came with little but the threadbare clothes on their backs and a few possessions in their hands. By the end of 1946, there were over one million refugees in Saxony-Anhalt and in excess of 600,000 in Thuringia. At least 50 percent of the refugees were Catholics, many of whom came from the Sudetenland and Silesia.⁶¹ By 1948, almost a quarter of the

⁵⁸ Schaefer, 46.

⁵⁹ *AKPS*, B1, 189, Pfr. K. (Halle) to *Stadtsuperintendent* (Oberkonsistorialrat) Hein, 1/12/47.

⁶⁰ *BAM*, *Staatliche Behörden: Regierungsverordnungen 1946-1951*, Dr. Kunisch to Churches, 24/9/46.

⁶¹ *BEA*, *BGVP* bzw. Fulda, Sondershausen to Freusberg, 7/7/46; *BEA*, *BGVE/BAE-M*, 129, Freusberg to the *BGVF*, 3/6/46; *BEA*, *BGVE/BAE-M*, 125, 1946, ‘Bericht über die seelsorgliche Lage’, Freusberg, 9/8/46.

Thuringian population were refugees.⁶² A number of observers noted that the suffering of most refugees was almost unbearable. The Catholic charity organisation, Caritas, reported, for instance, that many of them begged daily at the door of the Magdeburg office for clothes, linen, shoes and food.⁶³

Sources and methodology

The primary sources constitute the backbone of this study. A diverse range of evidence is necessary to support an investigation of ‘religio-politics’, the priesthood/pastorate, and people at the grassroots. Due to more voluminous sources, this study has a greater focus on the Protestant churches. This is made understandable given that, apart from Eichsfeld, Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia were traditionally Protestant regions. The sources include archival documents, printed primary source material, and questionnaires and interviews.

Firstly, this thesis draws on documents from 27 state and church archives. The former include the *Bundesarchiv* in Berlin (Lichterfelde), the main Thuringian state archive in Weimar, the Saxon-Anhalt state archives at Magdeburg, Dessau and Merseburg, and the regional archive of Magdeburg. Most of the material derived from these repositories is found in chapters one and two. There is also evidence from both local and major church archives. Lower level reports from small *Pfarrarchive* – as at Stendal, Zeulenroda, Zeitz, Frankenheim, Ohrdruf, Dohndorf, Tiefenort, Mihla and

⁶² *LKAE*, A750/IV, 163, ‘Sitzung der Landeskommission für Neubürger am 20. März 1948 in Weimar’.

⁶³ *BAM*, Caritas: Caritasverband Magdeburg 1947-1952/1954-1970, ‘Bericht über die Arbeit der Stadt-Caritas in Magdeburg’, (undated, probably 1947). In general, see: *BAM*, Geschichte des Kommissariats: Geschichtsschreibung 1950/1956/1957, ‘Kurzgefasste Geschichte der Katholischen Kirche in Mittelsachsen’, 1962.

Lüderode for example – provide insights into community life at the grassroots. The major church archives at Eisenach (LKAE), Dessau (LKAD), Magdeburg (AKPS and BAM), Erfurt (BEA), Fulda (BFA), Würzburg (DAW) and Berlin (EZAB) provide letters, reports, minutes, theological papers and newspapers. Another archive of particular value is that of the TheK weekly newspaper, *Glaube und Heimat*, in Weimar. This is an invaluable source for investigating and analysing the post-war discourses of Thuringian churchmen who wrote the majority of articles. *Glaube und Heimat* was authorised by the Soviet Administration in Thuringia (SVATH), and resumed printing in April 1946 after a hiatus during the war period. While it was scrutinised by the censor, clergymen often spoke freely of their Christian faith, social conditions and the need for Christian principles in the public sphere. They even, at times, criticised the activities of German communists, albeit guardedly.⁶⁴

Secondly, there is a great deal of printed primary source material from the post-war period such as memoirs and document collections.⁶⁵ The latter largely include sourcebooks on politics or church-politics.⁶⁶ I have also used some relevant Russian-language material. The head of SVATH from 1945 to 1949, Major General Kolesnichenko, wrote a memoir of his time in Germany, *Bitva posle voiny* (The battle

⁶⁴ See below, pp. 167-8. While the censor disallowed two articles from the first edition, they were few problems until after October 1949: *GuH*, n. 16, 16/4/2006, 15

⁶⁵ For example: E. Hübener, *Lebenskreise: Lehr- und Wanderjahre eines Ministerpräsidenten* (Cologne, 1984); W. Eichler, *Ein Wort ging um in Buchenwald: Erlebnisbericht aus den Jahren 1945 bis 1950* (Jena, 1992); T. Drebes, *Im Ringen um die Mitte. Erlebnisse eines Pfarrers* (Stuttgart, undated).

⁶⁶ For example: *DDR. Dokumente zur Geschichte der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1945-1985*, ed. H. Weber (Munich 1986); *Sowjetische Politik in der SBZ 1945-1949, Dokumente zur Tätigkeit der Propagandaverwaltung (Informationsverwaltung) der SMAD unter Sergej Tjul'panow*, ed. B. Bonwetsch et al (Bonn, 1998); *Die Protokolle der Kirchlichen Ostkonferenz 1945-1949*, ed. M. Kühne (Göttingen, 2005); *SED und Kirche*, Vol. 1, ed. F. Hartweg (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1995); *Quellen zur Geschichte Thüringens, 1945-1952*, Vols. 1-2, ed. J. John (Erfurt, 1999); *Kriegsende und Neubeginn im Landkreis Eichsfeld 1945/1946. Eine zeitgenössische Dokumentation*, ed. T.T. Müller/M. Pinkert (Heiligenstadt, 2003); *Datenatlas zur religiösen Geographie im protestantischen Deutschland: von der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts bis zum Zweiten Weltkrieg. Bd. 2: Osten*, ed. L. Hölscher (Berlin, 2001).

after the war), while there is a seven volume collection of documents from the Russian archives on the Soviet zone, *Sovetskaia Voennaia Administratsiia v Germanii 1945-1949*.⁶⁷

Thirdly, testimonies gathered from interviews and questionnaires offer an insight into the personal lives of people who lived in Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia after 1945. On the basis of questionnaires sent out in October and November 2007 to every Protestant and Catholic parish address I could find in Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia, I interviewed 37 persons from March to July 2008, almost 65 percent of whom were women, and almost all of whom were members of the Protestant Church in the post-war period (and always have been members) born between 1920 and 1933. I received few responses from Catholic priests. Regarding the 153 questionnaires that I received, there were again more female than male respondents, and almost all were members of the Protestant Church. 12 were refugees displaced to Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt after the war. Not all respondents appear in the thesis, largely as a result of space and utility. Otherwise, some interviewees were simply not lucid. Where this oral history material is cited, I note the witnesses' dates of birth, location(s) after the war, and recorded 'Interview with...' or 'Questionnaire from...'.⁶⁸ Regarding the former, I offer the date of the interview.

In all, I intend to pursue an integrative methodology. Using religious and secular sources, as well as evidence about micro- and macro-level events, this 'comprehensive history' allows an in-depth social history that relates developments in ordinary lives and the local village to larger scale processes. On the one hand, it is

⁶⁷ I.S. Kolesnichenko, *Bitva posle vojnny* (Moscow, 1987); *SVAG i religioznye konfessii Sovetskoï zony okkupats'ii Germanii, 1945-1949: sbornik dokumentov*, ed. V. V. Zakharov (Moscow, 2006).

⁶⁸ Note: all names are anonymised (apart from Bishop Noack), and are randomly assigned a first name and an initial in lieu of a surname.

axiomatic that the organised structures of power regulated peoples' lives, and the present work therefore seeks to develop an examination of political and church-political events in an attempt to show the interactions and reciprocal relationships between the parish and the diocese, and the diocese and the state office.

Correspondence and reports from the highest church-political level enable this investigation: most originate from secular hierarchs or the clerical elite, the pastorate or the church authorities. On the other hand, evidence gleaned from interviews, newspapers and clerical reports allows a recreation of the grass-roots social and cultural environment in the vein of *Alltagsgeschichte*.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ See, in general: A. Lüdtkke, 'Introduction. What is the history of everyday life and who are its practitioners?', in *The History of Everyday Life*, 7ff; G. Eley, 'Labor History, Social History, "Alltagsgeschichte": Experience, Culture, and the Politics of the Everyday – A New Direction for German Social History?', *The Journal of Modern History*, 61/2 (1989), 297-343; idem, 'Forward', in *The History of Everyday Life*, VIII-IX.

Chapter 1:

The Soviet leviathan, the German communists and the Churches

The Soviet occupation of eastern Germany privileged the considerable number of German Communists who had swiftly returned to their homeland from foreign exile or sprung up from the ashes of the Nazi State from early 1945.¹ Fostered and supervised by the SVAG, the ‘Socialist-democratic transformation’ of the Soviet zone between 1945 and 1949 gradually devolved power in political, economic and social spheres to the KPD/SED.² Communist mastery over politics was particularly certain by 1948; the Stalinised SED, the ‘party of a new type’, dominated the other bloc parties, the Liberals (Liberal-Demokratische Partei Deutschlands, LDPD) and the Christian Democrats (Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands, CDU), and occupied the most important state offices.³ SED apparatchiks, for example, directed the German Economic Commission (Deutsche Wirtschaftskommission, DWK), which

¹ *Die ‘Gruppe Ulbricht’ in Berlin April bis Juni 1945*, ed. G. Keiderling (Berlin, 1993); W. Leonhard, *Die Revolution entlässt ihre Kinder* (Köln, 1955); G. Pritchard, ‘Schwarzenberg 1945: Anti-fascists and the “Third Way” in German Politics’, *European History Quarterly*, 35/4 (2005), 499-522.

² On Soviet supervision and reporting, in general, see: G. Bordjugow, ‘Das ZK der KPdSU(B), die Sowjetische Militäradministration in Deutschland und die SED 1945-1951’, in U. Mählert (ed.), *Terror. Stalinistische Parteisäuberungen 1936-1953* (Paderborn, 1998), 283-311. On increasing SED control, see: Malycha, *Die SED. Geschichte ihrer Stalinisierung*, 136-277; J. Foitzik, *Sowjetische Militäradministration in Deutschland. Struktur und Funktion* (Berlin, 1999), 317-24.

³ H. Dähn, ‘Grundzüge der Kirchenpolitik von SMAD und KPD/SED’, in H. Mehringer/M. Schwartz (ed.), *Erobert oder befreit? Deutschland im internationalen Kräftefeld und die sowjetische Besatzungszone (1945/46)* (Munich, 1998), 148; T. Bauer, ‘Krise und Wandel der Blockpolitik und Parteineugründungen 1948’, in *Das letzte Jahr der SBZ*, 65-83; J. Murken, ‘Bodenreform-kampagne und politische Kultur in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern’, in U. Kluge/W. Halder/K. Schlenker (ed.), *Zwischen Bodenreform und Kollektivierung. Vor- und Frühgeschichte der “sozialistischen Landwirtschaft” in der SBZ/DDR vom Kriegsende bis in die fünfziger Jahre* (Stuttgart, 2001), 51. The ‘Partei neuen Typus’ was proclaimed at the first party conference on 28 January 1949: *DDR. Dokumente zur Geschichte der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1945-1985*, 133-5.

gave the party considerable control over the economy.⁴ This was not the case elsewhere, however, as the issue of a numerically insufficient cadre often frustrated direct party authority over areas deemed less immediately important, such as agriculture and the legal system.⁵ All was initially subordinated to the establishment of control and order.⁶

It is the intent of this chapter to explain the relationship among the Churches, the population at large and the secular authorities – the Soviet occupiers and the German communists – in the midst of these seismic changes to the political and social landscapes after 1945. Did persecution and coercion define the religious milieu as it had in Stalin’s Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s?⁷ What were the realities of Soviet and KPD/SED policy ‘on the ground’ and did they impact State and Church interaction at the highest level? While there is much literature on secular religious policy within the zone and in some states, there is little research on how this was

⁴ A. Steiner, ‘Die deutsche Wirtschaftskommission – ein ordnungspolitisches Machtinstrument?’, in *Das letzte Jahr der SBZ*, 85-105.

⁵ There were often difficult conditions in agriculture: A. Bauerkämper, ‘Auf dem Wege zum “Sozialismus auf dem Lande.” Die Politik der SED 1948/49 und die Reaktionen in dörflich-agrarischen Milieus’, in *Das letzte Jahr der SBZ*, 261-2; idem, ‘Zusammenfassung’, in *Zwischen Bodenreform und Kollektivierung*, 277; M. Projahn, ‘Konfrontation oder Zusammenarbeit? Die ländliche Gesellschaft in der Altmark 1945-1951’, in *Zwischen Bodenreform und Kollektivierung*, 125-40 (esp. 130). There was also a lack of qualified personnel: *ibid.*, 139; Ross, *Constructing Socialism*, 27ff. There was radicalisation in 1948 with a more hard-line agricultural policy in the form of the SED-mandated *Demokratische Bauernpartei Deutschlands* (Projahn, 139; Bauerkämper, ‘Zusammenfassung’, 253ff, 266). As for the judiciary, there was a primary concern to establish a viable justice system that would assert law and order: H. Wentker, *Justiz in der SBZ/DDR, 1945-1953. Transformation und Rolle ihrer zentralen Institutionen* (Munich, 2001), 573, 576. There was, however, inadequate personnel in the justice system: idem, ‘Das Jahr 1948 als Auftakt zu Zentralisierung, Politisierung und Sowjetisierung des Justizwesens’, in *Das letzte Jahr der SBZ*, 152.

⁶ In Thuringia: P. Weber, *Justiz und Diktatur. Justizverwaltung und politische Strafjustiz in Thüringen 1945-1961* (Munich, 2000), 512-7. N. Naimark, ‘To know everything and to report everything worth knowing’: Building the East German Police State, 1945-1949’, Washington, August 1994, (Cold War International History Project, Working Paper No. 10), 3ff. <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/topics/pubs/ACFB6F.PDF> (accessed 10/10/2010).

⁷ See, in general: D. Peris, *Storming the Heavens. The Soviet League of the Militant Godless* (Ithaca, 1998); N. Davis, *A Long Walk to Church. A Contemporary History of Russian Orthodoxy* (Boulder, 1995), 3-15.

‘worked out’ amongst the localities.⁸ A ‘religio-political’ analysis of two levels of interaction, therefore, offers much insight: between church hierarchs and their senior Soviet and German communist handlers, and between clergy and Red Army officers and public officials.

Although there was proclaimed religious tolerance throughout the zone, this was largely a propaganda campaign designed to win the Churches over to an ‘anti-fascist’ *Volksfront*.⁹ Not all Red Army officers and KPD/SED functionaries, however, understood this intent and there were significant inconsistencies in Soviet and KPD/SED interactions with the Churches, even within a single state. This was especially so in the Church Province of Saxony, where events at the lower level, amongst individual parishes, held great importance and had significant agency in defining Church and State relations at the macro-level.¹⁰ In other words, in the absence of an official policy strictly enforced from the top-down, lower-level interactions often defined the relationship. Regular and unresolved local conflicts thus combined with frictions at the highest state echelon to alienate the KPS leadership from the secular authorities, especially in the course of late 1948 and early 1949 as the SED increasingly asserted its agenda in the Eastern zone. On the other hand, while there were difficulties in the TheK, church hierarchs enjoyed a comparatively amiable interface with the Soviet occupation administration in Thuringia. This *entente* was Soviet *Realpolitik* that fostered a church largely aligned, with significant affinities, to

⁸ On Soviet and KPD/SED religious policy, see: Brennan, *The politics of religion in Soviet-occupied Germany*; S. Kreuzberger, *Die sowjetische Besatzungsmacht und das politische System der SBZ* (Weimar, 1996); Dähn, ‘Grundzüge der Kirchenpolitik’; Goerner, 17-36; Stanke, *Die Gestaltung der Beziehungen*; Tischner, *Katholische Kirche*. T. Seidel, *Im Übergang der Diktaturen*.

⁹ See further below, pp. 41-4. On the SVAG ‘religious freedom’ propaganda campaign, see: Brennan, 272-316.

¹⁰ Here, I define ‘State’ as the secular authorities: the SVAG and German officials in state ministries, the Majority of whom were KPD/SED personnel.

the State. In both Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia, nevertheless, the secular authorities shared the same object: the subordination and instrumentalisation of the Churches to the socialist agenda. While freedom of religion was promised, the Soviet leviathan presided over all spheres of public life, dislocating traditional power centers and promoting atheism through its patronage of the KPD/SED. Many party members pursued a more overt anti-religious program than their Soviet overlords, and their actions made religion increasingly subversive where it had once been a cultural axiom.¹¹

The Churches, the Americans, the Soviets and the German communists

The Western Allies pulled into large areas of Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia from April 1945 and their occupation lasted until early July. In the interests of law and order, restrictions curtailed church activity initially. At Erfurt, priests were included in the curfew order, while permission was withheld for the annual Catholic procession on Corpus Christi (Fronleichnamspzession).¹² Such were the fears regarding Nazi resistance, furthermore, there was a moratorium on group meetings, including those scheduled for religious education and church choirs.¹³ Soon, however, the Churches exploited a general freedom of worship, and American soldiers and the German population even attended church simultaneously, albeit on separate pews in

¹¹ Dähn, 'Grundzüge der Kirchenpolitik', 156; G. Besier, 'Kommunistische Religionspolitik und kirchlicher Neuanfang', in *Erobert oder befreit?*, 122. On the relationship of the SED to the SVAG see: Foitzik, 'Zum Verhältnis zwischen SED und Besatzungsmacht', 55-64.

¹² *BEA*, Erfurt, St. Marien, 'Bericht', 22/4/45; *BEA*, CII a16, Freusberg to BGVF, 13/6/45; *ACDP*, 03-031-243, 'Bericht', Erfurt, 26/10/1945; Schneider, 153; Tischner, *Katholische Kirche*, 65.

¹³ *BEA*, CII a16, 'Memorandum', 28/4/45; *ibid.*, Freusberg to American occupation authorities in Erfurt, 2/6/45; *ibid.*, Freusberg to Regierungsrat Dr. Pallinger, 5/6/45.

accordance with non-fraternisation guidelines.¹⁴ The Protestant Bishop Moritz Mitzenheim in Eisenach praised the new liberties, the Catholic Provost Joseph Freusberg in Erfurt warmly greeted the resumption of services and festivals, and his Commissar in Heiligenstadt, Josef Streb, welcomed the return and reopening of church schools and kindergartens that had been confiscated under the Third Reich.¹⁵

From the beginning of their occupation of areas of Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt in April 1945, and from their complete control in July 1945, the Soviets maintained a similar church policy to their western counterparts.¹⁶ The new occupiers guaranteed freedom of religion in accordance with the resolutions of the European Advisory Committee (EAC) of 24 November 1944, the Potsdam Conference and the Allied Religious Affairs Committee of August 1945.¹⁷ At the local level, for instance, the Catholic *Fronleichnamprozession* went ahead in Bitterfeld with a reported attendance of over 3,000 people, while in Wittenberg the Russian commandant gave permission for church activities to continue unhindered.¹⁸ There was one caveat though: the Churches were required to abjure Nazism and nationalism *in toto*. They acquiesced and declared their loyalty to the occupiers; Freusberg and Prosenior

¹⁴ Ibid., 'Niederschrift', 1/5/45; *ibid.*, American occupation authorities in Erfurt to Freusberg, 12/6/45.

¹⁵ *ACDP*, 03-031-243, 'Bericht', Eisenach, 26/10/1945; *ibid.*, 'Bericht', Heiligenstadt, 24/10/1945; *BEA*, CII a16, 'Niederschrift', 1/5/45; *ibid.*, Freusberg to American occupation authorities in Erfurt, 2/6/45;

¹⁶ See: Raabe, 23; Knauff, 18; Besier, *Der SED-Staat und die Kirche*, 23ff; T. Seidel, *Im Übergang der Diktaturen*, 99-102.

¹⁷ In Thuringia, see: *ibid.*, 252-62. In Saxony-Anhalt, see: *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 469, 3879, 'Tätigkeitsbericht (AKW)', 8/6/46. In general, see: R. Mau, *Eingebunden in den Realsozialismus? Die evangelische Kirche als Problem der SED* (Göttingen, 1994), 15-20; Dähn, 'Grundzüge der Kirchenpolitik', 148-50; Goerner, 29ff.

¹⁸ *BAM*, Geschichte des Kommissariates: Seelsorge (Komm.) allgemeine Lage, 1945-1947, 'Aus dem kirchlichen Leben und dem Zustand der Gemeinden im Kommissariatbezirk Magdeburg', 12/6/45. In Köthen: G. Windschild, *Der Pfarrer von St. Jakob. Porträt eines Aufrechten* (Dessau, 1996), 176ff. Kreisoberpfarrer Karl Windschild, however, allegedly recognised early on the bolshevising tendencies of the KPD/SED: 193-5, 198-9.

Breithaupt of the KPS complied, for example, at a meeting in Erfurt on 12 July 1945, and local clergy followed suit.¹⁹

Religious freedom prevailed in local parishes throughout Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt into 1946 at least.²⁰ The Archbishop of Paderborn, for instance, thanked the head of the Soviet Military Administration in Saxony-Anhalt (Sovetskaia Voennaia Administratsiia, Saksoniia-Angal't, SVAS-A), Major-General Kutikov, in a letter of 5 April 1946. The tolerance of the Red Army authorities had allowed clergymen and nuns throughout the Magdeburg Commissariat to pursue their duties without hindrance.²¹ Mitzenheim lauded the freedom of religion in a public address celebrating the 400-year anniversary of Martin Luther's death in September 1946.²² At the parish level, many welcomed the freedom in church life offered by the Soviet occupiers. For example, the Geisladen mayor reported in July 1946 that services and processions proceeded without interruption.²³ Religious liberty was further 'vouchsafed' by the constitutions of both states, which were formally ratified in Thuringia on 20 December 1946 and in Saxony-Anhalt on 10 January 1947. These

¹⁹ *BEA*, CII a16, 'Besprechung zwischen dem Kommandanten der Militärregierung und den Vertretern der Religionsgesellschaften', 12/7/45; *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 745, 193, Pfr. P. to Kons. and pastors, 30/8/45.

²⁰ Goerner, 30; Dähn, *Konfrontation oder Kooperation?*, 11-33; Goeckel, 41.

²¹ *BAM*, Paderborn: Erzbischof – Korrespondenz – 1945-1955, Jäger to Kutikov (Halle), 5/4/46. The heads of the Soviet administration in Saxony-Anhalt were: Major General Alexandr Georgievich Kutikov (July 1945-March 1946), Major General Mikhail Kondratevich Shlyahtenko (March 1946-October 1949): J. Foitzik, *SMAD-Handbuch: die Sowjetische Militäradministration in Deutschland 1945-1949* (Munich, 2009), 545.

²² *Ein Lebensraum für die Kirche*, 23; *LKAE*, NL Mitzenheim, 27, 'Luther Gedächtnisjahr 1946', undated.

²³ *ACDP*, 03-031-243, 'Kurze Darstellung des derzeitigen Standes der kath. Kirche in Altthüringen', 26/10/45; *Kriegsende*, 167.

guaranteed the right to association in the name of religion, and individual freedom of confession and participation in practical manifestations of faith.²⁴

Why the Soviets granted the Churches religious freedom, at least initially, may be explained with recourse to church policy in the Soviet Union and their

Deutschlandpolitik.²⁵ It seems unusual that an occupation conducted by a self-proclaimed militantly atheistic State would resolve to offer wide-ranging freedom to so-labeled ‘class enemies’. The Soviet Union had, after all, persecuted the Russian Orthodox Church throughout the 1920s and 1930s: many prelates were exiled or incarcerated and churches demolished or closed.²⁶ Simultaneous with the Great Purges, there was a further wave of closures between 1936 and 1938, and, by 1939, only 200-300 churches remained open. In all, approximately 80,000 clerics, monks and nuns had lost their lives at the hands of the Bolsheviks by the late 1930s.²⁷

Despite this, there was a change in policy coterminous with the annexation of Poland in 1939. Polish churches were not closed nor clergy persecuted, and, following the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, anti-religious propaganda was abandoned and the atheist solidarity group, the League of the Militant Godless, disbanded.²⁸ In 1943, Stalin even agreed to the appointment of a Patriarch (the position was vacant at the time) and approved, for instance, the consecration of

²⁴ *AKPS*, B1, 181, ‘Verfassung des Landes Thüringen vom 20. Dezember 1946’; *AKPS*, A, Gen. 4061, ‘Verfassung der Provinz Sachsen-Anhalt vom 10. Januar 1947’. The DDR constitution also guaranteed the right to freedom of belief (Art. 41), see: Raabe, 26-30.

²⁵ See also: Goerner, 30-1; J.J. Seidel, ‘*Neubeginn*’ in *der Kirche*, 78-81.

²⁶ Davis, 4ff; W. Husband, ‘*Godless Communists*’. *Atheism and Society in Soviet Russia, 1917-1932* (DeKalb, 2000).

²⁷ This equates to about half the number in office before the Bolshevik revolution in 1917: Davis, 11, 13; S. Miner, *Stalin’s Holy War* (Chapel Hill, 2003), 21ff.

²⁸ Peris, 221-2.

bishops and the ordination of priests.²⁹ Historians have speculated over the reasons for this policy change, but perhaps the explanation most pertinent to this study posits that Stalin changed tact in an attempt to unite the population, and, especially as the tide turned against Germany from 1943, to buttress the incomplete social power of the Soviets in recently re-conquered territories.³⁰

The liberal church policy in East Germany, then, mirrored these calculations in some measure, or rather was an extension of them.³¹ Historians of the Eastern zone have also concluded that, early on at least, the Soviets recognised the Churches' social influence, and that they could be useful allies and willing collaborators in reconstruction. This ensured a popular stabilisation and consolidation of authority according to an anti-fascist agenda.³² Wariness toward the influence of the Churches did remain, however. This is reflected in a report from the head of the propaganda section of the SVATH, M.M. Bakarin, to the head of the Propaganda section of the SVAG in Karlshorst, Colonel Sergei Tiul'panov (later Major General), dated 23 December 1946:

The influence of the Church on the population remains considerable. Control over the activities of the clergy is inadequate, as there is no special agent responsible for monitoring religion.³³

²⁹ Davis, 16-8.

³⁰ Miner, 12ff. For other explanations, see: *ibid*, 8; T. Chumachenko, *Church and State in Soviet Russia: Russian Orthodoxy from World War II to the Khrushchev Years* (London, 2002), 15ff; Davis, 19.

³¹ Cf. Goerner, 23ff.

³² Kreuzberger, 76; Dähn, 'Grundzüge der Kirchenpolitik', 154; J.J. Seidel, 'Neubeginn' in der Kirche, 78-9; T. Seidel, *Im Übergang der Diktaturen*, 100; Goerner, 30. The Churches also had martyred figures in common with the German communists: *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 469, 3879, 'Tätigkeit und Aufgaben der Abteilung für Kirchenwesen', undated (1946); Besier, *Der SED-Staat und die Kirche*, 24; Dähn, 'Konfrontation oder Kooperation?', 21.

³³ *SVAG i religioznye konfessii Sovetskoi zony okkupatsii Germanii*, 182.

Tiul'panov himself had recognised early on the popular influence of the Christian Church, especially in the lead up to the first and only free elections in the zone in October 1946, and he sought to exploit this to the benefit of the SED.³⁴

In terms of overarching *Deutschlandpolitik*, Stalin had not made a final decision on the future of East Germany in 1945 or 1946.³⁵ Rather, it seems that the Soviet authorities attempted to maintain flexibility by keeping their options open and cultivating a 'balance of interests' that sustained bargaining power with the Western Allies while not excluding the possibility of a Stalinist-style system in East Germany. Soviet aspirations included a desire for access to the industrially developed Rhine and Ruhr regions, even if this meant collaboration with the West.³⁶ Such a policy promoted religious freedom that, in theory at least, paralleled what was happening in the Western zones.³⁷

Lastly, in the context of the nascent Cold War, the motivation of achieving propaganda victories against the West should not be discounted. A memorandum of the Information Office of the SVAG on the July 1948 conference of the umbrella organisation for the regional Protestant churches in Germany, the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (EKD), noted that the very staging of the meeting in Eisenach was a propaganda coup for the Soviet zone:

Der lebhafteste Meinungs-austausch der Kirchenführer aus den Westzonen mit den sowjetischen Vertretern hat dazu beigetragen, bei ihnen zahlreiche falschen

³⁴ Creuzberger, 76-84; Besier, *Der SED-Staat und die Kirche*, 29ff.

³⁵ See, especially: Naimark, *The Russians in Germany*, 251-3, 465; E. Scherstjanoi, 'Die deutschlandpolitischen Absichten der UdSSR 1948. Erkenntnisstand und forschungsleitende Problematisierungen', in *Das letzte Jahr der SBZ*, 39-54; Fenwick, 70-5.

³⁶ Dähn, 'Grundzüge der Kirchenpolitik', 154. This may also be seen in Soviet support for the Autumn 1946 elections: Creuzberger, 180.

³⁷ Besier, 'Kommunistische Religionspolitik', 135; Dähn, 'Grundzüge der Kirchenpolitik', 161-2. The Soviets participated in the Allied Religious Affairs Committee until March 1948: Goerner, 30-1.

Vorstellungen und antisowjetischen Vorurteile zu zerstreuen...Die bedeutende Rolle der Kirche im öffentlichen Leben Deutschlands macht es notwendig, dass die Organe der SVAG ihre Aufmerksamkeit gegenüber der Tätigkeit der Evangelischen Kirche verstärken und in größerem Maße die Möglichkeiten nutzen, in unserem Sinne Einfluss auf den fortschrittlichen Teil der Geistlichkeit auszuüben, und zwar auch in den Westzonen.³⁸

The Soviets clearly sought to exploit the influence of clergy amongst their flocks by using the Protestant Church to promote communism, and to propagate and utilise that influence internationally. There is little doubt that the Soviet occupiers, much less their KPD/SED allies, did not see any prominent place for the Christian Church in future public or even private life.³⁹

There were significant differences in how the 'religious freedom' was worked out in Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia, especially between the KPS and the TheK. The Department for Church Affairs (Abteilung für Kirchenwesen, AKW) oversaw and mediated secular and religious relations in Saxony-Anhalt.⁴⁰ The AKW fully appreciated the influence of religion amongst the German populace, and it sought to balance the interests of the Churches with the demands of the secular authorities; the Department maintained, therefore, a close relationship to the Soviet occupiers to ensure clarity and unity of purpose.⁴¹ The initial interactions were promising, according to a report from March 1946, as the state/church dialogue progressed 'amiably' and 'satisfactorily' throughout 1945 and early 1946.⁴²

³⁸ *Sowjetische Politik in der SBZ 1945-1949*, 165-6. Also available in full at: *SVAG i religioznye konfessii Sovetskoi zony okkupatsii Germanii*, 220-7.

³⁹ See, for instance: Dähn, 'Grundzüge der Kirchenpolitik', 148; Goerner, 22-3; Brennan, 19, 279-80.

⁴⁰ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 469, 3879, 'Tätigkeit und Aufgaben der Abteilung für Kirchenwesen', undated; *ibid.*, 'Tätigkeit und Aufgaben der Abteilung für Kirchenwesen im abgelaufenen Jahr', 26/3/46.

⁴¹ *LA Magd.* – LKA – , K. 10, MVb, Nr. 2237, Memorandum, Wagner (AKW), 7/9/45; *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 469, 3879, 'Tätigkeitsbericht (AKW)', 8/6/46.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 'Tätigkeit und Aufgaben der Abteilung für Kirchenwesen im abgelaufenen Jahr', 26/3/46.

The AKW was no benign arbitration office, however, but a surveillance apparatus first and foremost. An undated report on the tasks of the Department noted that the influence of the Churches was ‘not to be underestimated’, and the Department must therefore maintain the State’s absolute legal authority through ‘supervision’ (Betreuung).⁴³ An internal report of 26 March 1946 explained that supervision was to be conducted with ‘caution’ and ‘wariness’, and KPD/SED functionaries, with or without a mandate from the Department, monitored local churches throughout Saxony-Anhalt from 1946.⁴⁵ The AKW ultimately sought a complete separation between Church and State, though the divide was not to be suddenly forced but rather was to proceed ‘step by step’. It was feared that a precipitous break would call the Churches to arms, and the guiding principle was thus to maintain a ‘benevolent neutrality’ whilst continuing ‘rigorous supervision’. This was a tight rope to walk, and it demanded adroit and shrewd handling so as to avoid another *Kulturkampf* (as waged by Otto von Bismarck against the Catholic Church in the 1870s).⁴⁶ As it turned out, the balance was too delicate: the KPS and the AKW disagreed over myriad issues, and this led to an almost complete breakdown in relations by mid-1949.

Two particular sources of antagonism in 1946 were the refusal of the KPS to assume an official position on and offer media support to the plebiscite (Volksentscheid) regarding Land Reform of 30 June 1946, and the church’s refusal to take a position on

⁴³ Ibid., ‘Tätigkeit und Aufgaben der Abteilung für Kirchenwesen’, undated (1946).

⁴⁵ Ibid., ‘Tätigkeit und Aufgaben der Abteilung für Kirchenwesen im abgelaufenen Jahr’, 26/3/46. The AKW, for instance, required and received a list of all clergy and church helpers: *ibid.*, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht (AKW)’, 8/6/46; *ibid.*, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht (AKW)’, 12/6/46. See also: *LHASA*, DE, KV KÖT, Nr. 18, MP to BP Magdeburg, Merseburg und Dessau, 15/6/46; *LHASA*, DE, KV ZE, Nr. 854, MP to Justizminister, Minister des Innern, Räte der Stadt- und Landkreise des Landes Sachsen-Anhalts, 1947; *LHASA*, MER, nr. 414, 282, Herr R. to Ortsvorsitzender der SED, Merseburg, 7/7/46; *BAM*, Geschichte des Kommissariates: Seelsorge (Komm.) allgemeine Lage, 1945-1947, SED (Magdeburg) to SED members in the Magdeburg district. 8/1/47; *LHASA*, DE, KV ZE, Nr. 854, SR Roßlau to KR Zerbst, 18/11/47.

⁴⁶ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 469, 3879, ‘Rechenschaftsbericht (AKW)’, 24/6/46.

the political elections throughout the Soviet zone in October 1946.⁴⁷ Firstly, the KPS leadership rejected the proposed systematic dispossession of ‘war criminals’ due to its concerns about the process of identifying, charging and sentencing suspects.⁴⁸ The Land Reform ought only occur in ‘just’ circumstances to serve the goals of peace and reconciliation. The KPS perceived a danger to the spiritual development of the population through incitement and an ‘unchaining’ of political passions which, it believed, would promote a ‘Freimachung aller bösen Geister des Masses, der Begehrlichkeit, des Neides und der Lüge...’.⁴⁹

Secondly, tensions also arose before the political elections of October 1946. In a circular dated 5 July 1946, the CDU in Saxony-Anhalt called for support from Protestant and Catholic clergymen.⁵⁰ This was precisely what the Soviets and their SED confederates sought to avoid, and SMA Information officers throughout the Zone, following the lead of Tiul’panov in Berlin, attempted to dissuade church support for the CDU. There existed, in their eyes, the danger of a political program gaining currency that favored a West-orientated liberal democracy.⁵¹ This pressure was felt at the parish level; Pastor Drebes at Reinstedt in Anhalt, for instance, recounted an interrogation by the local Soviet commandant during which he was required to state his position on the CDU circular.⁵²

⁴⁷ *AKPS*, A, Gen. 8256, 1946, Kreyssig to SVAS-A, 28/6/46.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, ‘Denkschrift’, unsigned, undated.

⁴⁹ *AKPS*, A, Gen. 3539, ‘Auf den Bericht vom 21. Juni 1946’, 6/7/46. In Saxony, by contrast, State pressure told and the church leadership released a ‘Wort der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Landeskirche zum Volksentschied’, that expounded that the proposed land reform should serve the interests of domestic and international peace: Dähn, ‘Kirchen und Religionsgemeinschaften’, 829.

⁵⁰ *AKPS*, A, Gen. 3539, Pfr. (Kölleda) to Kons., 27/7/46. See also: *ibid.*, Zuckschwerdt to SVAS-A, 2/8/46.

⁵¹ Creuzberger, 76-83; Kolesnichenko, *In gemeinsamen Kampf*, 83-90. For an example of SED propaganda against the CDU in Thuringia, see: *Quellen zur Geschichte Thüringens, Bd. 2*, 274-5.

⁵² Drebes, 29-30.

There were, moreover, discordant voices amongst the pastorate on the political question. On 23 July 1946, a provost proposed that the church leadership release a directive to the clergy that would require preaching about the serious political responsibility laid upon each individual Christian.⁵³ The majority of his colleagues, however, rejected the proposition on the basis that the church must withdraw from the political struggle. The KPS hierarchs also failed to endorse the 9 August public statement of the Bishop of Berlin, Otto Dibelius, as they believed that voting should not be compulsory, because the statement offered no ‘binding directive’ to keep pastors from peddling biased political propaganda, and because Christians should not get involved in the parties since it was, as yet, unclear what agendas were in play.⁵⁴ Instead, the official KPS stance was drafted by Provost Schapper, accepted at the 24 July conclave of the church leadership, and circulated on 15 August 1946 by the council member Pastor Zuckschwerdt:

Liebe Brüder! Uns ist bekannt, dass manche unter euch von der Kirchenleitung ein Wort zu den politischen Wahlen erwarten, das euch bestimmte Ratschläge in dieser oder jener Richtung gibt. Nach gründlicher Besprechung in unseren Sitzung sind wir einmütig beschlossen, es nicht zu sagen... Die Kirche hat sich heraushalten aus den Kämpfen der politischen Parteien und den Herrn Christus, der für alle gestorben ist, allen zu verkündigen.⁵⁵

The church leadership accordingly allowed each pastor to select his own course, though it did recommend abstinence from politics. Secretly, as the council agreed at its 23 July meeting, the directive to pastors ‘must be understood as disguised propaganda for the CDU’.⁵⁶ This was perceived in a Halle parish, for example, where

⁵³ Ibid., ‘Protokoll der Sitzung der Vorläufigen Geistlichen Leitung der KPS’, 23/7/46.

⁵⁴ *EZAB*, 2/142, VKL to the Evangelische Oberkirchenrat (Berlin), 15/8/46. For Dibelius’ ‘Wort der evangelischen Kirchen in der Ostzone zu den Landtagswahlen in den Ländern der sowjetisch besetzten Zone’, see: J.J. Seidel, ‘Neubeginn’ in *der Kirche*, 294-5.

⁵⁵ *AKPS*, A, Gen. 3539, ‘Protokoll der Sitzung der Vorläufigen Geistlichen Leitung der KPS’, 24/7/46. The circular is at: *ibid.*, ‘Wort der Kirche zu den politischen Wahlen’, Zuckschwerdt, 15/8/46.

⁵⁶ *AKPS*, A, Gen. 3539, ‘Protokoll der Sitzung der Vorläufigen Geistlichen Leitung der KPS’, 23/7/46.

a parishioner complained to the superintendent that the CDU were using church rooms for meetings; he believed that politics had no place within church walls.⁵⁷

Both KPS opposition to the *Volksentscheid* and the leadership's ambiguous position on the political election were frustrating to the AKW. Kunisch even resorted to accusing the church of intentionally retaining fascist vestiges by electing a former Nazi party boss (Ortsgruppenleiter) as a local spokesman.⁵⁸ Kunisch also unsuccessfully attempted to bypass the KPS hierarchs by consulting the Evangelische Oberkirchenrat (EOKR) in Berlin in August 1946 and asking it to intervene.⁵⁹ By September 1946, Kunisch reflected that the contours of the reconstituted religious life and the relationship of the church to the secular authorities were somewhat difficult to trace.⁶⁰ In early 1947, however, the Saxon-Anhalt Press Service reported that relations between the Churches and the State were 'trouble-free'. This assertion nonetheless appears rather disingenuous regarding the KPS, given the friction in the second half of 1946 especially.⁶¹ While tensions may have eased somewhat, that this statement was publicly issued by the government media office suggests that it was propaganda. The SED was predominantly concerned with presenting the success of its unifying policies in public and political life.

The situation was quite different in Thuringia. There was no office corresponding to the AKW, and religious affairs were handled almost exclusively by Major-General Ivan Sazonovich Kolesnichenko, the head of the administration and civil affairs in

⁵⁷ Ibid., Herr G. to Sup. (Halle), 29/7/46.

⁵⁸ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 769b, 200, AKW to Kons. 26/7/46; *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 734, 190, 'Aktenvermerk', 15/8/46.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 'Aktenvermerk', 15/8/46.

⁶⁰ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 469, 3879, 'Tätigkeitsbericht der Abteilung für Kirchenwesen', 4/9/1946.

⁶¹ *BAM*, Staatliche Behörden: Der Präsident der Provinz Sachsen, 'Sachsen-Anhalt, konfessionell gesehen', Pressedienst der Provinzialregierung Sachsen-Anhalt, Nr. 53, 3/4/47.

Thuringia from 1945 to 1949.⁶² A veteran of Stalingrad, Prague and Berlin, Kolesnichenko had served as a member of the military council of the 63rd Army, known as the Third Guards from 1942.⁶³ The interaction between the Thuringian Church and Kolesnichenko was characterised by co-operation from the outset of the Soviet occupation.⁶⁴ For instance, Bishop Mitzenheim visited Kolesnichenko in July 1945 to request the re-erection of the large golden cross that had adorned the highest point on the Wartburg before its removal after 1933. Kolesnichenko duly acquiesced.⁶⁵ The LKR acknowledged Kolesnichenko's willingness to meet and obliging conciliation in a report dated 26 October 1945, and Mitzenheim also praised the General for his understanding in a circular to the pastorate dated 19 November 1945.⁶⁶ Kolesnichenko reciprocated in an address to the LKR in February 1946, during which he stressed the importance of a close collaboration.⁶⁷ Mitzenheim and Kolesnichenko, unlikely bedfellows as they were, built an understanding that could even be described as friendship.

Kolesnichenko's indulgence toward the Thuringian church is perhaps best exemplified by personal interventions in local level disputes, but it is also apparent in discussions concerning media.⁶⁸ The occupiers allowed the printing of materials critical to church ordinance such as liturgies, catechisms and hymn and prayer

⁶² Kolesnichenko was officially in charge from 16 July 1945: *ThHStAW*, BMP, Nr. 459, Bl. 26, 'Befehl Nr. 1 des Chefs der sowjetischen Militäradministration für das Land Thüringen', 16/7/45.

⁶³ Kolesnichenko, *Im gemeinsamen Kampf*, 14. In general, see: *SVAG Handbuch*, 557-63, 647.

⁶⁴ See: T. Seidel, *Im Übergang der Diktaturen*, 99-105; *GuH*, 2/10, 9/3/47, 'Aus der Thüringer evangelischen Kirche', 3.

⁶⁵ Kolesnichenko, *Im gemeinsamen Kampf*, 86.

⁶⁶ *ACDP*, 03-031-243, 'Bericht', Eisenach, 26/10/1945; *Ein Lebensraum für die Kirche*, 23.

⁶⁷ *LKAE*, A860/VII/I, Dr. Hertzsch to Dr. Wolf (LVB, Weimar), 8/3/46.

⁶⁸ Kolesnichenko's interventions are treated below, p. 61-3.

books.⁶⁹ The KPS too received the SVAS-A's permission for similar print runs and published Christmas-themed material for dissemination in December 1946.⁷⁰ The Thuringian Church, in addition, received permission to publish handbooks for pastors, though the print run was hampered by a wide-spread paper shortage.⁷¹ The lack of paper also pushed back publication of the TheK's weekly newspaper, *Glaube und Heimat*, to 21 April 1946.⁷² The SVATh even approved a rise in circulation from 5,000 to 10,000 in 1947, although church inquiries for another increase in early 1948 were refused due to the paper shortage. While the run was limited relative to the total faithful – 1,500,000 members in 1,500 communities – the TheK profited from Soviet lenience where this was not accorded the KPS.⁷³ Political print runs of course place church publishing in sharp perspective. The daily KPD/SED newspapers – including *Thüringer Volk*, and *Freiheit* in Saxony-Anhalt – as well as journals (in total 108 titles) had a print run of 15,505,000 up to end-July 1947.⁷⁴ Despite this comparison, the importance of the post-war accommodation should not be understated, and the understanding between the Thuringian Church and Kolesnichenko endured, despite occasional discord, to the end of the SBZ.⁷⁵

The Catholic Church assumed a low profile in its dealings with the secular authorities in both Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt. Both Weskamm in Magdeburg and Freusberg

⁶⁹ See, in general: *EZAB*, 2/148, A837.

⁷⁰ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 469, 3879, 'Tätigkeitsbericht (AKW)', 10/12/46. Also theological scripts: *ibid.*, 'Tätigkeitsbericht (AKW)', 10/2/47.

⁷¹ *LKAE*, A155, 59, Mitzenheim to the SVATh, 6/11/45; request approved: 12/11/45; *ibid.*, Mitzenheim to Pfr. W., 2/9/46.

⁷² *GuH*, 1/2, 5/5/46, 'Am Fuße der Wartburg', Superintendent H. Elle (Jena), 2.

⁷³ *LKAE*, A156, 60, Dr. Schanze to SVATh, 3/2/47; *ibid.*, Mitzenheim to Herr L., 6/3/48. The estimated readership was approximately '13,000-15,000' readers: *GuH*, 2/40, 5/10/47, 'Warum schweigen die Gemeindeglieder', Schröter (Altenburg), 2. Permission withheld: *AKPS*, A, Gen. 4061, Kons. Rat A., 3/11/48.

⁷⁴ Malycha/Winters, 44.

⁷⁵ See below, p. 62.

in Erfurt submitted reports to their temporal counterparts from time to time, but they never pursued a collaborative relationship. Weskamm was ‘very surprised’ at reports of Soviet interference in church life in Achersleben in September 1945 given that there had been no difficulties elsewhere in Saxony-Anhalt; there must have been some sort of ‘misunderstanding’.⁷⁶ The AKW evaluated relations as ‘not bad’ in October 1946, although the supremacy of the State beyond church walls reportedly needed further emphasis. The author noted accurately that the concern of the Catholic Church was to conduct diplomacy and politics with a ‘view to the future’.⁷⁷ Weskamm himself avoided involvement in politics at all costs. The KPD chapter in Bernburg asked both a local Catholic priest and a Protestant pastor to offer speeches at one of its regular meetings in August 1945. Both agreed, had their scripts approved by the Soviet censor and spoke before the assembly. Weskamm was informed of this episode, and he wrote a sternly worded admonition to the priest to stay out of politics.⁷⁸ In December 1947, the Magdeburg Commissariat was also requested to send representatives to the second SED organised ‘Volkskongress für Einheit und gerechten Frieden’.⁷⁹ Weskamm turned down the offer: while the Church was bound to the ‘work of reconciliation’, its concern was premised not on ‘political factors’ but on ‘other considerations’.⁸⁰ Faced by a powerful secular adversary, Weskamm

⁷⁶ *BAM*, Staatliche Behörden: Der Präsident der Provinz Sachsen, Weskamm to Pfarramt Achersleben, 21/9/45.

⁷⁷ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 469, 3879, ‘Informationsbericht über kirchliche Verhältnisse’, 9/10/1946.

⁷⁸ *BAM*, Staatliche Behörden: Der Präsident der Provinz Sachsen, Pfr. (Bernburg) to Weskamm, 4/8/45; *ibid.*, Weskamm to Pfr. (Bernburg), 8/8/45.

⁷⁹ *BAM*, Politisches: Volkskongress 1948/1949, Herr Böttge (Präsident des Landestages Sachsen-Anhalt) to Weskamm, 19/12/47.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, Weskamm to Präsident Böttge, 31/12/47.

withdrew his church from the political sphere, concentrating instead on the pressing demands of pastoral care in particular.⁸¹

The Catholic Church in Thuringia was more ambivalent to politics.⁸² Before the 1946 elections, Joseph Freusberg distributed a circular that instructed the priesthood to keep political propaganda out of the church; he did, however, allow political membership so long as this did not lead to public canvassing.⁸³ This policy was exemplified by the Bischöflicher Kommissarius in Heiligenstadt, Josef Streb, who, on the one hand, condemned the sermon of a priest who had dissuaded his parishioners from reading the KPD newspaper. On the other hand, Streb was a member of the CDU. He was also, according to a Marxist biography of the Soviet commandant of Heiligenstadt, accommodating to the Soviet occupiers and German communists in Eichsfeld.⁸⁴ Freusberg too harbored CDU sympathies and some reports identified his accession to the post of Generalvikar in October 1946 as an initiative of that party.⁸⁵ He also accepted an invitation to the second *Volkskongress* in early 1948 before Bishop Preysing in Berlin forced his withdrawal.⁸⁶

⁸¹ T. Thorak, *Wilhelm Weskamm. Diasporaseelsorger in der SBZ/DDR* (Würzburg, 2009), 25-6; Tischner, *Katholische Kirche*, 51, 126-7; J. Pilvousek, 'Die Katholische Kirche in der DDR' in H. Dähn (ed.), *Die Rolle der Kirchen in der DDR* (Munich, 1993), 67-8. This was not the case in the Berlin diocese, however, where Preysing increasingly gave voice to his opposition of the Stalinisation of public life in the SBZ and the leadership of the SED. See: *ibid.*, 92; W. Tischner, 'Die Kirchenpolitik unter Konrad von Preysing 1945-1950', in C. Köster/W. Tischner (ed.), *Katholische Kirche in SBZ und DDR* (Munich, 2005), 37-62; Tischner, *Katholische Kirche*, 91-111; Brennan, 121-4.

⁸² On Kolesnichenko's indulgence to the Catholic Church, see, for example: *SVAG i religioznye konfessii Sovetskoi zony okkupatsii Germanii*, 227; Fenwick, 60-2.

⁸³ *BFA*, Bischöfliches Generalvikariat Fulda, Kirche in der DDR 'Grundsätzliches' 1946-1959, 'Übersetzung der Richtlinien', 24/11/47; Tischner, *Katholische Kirche*, 65-6, 221-2. Candidature was forbidden: Siebert, 130-3.

⁸⁴ R. Barthel/M. Fischer, *Major M.B. Dsilichow, erster Kommandant des Kreises Eichsfeld 1945/1946* (Heiligenstadt, 1984), 73-4.

⁸⁵ Tischner, *Katholische Kirche*, 204-6; Gatz, 175.

⁸⁶ Tischner, *Katholische Kirche*, 108-9.

Local conflict and accommodation: clergymen, soldiers and the communist cadre

In the absence of a broadly-enforced and widely understood secular *Kirchenpolitik*, Church and State relations were often defined and even dictated by what happened at grass roots, amongst individual parishes and ordinary lives. Individual German communists in particular made life difficult for a number of churchmen, and the parish reflected local circumstances upward, toward the church authorities, and therefore possessed indirect agency in macro-political developments. Ongoing frictions at the lowest level, especially from 1946 onwards, embittered the KPS relationship with the state authorities and the Soviets, particularly as the church often received little redress. On the other hand, conflict resolution in Thuringia gave much impetus to Church and State rapprochement.

Local disputes between secular and religious bodies were multiple and regular in communities of the KPS. One common site of secular obstruction was compulsory work scheduled for Sunday mornings, which conflicted with services and festival celebrations. Church complaints about these incidents rarely received any favorable response. For example, the local pastor and KPD leader in Möckern agreed that there would be no work outside the church on Sunday 17 February 1946. On the day, however, a detail began in the churchyard and the foreman refused to desist. Hammer blows and bangs, accompanied by boards and planks slapped about, drowned out the singing and interrupted the sermon. In a letter to his superintendent, the clergyman

went on to list a litany of such arrogations of ‘church freedom’.⁸⁷ The Konsistorium in Magdeburg demanded answers and described the behavior of the Möckern authorities as reminiscent of Gestapo methods.⁸⁸ There was little action, however, only a postponed case review.⁸⁹ In Schwarz, the Sunday morning scheduling of a labor detail to eliminate pests from potatoes emptied pews. Upon receipt of the church remonstrations, the AKW demanded flexibility from clergymen, especially given the overriding importance of securing the food supply.⁹⁰

Anti-clerical officials abounded throughout Saxony-Anhalt and their actions occasioned a great many complaints. The pastor in Welbsleben experienced petty disruptions and two break-ins at the local church kindergarten. A policeman summoned to investigate allegedly stated: ‘Wenn ich gewusst hätte, dass die Kirche am Kindergarten beteiligt ist, so wäre ich garnicht erst mitkommen.’ The churchman found the case ‘typical’ of the conduct of the secular authorities. The Abteilung für Volksbildung in Saxony-Anhalt (AVB) and local authorities further pressured the local church about the kindergarten until the church council relinquished possession on 1 October 1946. Denounced, the pastor was then called to account for extending invitations to two women to attend the congregation’s Frauenhilfe group (the, often locally organised, Protestant organisation for women).⁹¹ The local administration in Osternienburg confiscated money from a church collection without apparent cause.⁹² At Blumenberg, the mayor made the tasks and duties of the local church council

⁸⁷ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 769b, 200, Pfr. (Möckern) to Kons., 19/2/46.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, Kons. to MP, 12/3/46.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, BP (Magdeburg) to AKW, 9/5/46.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, Kunisch to Pfr. (Schwarz), 9/7/47. Regarding an incident in Brumby on Himmelfahrtstag (9 May): *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 769a, 200, Kons. to MP, 8/6/48.

⁹¹ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 769b, 200, Pfr. (Welbsleben) to Bishop Müller, 30/8/46.

⁹² *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 469, 3879, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht (AKW)’, 8/10/46.

‘almost impossible’ to fulfill and, according to a complaint dated 20 January 1947, had been doing so since Summer 1945. The mayor had charged exorbitant taxes, thus impoverishing the community, and had spoken against the Church, stating that it took people’s money from them (for nothing) and owned land that ought to be redistributed.⁹³ An investigation commissioned by the Ministry of the Interior eventually concluded that the majority of church remonstrations were petty or unsubstantiated: the mayor was within his rights, and the available evidence could not substantiate that the libelous remarks were ever uttered.⁹⁴ Lastly, a church employee twice attempted to buy a bus ticket from Halle to Magdeburg. Bus personnel proved obstinate, and they maintained that Red Army troops and state officials had claimed all the available seats; the employee remonstrated that there were only three soldiers on the bus in addition to a number of men and women who looked ‘not at all’ like officials.⁹⁵ There were multifarious conflicts elsewhere, often concerning the hindering of pastoral work and local clergymen who had staged unauthorised services outside of church walls.⁹⁶

Soviet officers in Saxony-Anhalt also often interfered in church life and, in general, received no reprimand. For example, the commandant in Weissenfels dismissed an application from a local parish to print religious materials. The AKW swatted aside the ensuing complaint, labeling the situation a misunderstanding that rested on ‘an erroneous evaluation’.⁹⁷ The local Soviet authorities fined the Schwanebeck church for an unapproved gathering held on 12 October 1947. This event was a small

⁹³ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 769a, 200, GKR and Pfr. (Blumenberg) to Kons., 20/1/47.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, Ministerium des Innern to MP, 23/10/47.

⁹⁵ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 769b, 200, Dr D. (Kirchenoberbaurat) to Kunisch, 3/2/47.

⁹⁶ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 469, 3879, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht (AKW)’, 10/12/46. There was, for instance, conflict over a weekly ‘community evening’ in Krusemark: *ibid.*, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht (AKW)’, 10/2/47.

⁹⁷ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 769b, 200, Kunisch to Kons., 22/3/47.

‘worship evening’ for which the organist had printed leaflets. The superintendent lamented that religious activities were, it seemed, limited to the service and sweeping in the chapel.⁹⁸ In the Altmark, the commandant in Seehausen interrogated the church teacher (Katachet) for allegedly making disparaging remarks about the Red Army, while the Soviet authorities in Stendal prohibited the printing of song sheets for Vespers on Christmas Eve 1948 (even though this had been previously allowed).⁹⁹ At the pastor’s inquiry, an officer replied: ‘Die Zeiten ändert [sic] sich.’¹⁰⁰

While disputes were rarely resolved in favor of the KPS, this did not mean that Soviet commandants could decree what they wished without any repercussions. The head of religious affairs in the Information Office of the SVAS-A, Major Belov, acted on a church complaint in at least one case.¹⁰¹ The KPS experienced considerable difficulties with the regional commandant in Bad Blankenburg, who had introduced a number of illegal restrictions, including prohibiting the placement of religious advertisements anywhere but on church doors. Kunisch mediated and, after a long-winded process stretching from April to September 1948, Belov eventually revoked the commandant’s decrees and relocated him to Wernigerode.¹⁰² This was no common event, however. About the same time, Kunisch passed another church complaint on to Belov regarding a fine levied against a pastor in Oebisfelde in April 1948 for illegal advertising and holding an unregistered event.¹⁰³ Kunisch informed Müller on 20 September 1948 that a conversation he had had with Belov had led to no

⁹⁸ *AKPS*, A, Gen. 3645, 1, Sup. (Schwanebeck) to Kreyssig, 7/11/47.

⁹⁹ *AKPS*, A, Gen. 3448, ‘Aktenvermerk’, 10/1/49.

¹⁰⁰ The church leadership in Magdeburg duly complained to the SVAS-A in Halle, though they expected no result from it: *AKPS*, A, Gen. 4061, KL to SVAS-A (Halle), 21/12/48.

¹⁰¹ There was some SVAS-A indulgence in church denazification matters, see below, pp. 254-6.

¹⁰² *AKPS*, A, Gen. 4061, Provost (Blankenburg) to Kons., 28/4/48; *ibid.*, Kunisch to Belov, 3/6/48; *ibid.*, Kons. to Kunisch, 10/9/48; *ibid.*, Kunisch to Kons., 20/9/48; *ibid.*, Provost (Blankenburg) to Kons., 28/9/48.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, KR Gardelegen to Pfr. (Oebisfelde), 16/4/48; *ibid.*, Kunisch to Kons., 5/6/48.

result.¹⁰⁴ KPS churchmen then brought up the matter with Belov at a meeting on 16 October. The major said that he had not yet sought a rationale from the commandant, but he did not think that the fine was illegal. The money was not refunded.¹⁰⁵ While Belov felt compelled to act in favor of the KPS in the case of the regional commandant in Bad Blankenburg, he was loath to overturn the judgement of the local commandant in Oebisfelde. While both these Soviet officers had proceeded against instances of church advertising, an explanation for the inconsistency may lie in consideration of the scale and the nature of the restriction. The regional commandant in Bad Blankenburg had systematically regulated church advertising throughout the area, while the local commandant in Oebisfelde had fined only one pastor. Belov perhaps considered that the anti-church regulations throughout the Bad Blankenburg region would have the potential to stir up considerable ill-will toward the occupation forces and the communist project in general; the Bad Blankenburg area had reportedly been the site of much previous Church and State tension since 1945.¹⁰⁶ It is perhaps telling that Belov refused to provide a written confirmation of the Bad Blankenburg resolution, and he did not directly notify the KPS of his decision. It appears that Belov, wary of the influence of the church, acted only grudgingly against his comrade in Bad Blankenburg.

Local disputes, along with the general refusal of the Soviet authorities to grant church requests, conspired to ensure that the relationship between the KPS and the occupiers became increasingly cold. At a meeting on 14 October 1948 with Colonel Tiul'panov, Bishop Müller lamented that individual difficulties had tainted the Church and State relationship, though he guardedly thanked the SVAS-A for 'generally' helping with

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., Kunisch to Kons. 20/9/48.

¹⁰⁵ *AKPS*, A, Gen. 4061, 'Aktenvermerk', Kons. Rat A., 16/10/48.

¹⁰⁶ *AKPS*, A, Gen. 3645, Kunisch to Belov, 3/6/48.

problems.¹⁰⁷ At another meeting on 2 November 1948 in Karlshorst, an officer of the SVAG Information Department described the relationship between the occupation forces and the KPS as ‘unfavorable’ and ‘unfriendly’. In response, his interlocutor, a member of the Konsistorium, noted that relations with the Minister President and Dr. Kunisch were good, and the church had always willingly met with the SVAS-A since the first meeting with Major-General Kutikov in 1945. This was a testament to the church’s desire for a trusting relationship, yet the occupiers had not reciprocated this:

Wir hätten jedoch auf alle unsere Bitten teils freundliche, teils zurückhaltende und oftmals gar keine Antworten bekommen, aber nicht ein einziges Mal ein wirkliches Ergebnis mit nach Hause gebracht. Dieses sei allerdings seitens der Kirchenleitung gegenüber der Besatzungsmacht eine Vertrauensfrage. Wenn ich aus dieser Besprechung wenigstens die Räumung einiger Häuser in Neinstedt mit nach Hause brächte, so würde dieses von der Kirche als eine Stärkung des Vertrauensverhältnisses empfangen werden.¹⁰⁸

The KPS received no concessions, and, while Belov often promised to make inquiries about continuing church concerns, little came of these.¹⁰⁹ In fact, events at end of 1948 and in early 1949 intensified the enmity between the KPS and the secular authorities such that any remaining good will had dissipated by mid-1949.

The KPS leadership was not afraid to direct pastors simply to defy secular regulations. Responding to an epidemic of poliomyelitis in 1948, the State Health Office suspended all events until further notice. Whilst the Konsistorium postponed small group meetings, it declared that services were to continue; man must hear and

¹⁰⁷ *AKPS*, A, Gen. 4061, ‘Aktenvermerk’, Kons. Rat A., 14/10/48.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, ‘Aktenvermerk’, Kons. Rat A., 3/11/48.

¹⁰⁹ There were, for example, KPS complaints about anti-clerical articles published in the SED press. See: *AKPS*, A, Gen. 3448, *Volksstimme*, ‘Ku-Klux-Klan Methoden altmärker Großbauern’, 23/12/48; *ibid.*, Sup. Seehausen (Altmark) to Kons., 7/1/49; *ibid.*, ‘Aktenvermerk’, Kons. Rat A., 10/1/49. Also: *ibid.*, *Volksstimme*, ‘Ist die Kirche gegen den Frieden? Einige Fragen des DFD an die Kirchen beider Konfessionen’, 27/12/48; *AKPS*, A, Gen. 2364, 1, Kons. to the editors of *Volksstimme*, 30/12/48. Both *Volksstimme* articles were discussed at a meeting with Major Belov on 31 December 1948, yet he denied any anti-church agenda and demanded evidence: *AKPS*, A., Gen. 4061, ‘Vermerk’, Kons. Rat A., 25/1/49.

follow the word of God above all, the health danger notwithstanding.¹¹⁰ The Konsistorium also forbade clergy from presenting sermons or other church materials to the censor, and encouraged ongoing church ritual. The pastor must not be ‘weak’, for ‘God’s word is not chained’ (2 Tim. II.9).¹¹¹ In August 1948, a Red Army officer in Genthin prohibited a festival in Schollene run by Frauenhilfe. The celebration went ahead in defiance of the order, attendance even exceeding expectations.¹¹² At Piesteritz, the church leadership also directed the local pastor to ignore the local mayor’s order that all events except church services must be registered in advance.¹¹³ The Soviet authorities in Genthin, lastly, turned down an application to hold a youth event on 12 September 1948, yet it went ahead with 200 girls present.¹¹⁴

Bishop Müller also became increasingly outspoken and confronted the secular authorities. In a meeting with a Soviet Colonel of the Ministry for State Security (Ministerstvo Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti, MGB) on 14 October 1948, and in a letter to Major-General Shlyahtenko dated 15 October 1948, Müller demanded information about the fate of several KPS churchmen and relatives arrested in 1946, including the superintendent in Schwanebeck, a pastor from Gatersleben and the daughter of a pastor in Pödelist.¹¹⁵ Müller also requested the repayment of money taken from the house of a prisoner who was formerly a parishioner in Bad Kösen. The MGB colonel, however, offered no information and replied that the money would be

¹¹⁰ *AKPS*, A, Gen. 3645, Kons. to provosts in Erfurt and Nordhausen, Sup. in Erfurt and Südharz, and GKR of the church region of Ziegenrück, 21/9/48.

¹¹¹ *AKPS*, A., Gen. 3645, Kons. to MP, undated.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, Pfr. (Schollene) to Kons., 26/7/48; *ibid.*, Pfr. (Schollene) to Kons., 31/8/48.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, BM (Piesteritz) to Pfr. (Piesteritz), 23/8/48; *ibid.*, Kons. to LR (Piesteritz), GKR (Piesteritz) and AKW, 1/10/48.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Pfr. (Genthin) to Kons., 4/9/48; *ibid.*, Kons. to Pfr. (Genthin), 4/9/48; *ibid.*, Pfr. (Genthin) to Kons., 7/9/48; *ibid.*, ‘Protokoll’, KL (Mag.), 8/8/48; *ibid.*, Kons. to the commandant of Genthin, 8/9/48; *ibid.*, Provost (Magdeburg) to Kons., 18/9/48.

¹¹⁵ *AKPS*, A, Gen. 4061, ‘Aktenvermerk’, 14/10/48; *ibid.*, Müller to Shlyahtenko (Halle), 15/10/48.

returned if it could be proved to be church property.¹¹⁶ In May 1949, Müller wrote to his brother in law, the LDPD member and first Minister President of Saxony-Anhalt, Erhard Hübener, about the elections to the third *Volkskongress* in the Soviet zone. Party members had illegally placed political propaganda on local church premises without permission, therefore giving the appearance of religious support. Where churchmen had objected or removed signs and posters, such as at Bibra, Löben, Bad Dübén, Schönebeck and Osterweddlingen, some had been apprehended and even imprisoned. Müller interpreted this conduct as a manifestation of declining ‘internal and external freedom’, as well as the futility of the law before heedless, unilateral local authorities.¹¹⁷ On 25 June 1949, lastly, the church leadership accused the Saxon Anhalt government of electoral fraud surrounding the *Volkskongress* and lamented the increasing arbitrariness of officials throughout the province.¹¹⁸ The ongoing frictions between the KPS and the state authorities had radicalised in the course of 1948 and early 1949, due not least to unresolved tensions at the local level.

The circumstances were quite different in those parts of Thuringia administered by the TheK and the Catholic Church. Kolesnichenko preferred a policy of accommodation with the Churches and, where local conflict developed, he moved swiftly to extinguish resentments.¹¹⁹ Early on, LKR requests for the return of confiscated or occupied buildings were discussed, and the SVATH had restored almost all church possessions by the end of 1945.¹²⁰ While there were Catholic

¹¹⁶ AKPS, A, Gen. 3448, ‘Aktenvermerk’, 10/1/49.

¹¹⁶ AKPS, A, Gen. 4061, ‘Aktenvermerk’, 14/10/48.

¹¹⁷ LHASA, MAG, K2, 745, 193, Müller to MP, 30/5/49. Cf. earlier questioning of arrests: n. 114; AKPS, A, Gen. 3448, Sup. (Seehausen) to Kons., 7/1/49.

¹¹⁸ Given in full in J.J. Seidel, ‘Neubeginn’ in der Kirche, 329-30.

¹¹⁹ See: ACDP, 03-031-243, three reports from October 1945.

¹²⁰ Ibid., ‘Bericht’, Eisenach, 26/10/1945.

grievances throughout Eichsfeld, a number of these were eased by the occupation authorities. At a meeting in October 1945, Kolesnichenko promised church representatives that he would investigate their allegations regarding the obstruction of clergy on pastoral duty.¹²¹ The Heiligenstadt Commissariat received an apology for the behavior of Red Army soldiers who had disrupted a procession at Spahl in 1945.¹²² Streb also negotiated the rescission of a prohibition on Palm Sunday celebrations in 1946 by threatening the Soviet commandant of Heiligenstadt with an appeal to Kolesnichenko. He also managed the return of church buildings and got a ban on local church youth work overturned.¹²³ The personal complaints of Mitzenheim were also heeded on multiple occasions. Kolesnichenko ordered the return of confiscated church safes at the bishop's remonstrance.¹²⁴ A Red Army officer was convicted of rape in the Saalfeld district following a church complaint.¹²⁵ Mitzenheim even publicised an incident to his pastorate at the end of 1947 whereby Kolesnichenko had censured the Soviet commandant of 'a Thuringian city' for prohibiting public church gatherings.¹²⁶

The relationship, it seems, had not tarnished by December 1949, the increasing Stalinisation of the zone under the aegis of the SED notwithstanding. The SVATH repaid a fine levied against the Thuringian church by a local Red Army officer for

¹²¹ *BEA*, CII a16, 'Niederschrift', 3/10/45.

¹²² *BFA*, T3, Spahl, 29/9/45. The Heiligenstadt conflicts are corroborated by another priest: *Kriegsende*, 204, 207, 209; see also: *BFA*, BGVF, Kirche in der DDR 'Grundsätzliches' 1946-1959, 'Bericht über die religiöse und politische Lage in Thüringen, speziell im Eichsfeld', 14/8/46. On the other hand, the Marxist historians, Barthel/Fischer (74), and Tischner (*Katholische Kirche*, 46) report good relations.

¹²³ *BFA*, BGVF, Kirche in der DDR 'Grundsätzliches' 1946-1959, 'Bericht über die religiöse und politische Lage in Thüringen, speziell im Eichsfeld', 14/8/46.

¹²⁴ *EZAB*, 2/148, K340, 20/11/45.

¹²⁵ *LKAE*, A930/V, Sup. (Saalfeld) to LKR, 29/4/46.

¹²⁶ *EZAB*, 2/149, Circular to pastors, 27/11/47.

staging unauthorised youth events in early 1948.¹²⁷ Mitzenheim even had Kolesnichenko intercede on his behalf on an inter-zonal issue. Kolesnichenko requested the aid of the Head of the Soviet Civil Administration in Germany, A.F. Kabanov, in returning several thousand church bells from Hamburg. A number of these belonged to the Thuringian church, and church efforts in securing their return up until October 1948 had been in vain.¹²⁸ Reciprocal regard and respect was a defining feature of the Mitzenheim and Kolesnichenko relationship; for his readiness to meet and enter discussion, his ‘justice’ and ‘tolerance’, Mitzenheim thanked Kolesnichenko in November 1949 after the General had passed executive power in Thuringia over to the SED.¹²⁹ Kolesnichenko, for his part, remembered Mitzenheim rather fondly and recorded the profound influence of the Thuringian church in public life in his memoir of 1985, *Im gemeinsamen Kampf...*, and the expanded Russian version, *Bitva posle voiny*.¹³⁰

Secular authority, personalities and church theologies

Tension in the KPS and accommodation in the TheK may be explained through three analytical discussions. Firstly, the nature of secular authority over the Churches differed between Saxony-Anhalt, where it was more diffuse, and Thuringia, where Kolesnichenko held all affairs firmly in hand. Secondly, Mitzenheim developed a

¹²⁷ *LKAE*, A930/V, 45, Mitzenheim to Sup. (Sonneberg), 20/4/48.

¹²⁸ *SVAG i religioznye konfessii Sovetskoi zony okkupatsii Germanii*, 376.

¹²⁹ *LKAE*, A930/1, 113, Mitzenheim to Kolesnichenko, 18/11/49. See also Mitzenheim’s letter to Kolesnichenko of 31 December 1948, thanking him for his understanding and passing on best wishes: *ibid.*, Mitzenheim to Kolesnichenko, 31/12/48.

¹³⁰ Kolesnichenko, *Bitva posle voiny*, 116-20; *idem*, *Im gemeinsamen Kampf*, 85-9.

personal understanding with Kolesnichenko and pursued a policy that accommodated a number of state demands, especially in political matters. Thirdly, the KPS leadership, especially Bishop Müller and the first president of the Konsistorium, Lothar Kreyssig, maintained a theology that challenged the secular authorities by demanding total commitment from each individual Christian in all spheres of life, not just the religious.

It is apparent that, apart from the ambiguous religious ‘tolerance’, there was no overarching Soviet and KPD/SED *Religionspolitik* imposed from above and methodically implemented on the ground.¹³¹ Much research has shown that the SVAG, in general, was fundamentally riven by conflicts of authority and jurisdiction focused on various power centres. As Norman Naimark has demonstrated, for example, Sergei Tiul’panov exercised considerable influence in pushing his own radically pro-SED agenda despite reservations and even criticisms from Moscow.¹³² This ambiguity filtered down, and, without clear directives and an imperfect grasp of the propaganda value of religious freedom, many Red Army officers and German communists at the local level pursued contrary agendas.¹³³ It is not difficult to appreciate the ideological conflicts as individuals impeded community life. Conflict and struggle was presaged and a schism between Church and State foreshadowed, for instance, in the Comintern Program of 1928.¹³⁴ Despite the wartime accommodation between Church and State in the Soviet Union, most Red Army officers had observed anti-clericalism first-hand as Stalin’s ‘communism in one state’ policy may have led

¹³¹ Creuzberger, 177ff.

¹³² Naimark, *The Russians in Germany*, 322ff. On central committee (Moscow) critiques of Tiul’panov, see: *ibid.*, 342ff.

¹³³ See, for example: Malycha/Winters, 16.

¹³⁴ *The Communist International, 1919-1943, Documents, Vol. 2: 1923-1928*, ed. J. Degras (London, 1971), 504-5.

to the atrophy of Communist International, but it maintained a militant atheism up until 1939. As for the German communists, the KPD's united *Volksfront* against fascism following Hitler's rise to power in 1933 obscured pre-*Machtergreifung* anti-religious rhetoric.¹³⁵ In 1945, however, presented with the vanquishing of National Socialism and bolstered by Soviet sponsorship, it is not surprising that some felt the time for expedient alliances was at an end. While the Soviet authorities proclaimed religious freedom, and the SED even formally declared an understanding for Christianity, individuals took it upon themselves to 'work toward' an ideal communist society that obscured Christianity and religion *in toto*.¹³⁶ Many, then, lagged behind the official Soviet and KPD/SED line of tolerance.

In general, Soviet *Deutschlandpolitik* lacked unequivocal imperatives that were systematically passed down to regular Red Army officers in the localities of each state. In Saxony-Anhalt, a junior officer in the SVAS-A Information Office, Major Belov, oversaw church affairs. Belov filled largely a liaison role, and day-to-day operations and supervision was delegated further to the AKW, though policy was never left to its discretion.¹³⁷ Belov is a rather shadowy character both in the primary and secondary sources. It is clear though that he had little authority in dictating policy, much like his comrade in the SVAS-A Information Office, Major Bobkov (see

¹³⁵ See: Raabe, 24-5; Goerner, 17ff; Goeckel, 25ff; Dähn, 'Konfrontation oder Kooperation?', 19.

¹³⁶ On the official relationship between the SED and the Churches, see: *DDR. Dokumente zur Geschichte der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik*, 85-7; *SED und Kirche*, 45-53. The SED, as Goerner argues, accommodated the Churches only as part of its 'Integrationsstrategie', 38ff. The official SED 'Stellung der Partei gegenüber den Kirchen' of 27 August 1946 (*SED und Kirche*, 42-3) was largely conditioned by the political elections of October 1946: Goerner, 41-4; Besier, *Der SED-Staat und die Kirche*, 32-3. On the concept of 'working towards', see: I. Kershaw, "'Working Towards the Führer.'" Reflections on the Nature of the Hitler Dictatorship', *Contemporary European History*, 2/2 (1993), 103-18.

¹³⁷ Tiul'panov kept apprised of the religious position in Saxony-Anhalt: *SVAG i religioznye konfessii Sovetskoi zony okkupatsii Germanii*, 278-80, 472-4. In Thuringia, the SVATH closely supervised all public offices: Kolesnichenko, *Bitva posle voiny*, 57.

below, pp. 255-6).¹³⁸ At the lower level, many local commandants meddled in religious affairs with little oversight and, when Church hierarchs reacted, Belov's often unhelpful responses to church grievances reflected an intent to weaken the social influence of the KPS.¹³⁹

Otherwise, Major-General Kolesnichenko held all Thuringian affairs in hand. Almost at the outset of the Soviet occupation, Dr. Rudolf Paul replaced the former Buchenwald inmate, Hermann Brill, as Thuringian Minister President at the behest of Kolesnichenko.¹⁴⁰ The SVATH certainly favoured the hegemony of the KPD in local government and, as Manfred Overesch has described it, the 'leftist seizure of power' in Thuringia was virtually complete by 1946.¹⁴¹ Kolesnichenko also pressed for the unification of the KPD and the SPD in Thuringia from an early date.¹⁴² At a 23 January 1946 meeting with the chairmen of both parties, Walter Eggerath (KPD) and Ernst Frölich (SPD), he asserted that the workers demanded unity, and Thuringia must show the way, to be an example to other states in the zone.¹⁴³ The shotgun wedding of the KPD and SPD created the Thuringian SED on 6 April 1946; it was the first merger announced in the Soviet zone, and the SVATH proceeded to intimidate members of the CDU and LDPD before and subsequent to the October 1946 elections.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁸ For instance, Foitzik's exhaustive *SMAD-Handbuch* does not mention Belov at all.

¹³⁹ In general, see: Goerner, 30.

¹⁴⁰ See, in general: M. Overesch, *Machtergreifung von Links. Thüringen 1945/6* (Hildesheim, 1993); idem, *Hermann Brill, Ein Kämpfer gegen Hitler und Ulbricht* (Bonn, 1992), 335, 351-62.

¹⁴¹ Overesch, *Machtergreifung von Links*, 129-35.

¹⁴² Foitzik, *Sowjetische Militäradministration*, 273.

¹⁴³ Overesch, *Hermann Brill*, 400; Naimark, *The Russians in Germany*, 279. The SVAG agitated for the union of the SPD and the KPD throughout the SBZ: *Auf dem Weg zur SED*, XCVff; Malycha, *Die SED. Geschichte ihrer Stalinisierung*, 101ff.

¹⁴⁴ Bauer, 65; Naimark, *The Russians in Germany*, 279.

Kolesnichenko's position on the future of Germany is most clear in a memorandum of 29 November 1948 that was sent to the head of the Central Committee Department for Foreign Relations in Moscow. Kolesnichenko urged a strengthening of the SED through the extrication of 'reactionary' elements and the abolition of the 'anti-fascist' bloc parties, the LDPD and the CDU.¹⁴⁵ Although this manifesto was not immediately implemented, Kolesnichenko dominated Thuringian public life and acted in accordance with his own vision for Germany.¹⁴⁶ Everything required his permission, and he was directly responsible for the 459 directives of the SVATH.¹⁴⁷ Wilhelm Pieck and Franz Dahlem complained to the SVAG in Berlin in 1946 that Kolesnichenko acted as if he was 'only subject to himself'. Tiul'panov had also earlier complained, without result, about Kolesnichenko's independence in a letter to the SVAG head in Berlin.¹⁴⁸ Though Tiul'panov – endowed with considerable authority and a far-ranging client network – had jurisdiction over affairs pertaining to religion from Karlshorst and exerted influence amongst most *Länder* in the Eastern zone, he found his authority in Thuringia frustrated by Kolesnichenko.

The General intervened where he deemed it appropriate. At Jena University – according to the memoir of Piotr Nikitin, the SVAG director of the Department for Tertiary Education and Academia – Kolesnichenko's actions were unprecedented in the zone. He re-opened the university on 1 December 1945 without prior authorisation, and, in March 1948, the General replaced the existing rector in the interests of 'democratisation' without informing the SVAG Department for People's

¹⁴⁵ *Sowjetische Politik in der SBZ 1945-1949*, 183-98. See also: Scherstjanoi, 47, 49.

¹⁴⁶ On Kolesnichenko's unilateral action, see: Naimark, *The Russians in Germany*, 26.

¹⁴⁷ E. Peterson, *Russian Commands and German Resistance: the Soviet Occupation, 1945-1949* (New York, 1999), 266.

¹⁴⁸ Foitzik, *Sowjetische Militäradministration*, 283.

Education.¹⁴⁹ Both instances contravened SVAG order no. 50 of 4 September 1945, which stated that decisions concerning tertiary education were under the mandate of both the designated education departments at Karlshorst.¹⁵⁰ Further interventions at Jena led to Nikitin's exasperation, yet he could do nothing: Kolesnichenko enjoyed the patronage of the victor of Stalingrad, Lieutenant-General (later Marshal) Chuikov.¹⁵¹

Kolesnichenko was, ultimately, particularly sensitive to any conduct or opinions that would undermine the 'anti-fascist-democratic transformation'. When he perceived that the German populace conflated the actions of his own officers and troops with their SED allies, thus endangering the nascent 'transformation', he ordered a 'more discreet' deportment. He advocated a continuation of ongoing Soviet intervention but ordered a change in method. For example, SED functionaries henceforth only met with SVATH personnel under cover of darkness.¹⁵² The General also criticised the SVAG as a 'Durchgangshalle' in which everyone was chasing women instead of performing work.¹⁵³ He sent a letter to Lieutenant General Bokov (a member of the SVAG military council) in June 1946 lamenting the absence of an adequate selection process; the existing system had provided a cadre with a lack of circumspection. Though nothing came of this, Kolesnichenko himself purged the ranks of the SVATH from early 1947. By September, a number of Red Army officers had been sent back to

¹⁴⁹ *Hochschuloffiziere und Wiederaufbau des Hochschulwesens in Deutschland 1945-1949. Die Sowjetische Besatzungszone*, ed. M. Heinemann (Berlin, 2000), 316.

¹⁵⁰ P. Nikitin, *Zwischen Dogma und gesundem Menschenverstand* (Berlin, 1997); *Inventar der Befehle des Obersten Chefs der Sowjetischen Militäradministration in Deutschland (SVAG) 1945-1949*, ed. J. Foitzik (Munich, 1995), 70-1; *Hochschuloffiziere und Wiederaufbau*, 97.

¹⁵¹ Nikitin, 108-10; *Hochschuloffiziere und Wiederaufbau*, 4-5, 83, 97, 114, 317-8.

¹⁵² Foitzik, *Sowjetische Militäradministration*, 72.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 212.

the Soviet Union on the count of ‘moral unsuitability for service in Germany’. These totaled 52 within the year, while 30 more waited on successors.¹⁵⁴

Perhaps taking impetus from Kolesnichenko’s often-radical actions, German communists and junior Red Army officers believed that they had a remit to intervene unilaterally in religious affairs. This was not permitted, however, and it seems somewhat incongruous that Kolesnichenko, a domineering communist capable of precipitate intervention, would not only allow the Churches leeway but favor them by countermanding orders given by his Red Army subordinates. The explanation lies in the General’s vision for Eastern Germany. In December of 1947, Kolesnichenko challenged the operational methods of the NKVD in Thuringia, over which he had no direct authority.¹⁵⁵ In a letter to Karlshorst, he concluded that frequent arrests and abductions served only to alienate the German population and CDU and LDPD bloc politicians.¹⁵⁶ Little was done, though, and Kolesnichenko broached the role of the Christian Church in his memorandum of November 1948. He advocated the recruitment of bishops and clergy to offer pastoral care to detainees through regular visits under the supervision of wards.¹⁵⁷ He evidently valued not only the propaganda value inherent to this, but also the traditional role of the church in ‘comforting the suffering’.¹⁵⁸ Kolesnichenko had spoken in a similar vein almost three years previously. The LKR member Dr. Hertzsch wrote to the Thuringian Office for

¹⁵⁴ Nikitin, 35-6; Foitzik, *Sowjetische Militäradministration*, 212.

¹⁵⁵ N. Petrov, ‘Zur Geschichte der sowjetischen Repressionsorgane (NKVD/MVD-MGB) in der SBZ 1945/46’, in A. Hilger et al (ed.), *Diktaturdurchsetzung. Instrumente und Methoden der kommunistischen Machtsicherung in der SBZ/DDR 1945-1955* (Dresden, 2001), 34ff.

¹⁵⁶ Naimark, *The Russians in Germany*, 392-4, see n. 167 on dating (November or December 1947).

¹⁵⁷ *Sowjetische Politik in der SBZ 1945-1949*, 197.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 198.

People's Education (Landesamt für Volksbildung, LVB) regarding a Kolesnichenko address on 25 February 1946:

[Kolesnichenko] hat uns [Mitglieder des Landeskirchenrats] ermächtigt und aufgefordert, bei jeder Gelegenheit der Lüge entgegenzutreten, dass die Regierung der Soviet-Union dem Christentum oder der Kirche ablehnend oder feindlich gegenüberstehe.¹⁵⁹

The General criticised contemporary 'old prejudices' that impeded or brought into question a 'trusting collaboration'. Finally, at various points in his memoir, *Bitva posle voiny*, it is clear that Kolesnichenko clearly understood the depth of Christian history in Thuringia, as well as the cultural and traditional pre-eminence of faith in the region.¹⁶⁰ He grasped the status of Martin Luther as reformer, for instance, and the significance of the Wartburg as the site of Luther's bible translation into the vernacular.¹⁶¹

Bishop Mitzenheim, for his part, was also disposed toward a mutually beneficial arrangement between Church and State. His greatest concern was to forge a 'living space' for the church that ensured its independence; he was determined not to countenance a recurrence of repressive totalitarianism.¹⁶² Mitzenheim thus followed, in large measure, a variation on the traditional Lutheran 'doctrine of the two kingdoms'.¹⁶³ His 'doctrine of the two dominions' (Zwei-Regimente Lehre) established a distinction between secular government and the spiritual realm, though

¹⁵⁹ LKAE, A860/VIII/I, Dr. Hertzsch to Dr. Wolf (LVB Thuringia), 8/3/46.

¹⁶⁰ Kolesnichenko, *Bitva posle voiny*, 116-20, 162-4, 219.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 116-7.

¹⁶² See, for example: AKPS, A, Gen. 4061, 'Die Grundsätze der evangelischen Kirche in den politischen Fragen der Zeit, Schreiben der evangelischen Bischöfe der Ostzone an Marschall Sokolowski', 11/5/48.

¹⁶³ The best discussion of the 'doctrine of the two dominions' is that of Koch-Hallas (*Die Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche*, 293-310), though her analysis largely applies to the early years of the DDR. See also: G. Besier, 'The German Democratic Republic and the State Churches, 1958-1989', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 50/3 (1999), 530; Friebe, 142-59.

the division was according to God's action and not that of mankind (as with the doctrine of the two kingdoms).¹⁶⁴ The individual Christian, *simul iustus et peccator*, was subject to God in the life of faith and to temporal authorities as a citizen of the world. The Christian believer, therefore, owed obedience to secular government, yet the demands of each 'dominion' ought not to extend beyond their respective bounds, one to interfere with the other. Perhaps the most prominent issue, especially in the later DDR, was the definition of the limits of secular authority and the appropriate exegesis of Romans XIII.¹⁶⁵ According to the two 'dominions', Church and State did share some common ground as, for instance, Mitzenheim maintained that it was acceptable to collaborate with the State in certain areas, such as in public encouragement to political engagement and in peace initiatives.¹⁶⁶

Regarding politics, Kolesnichenko was deeply concerned, like Tiul'panov, about the possibility of church support for the CDU in the lead up to the elections of October 1946. At a meeting on 25 February 1946, for instance, he urged the LKR not to make the error of binding the church to any of the anti-fascist parties ('etwa mit der CDU').¹⁶⁷ Mitzenheim acquiesced and promised no church interference in the political process. In his memoirs, Kolesnichenko remembered Mitzenheim's promise that the TheK, as an institution, would not agitate for any particular party.¹⁶⁸ The

¹⁶⁴ For further differences between the doctrines of the 'two kingdoms' and the 'two dominions', see: Koch-Hallas, *Die Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche*, 297ff.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 298, 301-3; see also: M. Greschat, 'Römer 13 und die DDR. Die Streit um das Verständnis der "Obrigkeit" (1957-1961)', *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, 105 (2008), 63-93.

¹⁶⁶ This stance continued into the DDR, see: *ibid.*, 67-8; F. Ehlert, "'Suchet der Stadt Bestes!': Bischof Mitzenheims Bemühungen um Einvernehmen mit dem Staat", *Kirche im Sozialismus*, 14/3 (1988), 97. Mitzenheim came in for great criticism, perhaps most saliently, over the 'concessions' he made to the State in the course of discussions on behalf of the EKD in June 1958: Greschat, 'Römer 13', 67-8; Besier, 'The German Democratic Republic', 526-30.

¹⁶⁷ *LKAE*, A860/VII/I, Dr. Hertzsch to Dr. Wolf (LVB Thuringia), 8/3/46.

¹⁶⁸ M. Mitzenheim, *Politische Diakonie, Reden, Erklärungen, Aufsätze 1946-1964* (Berlin, 1967), 12-6; Kolesnichenko, *Im gemeinsamen Kampf*, 87-8.

Thuringian church had, in fact, been the first in the Soviet zone, on 1 August 1945, to advise the pastorate to keep from political propaganda.¹⁶⁹ The bishop reiterated this on 29 July 1946.¹⁷⁰ An addendum on 5 August, however, impressed upon his pastors that, while restraint in political affairs was advisable, this was no directive; churchmen could conceivably run as political candidates.¹⁷¹

While Mitzenheim's personal position on politics was 'reserved' and 'neutral', as he stated in an interview in October 1947, this did not mean complete detachment from engaging in questions that concerned public life.¹⁷² Mitzenheim, therefore, encouraged political involvement amongst parishioners as a civic responsibility. The TheK was, again, the first church in the Soviet zone to encourage participation in the 1946 elections.¹⁷³ So, while Mitzenheim advised against biased party propaganda within church walls, he viewed electoral participation as the responsibility of every Christian, and he did not discourage membership in or candidacy for the political parties.¹⁷⁴ Kolesnichenko even granted Mitzenheim a space on Thuringian radio before the elections, which the bishop used to urge Christians to vote. Mitzenheim sought to ensure that the church was 'above' the parties and bound to none, though it was to participate and not to 'stand in the corner of the democratic state'.¹⁷⁵ In so doing, he attempted to prevail upon parishioners to uphold their duties as Christians on the one hand, and as secular citizens on the other.

¹⁶⁹ *AEKT*, Thüringer Kirchenblatt, 4/1945, 45ff; J.J. Seidel, 'Abkehr vom "Deutschen Christentum"', 44.

¹⁷⁰ *LKAE*, A239/III, LKR to all Pfr., 29/7/46.

¹⁷¹ T. Seidel, *Im Übergang der Diktaturen*, 120.

¹⁷² *LKAE*, NL Mitzenheim, 27, Interview with Mitzenheim, 13/10/47.

¹⁷³ Creuzberger, 81; *LKAE*, A930/V, Sup. (Gera) to LKR, 3/8/46.

¹⁷⁴ *GuH*, 1/17, 18/8/46, 'Amtliche Bekanntmachungen der Thür. evangel. Kirche', 4; cf. Mitzenheim, *Politische Diakonie*, 16, 17.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 12-3, 15.

Mitzenheim also publicly promoted ‘German unity’ and ‘peace’ in general. He wrote, for instance, an article intended for newspaper publication in celebration of the 400th anniversary of Martin Luther’s death in 1946:

Ich bin der Überzeugung, dass der Verfassungsentwurf der SED geeignet ist, die Entwicklung zu einem einheitlichen Deutschland entscheidend vorwärtzutreiben, da er gegenüber separatistischen Verfassungsentwürfen in anderen Zonen klar die Einheit Deutschlands verfassungs- und verwaltungsgemäßig herausarbeitet.¹⁷⁶

In December 1947, Mitzenheim also published a front-page article entitled ‘Frieden auf Erden’ in the Christmas issue of the SED-edited *Abendpost*.¹⁷⁷ Lastly, Mitzenheim attended and spoke at the first *Volkskongress* in Berlin on 6 and 7 December 1947.¹⁷⁸ The congress was, of course, a public manifestation of the SED’s ‘consensus politics’ (Bündnispolitik) designed to promote the party’s influence throughout the zone.¹⁷⁹ At the second sitting of the *Kirchliche Ostkonferenz* on 7 January 1948 (comprising church leaders from throughout the zone), Mitzenheim explained his participation as a civic duty. He bore a responsibility for the future of Germany that ought not to be restricted to the political parties. Each individual was responsible for ‘peace on earth’.¹⁸⁰ In a letter to the central office of the EKD, Mitzenheim stated that he had attended the *Volkskongress* not as a member of a political party but as a private citizen and delegate of the Thuringian state.¹⁸¹ He received the support, for example, of the Saxon Bishop Hugo Hahn and the theologian Dr. Oskar Söhngen.¹⁸² Mitzenheim also

¹⁷⁶ *LKAE*, NL Mitzenheim, 27, ‘Luther Gedächtnisjahr 1946’, undated (prob. September/October 1946).

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, *Abendpost*, 284/A, 24/12/47.

¹⁷⁸ *EZAB*, 4/448, Bd. 1, Mitzenheim to the central office of the EKD, 10/1/48. On the *Volkskongress* see: Friebel, 51-3; Besier, *Der SED-Staat und die Kirche*, 53-4; Goerner, 54.

¹⁷⁹ Bruce, 79.

¹⁸⁰ *Die Protokolle der Kirchlichen Ostkonferenz*, 227-8 (esp. nn. 8, 11).

¹⁸¹ *EZAB*, 4/448, Bd. 1, Mitzenheim to the central office of the EKD, 10/1/48.

¹⁸² *LKAE* A860/III, Mitzenheim to Pfr. B., Pfr. Dr. K., 13/1/48.

had approval from sections of the Thuringian pastorate, especially religious socialists. One of these was the LKR member Dr. Hertzsch, who had run for the SED in the October 1946 elections.¹⁸³ Mitzenheim, lastly, was not hostile to socialism and he found common ground between both worldviews, which he reportedly expressed to Tiul'panov.¹⁸⁴ It was acceptable to be a socialist in one's worldly life, and a Christian in the spiritual life.

Mitzenheim's political engagement was, however, not universally approved by the Thuringian pastorate.¹⁸⁵ Gera churchmen, for example, refused to send a representative to the second *Volkskongress* in 1948. They argued that the Christian gospel was not suited to the political rostrum: they declared for peace and unity, calling all to obedience to God, but only from the pulpit.¹⁸⁶ Pastor B. at Stünzhain criticised Mitzenheim's participation given that the bishop had admonished all to refrain from tendentious political agitation. Surely the *Volkskongress* was a forum for the SED: 'mir erscheint diese Veranstaltung einseitig parteipolitisch aufgezogen und in bestimmter Richtung an die politische Macht gebunden.'¹⁸⁷ Mitzenheim responded that the church had no alliance to any party, but its responsibility for public life demanded that clergy speak out upon solicitation.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸³ On religious socialists, see: *ThHStAW*, BMP, 80/867/103, 'Bericht über den Besuch der Tagung Religiöser Sozialisten in Kassel, 1/6/48'. A. von Jüchen, 'Warum Christentum und Sozialismus einander begegnen müssen', *Die Zeichen der Zeit*, 6 (1947), 185-90; *Die Anfangsjahre der CDU in Thüringen und auf dem Eichsfeld (1945-1950)*, ed. R. Wenzel (Duderstadt, 2000), 78-9. On Hertzsch, see: T. Seidel, *Im Übergang der Diktaturen*, 122-3, 125-7, 128-31.

¹⁸⁴ *LKAE*, A930/V, Superintendentur Gera to the LKR, 3/8/46; S. Tulpanow, *Deutschland nach dem Kriege (1945-1949). Erinnerungen eines Offiziers der Sowjetarmee* (East Berlin, 1986), 241.

¹⁸⁵ This is no surprise given the historical divisions within the pastorate, see above, p. 25. Also: T. Seidel, *Im Übergang der Diktaturen*, 105-35.

¹⁸⁶ *LKAE*, A860/III, Aufsichtsbezirk Ost (Gera) to the LKR, 30/1/48; *ibid.*, Sup. (Gera) to Kreisbüro Gera (Volkskongress), 27/1/48.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, Pfr. (Stünzhain) to Mitzenheim, 21/1/48.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, Mitzenheim to Pfr. (Stünzhain), 17/2/48.

Despite this reply, Mitzenheim's media contributions and appearance at the first *Volkskongress* could only be interpreted as support for the SED. More than support, perhaps, the bishop offered legitimacy to a party suffering from a significant lack of public credibility, and whose social control was incomplete even beyond 1949.¹⁸⁹ Mitzenheim was not ductile to all party wishes, however. He signed a remonstrance of the Protestant leaders in the Soviet zone, sent to the head of the SVAG, Marshal Sokolovskii, on 11 May 1948. This document outlined the refusal of the Protestant Church to offer a formal position on the upcoming *Volksbegehren* on German unity and to participate in the third *Volkskongress* in 1949. The prelates railed against increasing secular pressures on and interference in the regional churches, and outlined the claims of Christianity in public and private life. Following from this, Mitzenheim declined in April 1949 to participate personally in or to provide a representative to the third *Volkskongress*. Times had changed since the first *Volkskongress* in 1947. The SED held greater sway over public and political life, and now Mitzenheim stated that the task of the church lay with pastoral care and not in politics.¹⁹⁰ In sum, Mitzenheim and Kolesnichenko managed a *modus vivendi* throughout the period of the Soviet zone that allowed both to realise their ultimate aims in post-war Thuringia. Mitzenheim jealously sought the protection of the church's religious realm, Kolesnichenko, the foundations and eventual realisation of a socialist state. The reason for the General's liberal policy was, after all, to win the sympathies of the German population for the Soviet Union in particular, and the communist project in general.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 'Besprechungsvermerk', Mitzenheim and MP Paul, 17/1/47. Also, see below, p. 361-3.

¹⁹⁰ Besier, *Der SED-Staat und die Kirche*, 54-5. Mitzenheim repeated this focus in circulars to the Thuringian pastorate on 12 February 1950 and 28 April 1955: *Ein Lebensraum für die Kirche*, 48, 132.

¹⁹¹ *Sowjetische Politik in der SBZ 1945-1949*, 198.

Further north, the relationship between the LKA and the Saxon-Anhalt government was also largely peaceful. In line with its dominant Lutheran character, the small Anhalt church largely kept out of politics and maintained a pastoral focus on the individual's private life.¹⁹² According to an AKW report dated 9 October 1946, the administration and financial apparatus of the Anhalt Church was far superior to that of the Provincial Saxon Church. The LKA church council was comprised largely of 'moderate Confessing Church members' inclined towards co-existence with the State. On this count, there were few complaints amongst the clergy directed at the church leadership, and few frictions with the secular authorities. The AKW author noted that this was precisely the opposite situation to that experienced with the KPS.¹⁹³

The KPS focused the ire of the Saxon-Anhalt authorities. Where the Thuringian church advocated a variant on the doctrine of the two kingdoms, the KPS favored a theology, 'the kingship of Christ', based on the writings of the Swiss theologian Karl Barth and the second and fifth tenets of the 1934 Barmen Confession. The crux of this interpretation was that Jesus Christ had sovereignty over all spheres of life, and religious claims ought to bear utmost importance for believers.¹⁹⁴ This theology, furthermore, interpreted the Church and State spheres as concentric circles; it was not possible to make a clear distinction between the two. The Church, though an independent institution, bore significant public responsibility as a partner with the State. It was no peripheral organisation with a limited purview.¹⁹⁵ In practice, the

¹⁹² While a uniate church, the LKA was predominantly influenced by a Lutheran theology: *LKAD*, Bekenntnisstand in Anhalt, 'Der Bekenntnisstand der evang. Landeskirche Anhalts', M. Müller, 30/11/48. See also: Kars, 739.

¹⁹³ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 469, 3879, 'Informationsbericht über kirchliche Verhältnisse', 9/10/1946.

¹⁹⁴ The position is best presented at: Friebe, 159-69. For the Barmen Confession, see: <http://www.ekd.de/bekenntnisse/142.html> (accessed 10/1/2011).

¹⁹⁵ Friebe, 180ff.

claims of both the KPS and the secular authorities to the ‘leadership of people’ was the Gordian knot that lay at the heart of disagreements. An AKW report dated 26 March 1946 blamed the KPS for the breakdown of relations because the church endeavored to ‘seize’ and ‘influence’ people in all parts of life.¹⁹⁶ In attempting to sideline the Christian Church, the secular authorities sought to make religion an individual event constrained by ever-decreasing sacred spaces, and, ultimately, to restrict religious manifestations to within church walls. Christianity would atrophy, then, being an internal affair of the individual with little social reference. Yet, KPS hierarchs were not willing to give up the church’s claim on the entirety of human life at any cost, and they actively pursued the practical realisation of this theology by withholding support for the State in instances where it would incur an infraction of ‘public responsibility’. This is apparent, as we have seen, in initial church responses to the *Volksentscheid*, the 1946 elections and the Stuttgart Confession (see below, chapter six). Bishop Müller also turned down an offer to attend the second *Volkskongress* in early 1948. The church was not suited to politics; the concern of the KPS, rather, lay in its ‘responsibility for the life and future of our people’.¹⁹⁷

The task of the church, therefore, lay exclusively with the preaching of the Christian gospel. A conference held in 1945 by the Elsterwerda pastorate reached four conclusions on the relationship between the clergy and politics, which were representative of the KPS position. Firstly, any churchman who maintained the view that the Christian gospel was an individual and personal matter sinned against his inner calling and against his ordination vow. Secondly, a pastor who entered a

¹⁹⁶ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 469, 3879, ‘Tätigkeit und Aufgaben der Abteilung für Kirchenwesen im abgelaufenen Jahr’, 26/3/46; *ibid.*, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht der Abteilung für Kirchenwesen’, 4/9/1946.

¹⁹⁷ *EZAB*, 4/448, Bd. I, Müller circular to the KPS pastorate, 16/1/48. The Lutheran churches of Mecklenburg and Saxony also turned down invitations: Besier, *Der SED-Staat und die Kirche*, 54.

political party ran the risk of selling his soul to a non-Christian authority and endangered his pastoral work. Thirdly, all clergy were responsible for the Christian gospel to the population, and nothing else. Lastly, the churchman who toed a party line, became, in so doing, a ‘preacher’ for it; he became a mouthpiece for the primacy of politics rather than Christianity.¹⁹⁸

Minister President Hübener expressed concerns for future relations at the first sitting of the post-war synod on 22 October 1946. He acknowledged that both the Church and the State wanted to ‘take possession of people’s souls’ (Menschenseelen Besitz ergreifen), though he claimed that both institutions could and should work together peacefully:

Ich kenne aus der Weltgeschichte keinen einzigen Fall, wo wohl verstandene Staats- und Kircheninteressen sich gegenübergestanden hatten und einen Kulturkampf notwendig gemacht hätten. Wenn Staat und Kirche sich immer gewissenhaft prüfen, so wird der Friede zwischen den beiden Mächten gesichert sein. Gott schenke uns die Einsicht, die für diese Entscheidungen erforderlich ist.¹⁹⁹

One problem for Hübener and Dr. Kunisch was the headstrong personalities in church leadership. An AKW report submitted in October 1946 reached a negative verdict on the future of Church and State relations. Kunisch judged the KPS government to be divided into ‘good’ and ‘bad’ parties: the ‘moderates’ and the ‘radicals’. The issue resided in that, where the former advocated a rapprochement with the State, the latter championed the idea of a church with unlimited societal freedom of movement. These ‘radical Confessing Church members’ maintained that the Church must have

¹⁹⁸ AKPS, A, Gen. 3539, Sup. (Elsterwerda) to the KL, 28/11/45.

¹⁹⁹ AKPS, CI, Nr. 77. See also: LHASA, MAG, K2, 469, 3879, ‘Die Provinzial-Synode der Kirchenprovinz Sachsen vom 21. Bis 24. Oktober in Halle (Saale)’, 23 and 25/10/46. See also: Schultze, 52, n. 1.

precedence and secure influence in all areas of daily life. Kunisch commented pejoratively:

Sie vertritt das Dogma der Totalität, d.h. wenn wir Christen sind, dann wollen wir in allen Lebenslagen und Lebensäußerungen Christen sein. Das ganze Leben muss sich Christus unterordnen.

The report criticised Bishop Müller in particular for his undemocratic, authoritarian disposition that was exemplified by the appointment of key supporters to leadership positions. It was Lothar Kreyssig, the first President of the Konsistorium, however, who came in for the most criticism. He reportedly had the inclination to initiate another *Kulturkampf*.²⁰⁰ Kunisch identified Kreyssig as the intransigent head of the ‘radicals’ and a formidable opponent. In the Third Reich, Kreyssig had been outspoken in opposing the euthanasia of the mentally handicapped, and this courage, wedded to obduracy, was carried further into the post-war world.²⁰¹ In time, he harbored few illusions about the intentions of the Soviet occupiers and their KPD/SED allies; Red Army soldiers had plundered his farm in Brandenburg at the end of the war, and the Soviet security forces twice apprehended his brother-in-law. The second time he was sent to a concentration camp, never to return.²⁰² Kreyssig was, above all, a committed Christian who, Kunisch observed, tested everything against the touchstones of ‘bible and confession’. Anything that failed to accord with the Christian gospel was rejected, even state directives and legislation.²⁰³ Kunisch summed up Kreyssig’s position in this way: ‘Wenn wir Christen sind, wollen wir in

²⁰⁰ LHASA, MAG, K2, 469, 3879, ‘Informationsbericht über kirchliche Verhältnisse’, 9/10/1946.

²⁰¹ On Kreyssig and euthanasia the Third Reich, see, in particular: K. Weiß, *Lothar Kreyssig. Prophet der Versöhnung* (Gerlingen, 1998), 153-79. Kreyssig was also the ‘one documented case of resistance in which a judge opposed the system in the course of carrying out his professional duties’: I. Müller, *Hitler’s Justice. The Courts of the Third Reich* (London, 1991), 193-5.

²⁰² Weiß, 199-200, 204-6. He also almost lost his farm twice to the Bodenreform, in 1945 and 1947: 209-13.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, ‘Ergänzung zum Informationsbericht über kirchliche Verhältnisse’, 11/10/1946.

jedem Augenblick und in allen unseren Handlungen Christen sein.²⁰⁴ This attitude was borne out at the synod. Müller and Kreyssig had to register the meeting in advance and submit an order of business to the SVAS-A. Before the final day, however, it was forbidden the church to discuss the question of religious education. Kreyssig withdrew in protest with three others.²⁰⁵

Kreyssig did not act alone, however, and Müller's interactions with the State authorities and the AKW throughout 1946 revealed a rare political perspicacity. There were conflicting state assessments of him, and his nuanced approach ensured that various AKW reports were contradictory.²⁰⁶ Müller essentially maintained similar claims to the 'radicals' regarding the individual and Christianity. As early as 18 September 1945, Müller issued a circular to the pastorate asserting the absolute centrality of the Christian gospel; it was no private matter or 'peripheral affair'.²⁰⁷ From 1948 especially, as we have seen, Müller continued to uphold the key interests and affairs of the Church as paramount, and he was not afraid to challenge the secular authorities.²⁰⁸ Müller was, lastly, a co-signatory with the other bishops in the Soviet zone of the declaration sent to Marshal Sokolovskii in May 1948, which aptly

²⁰⁴ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 469, 3881, 'Die kirchenpolitischen Richtungen in der Evangelischen Kirche der Provinz Sachsen-Anhalt', undated; *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 469, 3879, 'Ergänzung zum Informationsbericht über kirchliche Verhältnisse', 11/10/1946. On the first synod of the KPS, see: Schultze, 33-51.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 33 (n. 1); Weiß, 237-8. The others were: Kons. Rat Anz, Probst Hildebrandt and Pfr. Lehmbach.

²⁰⁶ For example, if the State did not accede to the demands of the Church, Müller was prepared to compromise to reach a viable result. Somewhat telling is Kunisch's observation that Müller's willingness to engage in discussion was, to a large degree, attributable to his previous experience as a superintendent in the church and familiarity with the practice of its administration, see: *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 469, 3879, 'Ergänzung zum Informationsbericht über kirchliche Verhältnisse', 11/10/1946. This evaluation of Müller however is in direct contradiction to Kunisch's earlier representation of him to the EOKR in August 1946. In this, Kunisch believed that Church and State problems were a result of Müller's inexperience, see: *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 734, 190, 'Aktenvermerk', 15/8/46.

²⁰⁷ J.J. Seidel *Aus den Trümmern*, 217-9.

²⁰⁸ Bishops Dibelius and Preysing in Berlin also publicly raised their voices against number of SVAG and SED measures, particularly from 1948: Brennan, 8, 121-4.

expounded the politico-theological position of Müller and Kreyszig: the reliance of the Christian Church on Jesus Christ alone; an engagement on political questions if the claims of the Christian gospel demanded it; and, the freedom to assume any position on state policy.²⁰⁹

Conclusion

Carrying on from the liberal American church policy, the Soviet occupiers offered ‘freedom of religion’ in Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt. Yet, the policy of tolerance was not entirely borne out in reality, as both the KPS and TheK were plagued by local conflicts. On the one hand, the Provincial Saxon Church struggled against both the Red Army authorities and their German communist allies, and the often uncompromising stance of its prelates was countered by largely unyielding temporal agencies. This provided for a prickly and tense interface. On the other hand, the Thuringian church enjoyed a positive relationship with the Soviet occupiers, though it was not immune to lower level incidents. It was the local conflicts and their resolution or non-resolution that ultimately defined the churches’ relationships to the secular authorities. Following a disagreement in Genthin in September 1948, the pastor wrote to Müller expressing a hope that such petty local disputes did not complicate relations at the highest level.²¹⁰ The reality was that they did, and these incidents undermined church relations with the secular authorities. 1948, the year of SED radicalisation, marked the turning point for the KPS: the church leadership fully recognised its lack

²⁰⁹ *AKPS*, A, Gen. 4061, ‘Die Grundsätze der evangelischen Kirche in den politischen Fragen der Zeit, Schreiben der evangelischen Bischöfe der Ostzone an Marschall Sokolowski’, 11/5/48.

²¹⁰ *AKPS*, A, Gen. 4061, Pfr. (Genthin) to Kons., 7/9/48.

of traction with secular government and grew increasingly critical of developments in Saxony-Anhalt. In Thuringia, however, the resolution of lower level conflicts greatly fostered a rapprochement between Church and State. In this way, micro-historical events amongst the pastorate carry significant explanatory power in understanding the macro-historical dynamics in Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt.

Despite the differences in Church and State relations in Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia, the secular authorities everywhere attempted to marginalise the Churches and their influence over society by making religion an affair of the individual. Religion became, as a result, increasingly subversive in an increasingly secularised and material culture (see chapters three and four below). As Sean Brennan has also shown in Berlin-Brandenburg, for example, the Soviet occupiers and the KPD/SED moved to undermine the influence of the Churches and push them to the margins of public life, especially from 1947.²¹¹ While the German communist-Soviet bloc in Saxony-Anhalt and Kolesnichenko in Thuringia offered contrary approaches to the religious question, *both* prevailed upon the Churches and asserted the pre-eminence of secular power. Personalities and theologies played a significant role in accounting for the regional differences. Similar to Bishops Dibelius and Preysing in Berlin-Brandenburg, for instance, Müller and Kreyssig contested state authoritarianism and upheld a religious claim on all spheres of life.²¹² Otherwise, the practicalities of the Thuringian ‘two dominions’ doctrine greatly recommended the TheK to the Soviet occupiers. Kolesnichenko and Mitzenheim constructed a relationship based on mutual understanding, whereby the bishop was prepared to acquiesce to certain state requests as he sought to carve out a ‘living space’ for the Thuringian church. This was his

²¹¹ Brennan, 4, 5-6.

²¹² In Berlin-Brandenburg: *ibid.*, 8, 121-4, 275.

‘Thüringer Weg’, which was paved in the immediate post-war period by the perspicacious Kolesnichenko.²¹³ Mitzenheim continued, well into the 1950s, to see the SVAG as a ‘protective power’ (Schutzmacht) for the church.²¹⁴ He effectively offered an ongoing stabilising and legitimising resource to the SED, even receiving the ‘Vaterländische Verdienstorden in Gold’ from Walter Ulbricht in August 1961.²¹⁵ By October 1949, regardless of conflict in the Church Province of Saxony and accommodation in Thuringia, the new Germany was a socialist Germany with the SED in the vanguard. As he recounted, Kolesnichenko had victory in his battle after the war; he exclaimed of the event of 7 October 1949: ‘Thus, the German Democratic Republic was established!’²¹⁶

²¹³ On the ‘Thüringer Weg’ in the DDR, see: Koch-Hallas, *Die Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche*, 287-9.

²¹⁴ T. Seidel, *Im Übergang der Diktaturen*, 103.

²¹⁵ *ThHStAW*, Ki 19, Bezirkstag und Rat des Bezirks Erfurt, undated; Friebe, 238.

²¹⁶ Kolesnichenko, *Bitva posle voyny*, 223.

Chapter 2:

The struggle over the next generation: religious education, youth and the *Jugendweihe*

The secular and religious establishments gave high priority to children and youth in the post-war period as the building blocks of 'new' orders. One salient reason for this attention was the burden of the Nazi past: many young people were reportedly left apathetic and demoralised at the fall of the Third Reich.¹ A state directive on school education in Saxony-Anhalt condemned the destruction and shame brought upon Germany by National Socialism and proclaimed the next generation as central to the regeneration of the country.² In a circular sent to the pastorate of the Anhalt church dated 27 July 1945, the LKRA expressed its concern at lingering Nazi ideas and placed great emphasis on 'winning' youth back to church traditions and the establishment of a 'spirit of peace'.³

Myriad conflicts emerged, however, from secular and religious attempts to harness the next generation. Anton Ackermann, a member of the central leadership of the KPD (and later, SED), wrote of the fundamental pedagogical differences between Marxism and Christianity:

¹ See, for example: *LKAD*, Die Fürsorge für die konfirmierte Jugend, Herr K. to Pfr. E. (Dessau), 24/7/45; *LHASA*, MER, Kreisleitung der SED Zeitz, 'Berichte', Januar 1946-Dezember 1948, IV/424/350, 'Bericht der Kreisdelegierten-Konferenz der SED am 23.2.47', undated. Also: Brennan, 127-8; U. Mählert/G-R. Stephan, *Blaue Hemden – Rote Fahnen. Die Geschichte der Freien Deutschen Jugend* (Opladen, 1996), 14-5; U. Mählert, *Die Freie Deutsche Jugend 1945-1949* (Paderborn, 1995), 24-6.

² *AKPS*, B1, 181, 'Verordnung der Provinzialverwaltung für die Provinz Sachsen', AVB, 1/8/45.

³ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 804, 212, LKRA circular, 27/7/45.

Als Verfechter des philosophischen Materialismus stehen wir auf streng wissenschaftlichem Standpunkt und damit auf einer der christlichen Religionslehre diametral entgegengesetzten Plattform.⁴

There was no place for Christian education in the communist utopia, and upbringing in general was the strategically significant battlefield on which neither authority was willing to give ground. The next generation was ultimately the site of communist efforts to break the cycle of religious regeneration; it was the touchstone for the success or failure of different blueprints for Germany's future and, in a sense, it was the Churches' fight for survival. The intent of this chapter is to trace the contours of secular attempts to regulate the church mission to the next generation through legislation, local level persecution, and 'co-ordination' and 'supersession' initiatives. Much has been written on Church and State conflicts over religious education, youth and *Jugendweihe* in the Soviet zone and the DDR in general.⁵ Little historiography, though, analyses the connections between local level conflicts and higher-level negotiations in the SBZ. There is also no study that discusses, in sequence and in comparison, religious and secular disputes over young people in the *Grundschule*, beyond the *Grundschule* and in the rites of confirmation/*Jugendweihe*.

There was, firstly, conflict over the role of religion in kindergartens and the *Grundschule* (up to 14 years old). The German communists sought, in general, to

⁴ AKPS, O3, 253, *Volkszeitung*, 'Religion und Schule', undated. On KPD intentions, see; M. Buddrus, 'Anmerkungen zur Jugendpolitik der KPD 1945', in H. Gotschlich et al (ed.), *Aber nicht im Gleichschritt. Zur Entstehung der Freien Deutschen Jugend* (Berlin, 1997), 139-53 (esp. 150-3).

⁵ For example: J. Rodden, *Painting the Little Red Schoolhouse: A History of East German Education, 1945-1995* (Oxford, 2002), 9ff, 33-4; K. Wappler, *Klassenzimmer ohne Gott: Schulen im katholischen Eichsfeld und dem protestantischen Erzgebirge unter SED-Herrschaft* (Duderstadt, 2007); idem, 'The Limits of Politicization of the Schools in the GDR: the Catholic Church in the Eichsfeld Region and the Protestant Erzgebirge – A Comparison', in E. Peperkamp/M. Rajtar (ed.), *Religion and the Secular in Eastern Germany, 1945 to the Present* (Leiden, 2010), 61-86; B. Blessing, *The Antifascist Classroom: Denazification in Soviet-Occupied Germany 1945-1949* (New York, 2006); Brennan, 127-227; Tischner, *Katholische Kirche*, 286-309; E. Überschar, *Junge Gemeinde im Konflikt. Evangelische Jugendarbeit in der SBZ/DDR, 1945-1961* (Stuttgart, 2003); Koch-Hallas, *Die junge Gemeinde*. For literature on the *Jugendweihe*, see nn. 137, 159 below.

limit the Churches' pedagogic activities through legislation and local-level persecution despite the proclaimed religious freedom. Yet, as we have seen in chapter one, the Thuringian church enjoyed the indulgence of the Soviet occupiers as Kolesnichenko restrained KPD/SED interventions on occasion. Secondly, after confirmation and/or upon completion of the *Grundschule*, both the German communists and the Churches wished to organise youth (14 years and older). There were various secular attempts to co-ordinate existing church youth groups with their secular counterparts, the *Jugendausschüsse* and the Freie Deutsche Jugend (FDJ). German communist officials also harassed religious groups in localities. Thirdly, various local and regional offices attempted to re-implement the *Jugendweihe* to replace the church rite of confirmation. This was a blatant attempt to supplant the social influence and role of the Churches. While it was not state policy, it was a harbinger of times to come. In all, conflicts at the local level possess great importance for our understanding of the tectonics of Church and State relations at the highest echelon. Despite secular regulations that guaranteed certain rights to the Churches, low-level conflicts defined the milieu until the dynamic changed in the early 1950s, when draconian legislation framed an outright 'Kirchenkampf'.

Religion and the school

Clergy had oversight over all schools in Germany up until the end of World War I, and the Weimar constitution of August 1919 provided for a clear separation between Church and State. The State would henceforth oversee the public school system (article 144), teachers would be ideologically 'free' (article 142) and classes on religion would be part of the school curriculum, except in the newly established

‘secular’ (weltlich) schools (article 149). Both Churches, however, disputed the Church/State division, and there was a compromise that ensured the survival of confessional schools.⁶ During the Third Reich, however, many of these schools were closed or taken over by Nazi administrators.⁷ In October 1945, the communist goal was, according to an article in the socialist-controlled *Volkszeitung*, the establishment of the ideal Weimar ‘Einheitsschule’ with its clear division between Church and State; post-war eastern Germany offered another opportunity, and indeed the moment, for a ‘unified’, ‘democratic’ school where all would be equal and have access to the same education.⁸ Religion would have no role to play in the future of East German education.⁹ The post-war period, therefore, featured fresh conflict as both secular and religious authorities offered different perspectives on what role, if any, religious education should play in the school. In general, the SVAG and the KPD/SED, especially the German communists in the Thuringian State Office for People’s Education (LVB) and the Saxon-Anhalt Department for People’s Education (AVB), sought to limit the Churches’ influence in the schools as much as possible.¹⁰ Yet, given the enduring social influence of the Churches and certain political calculations, especially in the lead up to the October 1946 elections, the secular authorities

⁶ A good general overview of German school history is: H.-G. Herrlitz, *Deutsche Schulgeschichte von 1800 bis zur Gegenwart: Eine Einführung*, 5th edn (Weinheim, 2009). On the reforms after 1918 and conflict in the Weimar republic see: 126-7.

⁷ *ACDP*, 03-031-243, ‘Bericht’, Erfurt, 26/10/1945; *ACDP*, 03-031-243, ‘Bericht’, Eisenach, 26/10/1945; Tischner, *Katholische Kirche*, 247-8.

⁸ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 768 I, 2, 199, *Volkszeitung*, ‘Warum kein Religionsunterricht mehr in den Schulen?’, 6/10/45. The German communists did not recognise the validity of the Concordat of 1933 between the Catholic Church and the Nazi State (Raabe, 30-1). The state constitutions of late 1946 and early 1947 in the SBZ, as well as the DDR constitution, took on many of the religious provisions of the Weimar constitution of 11 August 1919, including *inter alia* no *Staatskirche*, the division between Church and State, and religious instruction was an affair only of the Churches etc (Goerner, 44).

⁹ See also: Goeckel, 42; Blessing, 168.

¹⁰ Tischner, *Katholische Kirche*, 127-37.

proceeded cautiously against religious education.¹¹ Despite a *modus vivendi* in 1946, reluctantly accepted by the Churches, local actors often ignored regulations and harassed religious education in localities.

In 1945 and 1946, the ‘school question’ largely concerned the proposed reestablishment of confessional schools, the status of religious education within the curriculum, the time allocated for it, the employment of schoolteachers and the use of classrooms. In Saxony-Anhalt, the Archbishop of Paderborn, Ernst Jäger, stated in a circular to his priests dated 12 July 1945 that it was time to restore the confessional schools that had been confiscated in the Nazi period.¹² Parishes at Magdeburg and Wolmirsleben too requested the reopening of formerly Catholic schools.¹³ The Protestant and Catholic Churches in Thuringia also demanded the reinstatement of their rights and their schools taken under National Socialism. Despite this, no confessional schools were reopened anywhere in the Soviet zone. The first post-war Thuringian Minister President, Hermann Brill, met with church representatives on 19 June and vacillated on the re-establishment of the religious schools.¹⁴ In Erfurt, Freusberg and Breithaupt met with the regional head of school administration on 2 July 1945. He informed them that there was no future for confessional schools given the intended separation between Church and State. They discussed, therefore, the parameters of religious instruction in the new ‘Gemeinschaftsschule’. The Churches would be solely responsible for religious education; it would not be part of the curriculum, while churchmen could use schoolrooms before or after regular school

¹¹ The reasons of ‘religious freedom’ are given above, pp. 41-4. The considerations surrounding religious education were an extension of these. See: Brennan, 171ff; Rodden, 38-40.

¹² *BAM*, Paderborn: Generalvikariat – Korrespondenz – 1945-1955, Bishop Jäger circular, 12/7/45.

¹³ *BAM*, Schule: katholische Schulen – Forderung nach konfessionellen Schulen/Bekenntnisschulen – 1945/1946, Pfr. (St Johannis Bapt. Magdeburg) to MP, 10/8/45; *ibid.*, Pfr. (Wolmirsleben) to Weskamm, 24/10/45.

¹⁴ *LKAE*, A830, ‘Niederschrift’, 19/6/45.

hours for religion classes. This vision accorded with the intent of the Weimar constitution (article 146).¹⁵ In Saxony-Anhalt, the AVB also rejected the re-establishment of confessional schools at a 4 September 1945 meeting and deemed all schools ‘Gemeinschaftsschulen’ in which religion had no place.¹⁶ The state representative further submitted that religious instruction was not to be allowed on school grounds: it was not considered part of the curriculum and was not to be dispensed by teachers in school employ.¹⁷ Weskamm and Bishop Müller met with Dr. Wagner of the AKW on 7 September to discuss these regulations. While the churchmen had given up on confessional schools, they argued for religious instruction to be part of the curriculum; over 90 percent of the population were members of the Churches, and Christian education was the best guarantee for ‘public morality’ (Volkssittlichkeit). If it could not be part of the curriculum, the clergymen continued, then the Churches should be allowed to use classrooms when they were not in use, even during school hours. They also wanted permission for regular teachers to provide religious education.¹⁸ This was all to no avail.

Meanwhile in Thuringia, the LVB too sought the complete separation of Church and State through various measures in September 1945, including a refusal to allow the reopening of confessional schools and kindergartens, a decree that religious instruction would no longer feature in the curriculum, and a prohibition on religious

¹⁵ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 768 I, 2, 199, Stadtrat and Stadtschulrat H. to LVB (Weimar), 2/7/45; see also: *ACDP*, 03-031-243, ‘Bericht’, Heiligenstadt, 24/10/1945.

¹⁶ *BAM*, Dechanten: Allgemein, 1945-1972, ‘Dechantenkonferenz in Magdeburg am 28.8.45’; see also: *ibid.*, ‘Dechantenkonferenz in Magdeburg, 9.10.46’.

¹⁷ *BAM*, Paderborn: Erzbischof – Korrespondenz – 1945-1955, ‘Bericht über die Seelsorge im Kommissariat Magdeburg’, 14/9/45; *ibid.*, Weskamm to Jäger, 31/10/45.

¹⁸ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 768 I, 2, 199, ‘Memorandum’, Wagner, 7/9/45; *ibid.*, Müller to MP, 10/9/45.

instruction dispensed by schoolteachers.¹⁹ In fact, Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt were the only two states in the Soviet zone where teachers were initially forbidden to offer religious education.²⁰ Mitzenheim protested in vain to the head of the LVB, Dr. Wolf, and Minister President Paul about the regulations in mid-September, especially the prohibition on schoolteachers offering religious education.²¹ Following discussions with Kolesnichenko on 2 and 12 October 1945, though, teachers were henceforth permitted to give religious instruction. The General also advised that the Churches could apply for the use of school rooms outside of class time (if no suitable rooms were available).²² While the Soviet authorities and the LVB both intended a division between Church and State, Kolesnichenko (adhering to the directive of Marshal Zhukov from Karlshorst) countermanded the LVB prohibition on schoolteachers giving Christian education.²³ The LVB had apparently gone too far and threatened to alienate the Churches. Kolesnichenko was anxious to placate the Churches as best he could; he acknowledged before the LKR in February 1946 that a significant ‘majority’ of parents wished their children to be raised in the Christian faith – even those active in the ‘workers’ movement’.²⁴

The concessions in Thuringia broke the impasse in Saxony-Anhalt. The AVB had passed a decree on 10 October banning religious education in classrooms; by 17

¹⁹ *EZAB*, 2/148, ‘Mitteilungsblatt des Landesamtes für Volksbildung Land Thüringen, Weimar’, 7/9/45; *ACDP*, 03-031-243, ‘Bericht’, Heiligenstadt, 24/10/45; *ibid.*, ‘Bericht’, Eisenach, 26/10/1945. For an exhaustive, but not always coherent account, see: T. Seidel, *Im Übergang der Diktaturen*, 146-65.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 150.

²¹ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 768 I, 2, 199, Mitzenheim to all pastors, 22/9/45.

²² *BEA*, CII a16, ‘Niederschrift’, 3/10/45; *LKAE*, A930/I, 3, ‘Besprechung zwischen Mitzenheim and Kolesnichenko’, 2/10/45; *ibid.*, ‘Besprechung zwischen Mitzenheim and Kolesnichenko’, 4/10/45; *LKAE*, A830/VI, LKR circular to the pastorate, 8/10/45; *ibid.*, ‘Niederschrift’, 12/10/45.

²³ *ThHStAW*, MVB, 210, Kolesnichenko to Dr. Wolf, undated; *ibid.*, Prof. M. (AVB, SVAG) to Dr. Wolf, undated. Kolesnichenko had earlier requested and received a directive from Zhukov.

²⁴ *LKAE*, A860/VII/I, Dr. Hertzsch to Dr. Wolf, 8/3/46.

October, nevertheless, the AKW had acquired a copy of Kolesnichenko's directive and, soon after, received word that Bishop Dibelius had managed the same accommodation in Berlin. The Saxon-Anhalt regulations were aligned with those of Thuringia and Berlin by 1 November 1945.²⁵

The resolution was not, however, the final settlement of the 'school question'. Weskamm in Magdeburg, for one, was not satisfied with the new *status quo* and, in a circular to his priests dated 23 February 1946, he railed against the legislation that made schools secular and restricted religious instruction. Weskamm disapproved, furthermore, of the provision that required parental consent and he demanded, 'as a matter of conscience', that Catholic children ought to receive a compulsory Christian education. The 'obligatory, irreligious state school' (religionslose staatliche Zwangsschule) was a contravention of democratic principles, as well as historical and legal precedents such as articles 135 and 138 of the Weimar constitution on the freedom of confession and the free access to a Christian school respectively.²⁶ The Catholic community at Oranienbaum also sent a petition to the Minister President expressing its concern. There was disappointment that rights taken from the Churches in the Nazi period had not been restored, nor had a democratic state founded on confessional freedom been established.²⁷ In Thuringia, the LVB was a continual thorn in the side of the TheK.²⁸ While the Churches could use schoolrooms in the hours before or after regular classes were in session, in early 1946 the LVB prohibited

²⁵ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 768, I, AVB directive, 10/10/45; *ibid.*, Kolesnichenko directive (copy), 17/10/45; *ibid.*, 'Vermerk', Dibelius/Semjonov, 25/10/45; *AKPS*, A Gen. 2, 26.1,2, 'Stand der Schulfrage in der Provinz Sachsen am 1. November 1945'.

²⁶ See: http://www.documentarchiv.de/wr/wrv.html#DRITTER_ABSCHNITT02 (accessed 28/10/2010).

²⁷ *BAM*, Schule: katholische Schulen – Forderung nach konfessionellen Schulen/Bekenntnisschulen – 1945/1946, Oranienbaum community to MP, 5/3/46.

²⁸ Cf. Dähn, 'Grundzüge der Kirchenpolitik', 158-9.

young teachers (Neulehrer) from instructing religion as it would ‘overburden’ them. Dr. Hertzsch, a member of the LKR, remonstrated that this was part of a concerted LVB campaign to restrict those eligible to teach religion. There were also LVB accusations leveled against a number of preceptors who allegedly had been Nazi party members. Hertzsch continued that such attacks were intended to impugn the church on political grounds.²⁹ This was a tactic used by the KPD/SED throughout the Soviet zone. The Department for People’s Education in Berlin-Brandenburg, for example, formally requested that local branches investigate certain teachers of religious instruction in December 1945.³⁰

In May/June 1946, the Gesetz zur Demokratisierung der deutschen Schule determined the parameters of religion and the school in the Soviet zone.³¹ The legislation provided that all teachers were permitted to teach religion, and Christian instruction could accompany regular school education when it was ‘appropriate’ (zweckmässig). That is, religious education could proceed so long as it did not ‘overburden’ the children.³² There were nonetheless ambiguities in the wording as the state authorities were the arbiters of what was ‘appropriate’ and what ‘overburdened’ children. This decree, inevitably, occasioned protests throughout the zone, and the Churches in Saxony-Anhalt, for example, disputed the maximum allowance of two hours of Christian education per week.³³ The AVB rejected any increase in hours despite a

²⁹ AKPS, B1, 69, ‘Lageberichte der einzelnen Landes- und Provinzialkirchen’, undated (prob. mid-1946); cf. T. Seidel, *Im Übergang der Diktaturen*, 156-7, 162. On the denazification of teachers in the Soviet zone, see: Tischner, *Katholische Kirche*, 281-4; Wappler, *Klassenzimmer ohne Gott*, 34-5.

³⁰ Brennan, 150.

³¹ In Saxony-Anhalt, the legislation was enacted on 22 May, in Thuringia, on 2 June.

³² BAM, Schule: Allgemein/Religionsunterricht, 1945-1960, ‘Ausführungsbestimmungen zur Verordnung über die Demokratisierung der Schule vom 22.5.1946’.

³³ Benita Blessing (168) offers a blanket statement that the secular authorities heeded the regulations throughout the period of the Soviet zone. This is inaccurate as there were myriad conflicts. Apart from

meeting with Minister President Hübener, Provost Weskamm and Pastor Zuckschwerdt of the KPS (amongst others) on 9 August 1946. The main concern of the state authorities again was that the children were not ‘overburdened’ with commitments. Both Churches were also concerned that they had not been consulted before the directive of 22 May, and that the State supervised religious education in places and disputed the employment of certain teachers of religion on denazification grounds.³⁴ Weskamm met with Hübener again on 1 October and left with greater optimism. Hübener granted that the schoolrooms ‘should’ be used upon application (it was previously ‘could’), teachers could dispense religion classes without prejudice, and the participants did not require formal registration.³⁵

The final directive on religious instruction of 30 October 1946 formalised the Saxon-Anhalt arrangement and contradicted some of Hübener’s ‘concessions’ of 1 October. It stipulated that children up to 14 years of age required registration, and schooling also *could* take place in schoolrooms upon application, if church rooms were not available or were insufficient. Religious instruction remained restricted to two hours per week so long as it did not inhibit regular school education.³⁶ The Churches were also responsible for the ‘political reliability’ of preceptors.³⁷ As reflected in a letter to Archbishop Jäger in Paderborn, Weskamm reluctantly accepted these stipulations as a *modus vivendi*.³⁸ The superintendent of Wanzleben, for one, also urged the KPS

Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia, see on Berlin-Brandenburg, for example: Dähn, *Konfrontation oder Kooperation*, 30-1; Brennan, 139ff.

³⁴ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 768 I, 2, 199, ‘Niederschrift’, Kunisch, 10/8/46.

³⁵ *BAM*, Paderborn: Erzbischof – Korrespondenz – 1945-1955, Weskamm to Jäger, 12/10/46.

³⁶ In schools where teaching took place both in the morning and afternoon, the Churches were allowed to offer religious instruction in the intervening break.

³⁷ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 804, 212, MP directive, 30/10/46; also in: *BAM*, Schule: Allgemein/Religionsunterricht, 1945-1960.

³⁸ *BAM*, Paderborn: Erzbischof – Korrespondenz – 1945-1955, Weskamm to Jäger, 19/12/46.

leadership to affirm ‘cautiously’ the new ‘Einheitsschule’.³⁹ The school question was therefore, legally at least, settled by the end of October 1946.

The various stages of state regulation of the ‘school question’ were not able, nonetheless, to prevent myriad local conflicts throughout the Soviet zone from 1945.⁴⁰ According to a document on the status of religious education in the zone, the situation varied between locales in the KPS. Teachers and church-employed catechists taught in many areas, and classes were often held in schoolrooms. In the Anhalt church, religious instruction was not permitted in schoolrooms in a number of places, nor could schoolteachers offer classes on religion.⁴¹ Local authorities in Halle informed the rector of the church of Sts. Franziskus and Elisabeth that there were no hours available for religious education.⁴² At Wettin, religious teaching was forbidden in schoolrooms, and the registration of a catechist was delayed.⁴³ A community in Mieste in the Altmark petitioned the Minister President, ‘in the interests of democracy’, to include religious education in the school curriculum and to offer freedom to teachers in dispensing it. The petitioners used strong language in getting their point across: the *status quo* was a ‘Vergewaltigung’ of parents’ wishes and ‘conscience’ in general.⁴⁴ At Bornstedt and Eisleben, the local congregations wrote, in a similar vein, that they had hoped for ‘true democracy’, but this had not occurred: the school authorities had hindered religious education at every step, and would not allow

³⁹ AKPS, A, Gen. 3539, 1, Sup. (Wanzleben) to KL, 20/12/46.

⁴⁰ On Preysing’s struggles in Berlin in 1945, see: Tischner, *Katholische Kirche*, 251-6.

⁴¹ AKPS, B1, 69, ‘Lageberichte der einzelnen Landes- und Provinzialkirchen’, undated.

⁴² BAM, Schule: Allgemein/Religionsunterricht, 1945-1960, Pfr. (St. Franziskus und Elisabeth, Halle), to Wilhelm Raube Schule (Halle), 13/8/45.

⁴³ Ibid., Pfr. (Zappendorf) to Dean N. (Halle), 21/2/46.

⁴⁴ Ibid., Mieste/Altmark community (27 signatures) to MP, 3/3/46.

the use of schoolrooms.⁴⁵ TheK superintendents also reported at a conference in Eisenach on 6-7 March 1946 that local officials often impeded religious education in classrooms in places throughout Thuringia.⁴⁶ In another instance, two SED members attended a meeting held by the Osterburg (Altmark) pastor and challenged his attempts to solicit parents' signatures for religious instruction. Such a 'Zwangsglauben' was not allowed: no one had the right to pressure parents or children in a 'democratic state'.⁴⁷ Elsewhere, the Red Army commandant of the Ochersleben district summoned two clergymen from Harsleben and Wegeleben in June 1946. He criticised the affinities between religion and militarism, and requested their opinions of the school reform. He then asked the pastors to give public speeches in its favour. Both accepted, aware that a refusal would cast them in a suspicious light.⁴⁸ Weskamm himself commented to a fellow priest in a letter of 11 November 1947 that despite the legality of using schoolrooms, local agents often conspired to forbid their use to the Church.⁴⁹

Given the widespread difficulties, Müller met with Minister President Hübener on 28 November 1947 and requested a clarification of the regulations concerning religious education in schoolrooms. The bishop alleged that in many places local government and school authorities intentionally hindered church instruction, disputing regulations or acting in defiance of them. Many of these officials had maintained that religious instruction could only ensue after school was finished, and some had demanded a

⁴⁵ *LA Magd.* – LKA – , K. 10, MVb, Nr. 4300, Bornstedt community to MP, 10/3/46; see also similar complaints from Helfta, Wimmelberg, Volkstedt and Osterhausen in the same folder.

⁴⁶ *LKAE*, A190/III, 'Bericht über die Lage der TheK auf der Superintendentenkonferenz in Eisenach am 6./7. März 1946'.

⁴⁷ *LHASA*, MER, Kreisleitung der SED Merseburg, 'Informationsberichte', März 1946-Dezember 1948, IV/414/346, Frau K. to LR (Kreis Osterburg), 17/6/46.

⁴⁸ *AKPS*, A, Gen. 3539, 1, Sup. (Halberstadt) to Kons., 21/6/46.

⁴⁹ *BAM*, Schule: Religionsunterricht in Schulräumen, 1945-1959/1967, Weskamm to Pfr. P., 11/11/47.

break of two hours after school hours. Hübener promised to send a further directive with clear guidelines.⁵⁰ He did so on 27 January 1948, outlining that religious education could take place in schoolrooms if it did not inhibit instruction – thus not necessarily after instruction – and there was no requirement for a pause after school hours.⁵¹

Problems continued despite the circular, and even intensified. This is hardly surprising as the SED increasingly cemented its grip on power. In December 1948, the Catholic parish in Gernrode was forbidden the use of the local school for the religious instruction of 109 children, although this had been previously approved.⁵² On 2 March 1949, the KPS leadership wrote a long letter of remonstrance to Hübener. It listed the considerable difficulties encountered by many local churches throughout the province. Government authorities in Wittenberg, Oebisfelde, Naumburg and in the Sandau district impeded religious education in schoolrooms, often regulating the times available to local churches and demanding names and locations. Parishes in Genthin and the districts of Sandau and Ziesar were further prohibited from using classrooms at all. Teachers of Christian instruction were impeded in Tangerhütte, Stendal, Genthin, Magdeburg and in the area of Wernigerode through various devices, including overloading them with work and withholding formal authorisation.⁵³ The provost of Magdeburg, despite this, was defiant in the face of the local conflicts that hounded religious instruction. He reported to the church leadership in May 1949 that no amount of ‘unfriendliness’ and obstructions would

⁵⁰ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 768 I, 2, 199, ‘Vermerk’, Office of the MP, 18/12/47.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, ‘Zurverfügungstellung von Klassenräumen für die religiöse Unterweisung der schulpflichtigen Jugend’, MP Hübener, 27/1/48.

⁵² *Ibid.*, Pfr. (Ballenstedt) to MP, 13/12/48.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, KL (Mag.) to MP, 2/3/49. For problems in Genthin, see: *AKPS*, A, Gen. 4061, ‘Aktenvermerk. Betr.: Anruf von Pfr. M., Genthin, vom. 3. Dezember’, Kons. Rat. A., 3/12/48.

force the church to give up its constitutional right to the use of schoolrooms. A significant proportion of children in the district had, he noted, registered for a religious education (75,000 of 115,000). Most of the lessons were given in schools, and, despite obstructions, many schoolmasters and teachers were ‘friendly’.⁵⁴ In Thuringia, an LKR circular to the pastorate on 6 September 1949 advised all churchmen engaged in religious instruction to insist on the use of empty classrooms during school-time. It enjoined them to ignore the protestations of local school officials about an LVB prohibition. The LKR had, in fact, contacted the LVB on 19 July and requested a clarification. The reply stated that there had been no central directive and local schools, therefore, were solely responsible for appointing times for religious education.⁵⁵

While several historians rightly argue, largely on the basis of Church and State negotiations, that SED interference in the Churches’ religious education programme increased sometime after September 1947, this view must be nuanced somewhat.⁵⁶

Local conflicts had occurred throughout Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia from 1945 and had obstructed church efforts. In this way, local authorities often acted unilaterally, in ignorance or defiance of the official state legislation regarding the ‘school question’. Müller, Weskamm, Mitzenheim and Freusberg may have formally ‘settled’ the issues surrounding religious education, but they only reacted to situations on the ground, especially after October 1946. In this sense, they were reactive; the agents of historical causation were local administrators and their clerical counterparts. Greater

⁵⁴ *AKPS*, B1, 83, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht über die Propstei Magdeburg’, 12/5/49.

⁵⁵ *AEKT*, *Amtsblatt der Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland*, 10, 1949, ‘Christenlehre in Schulräumen’, LKR, 15/10/49, p. 209.

⁵⁶ Brennan, 154ff; Tischner, *Katholische Kirche*, 280-81. Tor Wappler (‘The Limits of Politicization’, 62, 64; *Klassenzimmer ohne Gott*, 27), the turning point was the second SED *Parteitag* in September 1947.

obstructions seem to have occurred in 1948 and 1949 as the ‘party of a new type’ offered greater licence to anti-clerical municipal officials. This, in turn, prompted church hierarchs to seek redress from the state governments in Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia.

Finally, as we have seen in chapter one, the Thuringian church enjoyed an understanding with Major General Kolesnichenko, who intervened on occasion at Mitzenheim’s complaints against local communists and Red Army officers.⁵⁷ This indulgence extended to matters surrounding religious instruction. Dr. Hertzsch, for example, remarked in a report on religious instruction from mid-1946 that a new *Kulturkampf* had erupted in Thuringia. Kolesnichenko, however, had been of service, and the church had found ‘greater understanding’ amongst the Soviet authorities than amongst the German state offices.⁵⁸ The amenable relationship was enduring and Kolesnichenko revoked ‘illegal measures’ up until at least early 1948. In April 1948, for example, the local school official (Schulrat) in Gotha unilaterally banned religious instruction before class or before six o’clock in the evening. The Soviet commandant in Gotha supported the prohibition, and the church council complained to the LVB in vain. On 16 April, Mitzenheim went to Weimar to see Kolesnichenko personally. The General repudiated the order, and stated that the commandant in question ought to refrain from meddling in such affairs. Mitzenheim thereupon informed the LVB of the resolution, and threateningly, almost gloatingly, stated that he would not hesitate to present himself at Kolesnichenko’s door again.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ *EZAB*, 2/149, circulars, 8/48, 9/3/48.

⁵⁸ *AKPS*, B1, 69, ‘Lageberichte der einzelnen Landes- und Provinzialkirchen’, undated.

⁵⁹ *LKAE*, A830, ‘Bericht über Christenlehre’, Eisenach, 22/4/48. Not all issues were of sufficient importance to bring before Kolesnichenko. For example, the ‘political community’ in Sassa harassed the teacher recruited to instruct religion, and he decided not to settle in the town: *AEKT*, 105.S.1,

Problems in the district of Nordhausen underscore the unique nature of the relationship between the SVATH and the Thuringian church. Nordhausen was under the jurisdiction of the SVATH, but, as a former Prussian possession, it was administered by the KPS. In July 1947, the provost of Sudhärz requested the mediation of the CDU in resolving a problem with the Soviet authorities. The issue was that, while the church was permitted to dispense religious instruction before or after school hours, local school officials prevented it from doing so. The Soviet administration in Weimar confirmed that Christian teaching was indeed legal, before or after school. This directive did not, however, reach the central school office in Nordhausen, and another church inquiry to Weimar on 11 August received another favourable response, which promised another letter to the Nordhausen school authorities. This did not arrive and, in late August and mid-September, further church queries were turned aside under various pretexts. By November, when the church catechist personally came to Weimar, a Soviet lieutenant was evasive and insisted on the separation of Church and State. The lieutenant directed the teacher to another officer responsible for cultural life, who could not be contacted at the time.⁶⁰ When the directive was finally forthcoming, it was craftily drafted. Instruction could not take place until six o'clock in the evening when the school buildings were being cleaned and when the use of electricity was prohibited. This scenario entailed small children making their way home in the dark through the rubble of Nordhausen while all, young and old, were under duress to collect foodstuffs.⁶¹ The directive, of course, did not correspond to the legislated parameters of religious education, and it is almost

⁶⁰ 'Tätigkeitsbericht des Gemeindegemeinderats Sassa für 1947', 30/3/48. Nor did Kolesnichenko always acquiesce to church complaints: T. Seidel, *Im Übergang der Diktaturen*, 162.

⁶⁰ AKPS, B1, 181, 'Bericht über die Lage der Christenlehre im Kreise Nordhausen', catechist (Nordhausen), 2/11/47.

⁶¹ Ibid., catechist (Nordhausen) to KL, 10/11/47.

inconceivable that the Thuringian church, on the other hand, would have received such a response.

Religious and secular youth work

Both the KPD/SED and the Churches also had ambitions to organise and discipline youth beyond the *Grundschule*. The German communists sought, firstly, to control all youth by subsuming church groups and then, when this failed, by promoting ‘unity’ through bloc politics. As in the schools, furthermore, the secular authorities attempted to limit church influence through regulation and interference, especially from late 1947.

Before 1933, the Churches enjoyed widespread influence amongst youth, especially the Protestant Church through the organisations, Reichsverband der evangelischen Jungmännerbünde Deutschlands and the Reichsverband der evangelischen weiblichen Jugend. While church youth (Junge Gemeinde) were integrated into the Hitlerjugend (HJ) from 19 December 1933 (according to Reichsbischof Müller’s agreement with HJ leader Baldur von Schirach), and were obligated to attend the HJ from 1 December 1936, the Churches swiftly set about re-establishing their youth activities after the end of the war.⁶² The Churches desired an inspired new generation capable of action and zealous for the Christian gospel.⁶³ In the Protestant Church, there were several groups commissioned to this purpose, including the Evangelische Jungmädchenwerk

⁶² Koch-Hallas, *Die junge Gemeinde*, 31-2. For a discussion on youth work in the Church Province of Saxony, see: Überschär, 116-26.

⁶³ LKAD, Die Fürsorge für die konfirmierte Jugend, 1938-49, ‘Sitzungsbeschluss’ (LKRA), 29/10/45; *ibid.*, LKRA circular, 5/11/45. Catholic youth work found a favourable situation in 1945: Tischner, *Katholische Kirche*, 324-5.

(EJMdW) and the Evangelische Jungmännerwerk (EJMW).⁶⁴ The EJMW was the successor to the Christliche Verein der Jungmänner (CVJM), and its goal was to ‘awaken’ faith through community and instruction that would be manifested in action:

Wir bitten zu beachten, dass die Jugend, die von der frohen Botschaft erfasst ist, aktiv werden und irgendwelche Aufgaben in der Gemeinde oder in Jungmännerkreis übernehmen will.⁶⁵

Small community groups often met at least once a week (on church property) to talk about Christianity.⁶⁶ In the last months of 1945, there was a proposal in the KPS to create a ‘Youth council’ (Jugendkammer) that would provide oversight to all Christian youth groups in the province, including the MBK (**M**enschen begegnen-**B**ibel entdecken-**K**irche gestalten).⁶⁷ The council met for the first time on 24 January 1946, and, chaired by Bishop Müller, the delegates elected Fritz Hoffmann to the post of Landeswart. Hoffmann oversaw the various church groups in the KPS and negotiated with the state authorities on youth issues.⁶⁸

The Thuringian church also had a central office for youth work, though it was understaffed and under-resourced. Pastor Hans Neumann was formally appointed Landesjugendpfarrer from 1 October 1946, and he was aided by a director for the

⁶⁴ For further on these groups, see: Überschär, 125-6.

⁶⁵ *LKAD*, Die Fürsorge für die konfirmierte Jugend, 1938-49, EJMW circular, Hoffmann, 3/7/46. See also: *ibid.*, ‘Jahresbericht des evangelischen Jungmännerwerkes’, EJMW to LKRA, 25/2/48.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, EJMW circular, Staemmler (Magdeburg), 2/5/45.

⁶⁷ *AKPS*, B1, 27, Hoffmann to Müller, 14/12/45. The MBK rejected the *Jugendkammer* and resisted the authority of the EJMW in the KPS: *ibid.*, MBK Mitteldeutschland to Müller, 25/10/45. See also: Überschär, 117-8.

⁶⁸ *AKPS*, B1, 27, ‘Vorschlag zur Bildung einer Jugendkammer der Kirchenprovinz Sachsen’, undated; Shortly thereafter, there was a call to create local groups: *ibid.*, ‘Aufruf der Vorläufigen Kirchenleitung der Kirchenprovinz Sachsen an die Gemeinden zur Bildung von Gemeindejugendkreisen’, Jungmädchenwerk (Berckenhagen) and EJMW (Hoffmann), undated; *ibid.*, ‘Kurzer Arbeitsbericht für die Zeit vom 1.10.45-22.2.46 in Ergänzung der monatlichen Rundbriefe’, Hoffmann, 22/2/46; On the establishment of the post of Landesjugendpfarrer (Pfr. Waldmann) in the KPS in 1949, see: Überschär, 147-50.

EJMW in Thuringia and two helpers from the Thuringian EJMdW.⁶⁹ The Anhalt church too had a pastor responsible for adolescents, Landesjugendpfarrer Martin Schmidt, though he was not unanimously supported within the pastorate. After a year in office, Schmidt reported in September 1947 that, while a ‘good beginning’ had been made, many older clergy had not recognised the ‘necessity and urgency’ of youth work; Schmidt considered it an obligation.⁷⁰ Youth work in the Catholic Church, on the other hand, was de-centralised and centred in each local community. There was no regional youth leadership.⁷¹

The German communists in the KPD/SED adopted a number of methods to capture all young people in the Soviet zone, including attempts to subsume religious groups or to control them by offering churchmen positions on secular councils. For instance, a meeting of 15 July 1945, chaired by a KPD functionary, included representatives of the SPD, LDPD and the Catholic and Protestant Churches. It gathered under the auspices of creating a unified ‘Deutsche Jugendbund’ (DJB) in Saxony-Anhalt. The various spokespersons discussed a collaboration that would provide pedagogic evenings, thus allowing youth to make up their own minds about the different worldviews. Another meeting on 19 July, nonetheless, put paid to the DJB. Whilst any ‘political’ emphasis would be avoided, there was little will amongst the participants to realise the proposal. One pastor in the Anhalt church feared that the

⁶⁹ *LKAE*, A723, Hertzsch to Hildebrandt (EKD, Berlin-Lichterfelde), 30/10/46; in response to: *ibid.*, Hildebrandt to Hertzsch, 4/10/46. All churches in the SBZ had a Landesjugendpfarrer by the end of 1949: Überschär, 145. Koch-Hallas (*Die Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche*, 94-5; *Die junge Gemeinde*, 254) maintains that Neumann was appointed in late 1945.

⁷⁰ *LKAD*, Die Fürsorge für die konfirmierte Jugend, 1938-49, Landesjugendpfarrer Martin Schmidt (Dessau) to all Pfarrer in the LKA, 15/9/47. The KPS youth work had the same goal and suffered the same issue in places: Überschär, 123-5.

⁷¹ Tischner, *Katholische Kirche*, 323-4.

DJB would disadvantage the Christian message and foster communism.⁷² The church youth groups and the so-called secular *Jugendausschüsse* accordingly went their separate ways.

The KPD had greater success, however, in recruiting clergy to the leadership of *Jugendausschüsse* throughout the Soviet zone. In Berlin, church representatives sat on the central committee.⁷³ This also occurred, regionally, in Saxony-Anhalt. The provost of Naumburg, for example, agreed to join the leadership of the *Jugendausschüsse* at a meeting in October 1945. As he reported to Magdeburg, the decision was easy given that the *Jugendausschüsse* leader was a ‘committed Christian’.⁷⁴ The Anhalt church was also represented on the regional committee of the *Jugendausschüsse*.⁷⁵ The church saw possibilities in these committees and, in a circular dated 5 November 1945, it advised that, although the decision was left to the individual pastor, each clergyman would do well to take advantage of this opportunity and send ‘convinced’ Christian youth to secular meetings. The leadership council was, nevertheless, determined to safeguard the interests of the church by sending only the most pious young people: those who would resist communist overtures.⁷⁶ The Catholic Church once again discerned a socialist agenda and sought to avoid the *Jugendausschüsse* in every way. Archbishop Jäger, Weskamm and others recognised that any influence exerted on youth could only be communist. At Halle, for instance,

⁷² LKAD, Die Fürsorge für die konfirmierte Jugend, 1938-49, Herr K. to Pfr. E. (Dessau), 24/7/45.

⁷³ Marshal Zhukov permitted the formation of the *Jugendausschüsse* on 31 July 1945: *Freie Deutsche Jugend. Berichte und Dokumente zur Entwicklung und Tätigkeit der kommunistischen Jugendorganisation*, ed. H.-P. Herz (Munich, 1957), pp. 9-10; E. Honecker, *Aus meinem Leben* (Frankfurt, 1980), 125.

⁷⁴ AKPS, B1, 27, Pfr. (Naumburg) to KL, 29/10/45.

⁷⁵ LKAD, Die Fürsorge für die konfirmierte Jugend, 1938-49, Dr. Pfr. Wagner (AKW) to KL and LKRA, 15/10/1945.

⁷⁶ Ibid., LKRA circular, 5/11/45.

local clergy observed prominence of the KPD; the party had circulated propaganda about the secularised school, and it was envisaged that stringent regulation could encompass church youth too.⁷⁷

Given that the *Jugendausschüsse* were fragmented in the five states of the zone (despite a central leadership in Berlin), there were movements toward a unified ‘mass organisation’ from January 1946.⁷⁸ This was eventually the Freie Deutsche Jugend, which was permitted by the SVAG on 7 March.⁷⁹ The FDJ inherited youth from the *Jugendausschüsse* and, under the direction of Erich Honecker until 1955, it increasingly sought to influence them towards recognising the merits of socialism.⁸⁰

The FDJ held a significant advantage over the Churches: it was permitted to hold many diverse extra-curricular gatherings.⁸¹ It expanded quickly as mass rallies supplemented meetings that engaged youth with high culture, sport and dance. In Saxony-Anhalt in February 1947, for instance, 14 rallies attracted 3,270 participants, 512 regular meetings had 17,090 attendees, and other, extra-curricular, events numbered 537, involving no less than 57,992 youth.⁸² Throughout the Soviet zone,

⁷⁷ BAM, Paderborn: Erzbischof – Korrespondenz – 1945-1955, ‘Protokoll der Besprechung über die Lage der Diözese in Sachsen’, undated.

⁷⁸ G. Noack, ‘Die Gründung der Freien Deutschen Jugend’, in M. Herms et al (ed.), *Das neue Leben muss anders werden... Studien zur Gründung der FDJ* (Berlin, 1996), 25-7; Mählert, 64-6.

⁷⁹ Noack, 34-43; Mählert, 79-108; *Freie Deutsche Jugend*, 11-2; M. Walter, *Die Freie Deutsche Jugend. Ihre Funktion im politischen System der DDR* (Freiburg, 1997), 33-8. The most comprehensive treatment of youth in this period is Mählert, *Die Freie Deutsche Jugend 1945-1949*. The FDJ, or at least a ‘unified’ secular youth group, was allegedly established in Thuringia in January 1946: Koch-Hallas, *Die junge Gemeinde*, 277.

⁸⁰ Tulpanow, 204ff. For discussion on the FDJ programme and its underlying communist character, see: Noack, 43-8; Buddrus, ‘Anmerkungen’, 150-3; Überschar, 72ff.

⁸¹ For the figures see: D. Zilch, *Millionen unter der blauen Fahne. Die FDJ. Zahlen – Fakten – Tendenzen* (Rostock, 1994), 9ff.

⁸² BAM, FDJ: 1945-1953, Vikar Aufderbeck to Kommissariat Magdeburg, 24/3/47.

according to official numbers, there were 203,000 members of the FDJ in May 1946, 405,500 by December 1946 and 535,000 by June 1947.⁸³

Similar to the *Jugendausschüsse*, the FDJ attempted to manipulate the Churches' youth work through a program of 'unity'.⁸⁴ An article in the CDU newspaper, *Neue Zeit*, on 12 March 1946 reflected positively on the creation of the FDJ. Reportedly approved by the Churches, the FDJ was a 'democratic' organ that represented unity in stark contrast to previous 'oppression' and 'uniformity'.⁸⁵ Other (church) commentators harboured reservations, however. For instance, the KPS delegate attended a conference on church youth work in Berlin on 22 March 1946. One of the topics of discussion was the status of the FDJ and its relationship to the Churches' youth groups. The FDJ representative requested the 'unification' of all youth in the zone, even proposing that the church groups could become a 'sub-section' (Unterabteilung) of the FDJ. The church delegates rejected this proposal, but agreed to the appointment of liaison officers who would sit on the FDJ central committee in Berlin.⁸⁶ At a meeting in Halle with a representative of the FDJ in March 1946, Weskamm too rejected outright the incorporation of Catholic youth into the FDJ; in no situation whatsoever were individual church groups to fall under the FDJ banner. In reply, the FDJ leader stressed the preservation of community and forbearance, stating that the organisation was not political despite having KPD functionaries in

⁸³ Noack, 59-60; *Freie Deutsche Jugend*, 17-8. There were variations among the five states: E. Schulze, 'Die Jahre 1946 und 1947 – ein statistischer Lagerbericht', in *Aber nicht im Gleichschritt*, 161.

⁸⁴ See the discussion of Überschar, 72-86.

⁸⁵ *AKPS*, O3, 253, *Neue Zeit*, 12/3/1946.

⁸⁶ *AKPS*, B1, 69, Pfr. F. to Müller, 30/3/46; *BAM*, FDJ: 1945-1953, Herr B. (FDJ) to Vikar Aufderbeck, 28/3/47. There were, of course, reservations to religious involvement within the FDJ: Noack, 52; Tischner, *Katholische Kirche*, 341-2.

leadership positions.⁸⁷ In all, secular attempts to co-ordinate church youth were opportunistic and, ultimately, abortive. Incorporation was never really an option for the Churches anywhere; Bishops Dibelius and Preysing in Berlin, for example, also refused FDJ overtures.⁸⁸

The inclusion of church representatives on the central committee of the FDJ, though, was replicated in regional leaderships throughout the zone. The Anhalt church had little hesitation in providing a delegate (the head of the EJMW) to the FDJ leadership in Saxony-Anhalt.⁸⁹ The church also gifted the Dessau FDJ office 100RM in December 1947, which was received gratefully as a ‘generous’ donation in difficult financial times.⁹⁰ While Weskamm declined the offer, the Catholic Church established a liaison office in Magdeburg with the aim of forging a ‘relationship of trust’ with the FDJ that would iron out local difficulties and promote the ‘democratic reconstruction’ of the German *Volk*.⁹¹ This was under the one condition, as with Freusberg in Erfurt also, that the FDJ recognise the independence of Catholic youth work.⁹² The FDJ leadership wanted more and, in March 1947, a senior functionary invited representatives from the Catholic Church and the KPS to join the regional

⁸⁷ *BAM*, FDJ: 1945-1953, ‘Besprechung am 27.3.46 zwischen Weskamm, Vikar L., Frau H. (church representatives) and Herr G. (FDJ) in Halle’.

⁸⁸ Mählert/Stephan, 34; Brennan, 191-2.

⁸⁹ *LKAD*, Die Fürsorge für die konfirmierte Jugend, 1938-49, EJMW circular, Staemmler, 1/6/46; *ibid.* ‘Jahresbericht des evangelischen Jungmännerwerkes’, EJMW to KL, 28/1/48.

⁹⁰ *LKAD*, Die Fürsorge für die konfirmierte Jugend, 1938-49, ‘Sitzungsbeschluss nr. 7 vom 9. Dezember 1947’, LKRA; *ibid.*, KV der FDJ (Dessau) to the Landeskirchenamt Dessau (Körmigk), 10/1/48.

⁹¹ *BAM*, FDJ: 1945-1953, Pfr. (St Sebastian, Magdeburg) to FDJ (Provinz Sachsen), undated (prob. early/mid 1946); *ibid.*, ‘Errichtung einer Verbindungsstelle zwischen der FDJ und der kirchlichen Jugendarbeit. Halle’, 1/7/46.

⁹² *Ibid.*, Biehl (FDJ) to Aufderbeck, 28/8/47; *ibid.*, Weskamm to Biehl (FDJ), 30/4/47; *BEA*, BGVE, CVb2, BGVE to Freusberg, 14/12/46. This occurred also in Berlin before the central committee in February 1946: Mählert, 90-3.

leadership committee.⁹³ Weskamm again politely refused, though he did laud the industrious work of the committee, remarking that no frictions had thus far arisen between the FDJ and the Catholic Church.⁹⁴ Even so, both the Catholic and Protestant Churches sent observers to the third sitting of a youth oversight commission in June 1947.⁹⁵ The FDJ attempts to include church delegates on leadership councils was archetypal ‘Bündnispolitik’: the FDJ was concerned to disguise any anti-clerical tendencies and sought legitimisation through church representation that would ultimately not compromise communist executive power.⁹⁶ This example of bloc politics, in any case, aligned the Eastern zone with the religious freedoms offered in the West, which was a focus of Soviet *Deutschlandpolitik* for a period (see above, p. 43).⁹⁷

There was greater support for the FDJ in Thuringia, where Landesjugendpfarrer Neumann, and his FDJ counterpart, Ernst Horn, enjoyed good relations.⁹⁸ They met on 11 June 1947, for instance, to discuss how both could facilitate a closer relationship. There had been examples of conflict at Altenburg and Ronneberg, where the church superintendent attended an FDJ rally with 25 members of his youth group, only to be verbally attacked by FDJ and SED members. Horn, however, condemned the attacks and was critical of the behavior of his subordinates, even requesting statements and promising immediate help if other disputes arose. He also asked Neumann for a church youth service, which would proceed in conjunction with a FDJ

⁹³ *BAM*, FDJ: 1945-1953, Herr. B. (FDJ) to Vikar Aufderbeck, 28/3/47.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, Weskamm to FDJ, 30/4/47.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, ‘Bericht über die dritte Sitzung des Kreisausschusses des Werks der Jugend am 24.6.47 in Franke-Jugendheim’.

⁹⁶ Mählert/Stephan, 23-4. The central committee in Berlin comprised 80 communists and 20 non-communists (of whom only two were churchmen): *Freie Deutsche Jugend*, 12-3.

⁹⁷ Brennan, 221.

⁹⁸ Cf. Koch-Hallas, *Die junge Gemeinde*, 277-9.

rally on *Friedenstag*. Neumann agreed and also proposed the creation of a forum, attended by church and FDJ representatives, to discuss mutually beneficial questions. He further requested two hours per week in the school curriculum during which teachers could present ‘questions of mutual interest’. Horn was predictably evasive in replying that these were possibilities to be discussed at a later date, and he invited Neumann to sit on the regional FDJ committee. Neumann agreed in principle and subsequently took part in the FDJ council of 17 and 18 July 1947 in Weimar.⁹⁹ In a letter to the LKR, Neumann emphasised that Horn placed ‘great value’ on a close collaboration with the church. Not only this, Neumann encouraged a close relationship – despite his wariness of mass youth organisations – because many church youth were often also members of the FDJ.¹⁰⁰ There were good relations in some localities too. For instance, a pastor held a talk in March 1948 before FDJ youth in Zeulstadt about the organisation of the Christian Church and its position in society.¹⁰¹ The superintendent at Friedrichsroda also talked the following month at a regional FDJ school on ‘Democracy and Christianity’.¹⁰² At the end of 1948, Neumann wrote a letter to his counterpart in the FDJ head office in Weimar wishing him well for the New Year. He described an improvement in their collaboration and even asked whether a section entitled ‘Gottesfragen’ could be placed in the FDJ newspaper *Junge Welt*.¹⁰³

⁹⁹ *LKAE*, A720/VI, Pfr. Neumann to LKR, 11/6/47; *ibid.*, Pfr. Neumann to LKR, 19/7/47.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, Pfr. Neumann to LKR, 19/7/47.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, Pfr (Gera) to LKR, 8/3/48.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, Sup. (Friedrichsroda) to LKR, 23/4/48.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, Pfr. Neumann to FDJ (Weimar), 24/12/48. There was a precedent: the previous year *Junge Welt* had published a report on the World Conference of Christian Youth: *ibid.*, Pfr. Neumann to all youth pastors, 12/9/47.

Quite apart from the FDJ's attempts to co-opt or control the Churches' youth groups, the secular authorities also intended to undermine church influence amongst young people through legislation. The Protestant churches in Saxony-Anhalt attended a meeting with state representatives on 11 April 1946 about the parameters of action for church youth groups and their relationship to the nascent FDJ.¹⁰⁴ The state delegate stressed that youth work was the exclusive affair of the FDJ and the *Jugendausschüsse*, while church work was restricted to the 'religious care' of youth.¹⁰⁵ Church activities were thus limited to bible studies, and singing and theatre were permissible only so long as they were religious in content and had some connection to the church service.¹⁰⁶ Sport, theatre, political statements and social events were prohibited. 'Organised' youth work on a regional level was also proscribed.¹⁰⁷ An 18 April state directive subsequently enjoined secular offices in Saxony-Anhalt to refrain from interference in church youth work that remained within the religious purview.¹⁰⁸

However, the flashpoint for Church and State conflict was when the church groups allegedly assumed the character of 'organisations'. An SVAG directive of 31 July 1945 prohibited any youth organisations other than the *Jugendausschüsse*.¹⁰⁹ The Churches could continue their work, so long as their apparatuses did not assume an 'organised' (organisiert/vereinsmäßig) form. This meant that youth work could neither

¹⁰⁴ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 789, 207, AKW to Kons., 4/4/46.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, MP to BP in Magdeburg, Merseburg, Dessau, 12/4/46; cf. on the activities of the *Junge Gemeinde*: Koch-Hallas, *Die junge Gemeinde*, 67-71.

¹⁰⁶ *AKPS*, B1, 69, Pfr. F. to Müller, 30/3/46. On the *Jugendkammer Ost*, in general, see: Überschar, 139-44.

¹⁰⁷ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 789, 207, 'Vermerk', Kunisch, 11/4/46.

¹⁰⁸ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 789, 207, AKW to BP Magdeburg, Merseburg and Dessau, 18/4/46.

¹⁰⁹ *Freie Deutsche Jugend*, 12; Noack, 20. After the foundation of the FDJ, the SVAG prohibited any other independent youth organisations in September 1946: Walter, 39-40. Mählert, 46-7.

be centrally organised, nor stray beyond religious affairs (and thus transgress the Church and State distinction). As discussed at the *Jugendkammer Ost* in Berlin on 22 March 1946, while church youth work was recognised (as ‘Gemeindejugendkreise’), it could not assume the ‘form of an organisation’. This was a problem particularly for Protestant youth work. Youth organisations on the model of those operational in Imperial Germany and the Weimar Republic were prohibited, and TheK youth work, for example, devolved to the local parish (though this was overseen by the regional superintendent, who was in turn subject to the Landesjugendpfarrer).¹¹⁰ The Catholic youth groups experienced fewer conflicts in general because they were more locally focused than their Protestant counterparts.¹¹¹

Local authorities, though, often obstructed church youth work, sometimes taking significant license in interpreting state legislation. Groups were forbidden in Greiz and Stutzhaus in October 1945 on the basis of having the form of an ‘organisation’.¹¹² Mitzenheim responded to this situation by sending a letter to the authorities at Gotha with a specific reference to Kolesnichenko’s approval of religious youth work.¹¹³ The Stutzhaus problem was seemingly caused by virulent anti-clericalism as shown, for instance, in a subsequent incident whereby, in March 1946, the Stutzhaus official accused the local pastor of continuing the work of the Hitler Youth and employing former Bund Deutscher Mädel (BDM) members (the female equivalent to the HJ).¹¹⁴ The EJMW in Saxony-Anhalt refuted secular claims that it was an ‘organisation’ in

¹¹⁰ Koch-Hallas, *Die junge Gemeinde*, 263, 360.

¹¹¹ Tischner, *Katholische Kirche*, 323-4, 328. There were of course local conflicts throughout the zone nonetheless: *ibid.*, 335-9.

¹¹² *LKAE*, A720/VI, Jugendbeauftragter unteres Vogtlands (Greiz) to LKR, 11/10/45; *ibid.*, Pfr (Stutzhaus) to LKR, 12/11/45.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, Mitzenheim to LR, Gotha, 7/1/46.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Pfr. (Stutzhaus) to Mitzenheim, 2/3/46; *ibid.*, Mitzenheim to LR, Gotha, 14/3/46.

1945 and 1946.¹¹⁵ The church groups, according to its leaders, were merely youth gatherings on church property for the sake of the Christian gospel.¹¹⁶ In November 1945, such were the conflicts with secular offices, the Anhalt council issued a circular to pastors in November 1945 that urged them to desist from activities beyond the religious purview. It concluded that organised church youth work was ‘out-dated’ (überholt) and, instead, the goal was to motivate young people to focus only upon Jesus Christ and to act in his service.¹¹⁷ In December 1945, the Thuringian EJMdW wrote to Müller complaining at the difficulties that local chapters had experienced in the area of Naumburg. There was confusion over the nature of church youth work, and a number of instances where disagreements arose over whether the religious groups were ‘organised’.¹¹⁸

In Saxony-Anhalt in March 1946, the Konsistorium contacted the Minister President to complain about the frequent secular obstruction of youth work in various locales. The local authorities had, according to the Konsistorium, mistaken the ‘organisationslos’ nature of church activities and therefore caused ‘unnecessary’ tensions. The church hierarchs argued that there was no ‘organisation’ or central authority within the KPS, but that, rather, the pastor alone assembled local youth to teach about the traditions and theology of the Christian Church. Attendance was entirely voluntary; each individual was free to join any political party or simultaneously attend FDJ events. As the church officials noted, however, difficulties often developed in certain places where a pastor had reinstated or begun a new group. This was the formation of an illegal organisation in the view of some secular

¹¹⁵ *LKAD*, Die Fürsorge für die konfirmierte Jugend, 1938-49, EJMw circular, Staemmler, 2/5/45.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, EJMw circular, Hoffmann, 4/11/45; *ibid.*, KOP (Dessau-Törten) to Pfr. H., 14/3/46.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, LKRA circular, 5/11/45.

¹¹⁸ *AKPS*, B1, 27, Jungmädchenwerk (Thuringia) to Müller, 7/12/45.

authorities, while the pastor believed that he had merely exercised a long-term right.¹¹⁹ Lastly, Hoffmann in Saxony-Anhalt and Willi Stetter in Thuringia lent their signatures to a declaration of all EJMW pastors in the Soviet zone on 25 September 1947. Their protest was directed against disruptions and intentional hindrances to church youth work; the pastors contended that the EJMW was no ‘organisation’ and they had only guided young men in their spiritual growth.¹²⁰

The Soviet occupiers also proceeded against ‘organised’ church youth work. In April 1946, for example, the superintendent of Sauberzweig in Salzwedel complained of a prohibition on youth groups that had been orchestrated by the local *Bürgermeister* and Soviet commandant. Under interrogation, the pastor stated that he had led the group for the last twenty-five years, and he maintained that it was in no way political and did not constitute an ‘organisation’. The Soviet commandant responded that the group was indeed an illegal ‘organisation’. Every religion, he added, was simultaneously political. At the pastor’s retort that youth work was merely a continuation of religious instruction at Sunday school and in the school itself, the commandant expressed his concerns about these too.¹²¹ The superintendent of Ermsleben was summoned to the Soviet headquarters in Hettstedt in November 1947 to answer questions about religious instruction and church groups. The Red Army officer warned the superintendent that he was blurring the boundaries between Church and State and notified him that all meetings of the women’s and youth groups required prior registration.¹²²

¹¹⁹ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 789, 207, Kons. to MP, 20/3/46.

¹²⁰ *AKPS*, B1, 27, EJMW to Müller, 29/9/47.

¹²¹ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 789, 207, Kons. to MP, 11/5/46.

¹²² *AKPS*, A, Gen. 3817, Sup. (Ermsleben) to Kons., 5/11/47.

From 1948/1949, the SED's transformation into a 'party of a new type' became increasingly reflected in the treatment of the church youth groups. The FDJ, as an extension of SED policy, was no longer committed to non-partisan 'unity'.¹²³ The time for bloc politics was at an end, and church youth work was increasingly subjected to harassment. High-level authorities had also increasingly warned the Churches about youth groups. In early 1948, a pastor from Berlin-Lichterfelde and the SVAG head of Church Affairs, Lt. Colonel Vsevolod Ermolaev, discussed church activities at a meeting at Karlshorst. Ermolaev warned that events beyond the religious purview would endanger any church involvement with youth.¹²⁴ Commenting on the Saxon-Anhalt situation before the central committee of the FDJ in Berlin in December 1948, a Protestant pastor resented secular accusations that church groups constituted illegal 'organisations'. Members of the central committee replied that, while prelates spoke of youth work exclusively focused on pastoral care, pastors at the grass roots acted differently. Erich Honecker, as chairman of the FDJ, stated that nobody wished to hinder the work of the Churches, but they acted beyond their mandate and had seconded the privileges of secular youth work. He accused the Church of cynical negativity and ironically commented:

Es steht die Kirche frei, zu beantragen, auch Organisation zu werden. Wird ihr dies zugebilligt, dann können wir gegen ihre erweiterte Arbeit nichts mehr sagen und müssen dann einen verstärkten ideologischen Kampf aufnehmen. Will die Kirche – so frage ich – eine Mauer aufrichten? Auf der einen Seite christliche Jugend, auf der anderen Seite nicht christliche Jugend?¹²⁵

¹²³ Noack, 61-2; *Freie Deutsche Jugend*, 21ff; E. Scherstjanoi, 'Die Jugendpolitik der SMAD 1945/46', in *Aber nicht im Gleichschritt*, 132-3; Mählert, 291; Koch-Hallas, *Die junge Gemeinde*, 75ff; Brennan (182-4, 226-7) and Überschar (90-8) recognise this also.

¹²⁴ *LKAD*, Die Fürsorge für die konfirmierte Jugend, 1938-49, Pfr. H. (Berlin-Lichterfelde) to Hoffmann and Jugendkammer Ost, 6/4/48.

¹²⁵ *BAM*, FDJ: 1945-1953, 'Sitzung des Zentralrates der FDJ Berlin am 11.12.48'.

In Saxony-Anhalt, where the KPS suffered greater frictions with the secular authorities, the first major restriction was the dissolution of the central apparatus of the EJMW after a meeting on 15 April 1948. In accordance with SVAG order 864, its tasks were passed onto state offices: the Ministerium für Arbeit und Sozialfürsorge and the Landesjugendamt beim Ministerium für Volksbildung, Kunst und Wissenschaft.¹²⁶ Regional branches were subsequently disestablished, church representatives released from their duties, and the post of Kreisjugendpfarrer abolished.¹²⁷ This episode illustrates well the radicalisation of Soviet and KPD/SED measures designed to eliminate religious influence over youth.

There were multiple ongoing issues with the obstruction of youth work at the local level, **though** there were evidently fewer tensions in Thuringia. As Christine Koch has pointed out, the Thuringian FDJ especially was amenable to church organised groups up until the third conference of its central committee in Berlin from 1 to 4 June 1949.¹²⁸ Koch's reason for this tolerance in comparison to, say, the situation in Saxony, is the correct one: Kolesnichenko's generally accommodating disposition *vis-à-vis* the Thuringian church.¹²⁹ There were nonetheless local conflicts in Thuringia. For instance, police raided a pastor's house in Steinach in March 1949, confiscating his books and interrogating him about his activity in the Third Reich and his ongoing youth work.¹³⁰ The following month, the churchman was charged with 'illegally' employing youth to help in local church work, as well as employing a former NSDAP (Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei) member as a church catechist. The

¹²⁶ *Inventar der Befehle*, 135.

¹²⁷ *LKAD*, Die Fürsorge für die konfirmierte Jugend, 1938-49, Hoffmann to KL (KPS) and LKRA, 19/4/48.

¹²⁸ Koch-Hallas, *Die junge Gemeinde*, 283.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 284, 359-60. On conflicts in Saxony, see: 143ff, 359.

¹³⁰ *LKAE*, A720/VII, Pfr. (Steinach) to LKR, 19/3/49. The pastor at Hildburgshausen was also interrogated by police about youth work: *ibid.*, Pfr. (Hildburgshausen) to LKR, 24/3/49.

regional FDJ leader in Sonneberg was allegedly behind the accusations.¹³¹ At Jecha in November 1948, conflict came to a head over an episode in which a group of *Junge Gemeinde* was prevented from entering the cinema on account of their badges (which depicted a globe and a cross). The youths were taken to the local police station for questioning before being released.¹³² The first fundamental limitation imposed on the Thuringian church was the legislation of 1 July 1949 that required local churchmen to register all events outside church services. This was a significant event in theory: hitherto, local officials and Red Army officers had unilaterally imposed bans on parish youth; now, secular authorities in the localities had an official remit to interfere in the Churches' youth work. The legislation was not, however, consistently enforced and only achieved general application after the foundation of the DDR in October 1949, after which permission was repeatedly withheld for *Junge Gemeinde* events.¹³³

There were similar conflicts in Saxony-Anhalt. In Sangerhausen, the local mayor prohibited youth work and even requisitioned the church community house. When the affair was brought to the attention of Major Belov at a meeting in Halle on 31 December 1948, he promised to make inquiries. He did nothing, however, and vacillated at a meeting on 25 January 1949.¹³⁴ The provost of Halberstadt and Quedlinburg reported in April 1949 that difficulties with the FDJ had increased significantly in recent months.¹³⁵ The Saxon-Anhalt FDJ had declared on 22 January 1949 that there was no longer any place for church representation on its leadership council, while church spokesmen left the FDJ central committee in Berlin at its third

¹³¹ Ibid., Neumann to LKR, 8/4/49.

¹³² Ibid., Sup. Sonderhausen to LKR, 19/11/48.

¹³³ Koch-Hallas, *Die junge Gemeinde*, 287.

¹³⁴ AKPS, A, Gen. 4061, 'Aktenvermerk', 25/1/49.

¹³⁵ AKPS, B1, 83, 'Tätigkeitsbericht des Propstes zu Halberstadt und zu Quedlinburg für das Jahr 1948', 8/4/49.

conference in June.¹³⁶ As with issues arising from religious education, municipal authorities often intervened in church youth work. There was, however, a unique dynamic at work: local functionaries often took impetus from state regulation and applied this with anti-clerical intent. That is, drawing on the ambiguities inherent to the ban on ‘organised’ youth work, officials ‘legally’ obstructed church efforts on the ground. In this way, state regulation and local persecutions reinforced each other; while official policy formally permitted church youth groups, local actors implemented the increasingly anti-clerical agenda of the ‘party of a new type’. A number of Soviet officers and state functionaries at the grassroots were thus out of step with the proclaimed ‘freedom of religion’.

Confirmation and the *Jugendweihe*

Lastly, various local secular authorities sought to replace the church institution of confirmation with the *Jugendweihe*. This was an overt and blatant attempt to supplant an important Christian rite of passage. Confirmation took place when the candidate was usually 14 years old and had undertaken instruction on religious topics. He/she was subsequently a full member of the congregation and the Christian Church. In a similar vein, the secular *Jugendweihe* celebrated the ‘coming of age’ and the accession of the candidate to becoming a recognised member of society. The antecedents of the *Jugendweihe* date from the Enlightenment and proceeded from,

¹³⁶ Walter, 42; Tischner, *Katholische Kirche*, 347. This was the turning point, for Koch-Hallas, (*Die junge Gemeinde*, 76) to an increasingly anti-Christian FDJ.

among others, Immanuel Kant's ideas concerning rationality and one's 'becoming'.¹³⁷ Once it was legal to leave the institutional Protestant or Catholic Churches in 1847, various 'free' religious movements emerged, and a number of these drew on Enlightenment ideas in developing an event to replace confirmation. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, groups of socialists and humanists (Freidenker) used the *Jugendweihe* as a secular initiation ceremony, often to celebrate school graduation.¹³⁸ The *Jugendweihe* was widespread in the Weimar Republic amongst socialists, and, while the Nazi authorities prohibited the *Jugendweihe* as such, the 'Verpflichtung der Jugend' celebrated a young person's school graduation, entrance into the Hitler Youth or BDM, and allegiance to the *Führer* as a member of the *Volkgemeinschaft*.¹³⁹

During the period of the Soviet zone there were attempts to re-introduce *Jugendweihe*. At no point, however, was *Jugendweihe* a systematic policy decided at the highest echelons of the party and handed down to apparatchiks in the localities of the Soviet zone. *Jugendweihe* ceremonies, therefore, represent the ultimate manifestation of independent local and regional actors. For example, on 19 March 1946, the regional head of the AVB in Sangerhausen (Saxony-Anhalt) sent a letter to the SPD and KPD leaderships in the area. It urged the organisation of a 'school leavers celebration' (Schulentlassungsfeier) that was timed to coincide with confirmation. It would out-do confirmation, thus being the celebratory 'pinnacle' to school graduation. As the author wrote:

¹³⁷ B. Hallberg, *Jugendweihe. Zur deutschen Jugendweihetradition* (Göttingen, 1978), 5. A good account of the background to the *Jugendweihe*: G. Diederich/B. Schäfer/J. Ohlemacher, *Jugendweihe in der DDR. Geschichte und politische Bedeutung aus christlicher Sicht* (Schwerin, 1998), 9-14.

¹³⁸ C. Fischer, *Wir haben euer Gelöbniß vernommen. Konfirmation und Jugendweihe im Spannungsfeld* (Leipzig, 1998), 24ff; Hallberg, 81ff (on Kant, 14ff).

¹³⁹ A. Meier, *Jugendweihe – Jugendfeier. Ein deutsches nostalgisches Fest vor und nach 1990* (München, 1998), 144; Hallberg, 106ff; A. Döhnert, 'Die Jugendweihe', in E. Francois/H. Schulze (ed.), *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte*, Vol. 3 (Munich, 2009), 352-3.

Es muss auf jeden Fall erreicht werden, dass die Schulentlassungsfeiern eine derartige Ausgestaltung und Beachtung finden, dass daneben die Konfirmationsfeiern völlig verblassen.¹⁴⁰

It was pronounced obligatory for school leavers, as well as those children who would graduate the following year. On 22 March, the same letter was sent to teachers and school officials in the region, seeking their support and cooperation.¹⁴¹ The CDU chapter in Sangerhausen, however, raised a stern protest and sent a circular to all pastors in the district, informing them of the intended *Jugendweihe*. The authors noted that it made no sense as a celebration for school graduation given that this was much later; they perceived that the AVB bureaucrat responsible instead wished to ‘sabotage’ church confirmation.¹⁴² The KPS also protested and sent copies of the letters to the Catholic Church.¹⁴³ The outcome of this episode is unclear, although the SED newspaper in Saxony-Anhalt, *Freiheit*, described the ‘first’ *Jugendweihe* celebration in Saxony-Anhalt, at Löbejün, just north of Halle, on 17 April 1946. It was reportedly carried out by the FDJ in the local school on Palm Sunday (14 April). Despite this, the Löbejün pastor observed with some satisfaction, as Easter 1947 approached, that the appeal of confirmation remained, and the *Jugendweihe* participants were largely only those absent from confirmation classes. He did not fail to recognise, though, that the *Jugendweihe* was a ‘competitor’, and he stated that he had lost one candidate in early 1947 to the FDJ. Prefiguring future developments, he

¹⁴⁰ AKPS, B1, 46, Organisationskomitee SED (Sangerhausen) to SPD and KPD (Sangerhausen), 19/3/46.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., AVB to teachers in the Sangerhausen region, 22/3/46.

¹⁴² Ibid., CDU (Sangerhausen) to pastors in the Sangerhausen region, 23/3/46.

¹⁴³ BAM, Jugendweihe, 1946/1946/1956-1959/1971, VKL to Weskamm, 17/4/46; LA Magd. – LKA – K. 10, MVb, 2237, VGL (Kreyssig) to MP, 17/4/46.

questioned what he should do if the situation arose where confirmation candidates also took part in the *Jugendweihe*.¹⁴⁴

In Thuringia, the church council sent numerous letters to various organisations requesting a clarification on their religious neutrality. The LKR judged the *Jugendweihe* an infraction of the State's obligation to stay out of church affairs. In 1947, the Apolda branch of the SED-controlled trade union, the Freier Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (FDGB), advertised a *Jugendweihe* in the *Thüringer Volk* issue of 11 March 1947. The announcement requested that all youth who had no affiliation to the Churches and wished to attend ought to present themselves to the local town hall on the morning of 30 March. An orchestra and choir would dignify the occasion.¹⁴⁵ The LKR wrote to the FDGB in Apolda with disappointment that it had abandoned its proclaimed religious neutrality. The secular confirmation was, furthermore, reminiscent of Nazi ersatz rites.¹⁴⁶ The FDGB waved the complaint away: the practice was legal and it had merely advertised the event; the SED had held the ceremony.¹⁴⁷ At one school in Gera in March 1947, children who had not previously been confirmed were obligated to take part in a *Jugendweihe* ceremony, facilitated by the FDJ and scheduled to take place on the Sunday before Palm Sunday. Upon church complaint, it was alleged that the event would be 'purely educational' and 'without any political or ideological bias'. The ceremony had, nonetheless, as the Gera regional superintendant observed, an unmistakable bias against the church and reflected the

¹⁴⁴ AKPS, B1, 46, Pfr. (Löbejün) to Kons., 19/3/47.

¹⁴⁵ LKAE, A450/III, Landesjugendpfarrer (Apolda) to LKR, 12/3/47.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., LKR to FDGB, 22/3/47.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., FDGB to LKR, 8/4/47.

‘misuse’ of a local school for political ends.¹⁴⁸ Soon after, articles in the socialist press advertised *Jugendweihe*.¹⁴⁹

There was also considerable propaganda for the *Jugendweihe* in 1948. A pastor in Ballenstedt in Anhalt reported in July that there had been recent widespread agitation. He lamented that this was an infraction of the promised separation between State and Church; *Jugendweihe* was ‘doubtless’ a substitute for religious instruction and activity.¹⁵⁰ Following the churchman’s complaint, a member of the Anhalt church council spoke with Dr. Kunisch, who denied that the *Jugendweihe* was an official policy of the state administration.¹⁵¹ In Thuringia, individual German communists in the SED and the FDGB certainly sought to dislodge Christian confirmation with recourse to *Jugendweihe* ceremonies scheduled in Geraberg, Arnstadt and Ilmenau on Palm Sunday. The pastor in Geraberg sent a copy of the ‘confession’ (Glaubensbekenntnis) of the ‘red’ *Jugendweihe* to the LKR. The statement began:

Wir haben keinen lieben Vater im Himmel
Sei mit die in Reinen!
Man muss aushalten im Weltgetümmel auch ohne das.
Was ich alles las bei gläubigen Philosophen
Lockt keinen Hund vom Ofen.
Wär einer droben in Wolkenhöhn und würd das Schauspiel mitansehn,
Wie mitleidlos, wie teuflischbild
Tier gegen Tier und Menschenbild gegen Menschenbild
Wütet mit Zahn mit Gift und Stahl
Mit ausgesponnener Polterqual,
Sein Vaterherz würde es nicht ertragen.¹⁵²

In the Ilmenau region, the Elgersburg pastor noted that the concurrent scheduling of *Jugendweihe* with confirmation was a significant challenge to and endangerment of

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., Sup. (Gera) to LKR, 26/3/47. Cf. the church report on the *Jugendweihe* in 1955: *LKAE*, A450/II, ‘Auswirkungender Jugendweihe’, Landesjugendpfarrer von Hintzenstern, undated.

¹⁴⁹ See, for example: *LKAE*, A450/III, *Thüringer Volk*, ‘Jugendweihe – eine Erhabende Feierstunde’.50, 5/6/47.

¹⁵⁰ *LKAD*, Beschwerden, 1947, Pfr. (Ballenstedt) to LKR, 22/7/48.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., Pfr. F. (Magdeburg) to Pfr. (Ballenstedt), 22/11/48.

¹⁵² *LKAE*, A450/II, Pfr. (Geraberg) to LKR, 25/3/48.

the proclaimed ‘religious freedom and neutrality’.¹⁵³ The church leadership responded vigorously to the FDGB advertisement of the Arnstadt event in the *Thüringer Volk* issue of 4 March 1948, evaluating the practice as a challenge to confirmation that was reminiscent of the Bismarckian *Kulturkampf*.¹⁵⁴ The local SED leadership responded that there were tens of thousands of children whose parents wished them to undergo *Jugendweihe*, and, moreover, it was not anti-Christian or directed against the Church.¹⁵⁵ This time, however, the director of the Land Thüringen Arbeit und Sozialwesen, Dr. Appell, responded to the LKR’s complaint of 10 March 1948 with an admission that his office had not approved any such event, and he promised that such ceremonies would not occur in the future.¹⁵⁶ In Saxony-Anhalt, there were instances of *Jugendweihe* in 1949.¹⁵⁷ A pastoral conference in Staßfurt in 1949 discussed the exclusion of youth who had taken part in *Jugendweihe* from confirmation. A final decision was not reached, but rather referred to the KPS church leadership.¹⁵⁸ The hierarchs in Magdeburg did not, however, rule on this conundrum until it was forced upon them with the official institution of the *Jugendweihe* in 1954.¹⁵⁹ What is clear is that all of these incidences of *Jugendweihe* were planned and

¹⁵³ Ibid., GKR (Elgersburg) to LKR, 5/3/48.

¹⁵⁴ *LKAE*, A450/III, LKR to FDGB, FDJ, Minister für Arbeit und Sozialfürsorge, Kulturbund Thüringen, SED Thüringen, 10/3/48.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., SED (Abteilung Kultur/Erziehung) to Mitzenheim, undated.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., Dr. Appell to LKR, 16/4/48. There were nevertheless further FDGB attempts in agitating for *Jugendweihe* the following year. See, for example: *ibid.*, LKR to FDGB, 2/4/49.

¹⁵⁷ See, for example: *AKPS*, B1, 46, ‘Feier der Jugendweihe am 10. April 1949 in Gommern’.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., Sup. (Staßfurt) to KL, 23/4/49.

¹⁵⁹ On *Jugendweihe* in the DDR see, for example: M.-T. Münch, ‘Die Jugendweihe als Erziehungsinstanz in der DDR – Intentionen politisch-ideologischer Erziehung in den Jugendstunden’, in S. Eschler/H.M. Griese (ed.), *Ritualtheorie, Initiationsriten und empirische Jugendweihforschung* (Stuttgart, 2002), 110-35; H. Wentker, ‘Die Einführung der Jugendweihe in der DDR: Hintergründe, Motive und Probleme’, in H. Mehringer (ed.), *Von der SBZ zur DDR* (Munich, 1995), 139-65. For oral and cultural history, see: D. Wierling, *Geboren im Jahr Eins. Der Geburtsjahrgang 1949 – Versuch einer Kollektivbiographie* (Berlin, 2002), 242-9, 252-3; M. Chauliac, ‘Die Jugendweihe’, in M. Sabrow (ed.), *Erinnerungsorte in der DDR* (Munich, 2009), 161-8.

executed at a local level, unsanctioned by the SED leadership.¹⁶⁰ As the head of the Abteilung für Kultur und Erziehung in the SED central committee, Stefan Heymann, admonished in *Neues Deutschland* on 31 March 1950, *Jugendweihe* was ‘reactionary’ and undermined the ‘collaborative struggle for unity and peace’.¹⁶¹ The SED was not yet ready for a full-scale *Kirchenkampf*, despite the unilateral actions of local and regional actors.

Conclusion

The German communists, the Soviet occupiers and the Churches all invested education and youth with great significance and, though the framework was altered in the DDR, the school and youth questions were legally settled in the Soviet zone by the end of 1946. The SVAG and their German communist allies attempted to restrict the Churches’ activities, firstly, through legislation. The Churches were *inter alia* held to dispensing religion classes for only two hours per week in schoolrooms upon application and only before or after classes. At the state level, the Thuringian LVB and the Saxon-Anhalt AVB caused considerable disruptions for the Churches. Regulation that fell short of outright prohibition was also used as a device to sideline church influence amongst youth. Church groups could meet only so long as they did not bear the character of an ‘organisation’, which would infringe the proclaimed separation between Church and State. There was, however, a second tactic employed against church youth: the attempted co-ordination of Christian groups with the

¹⁶⁰ The SED did not sanction *Jugendweihe* until 1954 on tactical grounds: the party had not yet fully secured hegemony over political and social life. It could ill afford a precipitate public confrontation with the Churches: Diederich et al, 8-9.

¹⁶¹ *Neues Deutschland*, ‘Warum keine Jugendweihe?’, Stefan Heymann, 31/3/50, 4.

Jugendausschüsse and then the FDJ. Thirdly, the secular organisations recruited church representatives to their leadership councils in an attempt to control and supervise the religious groups. Lastly, in the *Jugendweihe*, even though it was only sporadically practiced in localities without central, official authorisation, it embodied a conscious strategy to supplant the church rite of confirmation and excise religious influence from public life. Legal regulation, co-ordination, supervision and supersession were the four mechanisms deployed by KPD/SED functionaries to win the hearts and minds of the next generation.

The Christian mission to children and youth was, moreover, regularly burdened by persecution at the local level. These frictions reveal the importance of local events in understanding greater developments. Agents on the ground did not always adhere to the legislated state position on religious education or youth work. There was sometimes a complete disregard for legal regulations and, in Saxony-Anhalt, there was often little redress for ‘renegade’ anti-clerical officials who infringed church space and prerogatives. Kolesnichenko in Thuringia, however, indulged the church’s remonstrations on occasion. This notwithstanding, many local authorities often did not take government legislation as imperatives to respect the few state concessions made to the Churches. These officials did not so much try to ‘circumvent’ the decrees regarding religious education of 31 May and 30 October 1946, as Sean Brennan has argued, as ignore them entirely.¹⁶² State regulation of youth work was often interpreted at the lower level with anti-clerical intent: what indeed constituted an ‘organisation’? In this respect, local unilateralism was often tolerated where the Churches were concerned, and the regional landscape was dotted with independent actors. As the SED became increasingly Stalinised from late 1947, state authorities

¹⁶² Brennan, 128.

and the actions of local agents reinforced each other to obstruct and limit religious youth work especially. The Churches found themselves assailed from above and below: from antagonistic officials and officers on the ground, and from often unobliging regional administrations. The supreme manifestation of local independence was the occurrence of *Jugendweihe* in areas of Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt during the period of the SBZ.

By 1949, the Churches had recognised the reality behind the promised ‘religious freedom’, and this did not correspond at all with religious blueprints and hopeful expectations in 1945. As the provost of the Altmark lamented in May 1949, secular obstructions to religious education in the school fully reflected the ‘deployment of the materialistic worldview’. Other interventions and events, such as the oath taking of the ‘junge Pioniere’ (the feeder organisation to the FDJ) in Stendal, reminded the churchman of the Third Reich.¹⁶³ As socialist alternatives were introduced, the Churches were well and truly embroiled in a struggle for survival; the Churches faced a second dictatorship within only five years.¹⁶⁴ Yet, the question of the next generation had not been settled by the time of the establishment of the DDR in October 1949, and the SED jealously eyed the strength of the Churches’ grip on youth in particular.¹⁶⁵ In fact, both Churches continued to attract significant numbers of youth up to at least 1952. Wolfgang Tischner and Kristin Wappler have noted, in particular, that Catholic youth work maintained its cohesion and practice in the face

¹⁶³ AKPS, B1, 83, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht’, Propst der Altmark, 27/4/49.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. Lange’s representation of the two thrusts of SED *Kirchenpolitik* in the DDR: to introduce socialist alternatives and to foster an environment that phased Christianity out: G. Lange, ‘Staatliche Kirchenpolitik in der DDR. Versuch einer Bilanz aus katholischer Sicht’, *Die neue Ordnung*, 46 (1992), 328.

¹⁶⁵ Dähn, *Konfrontation oder Kooperation*, 42-5.

of secular persecution.¹⁶⁶ This was in no small measure attributable to its more modest ambitions and the development of a Catholic subculture designed to outlast secular antagonists.

The worst persecution was to come in the DDR. While the right to offer religious education in schoolrooms was ‘vouchsafed’ by the constitution (article 44), this was disingenuous at best. Legislation restricted church instruction, especially in 1953 and 1954.¹⁶⁷ There was also increasing conflict between the *Junge Gemeinde* and the FDJ from 1948, which was heightened in the second half of 1952 and intensified further by Honecker with his proclaimed ‘Liquidierung der Jungen Gemeinde’ from April 1953.¹⁶⁸ While the SED eased its harassment of church youth under advisement from Moscow in June 1953, the attempted displacement of confirmation with *Jugendweihe* again threatened the cohesion of the religious milieu from 1954/55.¹⁶⁹ The secular rite was to replace the church ceremony; scientific materialism was to replace religion. While zealous local officials held isolated instances of the *Jugendweihe* from 1946 to 1949, the turn from local event to state-imposed policy, from unsanctioned grass-roots action to official sanction, came in 1954/55.¹⁷⁰ This ceremony was not qualitatively different from what had occurred in various localities in the Soviet zone, but the

¹⁶⁶ This was especially true in Eichsfeld: Tischner, *Katholische Kirche*, 348-9; Wappler, ‘The Limits of Politicization’, 61-86. In general, see: Klenke, *Das Eichsfeld unter den deutschen Diktaturen*.

¹⁶⁷ Goerner, 289-90; Dähn, *Konfrontation oder Kooperation*, 35-7. The Churches’ right to offer religious education in classrooms was rescinded in 1959.

¹⁶⁸ See, in general: *BArch*, DO4 84019, Evangelische Jugendarbeit, insb. ‘Junge Gemeinde’, 1949-1953. Also: H. Wentker, ‘“Kirchenkampf” in der DDR. Der Konflikt um die Junge Gemeinde 1950-1953’, *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 42/1 (1994), 95-127; also: Besier, *Der SED-Staat und die Kirche*, 106-25; Goerner, 92-105.

¹⁶⁹ H. Wentker, ‘Jugendarbeit oder Jugendopposition? Die junge Gemeinde im Urteil von SED und Ost-CDU und in ihrem Selbstverständnis 1950-1953’, in U. Hermann (ed.), *Protestierende Jugend. Jugend Opposition und politischer Protest in der deutschen Nachkriegsgeschichte* (Weinheim, 2002), 184-6.

¹⁷⁰ See: *BArch* DO 4 84018, Jugendweihe und Konfirmation, 1954-1956; *ibid.*, Staatssekretär für Kirchenfragen; Stellvertreter der Ministerpräsidenten Nuschke: Jugendweihe, Bd. 1, 1955-1956.

legislation did formalise *Jugendweihe* as the sharp end of the communist intent to promote a secularised environment toxic to religious belief.

Chapter 3:

The project of ‘re-Christianisation’ in the ‘seelische Trümmerfeld’

At the fall of the Third Reich, various politicians, philosophers and prelates throughout Germany hailed a new hour for the Churches. The collapse of Nazism appeared to offer the perfect opportunity to re-order society according to Christian precepts, and Protestant and Catholic churchmen proclaimed a coming ‘re-Christianisation’ of the German *Volk*.¹ The influential Württemberg Bishop, Theophil Wurm, challenged the Protestant churches of Germany to take hold of the post-war opportunity before an international ecumenical delegation in Stuttgart on 18 October 1945.² Catholic clergy elaborated on the project of ‘re-Christianisation’ as a return to God, and a reclaiming of lost ground after long-term secularisation and Nazi persecution.³ The ideas of a ‘neue Anfang’, in fact, echoed throughout society and there were even expectations at the parish level. The wife (1923) of a pastor in

¹ See: W. Löhr, ‘Rechristianisierungsvorstellungen im deutschen Katholizismus 1945-1948’, in J.-C. Kaiser/A. Doering-Manteuffel (ed.), *Christentum und politische Verantwortung. Kirchen im Nachkriegsdeutschland* (Stuttgart, 1990), 25-41; Greschat, ‘Zwischen Aufbruch und Beharrung’, 110ff; R. Bessel, *Germany 1945. From War to Peace* (London, 2009), 312-8; K. Meier, ‘Volkskirchlicher Neuaufbau in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone’, in *Die Zeit nach 1945 als Thema kirchlicher Zeitgeschichte*, 213; B. Ziemann, *Religion and the Search for Meaning, 1945-1990* (manuscript, 2010), 2ff.

² M. Greschat, “Rechristianisierung” und “Säkularisierung”. Anmerkungen zu einem europäischen interkonfessionellen Interpretationsmodell’, in *Christentum und politische Verantwortung*, 1.

³ See: Thorak, 64; Löhr, 29; Repgen, 138ff; J. Köhler/D. van Melis (ed.), *Siegerin in Trümmern: Die Rolle der katholischen Kirche in der deutschen Nachkriegsgesellschaft* (Stuttgart, 1998), 10-7. D. van Melis, “Strengthened and purified through ordeal by fire”. Ecclesiastical Triumphalism in the Ruins of Europe”, in R. Bessel/D. Schumann (ed.), *Life after Death. Approaches to a Cultural and Social History of Europe during the 1940s and 1950s* (Cambridge, 2003), 231-41.

Gerbstedt, Thuringia, for example, remembered the high hopes of her spouse for a ‘revival’ (Erweckung) in the post-war period.⁴

There were several dimensions to ‘re-Christianisation’. Two aspects were, as we have seen in chapter two, the desire to re-establish confessional schools and regain influence over youth. Political aspirations included ‘re-Christianisation’, especially those of the CDU, though this programme was increasingly problematic in the Soviet zone as the KPD/SED expanded its influence over politics. The pressures exerted on the Churches and the CDU leading up to the elections in October 1946 illustrated the difficulties of ‘re-Christianisation’ through politics.⁵ This chapter, however, analyses the extent of ‘re-Christianisation’ through an investigation of church membership and the obligation placed upon each believer to attend church services. The service (and communion/mass in particular) was the centrepiece of both Protestant and Catholic religious life. For Martin Luther, it was the site of an ongoing conversation between God and his community, while mass was the heart of the Catholic liturgy.⁶

A number of historians have addressed ‘re-Christianisation’ and the idea of a popular ‘revival’ in 1945. Few have examined the grassroots realities of how ‘re-Christianisation’ was worked out within the religious milieu and/or in terms of ‘lived religion’.⁷ This chapter, then, investigates popular behaviours and mentalities toward

⁴ Questionnaire from Frau Maria D., Gerbstedt, 1923.

⁵ Greschat, “Rechristianisierung” und “Säkularisierung”, 6ff; Löhr, 26-7.

⁶ *KJ*, 1952, 477; *GuH*, 2/7, 16/2/47, ‘Glaube und Gottesdienst’, Dr. Deter (Gera-Untermhaus), 1; *GuH*, 3/33, 15/8/48, ‘Muß man sonntags in die Kirche gehen?’, K. Brinkel, 3; *KH*, 1944-51, 292-5.

⁷ For instance: C. Kleßmann, *Die Doppelte Staatsgründung. Deutsche Geschichte 1945-1955* (Göttingen, 1982), 59; T. Seidel, *Im Übergang der Diktaturen*, 71-2; Repgen, 140-1. Two milieu studies that address the post-war period (at least in part) are: W. Beck, *Westfälische Protestanten auf dem Weg in die Moderne*. W. Damberg, *Abschied vom Milieu? Katholizismus im Bistum Münster und in den Niederlanden 1945-1980* (Paderborn, 1997), esp. 511. See also: M.E. O’Sullivan, ‘West German Miracles. Catholic Mystics, Church Hierarchy, and Postwar Popular Culture’, *Zeithistorische Forschungen/Studies in Contemporary History*, Online-Ausgabe, 6 (2009) H. 1, URL: <http://www.zeithistorische-forschungen.de/16126041-OSullivan-1-2009> (accessed 25/4/11).

the institutional Churches.⁸ Initially, many clergymen reported the involvement of significant numbers of people in church life in the first months after the end of conflict in 1945. Thereafter, the picture is more ambiguous: some localities reported consistent religious observance, especially as people attended festivals and observed life's rites of passage according to church tradition. A number of reports also noted the piety and faithfulness of refugees in visiting chapel. On the whole, however, people abstained from regular religious observance, and some left the Churches. There was no 're-Christianisation' anywhere in Germany in the period 1945 to 1949, and certainly not in Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia. As Hartmut Lehmann has pointed out in reference to times of natural disasters, the years of the Soviet zone reveal continuities and changes in religious conceptions of the world and in the process of secularisation itself.⁹ The failure of 're-Christianisation' in the Soviet zone preceded the precipitous drop in church membership during the DDR.¹⁰ Research has shown that the former East Germany remains among the most secularised regions in the

Further, Ruff (*The Wayward Flock*, 187-202) argues that the authority of the Church declined after the establishment of the *Bundesrepublik*.

⁸ Elsewhere (Fenwick, 100-26), I have discussed the question of church popularity in Thuringia from 1945 to 1948 and attempted to answer why popular interest in the Churches declined after 1945. I am now not convinced, however, that there is sufficient and compelling enough evidence to accept a throughgoing 'revival' in Thuringia in 1945.

⁹ M. Jakubowski-Tiessen/H. Lehmann, 'Religion in Katastrophenzeiten: Zur Einführung', in M. Jakubowski-Tiessen/H. Lehmann (ed.), *Um Himmels willen. Religion in Katastrophenzeiten* (Göttingen, 2003), 10.

¹⁰ See, for example, D. Pollack, *Kirche in der Organisationsgesellschaft. Zum Wandel der Gesellschaftlichen Lage der evangelischen Kirche in der DDR* (Stuttgart, 1994); idem, 'Von der Volkskirche zur Minderheitskirche. Zur Entwicklung von Religiosität und Kirchlichkeit in der DDR', in H. Kaelble et al (ed.), *Sozialgeschichte der DDR* (Stuttgart, 1994), 271-94; E. Neubert, 'Von der Volkskirche zur Minderheitskirche: Bilanz 1990', in *Die Rolle der Kirchen in der DDR*, 36-55; W. Büscher, 'Unterwegs zur Minderheit: eine Auswertung konfessionsstatistischer Daten', in R. Henkys (ed.), *Die evangelischen Kirchen in der DDR. Beiträge zu einer Bestandsaufnahme* (Munich, 1982), 422-36.

world.¹¹ I conclude that developments between 1945-1949 contain some explanatory power in understanding the developments after 1949.

Variations in religious observance

In early 1947, the head pastor at Zeulenroda in Thuringia wrote an exhaustive report on church life in his parish from 1944 to 1946. It records many characteristics of religious observance that were prevalent elsewhere in Thuringia and in Saxony-Anhalt. Firstly, the pastor observed that church attendance was often dependent on political circumstances. Only the most faithful parishioners attended services in the Third Reich; there were few public officials and young and middle-aged men. With the arrival of the Americans, though, attendance more than doubled, and men who had never attended before now visited services. Yet, the subsequent Soviet occupation ensured that these men again disappeared and participation declined in general. Secondly, there was often poor attendance on normal Sundays, though traditional church festivals drew larger numbers. The Christmas Eve service (Christvesper) attracted the greatest number of people and the local chapel could not seat all visitors. Services on *Totensonntag*, *Erntedankfest*, Easter (Osterfest) and New Year's (Silvester) were also well attended.¹² Thirdly, the forging of a strong, growing congregation was reportedly difficult given that the majority of people in Zeulenroda was indifferent to religion, especially the middle class. Some families, however,

¹¹ T. Schmidt/M. Wohlrab-Sahr, 'Still the most areligious part of the World: developments in the religious field in Eastern Germany since 1990', *International Journal of Practical Theology*, 7/1 (2003), 86.

¹² *Totensonntag* commemorates the dead and is celebrated the Sunday before First Advent; the *Erntedankfest* thanks God for the fruits of the harvest and is held on the Sunday after St. Michael's Day on 29 September.

remained faithful to the church (including Protestant refugees), while others only attended sporadically. The Catholic community, on the other hand, was bolstered by a number of pious refugees who understood church-going as a primary obligation.¹³

As at Zeulenroda, there were reports of increased involvement in church life throughout Germany at the end of the war in 1945.¹⁴ The removal of the constraints of wartime and the Third Reich gave impetus to local parish life. A pastor in Zeitz, for instance, reflected that people only dared to speak to him in passing during the Nazi period, whereas they could attend church with little fear after the war.¹⁵ Similarly, a pastor in Sudenburg (Magdeburg) reflected on a rise in religious enthusiasm in 1945 that was manifest in strong attendance and participation in ceremonies.¹⁶ The word ‘Aufschwung’ was sometimes used to describe church life from April to July 1945 (roughly the period of the American occupation in areas of Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia). A pastor at St Marien in Stendal reported that there had been an initial ‘Aufschwung’ in church life after the war, and a churchman in Gera described an ‘Aufschwung’ in May 1945 that strained church resources.¹⁷ Mitzenheim wrote Bishop Lau in Saxony in July 1945 that an ‘Aufschwung’ was unmistakable in many areas of the TheK.¹⁸ In Anhalt, the Ballenstedt Kreisoberpfarrer observed that the numbers at church services in his jurisdiction rose ‘suddenly’ in the ‘Katastrophenjahr

¹³ *AEKZ*, ‘Chronik der evang.-luth. Kirchgemeinde Zeulenroda, 1944-1946’, 27/2/47.

¹⁴ Greschat, ‘Zwischen Aufbruch und Beharrung’, 112; W-D. Hauschild, *Konfliktgemeinschaft Kirche: Aufsätze zur Geschichte der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland* (Göttingen, 2004), 301; T. Seidel, *Im Übergang der Diktaturen*, 69-70.

¹⁵ *AKPS*, B1, 189, Pfr S. (Zeitz) to Müller, 27/11/47.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Pfr. R. (Magdeburg) to Konsistorialrat A. (Magdeburg), 13/9/47.

¹⁷ *AKPS*, B1, 22, Pfr. (Stendal) to Pfr. Schapper, 2/11/45. *LKAE*, A130/II, Pfr. D. (Gera) to Mitzenheim, 31/5/45.

¹⁸ *LKAE*, A239/III, Mitzenheim to Lau (Sachsen), 20/7/45. In Jena, for example: *Ibid.*, 170, Johannes Rabe to Mitzenheim, 10/12/45; *LKAE*, NL Mitzenheim, n. 3, Pfr. K. (Jena) to Mitzenheim, 26/7/45.

1945'.¹⁹ Catholic church life, especially in Eichsfeld, was also vibrant after the war. This is reflected particularly in reports from mid to late 1945. The American occupiers approved the *Fronleichnamsprozession* (with the notable exception of Erfurt), and great numbers reportedly observed the festival throughout Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt.²⁰ Regular church services also drew good numbers in many parishes, including Geismar, Saalfeld, Allendorf and Bienstädt.²¹ It seems that many people attended church in the first post-war months to give thanks to God for their preservation and that of loved ones. People widely believed that God's good will had kept them from harm.²² This is evident in echoes of 'Gott sei Dank' as relief came over parishioners. Individuals and communities throughout Eichsfeld, including at Effelder, Geismar, Heiligenstadt, Kefferhausen and Küllstedt, praised the faithfulness of God, the Virgin Mary and a host of saints.²³

There were, however, a number of places where participation in church life was poor in 1945. Church attendance was 'very bad' in the Piethen parish in Anhalt, and it reportedly had been low for a long time.²⁴ In Hendeluft-Weiden, there had been a 'significant' drop in attendance after the war. The Zerbst Kreisoberpfarrer visited the

¹⁹ *LKAD*, Statistik, Gemeinden, 1944-53, KOP (Ballenstedt) to LKRA, 22/5/47.

²⁰ *BEA*, C II a 16, 1945-1953, Freusberg to American occupation authorities in Erfurt, 2/6/45; *BAM*, Geschichte des Kommissariates: Seelsorge, allgemeine Lage, 1945-1947, 'Aus dem kirchlichen Leben und dem Zustand der Gemeinden im Kommissariatbezirk Magdeburg', 12/6/45. Corpus Christi (Fronleichnamsfest) is celebrated on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday (Dreifaltigkeitsfest), which was the first Sunday after Pentecost (Pfingsten).

²¹ *Kriegsende*, 171; Siebert, 28. *DAW*, BKM, K4: Geschichtliche Dokumentation, 28, 'Abschrift aus dem Tagebuch der Frau Katharina Link gewesene Studienrätin, Mutter des Herrn Pfr. Hans Link, 1945', 3/5/45; G. Zähm, 'Thüringer Blickpunkte 1933-1945 aus der Sicht eines Dorfpfarrers damaliger Zeit', in T. Seidel/D. Wiegand (ed.), *Thüringer Gratwanderungen* (Leipzig, 1998), 244-55.

²² See, for example: *LKAE*, NL Mitzenheim, 3, Pfr. (Arnstadt) to Mitzenheim, undated.

²³ Fenwick, 50, 107. The examples are at: *Kriegsende*, 158, 169-70, 195, 254, 270. Other examples for Reinhalterode, Neustadt, Leinefelde, Wiesenfeld and Worbis are at: *ibid.*, 271, 295, 299, 341, 354.

²⁴ *LKAD*, Gemeindehelfer und Gemeindehelferinnen, 1945-51, KOP (Köthen) to LKRA, 29/10/45.

town one Sunday and reported that nobody attended the service from nearby Jeber due to a work detail and Soviet billeting scheduled for the following day.²⁵ In Graitschen and Foxdorf in Thuringia, the participation in church services also dropped ‘significantly’ after the end of the war and then fell further, as at Zeulenroda, after the Russians moved into occupation.²⁶ Other areas in Thuringia were historically infamous for low religiosity and little changed in 1945.²⁷

The general picture after 1945 is even more heterogeneous. Some reports noted enthusiastic involvement in church life and others observed lagging or even non-existent interest in religion. In some places, people attended church services and observed ritual in significant numbers. Many areas in Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt had not previously accommodated a Catholic population, and the arrival of hundreds of thousands of Catholic refugees meant that multiple services were common, especially in more populous areas.²⁸ For instance, there were four in Magdeburg chapels on Sundays and three on weekdays.²⁹ According to one report, an average of five church services took place each Sunday in every occupied pastoral station

²⁵ *LKAD*, Kirchenvisitationen, 1945-48, KOP (Zerbst) to LKR (regarding Mundeluft), 29/11/45; *ibid.*, LKR (Fiedler) to Pfr. K. (Weiden), 5/2/46.

²⁶ *AEKE*, Graitschen I: 1.2.1946-28.12.1949, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht für die Gemeinden Graitschen u. Foxdorf 1942-1947’, 29/4/48.

²⁷ *GuH*, 3/15, 11/4/48, ‘Woran erkennen wir die lebendige Gemeinde?’, 2.

²⁸ The result was that Catholic refugees often visited Protestant churches. The use of Protestant chapels was especially welcomed in larger towns such as Rudolstadt and Schmalkaden where the bigger structures offered much greater space: *BEA*, BGVP bzw. Fulda, Rudolstadt parish to Sup. (Rudolstadt), 8/5/48; *BEA*, BGVE/BAE-M, 306, Schmalkaden parish to Erfurt, 2/4/47. Protestant communities throughout Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia were largely accommodating and collaborated with Catholic congregations: *LKAD*, Kreisoberpfarramt, 1945-65, KOP (Köthen) to LKRA, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht des Gemeindegemeinderäte’, 28/1/48; *BAM*, Paderborn: Erzbischof – Korrespondenz – 1945-1955, Weskamm to Jäger, ‘Bericht über verschiedene Angelegenheiten’, 5/6/48; *ibid.*, Evang. Konsistorium to Jäger, 8/3/47. For Thuringia, see Fenwick, 82-5.

²⁹ *BAM*, Staatliche Behörden: Der Präsident der Provinz Sachsen, Provinzialregierung der Provinz Sachsen-Anhalt, 1945-Juni 1947, Weskamm to Stadtverwaltung (Schulverwaltung), 2/8/45.

throughout the Magdeburg Commissariat.³⁰ In Thuringia, there were four services every Sunday in Arnstadt and Rudolstadt, six in Meiningen, and the Erfurt church of St Marien moved services to the evening to accommodate as many working people as possible.³¹ That multiple services took place in any given parish largely reflects only that the local Catholic (or Protestant) population had increased due to population movements. It is necessary, therefore, to explore the ratio of churchgoers to total church members where such data is available.

With this in mind, many places reported low participation. In the large parish of Torgau, which included ca. 16,600 Catholics, only 20 percent visited church in the 26 towns where services were offered.³² Attendance often wavered according to weather conditions and work commitments.³³ Only 15 to 20 percent of all Catholics attended chapel at Neudietendorf, near Erfurt, while nearby satellite congregations comprised only 10 to 15 percent of the total Catholic population.³⁴ The priest at Niedersachswerfen lamented that most of the 1,970 Catholics in the parish were indifferent to religion and were not regular visitors to chapel.³⁵ In Möser in the Magdeburg Commissariat, an average of 110 people went to church services out of a total of 321 Catholics in 1947. At Nienburg, 500 participated from a population of

³⁰ *BAM*, Statistik: Allgemein: Generalia, 1948-1964/1977, 'Statistische Zahlen über die Seelsorge des Kommissariats Magdeburg (Sachsen/Anhalt), 16/3/1948'.

³¹ *BEA*, 3 III, Erfurt, St. Marien, Propststeipfarrkirche, 1942-1959, Gottesdienst und Seelsorge, 'Abendmesse – ein wirkliches Bedürfnis', 12/4/46; *BEA*, BGVP bzw. Fulda, Rudolstadt parish to Sup. (Rudolstadt), 8/5/48; *DAW*, BKM, K4: Geschichtliche Dokumentation, 32, 'Bericht über die Fahrt des Caritas Direktors der Diözese Würzburg in die Diaspora in Süd-Thüringen vom 20 Mai-2 Juni 1948'.

³² *BAM*, Geschichte des Kommissariates: Seelsorge (Komm.) allgemeine Lage, 1945-1947, 'Bericht über die seelsorgliche Lage im Pfarrbezirk Torgau', Pfarramt Torgau, 6/5/46. As Benjamin Ziemann has remarked, the numbers, if at all manipulated, would only have been increased given that 'attendance and communion figures were the benchmark for pastoral success': Ziemann, 7.

³³ Weather conditions: *BEA*, BGVE-BAE-M, 125, 1947-1957, 'Bericht über die seelsorglich-caritativen Verhältnisse in Seelsorgsbezirk Erfurt-Ost (Linderbach)', undated (probably early 1947). Work commitments: *BEA*, BGVP bzw. Fulda, Bleicherode to BGVF, 30/6/47.

³⁴ *BEA*, BGVE/BAE-M, 125, 1946, 'Jahresbericht der Seelsorgstelle Neudietendorf über das Jahr 1946', undated.

³⁵ *BEA*, BGVP bzw. Fulda, Niedersachswerfen to BGVF, 4/8/47.

1,700 Catholics and, at Gernrode, 150-200 attended church out of 670.³⁶ In total, the German Catholic Yearbook for 1944-51 listed that an average of 38.4 percent of all Catholics visited church services in 1948 throughout the Thuringian section of the Fulda diocese (no figures exist for other years).³⁷ In comparison, 57.2 percent of Catholics attended chapel in the Fulda diocese proper in 1942, 39.5 percent in 1946, 44.9 percent in 1947, 43.8 percent in 1948 and 55 percent in 1949.³⁸ The Yearbook noted that only 24.8 percent of the total 602,813 Catholics in the Magdeburg Commissariat attended church services in 1948.³⁹ This is corroborated by an undated report prepared for the Catholic authorities in Paderborn insofar as it observed that attendance was comparatively lower in the Commissariat than in the Thuringian section of the Fulda diocese.⁴⁰ Throughout the Paderborn diocese, 46.2 percent of Catholics visited church in 1942, 43.3 percent in 1946, 44.7 percent in 1947, 47.2 in 1948 and 45.5 percent in 1949.⁴¹ Often difficult conditions, logistics and a severe lack of priests ensured that regular church life was impeded, if not impossible, in many places.⁴²

As for the Protestant Church, there were sometimes variations within the same church community, as well as considerable regional variations. The ‘neue Aufschwung’ observed at St Marien in Stendal in the immediate post-war period soon dissolved,

³⁶ *BAM*, Statistik: Allgemein: Generalia, 1948-1964/1977, Kuratien ohne kircheneigene Gottesdiensträume, undated (probably before 1948).

³⁷ *KH*, 1944-51, 329.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 397, 401, 405, 409, 413.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 357.

⁴⁰ *BAM*, Statistik: Allgemein: Generalia, 1948-1964/1977, Kuratien ohne kircheneigene Gottesdiensträume, undated (probably before 1948).

⁴¹ *KH*, 1944-51, 397, 401, 405, 409, 413.

⁴² See Fenwick, 79-101.

and the pastor observed in December 1945 that ‘Jetzt ist alles wieder tot’.⁴³ A clergyman in Magdeburg reported that church life had been muted up until Summer 1947 when there was ‘ein gewisses Erwachen aus der allgemeinen Betäubung, doch schon überall eine leise Besserung im gottesdienstlichen Leben, im Unterricht, und bei anderen Gelegenheiten’. Yet, as soon as Autumn (September) 1947, this brief ‘awakening’ had dissipated.⁴⁴ At a higher level, a number of KPS provosts noted that the spiritual climate within their constituencies was extremely varied according to locale. In areas of the Naumburg district, the provost observed that there were rural and industrial areas where there were signs of ‘spiritual life’. In these places, he went on:

Man fängt an, auf das Wort der Kirche zu hören. Man sieht, wie heute alles Menschensein verlorengelht. Man spürt, dass allein in der Botschaft von Jesus Christus die nackte Existenz des Menschen gerettet werden kann.⁴⁵

These people attended church to submit to God’s judgement and receive his grace. Communion attracted numbers because its visitors knew the doctrine of justification by faith alone. Religion was central in such areas: ‘Kurz: die Botschaft der Kirche rückt in den Mittelpunkt des Lebens’. There were, nonetheless, other communities where religion played little or no role. The provost evaluated that there was nothing approximating a ‘revival’, though one could ‘probably’ state that these communities were at least ‘awake’.⁴⁶ In 1948, the provost of Halberstadt and Quedlinburg visited churches throughout the district of Oschersleben and reported ‘pleasing participation’ in the parishes of Hordorf, Hornhausen, Hamersleben, Oschersleben,

⁴³ *AKPS*, B1, 22, Pfr. (Stendal) to Pfr. Schapper, 2/11/45.

⁴⁴ *AKPS*, B1, 189, Pfr. R. (Magdeburg) to Konsistorialrat A. (Magdeburg), 13/9/47.

⁴⁵ *AKPS*, B1, 83, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht für das Jahr 1948’, Propstei Naumburg, 13/1/49.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht für das Jahr 1948’, Propstei Naumburg, 13/1/49.

Kleinoschersleben, Schermcke, Hadmersleben, Ausleben, Wackersleben and Warsleben. In all of these, local church council members showed a willingness to help, and there was a good knowledge of the bible amongst children and youth. There was an average of 200 persons at each evening church service. He also attended the 'Church Day' (Kirchentag) in Eilenstedt and commented on its vibrant community work that had yielded 'significant' attendance at all events. In all, the provost concluded:

Ich gewann den Eindruck, als ob die Gemeindeglieder durch die vielen Fragen, in die sie durch unsere Zeit gestellt werden, zu einer großen Hörbereitschaft auf das Wort der Kirche geführt werden.

However, this was just an 'impression' and he noted that there was often little enthusiasm amongst parishioners and clergy to evangelise the general population.⁴⁷ In the Halle-Merseburg district, the provost observed varying degrees of piety amongst communities. Spiritual life flourished in some congregations, but most communities were spiritually 'dead'.⁴⁸ In the Magdeburg district, which was historically infamous for poor church observance, the provost pronounced in an introductory sermon on 13 March 1946: 'Soweit die Domtürme von Magdeburg zu sehen sind, bleiben die Kirchen leer.'⁴⁹ The 'Men's Day' (Männertag) in 1948, though, was reportedly extremely well attended and stimulating, and participation had been strong in the annual 'mission celebrations' (Missionsfeste) for a number of years. The provost summarised, in spite of these successful events, that there was no inner renewal in the communities, nor could one speak of a 'revival'.⁵⁰ The provost in the Altmark reached a similar conclusion. There were certain 'dead' communities alongside those that

⁴⁷ Ibid., 'Tätigkeitsbericht des Propstes zu Halberstadt und zu Quedlinburg für das Jahr 1948', 8/4/49.

⁴⁸ AKPS, B1, 17, 'Tätigkeitsbericht der Propstei Halle-Merseburg für das Jahr 1947', 18/5/48.

⁴⁹ AKPS, B1, 18, 'Bericht über die kirchliche Lage im Kirchenkreis Magdeburg', 27/8/46.

⁵⁰ AKPS, B1, 83, 'Tätigkeitsbericht über die Propstei Magdeburg', 12/5/49.

were inspired by the working of the 'Holy Spirit'. Some church elders did good work and sometimes took church services in the absence of the pastor, while parishioners contributed to an active church life as organists, teachers, elders, helpers in children's church, Frauenhilfe and youth workers. This was reportedly a better situation than that of a decade beforehand, though there was no 'inner revival'.⁵¹

The same variations are evident in the Anhalt church. The five Kreisoberpfarrer undertook visitations to parishes and observed that some areas enjoyed a vibrant church life with many participants, while others had died off to Christianity. There was reportedly good attendance in the towns of Großalsleben, Kleinalsleben and Alikendorf in October 1946, and in the St. Martin's church in Köthen in November 1946.⁵² The church in Preußnitz enjoyed good attendances at communion services (three times per year), at confirmation and during Advent. Most attendees were refugees.⁵³ A great many parishioners attended the church service for Köthen Kreisoberpfarrer Karl Windschild's visit to the Radegast parish in February 1947.⁵⁴ On the other hand, Windschild had reported in July 1946 that the pastor in Dohndorf had preached a well-prepared sermon before three refugee women and a child. He was shocked at the town's lack of religiosity. Apparently a previous pastor had preached one Good Friday to a single person: his wife.⁵⁵

⁵¹ Ibid., 'Tätigkeitsbericht', Propst der Altmark, 27/4/49.

⁵² *LKAD*, Kirchensitationen, 1945-48, KOP (Ballenstedt) to LKRA (regarding Großalsleben, Kleinalsleben, Alikendorf), 10/10/46; *ibid.*, KOP (Köthen) to LKRA (regarding the Martinskirche in Köthen), 7/11/46; *ibid.*, LKRA (Fiedler) to GKR (Martinskirche), 3/1/47.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 'Bericht über die Gemeindegemeinschaft', Pfr. S. (Preußnitz), 6/1/47; *ibid.*, LKRA (Fiedler) to GKR/Pfr. (Preußnitz), 6/3/47.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, KOP (Köthen) to LKRA (regarding Grossbadegast, Prosigk and Radegast), 18/3/47.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, KOP (Köthen) to LKRA (regarding Dohndorf), 22/7/46.

Although there are no general statistics on Protestant church attendance, figures exist for the Ballenstedt district in Anhalt.⁵⁶ After a decline in per week participation during the war, the attendance rose – concurrent with the arrival of refugees – to 1,904 in 1945 before dropping the following year to 1,720. The percentage of total Protestants attending regular services was exceedingly low, however. Kleinalsleben had the highest proportion of the 18 parishes with 7.8 percent; Frose had the lowest with 1.8 percent. The pastor blamed the indifference of farmers at Radisleben and Badeborn for figures of 3.6 and 3.8 percent. Rieder (3.5) and Harzgerode (3.2) had experienced poor participation for a long time and had always been ‘difficult ground’. Farmers and forestry workers worked long hours at Neudorf (2.3); Opperode (2.3) was a long way from its pastor, and Frose was largely populated by miners working long shifts.⁵⁷

There are, nevertheless, general statistics on participation in communion, which was not regular throughout Protestant parishes and nowhere a weekly event. In 1945, only nine percent of all Protestants took part in communion in the Thuringian church. From 1946 to 1949, the figure rose to 11, 13, 15 and 17 percent. The same upward trend, however marginal, was apparent in the KPS and the LKA. The KPS went from 11 percent in both 1945 and 1946, to 12, 13 and 15 percent from 1947-9. The Anhalt church reported figures of 10 percent in 1946, 11 percent in 1947, 13 percent in 1948 and 14 percent in 1949.⁵⁸ At a lower level, in the Eisenberg district in Thuringia, churchmen often criticised poor attendance at communion services. In Bürgel, only 10 percent of local Protestants attended one of the four communion services in 1947. The

⁵⁶ *KJ*, 1951, 360.

⁵⁷ *LKAD*, Statistik, Gemeinden, 1944-53, KOP (Ballenstedt) to LKRA, 22/5/47.

⁵⁸ *KJ*, 1952, 474; *KJ*, 1954, 324. There is no data for the LKA in 1945: *KJ*, 1951, 358.

pastor deemed this ratio ‘very poor’.⁵⁹ In the Bad Klosterlausnitz area, nine percent of the Protestant community took communion over 16 services in 1946.⁶⁰ The best ‘performance’ in the Eisenberg superintendenture was at Königshofen where 33 percent attended communion over the three services in 1947.⁶¹ In the Ballenstedt district, a comparison between attendance figures at communion services in 1930 and 1946 yielded a rise in 12 parishes and a decline in seven others.⁶² Again, the statistics may reflect difficult conditions and the infrequency of communion services. The rise in overall percentage of communion participants from 1945 to 1949 might equally reflect a greater number of communion services as organisation and/or circumstances improved in some parishes.

It is very difficult to account for regional and local variations accurately. While all of this (largely) anecdotal evidence offers only glimpses into church life in various locales, there are some tentative general explanations. Local conditions and personnel, for example, offer a little insight. At Zeulenroda, the winter cold kept many parishioners from church, and in summer people were hard at work collecting food and wood.⁶³ Each clergyman was also often a key factor in promoting either a cohesive or a fragmented community. For instance, the Catholic priest at Ruhla reportedly forged a vibrant and unified congregation despite cultural and linguistic differences between refugees and native Thuringians.⁶⁴ ‘Motivated’, ‘faithful’ pastors in the Laurentius, Paulus and Johannes congregations in Halle promoted ‘something

⁵⁹ *AEKE*, Bürgel I: 27.1.1941 zum 14.12.1951, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht 1947’, Bürgel, undated.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht des Ev. Pfarramtes Bad Klosterlausnitz für das Jahr 1947’, 29/7/48.

⁶¹ *AEKE*, Königshofen: von 1939-Dez. 1955, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht des Gemeindegemeinderats Königshofen für die Zeit vom 1.4.47-31.3.48’, 9/3/48.

⁶² *LKAD*, Statistik, Gemeinden, 1944-53, KOP (Ballenstedt) to LKRA, 22/5/47.

⁶³ *AEKZ*, ‘Chronik der evang.-luth. Kirchgemeinde Zeulenroda, 1944-1946’, 27/2/47.

⁶⁴ *BEA*, BGVP bzw. Fulda, Pfr. K. (Ruhla) to BGVF, 13/8/46.

like a revival'. The provost of Halle-Merseburg, on the other hand, expressed concerns about pastors who neglected religious instruction to children and youth, and failed to hold regular church services. He further inculpated pastors' wives for never attending church and teaching thievery to their offspring.⁶⁵ In Erfurt, a Protestant congregation lost faith in its pastor and alleged that his wife was a thief; church attendance had accordingly dropped significantly.⁶⁶ In Klitschen, community life had almost come to a standstill under the stewardship of one pastor. Bishop Müller hoped that it could be revived under the leadership of a different churchman, who had a record of diligent service.⁶⁷ According to a report by the Magdeburg provost, a dynamic church life in various communities, including Brumby and throughout the district of Calbe, was often the fruit of strenuous and effective pastoral labour. Otherwise, the stagnant church life in Börde, northwest of Magdeburg, was the result of years of pastoral neglect.⁶⁸ In Weihe (Eichsfeld), the Chairman of the Thuringian CDU, Johann Steinbach, wrote to the Fulda diocese complaining about the behaviour and general indifference of the local priest that had resulted in little enthusiasm for religious life amongst the congregation.⁶⁹ It seems, therefore, that the disposition and presence/absence of churchmen had a significant effect on the contours of church life in many places. In keeping with the pluralities of the religious experience, however, there were definitely exceptions. The energetic efforts of the Catholic priest at

⁶⁵ *AKPS*, B1, 17, 'Tätigkeitsbericht der Propstei Halle-Merseburg für das Jahr 1947', 18/5/48.

⁶⁶ *AKPS*, B1, 191, Frauenhilfe and GKR (Erfurt) to Müller, 12/5/48.

⁶⁷ *AKPS*, B1, 13, 'Vermerk über meine Fahrt durch die Propstei des Kurkreises in den Tagen vom 19.-21. März dieses Jahres', Müller, 26/3/49.

⁶⁸ *AKPS*, B1, 83, 'Tätigkeitsbericht über die Propstei Magdeburg', 12/5/49.

⁶⁹ *BEA*, BGVP bzw. Fulda, Johann Steinbach (Chairman of the Thuringian CDU) to BGVF, 10/9/1946. See also: Fenwick, 115.

Leutenberg, for instance, had little impact on the largely indifferent townsfolk.⁷⁰

Refugees, men, youth, church festivals and rites of passage

There is more agreement amongst contemporary observers about the religious behaviour of certain demographics and the involvement of the general populace in church festivals and rites of passage. Firstly, many reports agree that refugees attended church in greater numbers than native Thuringians and Saxons and often reinvigorated local church life.⁷¹ Pastor Schröter in Altenburg wrote in his October 1947 article ‘Warum schwiegen die Gemeindeglieder?’ that the newcomers made up the heart of many communities, especially given the generally low piety of Thuringians. He estimated that two-thirds of the ca. 13,000 to 15,000 people who read *Glaube und Heimat* were refugees. Thuringians even ridiculed the refugees for their church going and general interest in religion.⁷² At the local level, the pastor at Graitschen observed in 1948 that as native Thuringians withdrew from church life, refugees filled the vacuum.⁷³ The pastor at Schlagenthin reported that Saxons often declared: ‘In die Kirche können die Flüchtlinge gehen, wir haben keine Zeit dazu.’⁷⁴ In Halle, a pastor found instances of the religious conviction amongst refugees that

⁷⁰ *BEA*, BGVE-BAE-M, 125, 1947-1957, ‘Jahresbericht über das Jahr 1946’, Leutenberg, 2/2/47; *BEA*, BGVP bzw. Fulda, ‘Frühjahrsbericht 1947’, Leutenberg, 14/6/47.

⁷¹ There is, of course, evidence that refugees kept away from church: *BEA*, BGVP bzw. Fulda, Kirchgandern to BGVP, 13/4/48; *BEA*, BGVE-BAE-M, 129, ‘Jahresbericht 1946 für die Arnstadt (Land)’, 2/2/1947; *BEA*, 306, ‘Jahresbericht für Bad Salza (1947)’; *KH*, 1944-51, 213; *GuH*, 3/14, 4/4/48, ‘Ein Wort an die Ostpreußen in der TheK’, E. Fügner (Eisenach), 4.

⁷² *GuH*, 2/40, 5/10/47, ‘Warum schweigen die Gemeindeglieder?’, Schröter (Altenburg), 2.

⁷³ *AEKE*, Graitschen I: 1.2.1946-28.12.1949, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht für die Gemeinden Graitschen u. Foxdorf 1942-1947’, 29/4/48.

⁷⁴ *AKPS*, B1, 189, Pfr. A. (Schlagenthin) to provost (Magdeburg), 11/9/47.

the Church most earnestly sought. He heard some of them state: 'Heimat, Stellung verloren, drei Söhne geopfert, aber ich habe meinen Heiland gefunden', and 'Mehr als vierzig Jahre treu gedient und nun ohne Pension entlassen, was würde ich ohne meinen Glauben tun'.⁷⁵ In Anhalt, Karl Windschild wrote to the church council in January 1948 commending the religiosity of the refugees. The newcomers had fundamentally changed the composition of congregations, much to the benefit of the church. In Pösigk, for instance, refugees from the Warthegau contributed significantly to a vibrant community.⁷⁶ Pastors from the Zerst region met in May 1948 and reported an overall increase in attendances (with some exceptions). This was largely due to refugees who attended services weekly in stark contrast to many native Germans who kept their distance.⁷⁷ Especially in the Catholic Church, the refugees were considered the key to 're-Christianisation'.⁷⁸ A report from Erfurt in 1947 noted that refugees often outnumbered Thuringians at local services, while at Bilzingsleben, north of Erfurt, the priest remarked in November 1947 that almost the entire native population had rejected Christianity. Far from maintaining the Sabbath, these people simply went about their regular business on Sunday, even disposing of dung.⁷⁹

Eyewitnesses further attest to the impact of refugees in church communities. Frau L. (1925) lived in Zeitz in the post-war period and noted that an 'Aufschwung' in church life was primarily the contribution of the refugees from the East who continued in

⁷⁵ Ibid., Pfr. K. (Halle) to Stadtssuperintendent (Oberkonsistorialrat) Hein, 1/12/47.

⁷⁶ LKAD, Kreisoberpfarramt, 1945-65, KOP (Köthen) to LKRA, 'Tätigkeitsbericht des Gemeindegemeinderäte', 28/1/48.

⁷⁷ LKAD, Kreispastoral Versammlungen, 1945-65, 'Ephoralbericht über das kirchliche Leben im Kirchenkreis Zerst erstattet bei der Kreispastoralversammlung 19. Mai 1948 in Rosslau'.

⁷⁸ See, in general: R. Bendel, *Aufbruch aus dem Glauben? Katholische Heimatvertriebene in den gesellschaftlichen Transformationen der Nachkriegsjahre 1945-1965* (Cologne, 2003), 438ff.

⁷⁹ BEA, BGVE-BAE-M, 125, 1947-1957, 'Bericht', North Erfurt, undated (probably early 1947). BFA, BGVE, Kirche in der DDR 'Grundsätzliches' 1946-1959, Bilzingsleben to BGVE, 13/11/47.

their habit of visiting church weekly.⁸⁰ In Langeln, another woman (1924) observed that the Silesians and the East Prussian refugees ‘waren viel mehr in ihrem Alltag im Glauben verwurzelt als die Einheimischen’. They reportedly invigorated church life with their industry and competence and, in the course of time, created a sense of home (Heimat).⁸¹ Herr M. (1930), a teenager at the end of the war, remembered that refugees maintained church life in Schwiesau.⁸² Refugees, in fact, changed the complexion of church life well beyond the period treated here.⁸³ Bishop Axel Noack (1949), who led the KPS from 1997 to 2008, related in an interview how refugees had given both Churches great impetus in the post-war era, and had formed the backbone of many Protestant communities in the Saxony-Anhalt throughout the DDR up until the present day.⁸⁴

However, many reports identified that men and youth remained distant from church life.⁸⁵ This was a perpetuation of pre-war trends and not just a reflection on the female-dominated demography of post-war Germany. In 1939, for instance, only 36 percent, 32.5 percent and 37 percent of all attendees at communion were male in the TheK, KPS and LKA respectively.⁸⁶ From 1945 to 1950, on average, 30 and 31 percent of those partaking in communion in the KPS and TheK were men, and 28

⁸⁰ Questionnaire from Frau Helga L., Zeitz, 1925.

⁸¹ Interview with Frau Ingrid K., Langeln, 1924, 17/4/2008.

⁸² Questionnaire from Herr Kurt M., Schwiesau, 1930.

⁸³ Cf. N. Schrammek, *Alltag und Selbstbild von Flüchtlingen und Vertriebenen in Sachsen, 1945-1952* (Frankfurt am Main, 2004), 264-6. Schrammek posits that there was, ultimately, a lack of connection between refugees and the Protestant Church in Saxony. The Catholic Church had greater success in the establishment of its sub-culture, in which refugees held great importance (276-80).

⁸⁴ Interview with Bishop Axel Noack, Magdeburg, 1949. 17/4/2008.

⁸⁵ See, for example: *AEKE*, Bürgel I: 27.1.1941 zum 14.12.1951, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht 1947’, Bürgel, undated.

⁸⁶ *KJ*, 1950, 452-3. See, in general: *Datenatlas zur religiösen Geographie*.

percent in Anhalt over the years 1946 to 1950.⁸⁷ The overall EKD average in 1948 was 35 percent. Even with an adjustment for the excess of women in the population, men were outnumbered 60 to 40.⁸⁸ In the Eisenberg superintendence in Thuringia, communions held throughout 1947 attracted 151 men in comparison to 324 women.⁸⁹ While the following year yielded a greater proportion of men, 249 as opposed to 476, they remained greatly outnumbered.⁹⁰ At communion services in Bad Klosterlausnitz, 98 men took part in comparison to 253 women.⁹¹ The numbers of women to men who visited Sunday services in Tautenhain in the years 1947, 1948 and 1949 were 97 to 43, 82 to 35 and 78 to 34 respectively.⁹² At Sassa, men comprised only a quarter of attendees at regular services, a trend up until at least 1958.⁹³

Apart from the statistics, church lamentations over the plight of men were myriad. Many men were war veterans and former prisoners of war (POW), who, authors in *Glaube und Heimat* reported, generally neglected the Christian Church.⁹⁴ Providing support to men was extremely difficult and taxing for both parties; men were especially plagued by ‘the most difficult questions of conscience’ according to one KPS clergyman.⁹⁵ In the LKA, the pastorate of the Zerbst district rued the difficulties

⁸⁷ *KJ*, 1954, 325.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 325; *KJ*, 1952, 475-6.

⁸⁹ *AEKE*, 105.E.2: Tätigkeitsbericht für 1947, Eisenberg, 30/8/48. The total, 475, amounted to only 5.3 percent of the overall Protestant population.

⁹⁰ *AEKE*, 105.E.2: Tätigkeitsbericht für 1948, Eisenberg, 8/7/49.

⁹¹ *AEKE*, Bürgel I: 27.1.1941 zum 14.12.1951, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht des Ev. Pfarramtes Bad Klosterlausnitz für das Jahr 1947’, 29/7/48.

⁹² *AEKE*, Bürgel I: 27.1.1941 zum 14.12.1951, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht des Gemeindegemeinderates Tautenhain für 1947’, 16/10/48; *AEKE*, Tätigkeitsberichte: Tautenhain (Tabellen I u. II), ‘Tätigkeitsbericht des Gemeindegemeinderates Tautenhain für das Jahr 1948’, 4/8/49; *ibid.*, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht des Gemeindegemeinderates Tautenhain für das Jahr 1949’, 18/2/1950.

⁹³ *AEKE*, 105.S.1, Sassa, ‘Zusammenfassender Bericht 1949-1958’.

⁹⁴ *GuH*, 2/3, 26/1/47, ‘Hetzpredigten?’, 2; *GuH*, 3/7, 15/2/48, ‘Was nun? Die Frage eines Heimkehrers an die Gemeinden’, 3.

⁹⁵ *AKPS*, B1, 83, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht für das Jahr 1948’, Propstei Naumburg, 13/1/49.

inherent to ‘winning’ men for the church.⁹⁶ Freusberg in Erfurt issued guidelines for the pastoral care of men throughout the Thuringian section of the Fulda diocese: the priest was to pay special attention, for example, to the welfare of returning POWs in order to attract them (back) to church.⁹⁷

A number of observers also noted that youth kept their distance from church.

Landesjugendpfarrer Neumann published a front-page article on 11 January 1948 entitled ‘Die Situation der Jugend und die Kirche’. He described the difficult work of volunteers who daily came in contact with adolescents on fringes of the church; the workers were in danger of losing hope as the youth simply did not care: ‘Die religiöse Gleichgültigkeit ist so allgemein, dass sie zu den größten Besorgnissen Anlaß gibt.’⁹⁸ Such was the perceived problem that *Glaube und Heimat* questioned final year students at an *Oberschule* about their attitudes to religion. Most of these comments were negative. One student labelled the church a sanatorium for those who had lost faith in themselves; another called the church a ‘relic’ (Reliquie), while a third youth stated: ‘Die Kirche ist ein kranker Körper in der Krisis.’⁹⁹ So it was that, in general, as another contributor offered: ‘Sie [junge Männer] sind nicht im Gottesdienst, der überaus größte Teil der Kirchengänger besteht heute aus älteren Leuten, davon viel mehr Frauen als Männer.’¹⁰⁰ Similarly, the Altmark provost observed that only people with grey and white hair frequented church services.¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ *LKAD*, Kreispastoral Versammlungen, 1945-65, ‘Ephoralbericht über das kirchliche Leben im Kirchenkreis Zerbst erstattet bei der Kreispastoralversammlung 19. Mai 1948 in Rosslau’.

⁹⁷ *BEA*, 3 III, Erfurt, St. Marien, Propststeipfarrkirche, 1942-1959, Gottesdienst und Seelsorge, ‘Seelsorge an den Männern, besonders an den heimkehrenden Soldaten’, undated.

⁹⁸ *GuH*, 3/2, 11/1/48, ‘Die Situation der Jugend und die Kirche’, Pfr. Neumann, 1-2.

⁹⁹ *GuH*, 3/8, 22/2/48, ‘Wie die Jugend über die Kirche denkt’, 4.

¹⁰⁰ *GuH*, 3/40, 3/10/48, ‘Hier spricht die Gemeinde – Die fordernde ev. Männergemeinde’, Pfr. Denzin (Gera), 3.

¹⁰¹ *AKPS*, B1, 16, Provost Schapper (Altmark) to pastors, 1/47.

There is, nevertheless, a largely consistent picture of significant popular participation in church festivals and rites of passage, though churchmen rarely used descriptive superlatives. Christmas in particular was an extremely religious period and services attracted a great many people throughout Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt.¹⁰² Between 8,000 and 10,000 people attended the annual *Leidensprozession* on Easter Sunday in Heiligenstadt.¹⁰³ Other Catholic festivals in Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt drew considerable numbers.¹⁰⁴ In the Protestant churches, many people attended celebrations surrounding the 400th anniversary of Martin Luther's death on 18 February 1946.¹⁰⁵ The celebration of the 250th anniversary of the *Trinitatiskirche* in Zerbst on 13 October 1946 attracted appreciable participation from the populace and had an 'invigorating' effect on the congregation.¹⁰⁶ In Thuringia, *Glaube und Heimat* dedicated front-page articles to festivals such as *Erntedankfest*, Christmas and Easter, and devoted a section to events in church life, the 'Thüringer kirchliche Chronik', which often, perhaps selectively, reported well-attended events.¹⁰⁷

The church was also the purveyor of the rites of passage: birth (baptism), coming of age (confirmation), marriage and death (burial). The Christian Church played a particularly prominent role in burial after the war. The diary entries of a refugee

¹⁰² *BEA*, BGVE-BAE-M, 126, 1943-1951, Freusberg to Bonifatiusverein (Flottenberg), 30/1/47; *BEA*, BGVP bzw. Fulda, 'Bericht aus der Seelsorgsarbeit, besonders Religionsunterricht', Bilzingsleben to BGVF, 25/4/47; *GuH*, 2/52, 28/12/47, 'Thüringer kirchliche Chronik', Sup. Eisenach, 3.

¹⁰³ Siebert, 117.

¹⁰⁴ For example: the Maria Schness *Fest* in Schleid: *BFA*, T3: Gottesdienst und Seelsorge, Bonifatiusbote, 29/9/46; *ibid.*, Spahl to BGVF, 29/9/45.

¹⁰⁵ *EZAB*, 2/149, Sammelrundschreiben, 15/47, 9/7/47. See also: *ibid.*, 21/47, 22/8/47; *GuH*, 1/1, 21/4/46, 'Thüringer kirchliche Chronik', 3.

¹⁰⁶ *LKAD*, Kreispastoral Versammlungen, 1945-65, 'Ephoralbericht über das kirchliche Leben im Kirchenkreis Zerbst erstattet bei der Kreispastoralversammlung 19. Mai 1948 in Rosslau'.

¹⁰⁷ *GuH*, 1/24, 6/10/46, 'Zum Erntedankfest 1946', Mitzenheim, 1; *GuH*, 1/35, 22/12/46, 'Weihnachten in Notzeit', Mitzenheim, 1; *GuH*, 2/12, 23/3/47, 'Christus. Der Sieger über Ermüdung und Bitterkeit', Dr. Friedrich Delekat, 1. On *Erntedankfest* in Kirchspiel Casekirchen-Aue-Graitschen: *GuH*, 2/41, 2/10/47, 'Thüringer kirchliche Chronik', 3. On the celebrations of Palm Sunday in Gotha: *GuH*, 1/4, 19/5/46, 'Thüringer kirchliche Chronik', 3. In general, see the 'Thüringer kirchliche Chronik' in each edition of *Glaube und Heimat*.

Catholic priest from April to July 1945 reveal the horror of the end of the war and the prevalence of death.¹⁰⁸ On 2 May, Pfarrer W. recorded that Hitler had left the world stage ‘sang- und klanglos’. On 11 May, he wrote of Allied victory and German tears, bleeding and hunger in defeat. On 1 July, he noted bitterly:

So vieles kann man im Laufe eines Tages kaum innerlich verarbeiten. Der Mund, die Hände und die Füße sind zwar dabei, aber Herz und Hirn kommen nicht mit. Heute habe ich drei Beerdigungen gehabt, für morgen sind drei angemeldet. Alles Kinder... Unschuldige Opfer eines grausamen Krieges, Sühne für die Schuld unseres Volkes.¹⁰⁹

Moritz Mitzenheim also oversaw the burial of a number of parishioners in the small town of Mihla, north of Eisenach, in 1945. Mitzenheim interred a number of young men, including two, born in 1925, whom he had confirmed in the local chapel five years before.¹¹⁰ The burial book for Mihla also contains numerous entries for the death of infants and young children. The 5 August entry, for example, recorded the death of one babe aged less than five months.¹¹¹ Difficult conditions continued to claim lives after 1945, and the mortality rate only returned to its pre-war level in 1951.¹¹² Between 23 February and 18 April 1947, four children under the age of four

¹⁰⁸ Richard Bessel notes that the year of 1945 saw the greatest number of German deaths in a single year before or since: Bessel, ‘The shadow of death’, in *Between Mass Death and Individual Loss*, 51. See also, in general: idem., *Germany 1945*; M.A. Black, ‘Reburying and Rebuilding: Reflecting on Proper Burial in Berlin after “Zero Hour”’, in *Between Mass Death and Individual Loss*, 69-90; P. Fritzsche, *Life and Death in the Third Reich* (Cambridge, MA., 2008), 290-5; M. Geyer, ‘“There is a Land Where Everything is Pure: Its Name Is Land of Death”. Some Observations on Catastrophic Nationalism’, in M. Funck/G. Eghigian/M. Paul Berg (ed.), *Sacrifice and National Belonging in Twentieth-Century Germany* (College Station, 2002), 118-47. There was also a higher mortality rate in the East than in the West: F.R. Schulz, ‘Disposing of the Dead in East Germany, 1945-1990’, in *Between Mass Death and Individual Loss*, 114.

¹⁰⁹ *BAM*, Geschichte des Kommissariates, ‘Das bittere Ende und der bittere Anfang’, Pfr. W.

¹¹⁰ *AEKM*, Mihla Bestattungsbuch, 1930-, 4/1945. The small town of Mihla, north of Eisenach, saw 26 fallen and 41 total funerals in 1945: *ibid.*, 29/12/45.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 5/8/45.

¹¹² Schulz, 115. For instance, there were 27 deaths in Tautenhain in 1946, 14 in 1947, eight in 1948 and nine in 1949: *AEKE*, Tätigkeitsberichte: Tabellen I u. II, Tautenhain, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht des GKR Tautenhain (1948)’, 4/8/49; *ibid.*, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht des GKR Tautenhain (1949)’, 18/2/50.

perished in Mihla.¹¹³ Elsewhere, the pastor at Zeulenroda remarked in his *Pfarrchronik* that it was not uncommon to attend to 12-15 burials per week in 1945-46, which was five times the pre-war number.¹¹⁴ Another churchman reported that the number of deaths from the outbreak of the war in 1939 until the summer of 1947 was double the peacetime mortality rate. While there had been fewer deaths in Autumn 1947, the number had risen again with the onset of Winter:

...nicht nur aus Not, sondern auch aus grenzenloser Mutlosigkeit. Auch die Selbstmordfälle, mit denen wir immer wieder zu tun hatten, werden wohl zunehmen. Wir sterben methodisch, aber langsam doch, und werden immer mehr noch als an Hunger, Kälte und Seuchen an gänzlicher Hoffnungslosigkeit sterben.¹¹⁵

The pastor further noted the psychological effect on church workers: it was a bitter pill to swallow that their main work lay in burial and tending to graves. He quoted the words of Jesus Christ in Matthew VIII.22: 'Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead.' A pastor in Zeitz wrote to the Konsistorium in November 1947 that he had had little time to conduct pastoral care calls to individual parishioners, largely due to the time commitments of multiple burials and religious instruction. The few visits he did make were made to the sick and the grieving.¹¹⁶ Frau D. (1923) remembered that her husband, a pastor, had to attend to many burials in Gerbstedt in the post-war years. Many of the dead were refugees who had succumbed to privations.¹¹⁷

¹¹³ *AEKM*, Mihla Bestattungsbuch, 1930-, 23/2/47, 5/3/47, 30/3/47, 18/4/47.

¹¹⁴ *AEKZ*, 'Chronik der evang.-luth. Kirchengemeinde Zeulenroda, 1944-1946', 27/2/47.

¹¹⁵ *AKPS*, B1, 189, Pfr. R. (Magdeburg) to Konsistorialrat A. (Magdeburg), 13/9/47.

¹¹⁶ *AKPS*, B1, 189, Pfr S. (Zeitz) to Müller, 27/11/47.

¹¹⁷ Questionnaire from Frau Maria D., Gerbstedt, 1923.

Protocols and ceremonies in Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia surrounding death often followed the same liturgy.¹¹⁸ When relatives died away from home – mostly as prisoners of war – clergy often notified relatives. This visit was taxing for both clergy and recipients alike.¹¹⁹ Sometimes, however, there was relief at the end of uncertainty. A clergyman at Magdeburg reported one such occasion in this way:

So wird heute eine Todesnachricht, die man als Pastor einer Familie von einem Kriegsgefangenen zu bringen hat, fast mit Freude begrüßt, weil es endlich eine Nachricht ist, während viel Liebe und Hoffnung stirbt im Nebel der Ungewissheit.¹²⁰

After death, most people sought a funeral in the local chapel. In Thuringia, 18,659 Protestant church burials in 1940 dropped slightly to 17,267 in 1943 before greatly inflating to 29,411 in 1945. There were 28,743 burials in 1946, 28,791 in 1947, 24,011 in 1948 and 21,122 in 1949. These figures represented 85, 85, 89, 89 and 95 percent of all Protestant deaths in the *Land* from 1945 to 1949. In the KPS, there were 32,978 church burials in 1940, 34,196 in 1943, 63,973 in 1945, 55,098 burials in 1946, 56,529 in 1947, 46,175 in 1948 and 40,972 in 1949. There are no percentage values for 1943 and the period 1945 to 1949, though the 1940 figure represented 94 percent of all Protestant deaths in the province of Saxony. While there are no statistics for Anhalt in 1945, there were 7,193 burials in 1946, 6,846 in 1947, 5,254 in 1948 and 4,651 in 1949. Percentage figures are also not provided for the post-war LKA, though 4,463 burials in 1940 and 3,974 in 1942 comprised 97 and 99 percent respectively of all Protestant burials.¹²¹ The rise in burial numbers must be considered largely the result of the influx of refugees into Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt. In the

¹¹⁸ On Catholic funerals and burials, see: S. George, *Bestattung und katholische Begräbnisliturgie in der SBZ/DDR*.

¹¹⁹ *BAM*, Caritas: Caritasverband Magdeburg 1947-1952/1954-1970, 'Jahresbericht für 1947 der Stadt-Caritas von Magdeburg und der Pfarr-Caritas von St. Sebastian', undated.

¹²⁰ *AKPS*, B1, 189, Pfr. R. (Magdeburg) to Konsistorialrat A. (Magdeburg), 13/9/47.

¹²¹ *KJ*, 1951, 354-5; *KJ*, 1952, 472; *KJ*, 1954, 322.

Ballenstedt district of Anhalt, the Kreisoberpfarrer noted that a great many people perished in 1945 after enduring deprivation in the latter war years. Between 1930 and 1936 there was an average of 86 deaths per year. The number of deaths was 168 in 1942, 243 in 1944, 363 in 1945 and 308 in 1946.¹²² From 1930 to 1946 almost precisely the same proportion were buried with church ceremony, and the churchman noted that local population had remained faithful to Christian burial practices.¹²³ The popularity of Christian burial rites is further attested in the Eisenberg superintendence. 84 percent of all deaths during 1945 were accompanied by a church funeral. The numbers in 1946, 1947 and 1948 were 72, 97 and 70 percent respectively.¹²⁴ In Ohrdruf, of the total 377 deaths in the years 1946, 1947 and 1948, there were 317 burials in the Protestant church (84 percent); much of the remaining 16 percent were buried according to Catholic rites.¹²⁵ In smaller rural towns, the figure was often 100 percent.¹²⁶ A report of the AKW in Saxony-Anhalt in December 1945 also noted the prevalence and popularity of rites of passage mediated by the church: most people had their children baptised and their dead buried.¹²⁷

There were even requests for religious ceremony regardless of church membership.

The pastor at Zeulenroda recorded:

¹²² Refugees swelled the local population in 1945 and 1946.

¹²³ *LKAD*, Statistik, Gemeinden, 1944-53, KOP (Ballenstedt) to LKRA, 22/5/47. There are no figures however.

¹²⁴ *AEKE*, Sup. Eisenberg 122: Äusserungen des kirchl. Lebens (Tabelle II) 1934-1957, 'Statistische Übersicht (Eisenberg), 1945', 3/1/1948; *ibid.*, 'Statistische Übersicht (Eisenberg), 1946', 5/2/1948; *ibid.*, 'Statistische Übersicht (Eisenberg), 1947', 26/6/1948; *ibid.*, 'Statistische Übersicht (Eisenberg)', 1948, 28/7/1948. Sometimes local complications meant that services could not be held. For example, at Königshofen, of 37 deaths from April 1947 to March 1948, only seven people were farewelled with church ceremony: *AEKE*, Königshofen: von 1939-Dez 1955, 'Bericht', 9/3/48.

¹²⁵ *AEKO*, A.1.5a.3: Statistik: Äusserungen des kirchlichen Lebens.

¹²⁶ For example: *AEKF*, 230, 'Statistische Übersicht (1946-1948)', Frankenheim an der Rhön, 12/5/49; *ibid.*, Birx, 12/5/49.

¹²⁷ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 469, 3881, 'Bericht über die kirchlichen Verhältnisse der KPS', AKW, 4/12/45.

Während viele Glieder der Kirche die kirchliche Trauung verschmähten, ist es bei der kirchlichen Beerdigung umgekehrt: nicht nur werden alle Glieder der Kirche mit kirchlicher Mitwirkung beerdigt, sondern die Angehörigen der meisten Ausgetretenen suchen um eine kirchliche Begräbnisfeier nach.¹²⁸

As the pastor noted, many of the deceased had left the church and had had little to do with Christianity, yet loved ones wished for a ‘beautiful ceremony’ to provide consolation and a formal farewell.¹²⁹ For instance, a widow sought a funeral for her husband who, although nominally a church member, had refused to pay taxes for years, called the church a ‘swindling institution’ (Schwindelanstalt) and the pastor an ‘arch-liar’.¹³⁰ This evidence, furthermore, confirms that the impact of Nazi ersatz rites on Christian burial was minimal: people continued to follow church ritual in farewelling the dead after the war.¹³¹

Both Churches understood burial, *mutatis mutandi*, as a service to the deceased and to provide hope and consolation to the grief-stricken.¹³² In the Protestant Church, the constituent parts of burial were largely the same despite certain local variations.¹³³

The sermon followed the liturgy, which was characterised by a short threnody for the deceased accompanied with a biblical passage.¹³⁴ The coffin was borne silently into the chapel (be it the main church or a special chapel for funerals). If it could be afforded, the choir subsequently performed before the coffin was borne into the cemetery behind the crucifix. The body was buried with the cross and wreaths placed

¹²⁸ AEKZ, ‘Chronik der evang.-luth. Kirchgemeinde Zeulenroda, 1944-1946’, 27/2/47.

¹²⁹ Ibid. An instance of one whom had previously left the church: AEKE, Serba, Jan. 1932-Dez. 1954, I, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht der Kirchgemeinde Serba im Jahr 1946’, undated.

¹³⁰ Ibid., Kunisch to Min. des Innern, 30/4/48. see also: ibid., LNA to Min. des Innern, 17/4/48.

¹³¹ On Nazism and the dead, see: S. Behrenbeck, *Der Kult um die toten Helden: Nationalsozialistische Mythen, Riten und Symbole 1923 bis 1945* (Vierow bei Greifswald, 1996); A. Confino, ‘Death, Spiritual Solace, and Afterlife. Between Nazism and Religion’, in *Between Mass Death and Individual Loss*, 219-231.

¹³² G. Rowell, *The Liturgy of Christian Burial* (London, 1977), 110ff; George, 24.

¹³³ Ibid., 25.

¹³⁴ Catholic burial, however, precluded a liturgy: ibid., 15.

at the head (cremation was reportedly rare).¹³⁵ There was a tolling of the bells in some areas.¹³⁶ In Sassa, an old tradition was re-instituted in the course of 1947 whereby singing school children, under the supervision of their teacher, followed the casket from the chapel to the grave.¹³⁷ In one Magdeburg parish, burial ceremonies were carried out ‘according to time-honored church traditions and ancient humanistic ritual’. Parishioners embroidered religious ceremony with ‘Männliches und Heroisches’ through references to a pantheon of figures from Magdeburg’s past, including Nicolaus von Amsdorf and Otto von Guericke.¹³⁸

It was common that the community presence at funerals was significant. Death and burial were, as in the Catholic Church, often communal events, especially in rural areas where parishes owned cemeteries. The clergyman handled the formalities and the congregation was expected to partake in the burial.¹³⁹ In Thuringia, at Foxdorf from 1942 to 1947, attendance was described as good, although at Graitschen it was ‘shockingly poor’ such that the family members of the deceased were hurt by the lack of interest shown by the community at large.¹⁴⁰ This may have had to do with the

¹³⁵ There were variations in different locales; *AEKE*, Graitschen I: 1.2.1946-28.12.1949, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht Graitschen (11/10/47-31/3/48)’; *AEKE*, 111.E.8: Niederschriften über Sitzungen des Kirchenvorstandes Eisenberg, 1929-1952, 13/3/48; *AEKE*, 105.S.1: Tätigkeitsberichte des GKR Sassa, 1947-1958, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht des GKR für 1947’, 30/3/48; *AEKF*, 227, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht des GKR für 1948’, Frankenheim, undated. In Eisenberg, of 159 funerals, 11 bodies were cremated: *AEKE*, 105.E.2: Tätigkeitsberichte des GKR Eisenberg, 1947-1956, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht für 1948’, 8/7/49. According to George, cremation led to more non-Christian burials: 15. This is corroborated by a report from Thalbürgel: *AEKE*, Tätigkeitsberichte Thalbürgel, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht Thalbürgel 1947’, 30/9/1948.

¹³⁶ *AKPS*, B1, 159, Pfr. S. (Benneckstein) to Sup. (Heiligenstadt), 22/5/46.

¹³⁷ *AEKE*, 105.S.1: Tätigkeitsberichte des GKR Sassa, 1947-1958, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht des GKR für 1947’, 30/3/48; *ibid.*, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht des GKR für 1948’, undated.

¹³⁸ *AKPS*, B1, 189, Pfr. R. (Magdeburg) to Konsistorialrat A. (Magdeburg), 13/9/47.

¹³⁹ George notes (14) that the secular founding of cemeteries from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries incurred a spatial separation between Church and State. This made burial an individual affair and no longer that of the Christian community at large. However, burial remained a communal event in some areas, at least in the rural districts of the Eisenberg superintendence.

¹⁴⁰ *AEKE*, Graitschen I: 1.2.1946-28.12.1949, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht für die Gemeinden Graitschen u. Foxdorf, 1942-1947’, 29/4/48.

limitations of war, as in early 1948 the Graitschen pastor remarked that there was ‘no spurning [Verschmähung] of Protestant consolation’ and even a turning toward the Christian gospel.¹⁴¹ Elsewhere in the Eisenberg superintendence, parishioners flocked to funerals in Taupadel, Rodigast and Jenalöbnitz.¹⁴² Evaluations from Bad Klosterlausnitz and Serba noted that there was no ‘rejection’ (Verschmähung) of church funerals.¹⁴³ The pastor at Sassa during the early years of the DDR claimed that the church funeral was a great opportunity for mission given that the service was heartily attended on every occasion.¹⁴⁴ The Thalbürgel pastor commented: ‘Angesichts von Tod u[nd] Ewigkeit wird der Trost des Evangeliums und deshalb die Mitwirkung der Kirche am wenigstens verschmäht.’¹⁴⁵

Despite strong community participation in festivals and rites of passage, church hierarchs desired more, wishing for a population that attended chapel regularly. The provost of the Naumburg district noted that there existed many ‘vermaterialisierte’ farming communities in his jurisdiction. In these places, people did not maintain regular churchgoing but rather, at most, observed specific traditions on particular occasions. These were largely limited to Christmas, prayer for the harvest (Erntebetstunde), the *Erntedankfest*, and for rites of passage such as baptisms, weddings, burials and confirmation.¹⁴⁶ The Magdeburg provost likewise remarked

¹⁴¹ Ibid., ‘Tätigkeitsbericht Graitschen (11/10/47-31/3/48)’, undated.

¹⁴² *AEKE*, Rodigast, Statistik, Tätigkeit, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht für die Gemeinden Taupadel, Rodigast u. Jenalöbnitz 1947’, undated. Also, in Birx in Southern Thuringia: *AEKF*, 227, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht des GKR für 1948’, Birx, undated.

¹⁴³ *AEKE*, Bürgel I: 27.1.1941-14.12.1951, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht des ev. Pfarraamtes Bad Klosterlausnitz 1947’, undated; *AEKE*, Serba, Jan. 1932-Dez. 1954, I, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht der Kirchgemeinde Serba im Jahr 1946’, undated.

¹⁴⁴ *AEKE*, Chronik von Sassa.

¹⁴⁵ *AEKE*, Tätigkeitsberichte Thalbürgel, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht Thalbürgel 1947’, 30/9/1948.

¹⁴⁶ *AEKE*, Bürgel I: 27.1.1941 zum 14.12.1951, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht des Ev. Pfarraamtes Bad Klosterlausnitz für das Jahr 1947’, 29/7/48.

upon the traditionalism of many local Saxons who mechanically attended chapel only on special occasions:

Wohl hängt die einheimische Bevölkerung zäh und ohne viel
Nachdenken an gewissen Traditionen wie dem Palmsonntag als
Konfirmationstermin, am Erntedankfest, wie an der kirchlichen Feier des
Heiligabend.¹⁴⁷

At 'unchurched' Sassa in Thuringia in 1947, attendance numbered between 70 and 100 on the festival days of Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, the *Erntedankfest* and *Totensonntag*. Other services attracted an average of 25 participants.¹⁴⁸ The following year yielded an average weekly attendance of between 10 and 20 people, while 40 to 50 attended church on festival days.¹⁴⁹ In Eisenberg, regular services in 1947 drew approximately 150 per week and ca. 300-400 on festival days.¹⁵⁰ The numbers increased to 190 and 400-500 respectively the subsequent year. The increase is largely attributable to better conditions that enabled more people to attend; in 1948, only three people formally entered the Church and 36 left.¹⁵¹ Still, even the 400-500 attendees at festivals ought to be placed in perspective by the number of total Protestants in the area, who numbered 9,516. Numbers at services doubled on most festival days in Seifartsdorf and more than tripled at *Erntedankfest*, Christmas Eve and confirmation.¹⁵² There was also a three-fold increase in numbers at Bad Klosterlausnitz on festival days.¹⁵³ Bürgel reported high numbers at festivals, and in

¹⁴⁷ AKPS, B1, 83, 'Tätigkeitsbericht über die Propstei Magdeburg', 12/5/49.

¹⁴⁸ AEKE, 105.S.1, 'Tätigkeitsbericht des Gemeindegemeinderats [sic!] Sassa für 1947'.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 'Tätigkeitsbericht des Gemeindegemeinderates Sassa für das Jahr 1948', undated.

¹⁵⁰ AEKE, 105.E.2, 'Tätigkeitsbericht für 1947', Eisenberg, 30/8/48.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 'Tätigkeitsbericht für 1948', Eisenberg, 8/7/49.

¹⁵² AEKE, Seifartsdorf: Juli 1937-Dez. 1955, 'Tätigkeitsbericht', 8/4/47.

¹⁵³ AEKE, Bürgel I: 27.1.1941 zum 14.12.1951, 'Tätigkeitsbericht des Ev. Pfarramtes Bad Klosterlausnitz für das Jahr 1947', 29/7/48.

particular *Erntedankfest* and *Totensonntag*, yet services were poorly attended at other times.¹⁵⁴

The pastor at Schlagenthin in the Altmark asked visitors to the *Erntedankfest*, whom he saw irregularly, why they attended the church service. He summed up the answers in the following way:

Ein letzter Rest der Vorstellung von einem Höheren, der Gewalt über Menschen und Felder hat, ist noch da, und wenn man Ihn auch im Alltäglichen nicht den Herrn sein lässt, so ist es vielleicht nicht zum Schaden, Ihn in Rechnung zu setzen und durch Besuch des Gottesdienstes am Erntedankfest sich Ihm in Erinnerung zu bringen.

The churchman considered this reply shameful: it was primitive superstition that sought to propitiate a largely absent deity sporadically for personal ends; this did not capture the full profundity of the Christian gospel.¹⁵⁵ Many people may have been reverent when faced with religious festivals and death, but the church wanted more: a ‘re-Christianisation’ that brought parishioners to church weekly and involved the congregation fully in church life.

The failure of ‘re-Christianisation’

In general terms, statistics regarding church membership and comments from church hierarchs bear out the failure of re-Christianisation. People left the Churches in Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia in increasing numbers, especially from 1948, while those converting to the Churches decreased. In the period April to end-September 1946, the Saxon-Anhalt Minister President’s office reported that 842 Protestants and

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., ‘Tätigkeitsbericht 1947’, Bürgel, undated.

¹⁵⁵ AKPS, B1, 189, Pfr. A. (Schlagenthin) to provost (Magdeburg), 11/9/47.

97 Catholics had left the Churches. 976 further persons were of unknown confession.¹⁵⁶ In January 1948, Hübener informed the SVAS-A in Halle of 2,861 Protestants and 321 Catholics who had seceded from the Churches in the year 1 October 1946 to 30 September 1947. Between April and October 1948, there were 1,845 exits from the Protestant churches and 328 from the Catholic Church.¹⁵⁷ There were 5,580 Protestant and 601 Catholic exits from 1 October 1948 to 31 March 1949.¹⁵⁸ Between 1 April and 30 September 1949, 8,415 people left the Protestant Church and 728 left the Catholic Church.¹⁵⁹ A report from the State Finance Office in Saxony-Anhalt in 1950 observed that the increase in church leavers in recent months had been exponential, and it calculated a weekly average of 90 church leavers since the beginning of December 1949.¹⁶⁰

The figures for church leavers in the Thuringian church are disputed. Horst Dähn, in the *SBZ Handbuch*, gives the following numbers. In 1946, 1,652 people seceded from church, in 1947, 2,076. 3,366 left in 1948 and in 1949, 7,635 (see Figure I below). The Protestant Yearbook for 1951, however, renders the figures from 1946 to 1949 as 92, 117, 194 and 444 (see Figure II two below). Regardless of whichever statistics are accurate (the ratios are almost identical in any case: 44.2 people entered the church per 100 exits according to Dähn; 44.9 people entered to 100 exits according to the Protestant Yearbook), secessions increased yearly while conversions decreased.

¹⁵⁶ *LKAD*, Kirchen Aus- u. Eintritte, 1945-52, MP to the Churches, 2/1/47.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, MP to the Churches, 3/12/48.

¹⁵⁸ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 469, 3881, 'Bericht über die Zusammensetzung der Bevölkerung nach Konfessionen und Kirchenstatistik', Ministerium der Finanzen, 17/1/50.

¹⁵⁹ *BAM*, Statistik: Seelenzahl des Erzbischöfl. Komm. Generalia 1946-1948/1951/1954/1955/1957, MP to the Churches, 'Kirchenaustritte in der Berichtszeit vom 1.4 bis 30.9.49'. undated.

¹⁶⁰ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 469, 3881, 'Bericht über die Zusammensetzung der Bevölkerung nach Konfessionen und Kirchenstatistik', Ministerium der Finanzen, 17/1/50. The figures varied from region to region. In the Köthen district, for example, see: *LKAD*, Kirchen Aus- u. Eintritte, 1945-52, KOP (Köthen) to LKRA, 4/3/46, 2/4/46, 4/7/46. 5/1/48, 12/1/49.

	Exits from the TheK	Conversions to the TheK
1946	1,652	5,206
1947	2,076	4,435
1948	3,366	4,107
1949	7,635	2,873

Figure I: Secessions from and conversions to the TheK, 1946-1949 (Dähn).¹⁶¹

The increase in secessions and decrease in conversions in Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt are consistent with overall EKD trends.¹⁶² The number of church leavers dropped from ca. 24,000 in 1944 to 10,000 in 1945, which was as low as the World War I years and before 1906. Leavers in 1946 subsequently slightly exceeded the 1944 total before rising further to ca. 32,000 in 1947, 49,500 in 1948 and 86,000 in 1949. The latter figure approximated the number who had seceded from the church in 1936. Conversions to the church were, furthermore, not as numerous as prelates had anticipated. There was a considerable rise from 1944 to 1945 (ca. 12,500 to almost 47,000) and then a further increase in 1946 (ca. 75,000). The total then declined to 58,000, 53,000 and 43,000 in the years 1947 to 1949. Of these, the majority of converts were in the western zones.¹⁶³ The failure of German ‘re-Christianisation’ in the post-war period is perhaps most apparent in this: the number of people who

¹⁶¹ Dähn, ‘Kirchen und Religionsgemeinschaften’, 843.

¹⁶² See *KJ*, 1950, 363-85 (esp. 382).

¹⁶³ *KJ*, 1945-1948, 460ff; *KJ*, 1951, 381-3.

seceded from the Protestant Church from 1933 to 1939 totalled more than 1.3 million, while only approximately 75,000 had turned to the Church in West Germany between 1945 and 1949.¹⁶⁴ In the TheK, following Dähn's numbers, 6,504 people re-entered the church from 1945 to 1949 while in 1933 alone over 17,000 left.¹⁶⁵

	Exits: Thuringia	Conversions: Thuringia	Exits: Anhalt	Conversions: Anhalt
1945	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)
1946	92	118	117	650
1947	117	100	180	500
1948	194	93	290	475
1949	444	70	565	410

Figure II: Secessions from and conversions to the TheK and the LKA, 1945-1949 (KJ, 1951).¹⁶⁶

In the Catholic Church, membership in the Thuringian section of the Fulda diocese dropped from 397,400 in 1946 to 344,000 in 1950. Membership also dropped in the Magdeburg Commissariat, from 685,398 in 1947 to 567,836 in 1949. The significant population movements of the post-war period, however, make it difficult to determine particular trends. In the Thuringian section of the Fulda diocese, though, the 255 secessions in 1948 were exceeded by the number of conversions (292), while 164 persons returned to the fold of the Church. Membership was anchored by the apparent

¹⁶⁴ *KJ*, 1945-1948, 460-5 (464); *KJ*, 1950, 363-85.

¹⁶⁵ *KJ*, 1945-1948, 461.

¹⁶⁶ *KJ*, 1951, 382-3.

cohesion of the Eichsfeld milieu: the vast majority of exits took place in the cities of Weimar (156), Erfurt (70) and Nordhausen (22).¹⁶⁷ In the Magdeburg Commissariat, figures for 1948 reflect 840 exits to 433 entrances and 221 returning apostates.¹⁶⁸ 1,329 people left the church in the period 1 October 1948 to 30 September 1949.¹⁶⁹ The increasing number of exits after 1945 is also apparent in the statistics for the Catholic Church throughout Germany. From 1946 to 1949, 9,204, 13,254, 19,988 and 30,806 people left the Church. Those returning to the Church declined (20,788; 14,352; 12,295; 10,819) and the number of converts remained about the same (19,729; 19,874; 21,983; 21,455).¹⁷⁰

Finally, general comments from church hierarchs confirm that there was no ‘re-Christianisation’. On 22 January 1947, the Pope evaluated the situation as perhaps the greatest ever crisis of the German Catholic Church. In 1948, the Bishop of Cologne reflected that parishioners had not heeded the call of the Church to change their lives, while the West German bishops published a circular five years after the end of the war that lamented the absence of ‘eine wirkliche Rückkehr zu Gott’.¹⁷¹ In the Protestant Church, contributors to *Glaube und Heimat* reflected on the unrealised, ‘illusory’ church expectations of 1945. In August 1947, one churchman regretted that there had been no return to God and no miracle.¹⁷² By 1948, the tone of contributors

¹⁶⁷ *KH*, 1944-51, 328-9.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 356-61 (the greatest number of exits were in cities: Halle [204], Wittenberg [127] and Magdeburg [124]). Dähn, ‘Kirchen und Religionsgemeinschaften’, 849.

¹⁶⁹ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 469, 3881, ‘Bericht über die Zusammensetzung der Bevölkerung nach Konfessionen und Kirchenstatistik’, Ministerium der Finanzen, 17/1/50; *BAM*, Statistik: Seelenzahl des Erzbischöfl. Komm. Generalia 1946-1948/1951/1954/1955/1957, ‘Kirchenaustritte in der Berichtszeit vom 1.4 bis 30.9.49’, MP to the Churches, undated.

¹⁷⁰ *KH*, 1944-51, 385ff, 417. The majority of converts were former Protestants: 15,064, 16,740, 18,947, 18,884.

¹⁷¹ Reppen, 141.

¹⁷² *GuH*, 2/34, 24/8/47, ‘Überzeugendes Zeugnis’, F. Högner, 1.

was overwhelmingly negative and defensive. In the 22 February 1948 edition, an article appeared entitled 'Wird die Kirche ihrer Aufgabe gerecht?' The author rued:

Die Zahl derer, die sich an den Gottesdienst beteiligen, ist erschreckend gering geworden. Nicht nur in den großen und mittleren Städten, auch auf dem flächen Lande. Es gibt Hunderte von Dörfern, in denen am Sonntag kaum ein Gottesdienst zustande kommt, weil die Menschen nicht den Weg in die Kirche finden.¹⁷³

A March 1948 article noted a general disinterest in religion as many forewent the church service.¹⁷⁴ Another observer wrote in August 1948 that many people never visited church, and many Christians did not attend regularly due to a lack of external compulsion.¹⁷⁵ Lastly, in November 1948, a churchman lamented: 'Wir hatten nach dem Kriege einen religiösen Aufbruch erwartet. Aber nach kurzem Anlauf verebbte das meiste.'¹⁷⁶

This same schema of hope to disillusionment was also presented in the Protestant Yearbook. There had been a perception in 1945 that a great number of people had only exited the church under duress during the Third Reich. There was even anxiety that the 'liberated' post-war conditions would bring so many people back to Christianity that existing structures would not be able to cope. Yet, the numbers returning to the bosom of the Protestant Church was less than expected.¹⁷⁷ While the refugees had bolstered church life in some areas, the local population had generally turned from religious participation. Zerbst pastors concluded at a meeting on 19 May 1948 in Rosslau that the often-difficult post-war conditions had not in general

¹⁷³ *GuH*, 3/8, 22/2/48, 'Wird die Kirche ihrer Aufgabe gerecht?', Dr. Scharfe, 1-2.

¹⁷⁴ *GuH*, 3/12, 21/3/48, 'Unsere Aussprache über Mitarbeit', F. Zimmer (Bad Blankenburg), 3.

¹⁷⁵ *GuH*, 3/33, 15/8/48, 'Muß man sonntags in die Kirche gehen?', K. Brinkel, 3.

¹⁷⁶ *GuH*, 3/46, 14/11/48, 'Was beunruhigt mich am meisten?', 2.

¹⁷⁷ *KJ*, 1951, 381-3; *KJ*, 1950, 382.

promoted greater participation in church life amongst native Saxons.¹⁷⁸ Bishop Müller wrote in the context of a circular to his pastors on ‘Judica’ Sunday (a week before Palm Sunday) in 1947:

Wir hofften auf die “Stunde der Kirche”. Wir glaubten an eine radikale Umkehr der in ihrer gottlosen Selbstsicherheit erschütterten Menschen. Wir setzten grosse Erwartungen für eine Verlebendigung unserer Gemeinden auf den Zustrom der aus kirchlicher Tradition herkommenden Ostflüchtlinge...Und nun schon wir uns in unseren Hoffnungen und Erwartungen enttäuscht...Die grosse “Stunde” ist ausgeblieben.¹⁷⁹

Despite attestations to the piety of many refugees, the absence of the overall majority of the population from church meant the failure of ‘re-Christianisation’.

Communism, difficult existential conditions and church inadequacies

On the whole, it seems that institutional Christianity did not fundamentally affect the course of many human lives in Germany after the Second World War. Yet, post-war developments ought not be considered apart from a longer process of secularisation throughout Germany, especially in the Protestant Church, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.¹⁸⁰ The figures represent a significant drop in church membership throughout Germany from the beginning of the twentieth century. In fact, from 1889 to 1949 over five million Germans left the Protestant Church.¹⁸¹ Significant numbers exited in the late 1930s: in 1939, for instance, 378,525 left the Church while 21,482

¹⁷⁸ *LKAD*, Kreispastoral Versammlungen, 1945-65, ‘Ephoralbericht über das kirchliche Leben im Kirchenkreis Zerbst erstattet bei der Kreispastoralversammlung 19. Mai 1948 in Rosslau’.

¹⁷⁹ *EZAB*, 2/142, Müller to KPS pastorate, Sonntag Judica 1947.

¹⁸⁰ See, for instance: A. Liedhegener, *Christentum und Urbanisierung: Katholiken und Protestanten in Münster und Bochum 1830–1930* (Paderborn, 1997), esp. 367-70, 568-86.

¹⁸¹ *KJ*, 1951, 363.

entered.¹⁸² East Germany (particularly Thuringia, Saxony-Anhalt and Saxony) was a traditional stronghold of the socialist working class, who were historically renowned as distant from Christianity. Attendance at Protestant communion services in the East from 1900 was also significantly lower than in the South and West of Germany.¹⁸³ Despite some reservations about the figures, there is a clear downward trend in the proportion of believers who attended communion services in Anhalt. 41.9 percent of all Protestants in 1862 steadily declined (with some exceptions) to 8.6 percent in 1940.¹⁸⁴ In the KPS, participation dropped from 58 to 10.2 percent in the same period.¹⁸⁵ As for the Thuringian church, 29.8 percent in 1910 fell to 10 percent in 1940.¹⁸⁶ Lucian Hölscher has observed, moreover, that pietist traditions, with a greater emphasis on active involvement in Christian life, were much weaker in territories east of the Elbe.¹⁸⁷ This may apply equally to Thuringia and areas of Saxony-Anhalt to the west of the Elbe.¹⁸⁸ As noted above, regions of Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt were infamous as infertile ground for the Christian gospel.¹⁸⁹

The Churches themselves understood that long-term secularisation had weakened the bonds between the Christian Church and society in general. This link had been greatly eroded by the strictures of the Nazi dictatorship and war. A report on the church

¹⁸² *KJ*, 1950, 462-3.

¹⁸³ Ziemann, 6.

¹⁸⁴ *Datenatlas zur religiösen Geographie*, XV-XVIII, 5.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 19-20.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 671. In contrast, the percentage of Protestant burials increased over the period 1880 to 1939 in the LKA and the KPS, and from 1910 to 1939 in the TheK (*ibid.*, 8, 209, 745).

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 182-9. See also: Ziemann, 6. Short discussions on pietism in German history are: H. Lehmann, 'Der Pietismus', in E. Francois/H. Schulze (ed.), *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte, Bd. I* (Munich, 2002), 571-84; M. Brecht, 'Pietismus', *TRE*, Bd. XXVI, (Berlin, 1996), 606-31.

¹⁸⁸ The early pietist influences at the University of Halle notwithstanding. On Pietism at Halle, see: M. Fulbrook, *Piety and Politics. Religion and the Rise of Absolutism in England, Württemberg and Prussia* (Cambridge, 1983), 154-60; Lehmann, 'Pietism', 576.

¹⁸⁹ See above, pp. 132-3, 157. In Saxony-Anhalt: Schultze, 'Kirchenprovinz Sachsen', 582-3.

situation in Magdeburg in August 1946 reflected that the conflict had ravaged both the inner and external lives of the individual. The author recalled a sentence uttered by Karl Holl in 1917: ‘Noch kein Krieg hat geistig so viel verschlungen wie dieser’. This judgement had even greater relevance for Germany after six years of total war.¹⁹⁰ In 1947, the Sudenburg pastor concurred: ‘Der Krieg hat noch einmal endlich viel an kirchlicher Sitte und Ordnung zerstört und aufgelöst.’ This was most apparent, he stated, in absent fathers. Many confirmation candidates lacked discipline, and it was a fight to get each individual to religious instruction.¹⁹¹ Pastors at Zerbst in May 1948 acknowledged that the conflict had caused difficult circumstances and the consequences had had, and continued to have, negative effects on church life.¹⁹² Weskamm also admitted, in a speech in 1951, that Nazism had put the Catholic Church on the defensive, often causing churchmen to lose their sense of mission.¹⁹³ National Socialism and the war had certainly not promoted conditions conducive to a vibrant and dynamic church life.

As a number of Catholic milieu historians posit, however, the church crisis dated from at least the early years of the Weimar Republic.¹⁹⁴ Gerhard Paul and Klaus Michael Mallmann argue that German society had already been thoroughly secularised through ‘long-term processes’ by the onset of the Third Reich in 1933.¹⁹⁵ They also

¹⁹⁰ AKPS, B1, 18, ‘Bericht über die kirchliche Lage im Kirchenkreis Magdeburg’, 27/8/46.

¹⁹¹ AKPS, B1, 189, Pfr. R. (Magdeburg) to Konsistorialrat A. (Magdeburg), 13/9/47.

¹⁹² LKAD, Kreispastoral Versammlungen, 1945–65, ‘Ephoralbericht über das kirchliche Leben im Kirchenkreis Zerbst erstattet bei der Kreispastoralversammlung 19. Mai 1948 in Rosslau’.

¹⁹³ Thorak, 67.

¹⁹⁴ S. Weichlein, *Sozialmilieus und politische Kultur in der Weimarer Republik, Lebenswelt, Vereinskultur, Politik in Hessen* (Göttingen, 1996), 314ff; Damberg, 47ff; C. Kösters, *Katholische Verbände und Moderne Gesellschaft: Organisationsgeschichte und Vereinskultur im Bistum Münster 1918 bis 1945* (Paderborn, 1995), 151ff; Liedhegener, 467–9, 574.

¹⁹⁵ G. Paul/K. Mallmann, *Milieus und Widerstand. Eine Verhaltensgeschichte der Gesellschaft im Nationalsozialismus, Widerstand und Verweigerung im Saarland, 1935–1945* (Bonn, 1995), 91. See

contend that there was little appreciable Catholic renewal in the early and mid-1930s, as Christoph Kösters, Wilhelm Damberg and Siegfried Weichlein have argued for example.¹⁹⁶ All agree, however, that the totalitarian ambitions of the Nazi State, at least eventually, debilitated the Catholic milieu.¹⁹⁷ Damberg carried his investigation of the Catholic Church in Münster up to 1980 and, in doing so, observed an abortive post-war revival that was dead in the water by 1951; the milieu was unable to maintain its authoritative moral and societal values in a liberal democratic society characterised by pluralism, individualism and, in the course of time, economic prosperity.¹⁹⁸ This interpretation lends itself to the argument that the failure of ‘re-Christianisation’ and the perpetuation of secularisation in the post-war period were contingent on specific pressures. In Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia, these included the rise of political secularism (socialism), a concentration on existential survival and the inadequacies of the Churches themselves.

The economic market model has some explanatory power in explaining the burgeoning religious participation immediately following the war in 1945. This model states that as the ‘religious market’ is flooded with greater possibilities and freedoms, this ought to lead to an increase in consumption.¹⁹⁹ After 1945, however, this schema

also: O. Heilbronner, *Catholicism, Political Culture, and the Countryside: A Social History of the Nazi Party in the Countryside* (Ann Arbor, 1998), 202; M.S. Dalton, *Catholicism, Popular Culture, and the Arts in Germany, 1880–1933* (Notre Dame, 2005), 239-40; Ruff, 187-202.

¹⁹⁶ Kösters, 34–5, 573–8; Damberg, 52-9; Weichlein, 162-8. M.E. O’Sullivan writes that, while the secularisation and the Nazi regime eroded the Catholic milieu, there remained ‘significant pockets of fervent followers’: ‘An eroding milieu? Catholic Youth, Church Authority, and Popular Behavior in Northwest Germany during the Third Reich, 1933-1938’, *The Catholic Historical Review*, 90/2 (2004), 259.

¹⁹⁷ Paul/Mallmann, 91; Kösters, 577-8; Damberg, 71-2.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 511.

¹⁹⁹ On this theory, see, in general: R. Stark/W.S. Bainbridge, *The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival and Cult Formation* (Berkeley, 1985); L.R. Iannaccone, ‘Religious Markets and the Economics of Religion’, *Social Compass*, 39/1 (1992), 123-31; R. Stark/L.R. Iannaccone, ‘A Supply-Side Reinterpretation of the “Secularization” of Europe’, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*,

lacks cogency as people neglected the Churches in many places. Religious indifference clearly pre-dated the Stalinisation of the SED from late-1947 and the party's increasing hostility to Christianity. This notwithstanding, the greater prevalence of political secularism, represented by socialism, contributed in some measure to the Churches' lack of resonance after 1945. Although the KPD/SED never forged a consistent *Religionspolitik* in the SBZ that was transmitted to lower-level functionaries, the party certainly did widely propagate its brand of political secularism as a viable alternative to religion.²⁰⁰

Due to state censorship, especially of *Glaube und Heimat*, church documents identified the emergence of an ideological competitor in veiled terms. In August 1946, the provost of Magdeburg observed, somewhat prophetically, that a new 'Illusionsstimmung' with totalitarian ambition threatened the Protestant Church and population at large.²⁰¹ The pastor in the town of Obersdorf lamented the 'latent' hostility of 'certain circles' in the region.²⁰² One article from the 31 August 1947 edition of *Glaube und Heimat*, 'Die Flucht in die Religion', rejected long-standing and allegedly prevalent objections to Christianity: that it promoted passivity, inaction, irresponsibility and flight from the demands of the present (material) crisis.²⁰³ Another author wrote in November 1948, noting the presence of an 'anti-clerical spirit hostile to Christ' in Thuringian factories.²⁰⁴ In the Catholic Church, Freusberg advised guidelines for providing pastoral care to returning prisoners given that 'mass politics'

33/3 (1994), 230-52; R. Stark/R. Finke, *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion* (Berkeley, 2000).

²⁰⁰ Besier, 'Kommunistische Religionspolitik', 145.

²⁰¹ *AKPS*, B1, 18, 'Bericht über die kirchliche Lage im Kirchenkreis Magdeburg', 27/8/46.

²⁰² *AKPS*, B1, 26, Pfr. Obersdorf to Müller, 21/2/47.

²⁰³ *GuH*, 2/35, 31/8/47, 'Flucht in die Religion', 2.

²⁰⁴ *GuH*, 3/46, 14/11/48, 'Was beunruhigt mich am meisten?', 2.

(Kollektivierung) had corrupted many men in the past, and it threatened to corrupt many more, perhaps with even more damaging consequences.²⁰⁵

In 1949, the provost in Naumburg also reported the increasing influence of socialism.

He complained of the collectivisation of public and individual life:

Das Eigentum verliert allmählich den Wert der Geborgenheit. Ja, das Eigenleben des Einzelnen ist in Frage gestellt. Der Mensch wird zum Produktionsmittel: das Kollektiv, das Kombinat, das Jugendaktiv... der Mensch ist zum Neutrum, zur Sache geworden. Hunger und Terror wirken Angst, Stumpfheit, Gewissenslosigkeit.

This, he claimed, applied throughout the region of Naumburg, whether rural, industrial or urban areas. The churchman even noted, interestingly, that in some rural districts, where farmers were about to lose their property and fall amongst the ‘proletariat’, they sought the church’s aid as their only ally in this ‘defensive struggle’.²⁰⁶ Here, then, the church was seen as the last resort to protect the comparatively wealthy against communist depredations. The religious authorities were of course critical of this sort of migration into church communion given that it was premised on material gain and not religious zeal.²⁰⁷

However, while the KPD/SED increasingly came to monopolise the reins of power in the Soviet zone, socialism cannot solely account for the failure of ‘re-

Christianisation’. Party members were widely unpopular for two major reasons.²⁰⁸

There was widespread fear amongst the population and, in many places, people

²⁰⁵ BEA, 3 III, Erfurt, St. Marien, Propststeipfarrkirche, 1942-1959, ‘Seelsorge an den Männern, besonders an den heimkehrenden Soldaten’, undated.

²⁰⁶ AKPS, B1, 83, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht für das Jahr 1948’, Propstei Naumburg, 13/1/49.

²⁰⁷ See, also, regarding former NSDAP members who entered the Churches after the war to secure an ‘alibi’: F. zu Löwenstein, ‘Religiöse Einkehr in Internierungslagern’, *Frankfurter Hefte*, 2 (1947), 463-70.

²⁰⁸ The unpopularity of the SED is well-attested by other historians: E. Neubert/T. Auerbach, *‘Es kann anders werden’*. *Opposition und Widerstand in Thüringen 1945-1989* (Cologne, 2005) 35; Bruce, 46ff, 92, 104; Allinson, 46-52; Ross, 8-9, 15, 24ff, 38-9; Pritchard, *The Making of the GDR*, 156-8. See also: *KJ*, 1950, 383-5.

conflated KPD/SED functionaries with the actions of their Soviet allies.²⁰⁹ The occupiers extracted reparations, including the deconstruction of factories, and, in various localities, Red Army troops engaged in theft, burglary, assault, rape and murder.²¹⁰ As Norman Naimark has observed in Berlin, party officials at times attempted to deflect opprobrium by alleging that attacks and night raids were the fault of disaffected elements who had stolen Red Army uniforms.²¹¹

The often difficult existential conditions, especially a lack of food, also detracted from the KPD/SED's public credibility.²¹² While the party desired popular engagement in political life, most people were often only interested in meeting day-to-day needs. Rumours often did not help the party and, according to multiple KPD/SED 'Stimmungsberichte', people accused the secular authorities of exploiting the population and not alleviating the deprivation even though they could.²¹³ One party official alleged in January 1946 that rumours to this effect were religious propaganda; a Christian in Magdeburg had reportedly stated that the KPD and the Soviets could resolve the food crisis if they wished, but they did not and vengefully

²⁰⁹ One report from the KPD in Merseburg observed that 90 percent of the population was opposed to 'Russia' (sic: the Soviet Union): *LHASA*, MER, Kreisverwaltung Merseburg, nr. 414, 282, 'Stimmungsbericht', 11/9/45, 6/7/46. The KPD/SED were known as 'Russenknechte': *LHASA*, MER, Kreisleitung der SED Merseburg, 'Informationsberichte', März 1946-Dezember 1948, IV/414/346, SED Ortsgruppe Wallendorf, 6/12/48.

²¹⁰ The instances are overwhelming. For example: *LHASA*, DE, KV KÖT, Nr. 112, Landrat des Kreises Zerbst to Landespolizeidirektor B., 5/9/45; 10/9/45, 15/10/45, 1/10/45, 7/10/45, 14/10/45, 12/12/45; *LHASA*, MER, Kreisverwaltung Merseburg, nr. 414, 282, 'Stimmungsbericht', KPD Merseburg, 18/9/45, 8/2/46; *LHASA*, MER, KPD-Bezirksleitung der Provinz Sachsen, P 506, Nr. 8, 'Zusammenfassender Bericht vom Monat November über Straftaten von Angehörigen der Roten Armee im U.B. Dessau', 10/12/45, 30/12/45; *ibid.*, KPD Stadtteilleitung Magdeburg Ost, 'Bericht', 28/2/46. In Thuringia, in general: *BArch*, DO 4, 25374.

²¹¹ *LHASA*, DE, KV KÖT, Nr. 82, LR Zerbst to BP Dessau, 24/12/45; *LHASA*, MER, KPD Bezirksleitung der Provinz Sachsen, P 506, Nr. 9, KPD Stadtteilleitung Magdeburg Ost, 'Bericht', 28/2/46; See also: Naimark, *The Russians in Germany*, 81ff.

²¹² This was especially true for refugees: I. Connor, *Refugees and Expellees in Post-war Germany* (Manchester, 2007), 223-5.

²¹³ For example: *LHASA*, MER, Kreisverwaltung Merseburg, nr. 624, 'Stimmungsbericht über die Umsiedler des Kreises Merseburg', KR Merseburg, undated (probably early 1948).

sought to exacerbate the situation.²¹⁴ There is no evidence to substantiate this claim, and it seems an example of anti-clerical agitation.

The provost of Halberstadt and Quedlinburg acknowledged ongoing competition with the socialist *Weltanschauung* in a report of April 1949. He had not yet entered discussions with this ‘new godlessness’, and he maintained that the church continued to enjoy moral authority in many places. He remarked that swathes of the population wait on the directives of the Church to advise ‘in der verwirrenden Fülle der aufgebrochenen Zeitfragen’.²¹⁵ It is difficult to evaluate this claim definitively, though given the rejection of German communists in many places throughout the Soviet zone, and the apparently good church participation in the Halberstadt district, it makes sense to posit that the church enjoyed greater resonance than their ideological competitors in some areas.²¹⁶ What is certain is that, though the Churches did come to recognise the rise of socialism as a serious adversary for the souls of Saxons and Thuringians, the SED did not exert ideological control over most hearts and minds by 1949.²¹⁷

Apart from political secularism, the situation of post-war deprivation had contradictory effects on religious belief and practice. On the one hand, the Churches afforded an institutional alternative to discredited Nazism and provided stability and consolation.²¹⁸ Organ music at a service in Köthen reportedly touched the hearts of

²¹⁴ *LHASA*, MER, KPD-Bezirksleitung der Provinz Sachsen, P 506, Nr. 8, Bezirksleitung der KPD, Halle, 28/1/46.

²¹⁵ *AKPS*, B1, 83, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht des Propstes zu Halberstadt und zu Quedlinburg für das Jahr 1948’, 8/4/49.

²¹⁶ See above, pp. 136-7.

²¹⁷ There were some activists, however. See: McDougall, ‘A Duty to Forget?’

²¹⁸ *KJ*, 1950, 381; *GuH*, 1/31, 24/11/46, ‘Sterbende Kirche?’, 1. See also: Herbert, 15; Vollnhals, ‘Die evangelische Kirche zwischen Traditionswahrung und Neuorientierung’, in *Von Stalingrad zur Währungsreform*, 114.

many members of the local congregation; the lyrics encouraged parishioners to cast their worries upon God.²¹⁹ Another churchman observed that refugees and former prisoners of war attended his services in good numbers as they clung to the Christian gospel as their last hope.²²⁰ A number of post-war internees at Buchenwald also converted to Christianity in search of consolation.²²¹ Lastly, two women appealed for Mitzenheim's help in the denazification cases of their husbands. Their letter stated that faith in God had helped them endure the difficult times; their sorrow would be too much to bear without belief.²²²

The same sentiment is apparent in recent testimonies. Frau L. (1920) was a Catholic refugee who had fled her home near Breslau, Silesia, on 20 January 1945. She had lost her brothers in the war, and her father had fallen in action with the *Volkssturm* on 26 January 1945. In flight for months, she arrived at a refugee camp in Thuringia in September 1945, concerning which she wrote: 'Die schlechten Verhältnisse kann niemand empfinden, nur die sie am eigen[en] Leibe verspürte[n].' Her Catholic faith and the Church had helped her endure the camp: 'Wie hätten wir sonst all das Schwere ertragen? Nur mit Gottes und der Gottesmutter Hilfe, bis auf den heutigen Tag spürbar.' Frau L. and her mother were welcomed into the local church community with open arms and soon felt at home, despite their impoverishment, because the congregation helped them both work through the 'unsagbar' suffering.²²³ Another refugee, Herr F. (1923), a Sudeten German who had fled to Köthen in 1945, recalled that the Protestant church offered him and other refugees support, and a sense

²¹⁹ LKAD, Kirchenvisitationen, 1945-48, KOP (Köthen) to LKRA, 10/9/45.

²²⁰ BEA, BGVE-BAE-M, 129, 'Bericht: Ex-priesters Mutke, über seine Tätigkeit in den Flüchtlings- und Heimkehrerlagern', 8/11/47.

²²¹ Eichler, 36; *Speziallager Nr. 2 Buchenwald*, ed. B. Ritscher (Buchenwald, 1993), 88, 93.

²²² LKAE, A750 Beiakte zu IV, Frau M. and Frau M. to Mitzenheim, 17/6/48.

²²³ Questionnaire from Frau Elfriede L., Breslau, *Umsiedlerlager* in Thuringia, Mühlhausen, 1920.

of 'Heimat' and community amongst other Christians.²²⁴ It seems that religion provided some parishioners with hope for a better world, even if it was metaphysical. In often-terrible conditions, there was solace in the thought that there was more beyond present life; faith invested suffering with meaning.²²⁵ There was, furthermore, the 'this-worldly' communion of believers who alleviated suffering with empathy and eased loneliness through relationships.

On the other hand, the privations of the post-war period often had the reverse effect and drove people away from religion. It seems that this departure from faith was the more common reaction. One church official observed, looking back, that while some believed that the catastrophic end of the war would have positive effects for the Christian Church in turning people to prayer and the gospel, the opposite had been the reality and the hearts of many people had turned 'stony' and 'icy'.²²⁶ In Zeulenroda, poor attendance was contrary to the clergyman's expectations. Given the prevalent deprivation and an increasing number of deaths in 1945-6, he had hoped that more people would have come to services to experience the consolations of faith. He reflected that many refugees had become embittered with suffering, and Christian consolation could not reach them in their indifference. He wrote in the *Pfarrchronik*:

Müßten die Massen nicht ins Gotteshaus strömen, um sich aus der alten unversiegblichen Trost zu holen? Alles, woran sie früher hingen, war doch zusammengebrochen. Warum kommen sie nicht zur Kirche, die ihnen Kraft und Frieden zu vermitteln hat?... "Not lehrt beten?" Dann müßten in dieser Zeit unvorstellbaren Elends die Kirchen überfüllt sein! Die Menschen sind stumpf, müde und schwer zugänglich für Gottes Wort.²²⁷

²²⁴ Questionnaire from Herr Kurt F., Köthen, 1923.

²²⁵ Cf. on meaning in suffering: V. Frankl, ...*trotzdem Ja zum Leben sagen. Ein Psychologe erlebte den Konzentrationslager* (Kösel, 1977).

²²⁶ *GuH*, 2/11, 16/3/47, 'Der kalte Verstand und das warme Herz', Grams, 2.

²²⁷ *AEKZ*, 'Chronik der evang.-luth. Kirchgemeinde Zeulenroda, 1944-1946', 27/2/47.

The pastor concluded that, as ‘schreckliche deutsche Hungerjahre’, most people in the post-war period focussed thought and effort on acquiring food and fuel. The result was that a ‘normal’ church life was simply not possible. He was correct in this: material conditions often dictated and directed people’s lives.

Therefore, the most compelling ground for the failure of the Churches’ ‘re-Christianisation’ was a mentality amongst broad swathes of the population that prioritised existential concerns and sometimes incurred a questioning of God’s purposes and even God himself. In other words, many people focussed on the exigencies of the everyday, often to the detriment of metaphysical considerations.²²⁸

A pastor in Halle, for example, evaluated contemporary life in Darwinist terms: life was purely a struggle for survival in which the strong act ‘at any cost’. The weak were left to despair and perish.²²⁹ The pastor in Schlagenthin lamented that most people occupied themselves with daily existence; their stomach was their god and they filled their days with unceasing labour. He wrote further, with palpable frustration, that these people were not aware of their ‘souls’ and accordingly lived like cattle in a shed.²³⁰ The provost of Magdeburg likewise admitted that the popular emphasis on material concerns in certain areas distracted people from the spiritual realm.²³¹ The focus on material needs inevitably led many people to forego church in order to pursue work, or to leave the church in order to avoid paying the church tax. Work and the threat of Soviet intervention in Mundeleft, for example, conspired to keep some from visiting church.²³² A report from the Saxon-Anhalt State Finance Office in

²²⁸ For example: questionnaire from Frau Waltraud T., Kemberg, 1925.

²²⁹ *AKPS*, B1, 189, Pfr. K. (Halle) to Stadtsuperintendent (Oberkonsistorialrat) Hein, 1/12/47.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, Pfr. A. (Schlagenthin) to provost (Magdeburg), 11/9/47.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht über die Propstei Magdeburg’, 12/5/49.

²³² *LKAD*, Kirchenvisitationen, 1945-48, KOP (Zerbst) to LKRA (regarding Mundeluft), 29/11/45.

January 1950 suggested that most church leavers had left for financial reasons, ‘weil die evangelische Kirche dazu übergegangen sei, rigoros die Kirchensteuer beizutreiben’.²³³ The Protestant Church Yearbook in 1950 too remarked that many left the church in lieu of paying the compulsory membership tax.²³⁴

The enduring privations of the post-war period also forced a number of people to re-evaluate their beliefs. While few denied outright the existence of God, many questioned how a benevolent deity could allow such suffering.²³⁵ It was the primary task of the Churches to offer pastoral support and invest suffering with meaning. At the end of 1948, Mitzenheim admitted that the church could not often satisfy the questionings of the populace. Feelings of loneliness, abandonment, revenge and envy ultimately led to indifference toward religion.²³⁶ His counterpart in the KPS, Ludwig Müller, too recognised the danger of suffering, leading to ‘weariness’ (Müdessein), as he preached in Heiligenstadt on 24 September 1950:

Über solchem Müdessein, kann man die Pflichten, die einem auferlegt sind, versäumen, kann man, und das ist vielleicht viel schlimmer, aufhören, zu glauben und zu beten.²³⁷

That people failed to reconcile a ‘good’ God with their suffering and fell away from the Churches is perhaps no surprise. The problem of evil is a long-standing, much vexed philosophical and theological question that has plagued generation after generation through the centuries: how could a perfectly good, all-knowing, all-

²³³ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 469, 3881, ‘Bericht über die Zusammensetzung der Bevölkerung nach Konfessionen und Kirchenstatistik’, Ministerium der Finanzen, 17/1/50.

²³⁴ *KJ*, 1950, 383.

²³⁵ *AKPS*, B1, 18, ‘Bericht über die kirchliche Lage im Kirchenkreis Magdeburg’, 27/8/46; *GuH*, 2/40, 5/10/47, ‘Warum?’, 1-2.

²³⁶ *LKAE*, A158/VIII, ‘Unsere Jahrelösung 1947’, Mitzenheim.

²³⁷ *AKPS*, B1, 26, ‘Predigt des Herrn Bischof D. Müller in der Martinskirche zu Heiligenstadt (Eichsfeld) am 24. September 1950’.

powerful creator God allow suffering?²³⁸ In Germany, many held God himself responsible for the war and the deprivation of the post-war years.²³⁹ One eyewitness (1917) in Erfurt admitted that, though she had been brought up in the Protestant Church, she doubted God's goodness and even existence. Her husband had been killed in action and she, feeling abandoned and initially without a source of income, questioned: 'Ich bin ganz ehrlich: [weil] mein Mann gefallen war, da hab' [ich] an Gott gezweifelt, war ein Zweifel in mir: warum, warum, warum?'²⁴⁰ After hearing Bishop Dibelius sermonise on the radio, the Jewish-Christian diarist Victor Klemperer mused in his entry for 29 July 1945 how it was possible for people to believe in a 'gracious' and 'loving' God. He resolved to leave the Protestant Church, which had disappointed him in 'such a shameful manner'.²⁴¹ A prisoner at Buchenwald after the war noted that many fellow internees questioned whether there was a God, and, if there was, how could he allow such suffering.²⁴² An author in *Glaube und Heimat* presented a popular question in quoting Gerhard Hauptmann: 'Hat Gott uns zu wenig geliebt?'²⁴³ A *Denkschrift*, written for Hugo Aufderbeck (the head of pastoral care in the Magdeburg Commissariat), proceeded along scientific and mathematical lines to establish the cogency of God's *a priori* existence. The argument harnessed science and philosophy and pivoted on the premise of the 'endless':

Vom Unendl[iche] wird schon im tägl[ichen] Leben überall gesprochen, wir hören von [sic] unendl[ichem] Leid unserer Tage, vom unendl[ichen] Reichtum mancher Länder, von unendlich[ichen] Energiequellen, die wir in den inneren

²³⁸ See: M. Jakubowski-Tiessen/H. Lehmann, *Um Himmels willen*. On the philosophical discussions of this question, see the instructive article in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/evil/#AttTotRef> (accessed 25/2/2011).

²³⁹ *GuH*, 1/33, 8/12/46, 'Hier spricht die Gemeinde – Heimkehrer und Kirche', Dr. Albert Hiß, 2.

²⁴⁰ Interview with Frau Ute J., Gispersleben/Erfurt, 1917, 16/5/2008.

²⁴¹ V. Klemperer, *So sitze ich denn zwischen allen Stühlen. Tagebücher 1945-1949* (Berlin, 1999), 60.

²⁴² Eichler, 18-9.

²⁴³ *GuH*, 2/34, 24/8/47, 'Überzeugendes Zeugnis', F. Högner, 1.

Kräften des Atoms besitzen, man redet von unendl[icher] Weite des Weltraums, schließlich stoßen Religion und Philos[ophie] allenthalben auf den Begriff des Unendl[iches].²⁴⁴

The Protestant Church in the Province of Saxony also moved to counter doubts with a proselytising mission conducted in Jeßnitz in June 1948. Sermons touched on pertinent issues within the community such as: ‘Wie kann Gott so viel Leid zulassen?’ and ‘Können wir auf eine bessere Zukunft hoffen?’ The report noted that these talks had given the community much to consider.²⁴⁵

Ultimately, the church authorities reported that many people fell into nihilism. A host of accounts testified that this phenomenon was most apparent amongst young people and men and observed that the demise of Nazism had left many disillusioned, indifferent, sceptical and hedonistic.²⁴⁶ According to a churchman in Zeitz, there was a ‘failure of idealism’ that impeded conversions to Christianity. Religion was, to these people, just *another* ‘idea’. There was no hope of a bright future, and nihilism threatened.²⁴⁷ One pastor, from Graitschen in Thuringia, observed the same phenomenon: ‘Allgemeine Krankheitsercheinung: Nihilismus unserer Tage als Not und Aufgabe unserer Kirche überhaupt.’²⁴⁸ This churchman’s sense that nihilism was a mental and moral sickness is symptomatic of the period and germane to many

²⁴⁴ *BAM*, Seelsorgeamt: Schriftverkehr von Hugo Aufderbeck 1947-1953, ‘Unendlich’, Herr Friedrich Huckemann to Hugo Aufderbeck, undated.

²⁴⁵ *LKAD*, Evangelisation, 1945-1967, Pfr. (Jeßnitz) to LKRA, 15/6/48.

²⁴⁶ For example: *BEA*, 3 III, Erfurt, St. Marien, Propststeipfarrkirche, 1942-1959, Gottesdienst und Seelsorge, ‘Seelsorge an den Männern, besonders an den heimkehrenden Soldaten’, undated; *AKPS*, B1, 26, Pfr. (Obersdorf) to Müller, 21/2/47; *BFA*, Kirche in der DDR ‘Grundsatzliches’, the BM (Keffershausen) to BGVF, 16/6/47; *GuH*, 8/9/46, 1/20, ‘Ewigkeit in die Zeit: “Was kann uns helfen”’, 1; *GuH*, 2/18, 4/5/47, ‘Warum gehen wir am Wesentlichen vorbei?’, Prof. Dr. Kayser-Petersen (Jena), 1-2; *GuH*, 2/45, 9/11/47, ‘Optimismus oder Pessimismus’, Prof. Dr. Kayser-Petersen (Jena), 1; *GuH*, 3/28, 11/7/48, ‘Müssen wir Männer stumm sein?’ Dr. W. Schäfer, 1.

²⁴⁷ *AKPS*, B1, 189, Pfr S. (Zeitz) to Müller, 27/11/47. See also: W. Müller, ‘Jugendverbände und “offene Jugendarbeit”. Die organisationsmüdigkeit der jungen Generation nach der bedingungslosen Kapitulation des Dritten Reiches’ in *Aber nicht im Gleichschritt*, 62-5.

²⁴⁸ *AEKE*, Graitschen I: 1.2.1946-28.12.1949, ‘Tätigkeitsberichte der Gemeindegemeinderäte des Kirchspiels Graitschen für die Zeit vom 11.10.1947 bis 31.3.48’, 26/4/48.

ecclesiastical evaluations from the period. Following the language of the church authorities, there was a close relationship between indifference (or nihilism) and hedonism. Where churchmen identified youth as pursuing pleasure to the detriment of religion, accusations of nihilism or indifference were often present.²⁴⁹ Party functionaries and bloc party politicians followed a similar schema: few youth were interested in politics; most were frightened and concerned only with ‘pleasure’. For example, a KPD observer in a southern suburb of Magdeburg noted that there was a widespread desire amongst the populace to pursue pleasure above all else.²⁵⁰ The KPD/SED viewed the ‘struggle’ against allegedly prevalent sexually transmitted diseases as not only one for the body, but also for the soul.²⁵¹ An LDPD delegate in the Saxon parliament in January 1947 considered dance halls ‘Treibhäusern der Geschlechtskrankheiten’.²⁵² It seems that hedonism and nihilism, for the religious and political authorities at least, were drawn from the same lexicon and had similar meanings. They were perhaps different sides to the same coin, if not synonyms, as both implied a lack of social control and influence, as we shall see below (Chapter four).²⁵³ For the Churches, in particular, if one abandoned institutional religion and forwent church services, one was nihilistic, had no faith in the afterlife and lived in

²⁴⁹ Young people, especially, apparently became indifferent to religion and fell into scepticism, nihilism and the pursuit of pleasure that considered nobody but themselves. For example: *GuH*, 1/3, 12/5/46, ‘Junge Gemeinde’, Köhler, 3; *GuH*, 2/23, 7/6/47, ‘Fragen der Jugend an die Kirchen’, 2; *GuH*, 3/2, 11/1/48, ‘Die Situation der Jugend und die Kirche’, Pfr. Neumann, 1-2; *GuH*, 3/37, 12/9/48, ‘Der Ruf an die jungen Christen’, W. Ölschner, 4; *BEA*, BGVP bzw. Fulda, Prof. Dr. M. (Jena) to BGVF, 10/9/46.

²⁵⁰ *LHASA*, MER, KPD Bezirksleitung der Provinz Sachsen, P 506, Nr. 9, ‘Bericht’, Stadtteilleitung Magdeburg, undated; *ibid.*, ‘Bericht – Stadtteil Farmersleben’, undated (probably early 1946).

²⁵¹ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 789, 207, ‘Bericht’, MVB, 27/7/46.

²⁵² Quoted in E. Badstübner-Peters, “Lassen wir tanzen...” Nachkriegsjugend und moderne Freizeitkultur in SBZ und früher DDR’, in *Aber nicht im Gleichschritt*, 71.

²⁵³ Buscher notes that ‘radicalism’ and ‘nihilism’ were related words in the church lexicon in the Western zones. Both noted a ‘rejection of all moral and religious principles’: F. Buscher, ‘The Great Fear: The Catholic Church and the Anticipated Radicalization of Expellees and Refugees in Post-War Germany’, *German History*, 21 (2003), 206, 208, 209, 220. Communists were also considered ‘nihilists’: *ibid.*, 209.

pursuit of worldly pleasures. This interpretation is exemplified in the August 1946 report of the Magdeburg provost, which reflected that there was no vibrant church life:

Sonst herrscht dumpfes Gehenlassen, herrscht ein Schicksalsglaube, hinter dem im Grunde die Verzweiflung an irgend einem ewige Sinn des Lebens lauert, wenn nicht die Losung: "Lasst uns essen und trinken, dann morgen sind wir tot" alle Triebe bewegt.²⁵⁴

There was also a correlation between death and meaningless; this was antithetical to the Churches' understanding of death as the passing of the mortal soul into eternity, and thus the dénouement of life's search for meaning. The link is explicit in the words of one circular from the Protestant aid organisation to young women in April 1946:

Eine Sintflut des Leides, die die letzte Insel uns[e]res Glücks verschlungen hat, aus der bald keine Bergspitze unserer Zuversicht mehr emporragt; Sterben, Sterben und Sinnlosigkeit; die Welt – ein Feld von Totenbeinen: so sieht es äußerlich in der Welt aus!...Die Sinnlosigkeit, das Leid und der Tod haben das letzte Wort. Die Welt ist zu einem großen Gefängnis des Todes geworden, das Leben zu einer Zelle der Hölle, aus der es kein Ausbrechen gibt. Das erleben heute viele.²⁵⁵

There was indifference to life and death, and even a longing for death.²⁵⁶ A pastor in Halle informed the Konsistorium that throughout his parish people envied and 'praised' the dead because they had put worldly suffering behind them.²⁵⁷ *Glaube und Heimat* published an article in August 1947, 'Warum wollt ihr sterben?', that criticised those who desired to fall asleep at night and not to awake in the morning.²⁵⁸

Suicide was also common in the post-war period in East Germany, particularly in 1945, and it sometimes challenged conceptions about God amongst affected friends

²⁵⁴ AKPS, B1, 18, 'Bericht über die kirchliche Lage im Kirchenkreis Magdeburg', 27/8/46.

²⁵⁵ AKPS, B1, 29, Evang. Jungmädchenwerk to Mitarbeiter(innen) u. Freunde, 8/4/46.

²⁵⁶ Similarly in Bremen: *Kriegsende in Bremen. Erinnerungen, Berichte, Dokumente*, ed. H. Müller/G. Rohdenburg, 3rd edn (Bremen, 2005), 87-8.

²⁵⁷ AKPS, B1, 189, Pfr. K. (Halle) to Stadtsuperintendent (Oberkonsistorialrat) Hein, 1/12/47.

²⁵⁸ *GuH*, 2/34, 24/8/47, 'Warum wollt ihr sterben?', Pfr. Wolf (Altenburg), 2.

and family.²⁵⁹ A pastor in Magdeburg summed up the attitude that, he believed, often led to suicide. He stated that one could often bear certain deprivations for a short period of time, or at least for a discrete period, but it became unbearable when hardship seemed endless. Without perspective or hope, suicide was viewed as an escape, although, as the churchman pointed out, it was immoral and greatly increased the bitterness of those still alive.²⁶⁰ In April 1948, a pastor at Mühlberg in Saxony-Anhalt spoke at the funeral of a young boy who had killed himself after being apprehended for drunkenness and found in possession of a knife. The pastor understood the possibility, if not the reality, of consequent questioning about God's existence, and he concluded the funeral sermon with a theodicy:

Es wäre aber falsch zu meinen, es gibt keinen Gott, warum lässt er so etwas zu. Wer die Existenz Gottes leugnet, ist 30 Jahre zu spät geboren. Selbst weise Vertreter der exakten Naturwissenschaften stehen heute demütig und bescheiden vor der Glaubensfrage. Gott ist schon da, Gott hat auch dem F. in seinem Handeln zugesehen. Und nicht gehindert? Er hätte es tun können. Er tat es nicht. Jeder Mensch hat seinen eigenen, freien Willen. Den gab uns Gott. Mitdem dürfen wir uns entscheiden für oder gegen Gott, handeln mit oder ohne Ihn. Für das Handeln mit Ihm tritt er mit seinen Zusagen und Verheissungen ein. Für das Handeln ohne Ihn ist der Mensch allein verantwortlich. Das ist die Tragik dieses Geschehens.²⁶¹

Drawing from the church lexicon, the trinity of immorality (drunkenness), meaninglessness (signalled by the sin of suicide) and suffering (theodicy) is apparent in this anecdote. The theodicy lies in this: while the pastor commended the youth into

²⁵⁹ See, in general: C. Goeschel, *Suicide in Nazi Germany* (Oxford, 2009), 149-66; idem, 'Suicide at the end of the Third Reich', 153-73; Bessel, 'Hatred after War', 199-203; *GuH*, 3/7, 15/2/48, 'Das Selbstmordproblem für Arzt und Seelsorge', W. Schulte, 3. There are multiple attestations to suicide in police and mayoral reports. See, for example: *LHASA*, DE, KV KÖT, Nr. 108, Biendorf, 2/5/45.

²⁶⁰ *AKPS*, B1, 189, Pfr. R. (Magdeburg) to Konsistorialrat A. (Magdeburg), 13/9/47. See also: Goeschel, *Suicide in Nazi Germany*, 165-6; idem, 'Suicide and the Third Reich', 158, 171-2. On proposed motivations for suicide, see: *ibid.*; idem, *Suicide in Nazi Germany*, 149ff, 164-6; Bessel, 'Hatred after War', 201-3. On the loss of hope see: *GuH*, 2/41, 12/10/47, 'Weg aus dem Chaos', Dr. H.-J. Schmidt (Griez), 4; *GuH*, 2/34, 24/8/47, 'Warum wollt ihr sterben?', Pfr. Wolf (Altenburg), 2.

²⁶¹ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 769b, 200, 'Beerdigungsrede des Pfarrer L.', 30/4/48.

the hands of God, emphasising divine forbearance and love, the young boy had acted in free will (in immorality and sin) to take his own life.²⁶²

There were other church attempts to combat unbelief by explaining the hiddenness of God. At the local level, for example, the women of Frauenhilfe in the St. Agnus community in Köthen visited many grieving families to offer support. They observed that, especially in cases where young people perished, ‘very serious’ questions arose about the meaning of life and the existence of God. It was not their task to offer intellectual rationales, but to give emotional succour first and foremost.²⁶³ In effect, the women acted in representation of God’s love for mankind.²⁶⁴ Bishop Mitzenheim, for his part, gave a radio address at Christmas 1946 about the nature of God: while He seems far away, unknown and mysterious, He is the saviour of all mankind and the father of humanity.²⁶⁵ In a similar vein, Mitzenheim also wrote an article for Trinity Sunday in 1948 on ‘Kirche und Heimat’. He noted that one’s fate was often difficult and not what one desired, but one and all must come to terms with it. In accepting fate, there was hope in God’s grace, for ‘Die Liebe Gottes hat kein Ende. Sie ist oft verhüllt.’²⁶⁶ An article in *Glaube und Heimat* in October 1947 also located the ‘answer’ in finding God’s grace through an admission of guilt and one’s subsequent repentance. The greatest problem was that, according to the author, people were too prideful.²⁶⁷ In sum, it seems that many people lost perspective and became

²⁶² Attitudes to suicide also represented a point of difference between Nazism, which idealised the act as self-sacrifice, and Christianity: Goeschel, ‘Suicide and the Third Reich’, 155-8.

²⁶³ *LKAD*, Kirchenvisitationen, 1945-48, KOP (Köthen) to LKRA (regarding St Agnus [Köthen]), 23/4/47.

²⁶⁴ I discuss Frauenhilfe further below, pp. 225-37.

²⁶⁵ *LKAE*, NL Mitzenheim, 27, ‘Rundfunkansprache zur Weihnachtsfest, 1946’.

²⁶⁶ *LKAE*, NL Mitzenheim, 36, ‘Kirche und Heimat’, Trinitatiszeit 1948.

²⁶⁷ *GuH*, 2/40, 5/10/47, ‘Warum?’, 1-2.

preoccupied with the satisfaction of their immediate needs. While this was often perceived by clergymen as nihilism and/or sin, it was a mentality that prioritised the survival of the flesh and not, so far as the Churches were concerned, of the soul.

Lastly, secularisation was promoted by the severe under-resourcing of the Churches in the post-war period. The Churches simply did not possess the resources to provide for the material and pastoral needs of the population.²⁶⁸ The Protestant and Catholic aid organisations, Hilfswerk and Caritas, could not alleviate widespread privation (see further below, pp. 235-9). Neither could the secular Volkssolidarität. Reports on public opinion from government officials in Anhalt at the end of 1945, for example, reflect upon a general sense of depression and resignation, much of which could be solved, so deduced the author, if more food and other critical supplies, such as coal, were available.²⁶⁹ The structural inadequacies of the Churches were also significant in view of the tremendous influx of refugees into Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia from 1944. The Catholic Church especially encountered great difficulties in providing services and the sacraments.²⁷⁰ The percentage of Catholics amongst the total populations of Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia increased from 7.04 and 2.71 percent in 1933 to 15.2 and 16.7 percent respectively in 1949.²⁷¹ By 1948, Weskamm in Magdeburg still had only ca. 170 regular priests and 100 refugee priests to service ca.

²⁶⁸ See my previous discussion of the inadequate resources of the post-war Churches: Fenwick, 79-101. Joppen, vol. 10, 142ff.

²⁶⁹ *LHASA*, DE, BV DE, 82, LR Ballenstedt to BP Dessau, 24/12/45. This attitude was often compounded by Red Army excesses: *ibid.*, LR Köthen to BP Dessau, 27/12/45; *ibid.*, LR Bernburg to BP Dessau, 27/12/45.

²⁷⁰ For instance: *BEA*, BGVE/BAE-M, 129, Freusberg to BGVF, 3/6/46; *BEA*, BGVE/BAE-M, 125, 1946, 'Bericht über die seelsorgliche Lage', Freusberg, 9/8/46.

²⁷¹ M. Elm, *Die kleine Herde: die katholische Kirche in der SBZ und im sozialistische Staat DDR* (Münster, 2007), 13. Throughout the area of the (later) SBZ the proportion of Catholics in the population climbed from 6.1 percent in 1939 to 12.2 percent in 1946: Tischner, *Katholische Kirche*, 56-7.

650,000 Catholics.²⁷² In Thuringia, over 50,000 Catholics had no recourse to pastoral care in early 1946. By mid-1947, while there were 250 priests – including 102 refugee clergy – in Freusberg’s jurisdiction, this number was still regarded as insufficient.²⁷³ The result was that churchmen often had to provide for communities considerable distances apart, and Weskamm’s desperate repeated appeals to the Paderborn diocese for help received little echo.²⁷⁴ As he reflected in 1951, many of the refugees were unprepared for life in a non-Catholic area amongst materialistic people and aggressive political atheism.²⁷⁵ There was often little the Church could do, particularly as a number of priests suffered mental and physical illnesses as a result of their tiring work. By 1949 at least, there was no resolution to the problems of the Catholic Church in Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt.²⁷⁶

Conclusion

Church hopes of ‘re-Christianisation’ in Germany in 1945 had been largely dashed by 1949. There was a brief spike of religious interest in many localities in 1945, but

²⁷² *BAM*, Seelsorgeamt, Generalia, 1948-1978, ‘Ziel und Vorschläge für die Seelsorge an den Evakuierten, 1948’.

²⁷³ *BAM*, Geschichte des Kommissariates: Seelsorge (Komm.) allgemeine Lage, 1945-1947, ‘Aufstellung über die Zahl der Priester in der Sowjetzone’, undated (probably mid-1947); *BEA*, BGVE/BAE-M, 129, ‘Übersicht über die Diaspora-Seelsorge der evakuierten Katholiken im thüringischen Anteil der Diözese Fulda’, Freusberg, 7/5/48.

²⁷⁴ *BAM*, Dechanten: Allgemein, 1945-1972, Dechantenkonferenz in Magdeburg, 9/10/46. *BAM*, Paderborn: Erzbischof – Korrespondenz – 1945-1955, Weskamm to Jäger, 30/1/46, 5/4/46; *ibid.*, Jäger to Weskamm, 17/1/47; *ibid.*, Weskamm to Jäger, 8/1/48.

²⁷⁵ Thorak, 56, 64ff.

²⁷⁶ *BEA*, BGVP bzw. Fulda, Freusberg to Bishop Dietz (Fulda), 16/4/49; *BAM*, Bonifatiusverein: Generalia, 1945-1969, ‘Der äußere Aufbau der Seelsorge im Kommissariat Magdeburg seit dem Jahre 1945’. 1949. In the West also: Buscher, 222-3.

subsequent reports reflected an increasingly polarised picture of religious observance. The statistics show a steady rise in exits from the Churches and diminishing conversions, while churchmen themselves admitted failure.²⁷⁷ With a few exceptions, several general conclusions emerge from the evidence: there was often greater support for the Churches in rural areas than in the cities, and especially in Catholic Eichsfeld. The Protestant project of 're-Christianisation' was also more ambitious than that of their Catholic counterparts given that it required a 'revival' (Erweckung) of the ca. 80 percent of the population in Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia who belonged to the Protestant Church in October 1946. Both Churches though had to contend with the emerging political secularism of the German communists, the difficult material conditions and their own inadequacies.

A number of churchmen associated questioning and burgeoning indifference, which ostensibly arose from suffering, with nihilism and its close companion in the religious lexicon, hedonism. These terms, however, seem to denote a popular alienation from the institutional Churches. Following the First World War, people had similarly left the Churches to general clerical dismay and criticism.²⁷⁸ Traditional religious interpretations of the world and the meaning of suffering failed to resonate widely, and it seems that a lack of social influence, and even political anomie (as after both wars), prompted churchmen to declare the prevalence of nihilism and hedonism. The Soviet leviathan occupied East Germany, fostered the rise of a new political elite and provided governance, but it certainly did not bring social order to many localities. The behavior of Red Army troops and MGB operatives on the ground, in fact, had the opposite effect. Soviet excesses undermined the position and program of the

²⁷⁷ Vollnhals, 'Die evangelische Kirche', 164.

²⁷⁸ For secessions from the LKA, KPS and TheK, see: *Datenatlas zur religiösen Geographie*, 9, 276, 767.

KPD/SED. Yet, similar to the Churches, which found that many people rejected clerical overtures to attend services and collaborate in church life, socialist admonitions to engage in politics were frustrated by the popular focus on survival in the post-war conditions. Given the failure of the secular authorities to supply food, a great many people were simply not interested in politics.²⁷⁹ A report from the SED leadership in Merseburg summed the situation up well in observing that, in certain circles, ‘die Politik [geht] durch den Magen’.²⁸⁰ A man questioned on the street by Leuna functionaries opined that most people wanted food and to be left in peace. Most could not be ‘bothered’ with politics. When he was asked to provide names, he refused, believing that the Soviets would pick him up and threaten him with imprisonment.²⁸¹ People even forwent political meetings and some left the party altogether.²⁸² One report from the KPD leadership in Köthen, for example, noted that party meetings in early 1946 were ‘extremely poorly attended’.²⁸³ Other reports observed that people were wary after the experience of Nazism and felt that there was no reason to enter KPD as it would bring little benefit.²⁸⁴ Some believed that the SED could not do ‘any better than the Nazis’.²⁸⁵ People therefore, as with the Churches, left the party. The regional party leadership in Merseburg disclosed to the Saxon-Anhalt SED leadership that six people had left the party in June 1948. One left on the

²⁷⁹ For instance: *LHASA*, DE, KV KÖT, Nr. 82, LR (Ballenstedt) to BP (Dessau), 24/12/45; *LHASA*, MER, Kreisleitung der SED Zeitz, ‘Berichte’, Januar 1946-Dezember 1948, IV/424/350, Ortsgruppe Droyssig, 22/5/47.

²⁸⁰ *LHASA*, MER, Kreisverwaltung Merseburg, nr. 414, 282, 1945-1951, Stadtleitung SED, Merseburg, 11/6/46.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, ‘Stimmungsbericht’, Merseburg, 11/6/46.

²⁸² In August 1945: *LHASA*, MER, P 508, Nr. 24, ‘Stimmungsbericht über das Buna Werk to Bezirksleitung der KPD Halle-Merseburg’, 1/8/45.

²⁸³ *LHASA*, MER, P 507, Nr. 4, ‘Bericht’, KPD Kreisleitung Köthen, 30/3/46.

²⁸⁴ *LHASA*, MER, Kreisleitung der SED Artern: Parteiorgane, Information: Informationsberichte, 12.3.46-13.11.46, IV/401/244, Ortsgruppe Kölleda to BL der KPD, Halle/Salle, 12/3/46; *ibid.*, Ortsgruppe Klosterhäscher to Arbeitsgebietsleitung Eckartsberga, 8/6/46.

²⁸⁵ *LHASA*, MER, Kreisverwaltung Merseburg, nr. 414, 282, 1945-1951, Stadtleitung SED, Merseburg, 11/6/46.

grounds of his Christian faith, claiming that religion had become increasingly important in his life, and the party programme did not align with his 'nature' (Wesen).²⁸⁶ In no way, then, was the influence of the Churches insubstantial for certain individuals by 1948, but it does seem that people generally did not heed imperatives handed down to them from any authority. Both the religious and secular authorities may have sought social order, but both failed to combat broad apathy or meet the material and spiritual need.

Religion in general, however, diversified and a number of people found meaning through other avenues. Some left the institutional Churches for sects or *Freikirchen*. The Jehovah's Witnesses, for instance, reportedly enjoyed some success in Quedlinburg through their dynamic and proactive proselytising.²⁸⁷ Reports also confirmed that Methodist churches were well attended in the post-war period.²⁸⁸ The Protestant Yearbook for 1951 reflected that, overall, there was an increase in interest in the *Freikirchen* and sects after the Second World War. One of the reasons given for this migration was exasperation with the institutional Church.²⁸⁹ Otherwise, a degree of individualisation of religion took place as the institutional Churches' interpretations of the post-war world and 'meaning-making' were not sufficient to create 'ultimate significance'.²⁹⁰ One of the *Glaube und Heimat* editors, Pastor

²⁸⁶ LHASA, MER, Kreisleitung der SED Merseburg, 'Informationsberichte', März 1946- Dezember 1948, IV/414/346, KV SED Merseburg to SED LV, Halle/Saale, 28/6/48.

²⁸⁷ AKPS, B1, 83, 'Tätigkeitsbericht des Propstes zu Halberstadt und zu Quedlinburg für das Jahr 1948', 8/4/49.

²⁸⁸ *Die evangelische Kirche nach dem Zusammenbruch*, 143.

²⁸⁹ *KJ*, 1951, 383.

²⁹⁰ See, in general: T. Luckmann, *The Invisible Religion* (London: Macmillan, 1967), esp. 95ff; D. Pollack/G. Pickel, 'Religious Individualization or Secularization. An Attempt to Evaluate the Thesis of Religious Individualization in Eastern and Western Germany', in D. Pollack/D.V.A. Olson (ed.), *The Role of Religion in Modern Societies* (New York, 2008), 191-220. Wolfhart Beck (387) notes this also in Westphalia.

Waldmann, wrote two articles that lamented the prevalence of this ‘personal’ religion. In March 1947, he criticised the readership who simply read the newspaper and did not act. He gave an example of one who received *Glaube und Heimat* but ignored calls to donate money to Hilfswerk.²⁹¹ Waldmann also began a front-page article on 11 July 1948 with a statement of astonishment, and perhaps vexation, at the number of people who maintained that they were Christians, even many who had left the church. Such people prayed but began the Lord’s prayer with the fourth petition: ‘Unser täglich Brot gib uns heute.’ Waldmann was exasperated at others who gave a little money here and there, but remained largely passive, looking only to their own interests and having no genuine desire to see the Kingdom of God on earth. There was a perceived danger in that this ‘Privatchristentum’ could boil down to a ‘schwärmerische religiöse Liebhaberei’.²⁹² One youth in the post-war period professed a form of this individual religion. Herr J. (1931) noted that he seldom attended church after his confirmation in 1946, and he switched from the *Junge Gemeinde* to the FDJ the following year. He summed up his attitude in the following way:

Selbst hatte ich damals schon eine Freie [sic] Auffassung dem Inhalt der Bibel. So beschäftigte ich mich mit der Evolution. Ich glaubte an Gott, der jedoch nicht faßbar ist. Im Glauben bin ich so, wie Einstein und Goethe den Glauben hatten.

He did in any case go to church to celebrate special occasions such as Easter and Christmas.²⁹³ In some cases, as the Protestant Yearbook for 1951 noted, it seems that such ‘private religion’ was a consequence of the restraints placed upon church life during the war when faith was cultivated more within oneself rather than in the

²⁹¹ *GuH*, 2/11, 16/3/47, ‘Ich lese “Glaube und Heimat”, das genügt mir’, Pfr. Waldmann, 2.

²⁹² *GuH*, 3/28, 11/7/48, ‘Privatchristentum?’, Pfr. Waldmann, 1.

²⁹³ Questionnaire from Herr Werner J., Leimbach, 1931.

community of active church life.²⁹⁴ Another author in *Glaube und Heimat* pontificated that faith was developed only within church walls, despite the claim of many that they maintain faith regardless of attending services. The author observed that a typical comment was: ‘Ich habe meine 10 Gebote, ich kenne noch meine biblischen Geschichten und Gesangbuchlieder. Damit komme ich aus. Mehr brauche ich nicht wissen. Mir genügt mein einfacher Glaube!’²⁹⁵ The pastor at Bad Klosterlausnitz in Thuringia explained the poor attendance in his services with a popular lack of understanding for the importance of services: they had become irrelevant to everyday life.²⁹⁶ In the Friedrichslohra parish, 98 percent of Protestants did not attend chapel. The priest referred to many of these people as godless; others reportedly cultivated a private religion that suited them.²⁹⁷

Once the SED officially took power in October 1949, church membership greatly declined. In 1949, 80.5 percent of the population were members of the Protestant Church and 11 percent members of the Catholic Church. In 1964, 60 percent belonged to the Protestant Church and eight percent to the Catholic Church. By 1989, less than 25 percent of the population were Protestant and around five percent were Catholic.²⁹⁸ Sociologists of religion posit two primary explanations for this decline: a general worldwide process of secularisation pursuant to modernity, combined with the oppressive *Religionspolitik* of the SED dictatorship.²⁹⁹ The first of these explanations

²⁹⁴ *KJ*, 1951, 337.

²⁹⁵ *GuH*, 2/7, 16/2/47, ‘Glaube und Gottesdienst’, Dr. Deter (Gera-Untermhaus), 1.

²⁹⁶ *AEKE*, Bürgel I: 27.1.1941 zum 14.12.1951, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht des Ev. Pfarramtes Bad Klosterlausnitz für das Jahr 1947’, 29/7/48.

²⁹⁷ *BEA*, BGVP bzw. Fulda, ‘Rudolf Kirchner (Friedrichslohra), am Feste der Hl. Familie 1947’.

²⁹⁸ Pollack, *Kirche in der Organisationsgesellschaft*, 271.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 271-3; Dähn, *Konfrontation oder Kooperation?*, 86, 200. Regarding SED policy, see: K.-F. Daiber, ‘Kirche und religiöse Gemeinschaften in der DDR’, in F.-X. Kaufmann/B. Schäfer (ed.), *Religion, Kirchen und Gesellschaft in Deutschland* (Opladen, 1988), 80; Neubert, 39-40; Büscher, 423.

provides that secularisation was (and is) inevitable with the onset and progress of modernity.³⁰⁰ It was (and is) a long-term process, and it is difficult to make any significant contribution here following evidence solely originating from the period 1945-9. In fact, secularisation *in toto* largely remains elusive to any definitive chronological boundaries.³⁰¹ Yet, it appears that the origins of the drop in church membership in the DDR had much to do with the immediate post-war conditions. What is interesting is that the social power vacuum created by the fall of the Third Reich created first a spike in religious interest in the institutional Churches and then an enduring decline. Although secularisation in Germany and East Germany may have followed modernisation, the model itself is perhaps a little too mechanistic.³⁰² Few, if any, would argue that East Germany was more ‘modern’ than West Germany for example. Decidedly non-modern conditions – such as food rationing, inadequate logistics and localised life – persisted throughout the late-1940s and early 1950s as church popularity waned. However, the post-war situation had, in fact, certain effects on society that mimicked those of ‘modernisation’. East German society became, in places where supplies were limited, a special kind of ‘consumer society’ in which the procurement (not necessarily buying) of goods and services was the most important social and economic activity. Life, cast against this background, incurred a degree of splintering (society shared few binding values in common), and the Churches’ message received little echo.

³⁰⁰ B. Wilson, *Religion in Sociological Perspective* (Oxford, 1982), 80. See, also, in general: S. Bruce, *God is Dead: Secularization in the West* (Oxford, 2002).

³⁰¹ See, for instance, A. Iseli/P. Kissling, ‘Säkularisierung – Der schwierige Umgang mit einem grossen Begriff. Ein Diskussionsbericht’, in P. Blickle/R. Schlögl (ed.), *Die Säkularisation im Prozess der Säkularisierung Europas* (Epfendorf, 2005), 564ff.

³⁰² In 1949, over 90 percent of the population were church members in West Germany. By 2000, church membership was at 80 percent in the former West Germany. So, as Pollack writes: ‘in the space of 50 years the share of people not belonging to either church increased more than three times in the West and about ten times in the East.’ The same trends are apparent in terms of the number of people leaving the church and frequency of church attendance: Pollack/Pickel, 200.

Modernisation notwithstanding, it seems that adverse political conditions further discouraged church membership – even attacking religious individualisation – and eventually led to outright secularism.³⁰³ As difficult economic conditions persisted and the SED persecution of the Churches enveloped the DDR from the early 1950s, greater numbers of people formally left the Churches, often on the basis of expediency: to avoid church taxes and/or state victimisation.³⁰⁴ As we shall see further below, widespread passivity and a refusal to engage in self-sacrifice tolled the death knell for the Protestant Church’s visions of a ‘re-Christianised’ society. An article in *Glaube und Heimat* from November 1948 was prophetic in this sense. The author lamented the ‘inaction, sleepiness and short-sightedness’ of many people who did not feel responsible for the Kingdom of God, becoming indifferent to the growing power of the ‘Anti-Christians’ (Antichristen) as had been the case after 1933.³⁰⁵ While many people may not have rejected religious faith outright, they certainly did not embody what the Protestant Church, in this example, desired from ‘true believers’. As the Churches struggled to attract parishioners to church services and increasingly lost relevance, it is no surprise that state persecution was often the keen instrument of ultimate severance.

³⁰³ Ibid., 207.

³⁰⁴ Cf. on taxes: *KJ*, 1951, 385.

³⁰⁵ *GuH*, 3/46, 14/11/48, ‘Was beunruhigt mich am meisten?’, 2.

Chapter 4:

The Churches and the Christian ethic in the post-war world: 'dissolution', refugees and the faithful

Es liegt in der inneren Logik der Dinge, dass nur in der radikalen Abkehr von Religionslosigkeit und Materialismus ein Wiederaufbau unserer zerstörten Kultur möglich ist.¹

As one KPS pastor wrote to Minister President Hübener in November 1945, there was another thrust to the project of 're-Christianisation': the necessity of a moral renewal of German society according to Christian values.² There were two points to the Churches' moral imperatives. Firstly, clergymen inveighed against the dissolution that they saw in society. The state authorities thought in the same terms and even recruited the Churches and the Ten Commandments to combat theft in particular. Secondly, churchmen sought to persuade parishioners to bear 'Christian neighbourly love' (christliche Nächstenliebe) toward refugees beyond church walls into everyday life. The integration of the newcomers was all-important to the Churches, just as it was to the secular authorities. This was, however, no small task: millions of ethnic Germans had flooded into Central Germany before the advance of the Red Army from autumn 1944.³ In Thuringia, the number of refugees on 29 October 1946 was 607,390; in Saxony-Anhalt, approximately 765,000 refugees.⁴

¹ *LA Magd.* –LHA – K 10 MVb, 2237, Pfr. S. to Hübener, 9/11/45.

² See: Ziemann, 2; Löhr, 26ff.

³ R.-D. Müller/G.R. Ueberschär, *Kriegsende 1945. Die Zerstörung des Deutschen Reiches* (Frankfurt am Main, 1994), 114.

⁴ *KH*, 1944-51, 205; *BFA*, BGVF, Kirche in der DDR 'Grundsätzliches' 1946-1959, 'Bericht über die religiöse und politische Lage in Thüringen, speziell im Eichsfeld', 14/8/46. M. Wille, 'Compelling the Assimilation of Expellees in the Soviet Zone of Occupation and the GDR', in P. Ther/A. Siljak (ed.),

While the Churches attempted to exert social control over the population with pleas to love and strictures to desist, they castigated the broad absence of a Christian ethic and their recourse to moralising did not bring about the desired change. Native Germans encountered refugees in their fields, their towns and even their homes, but church calls for ‘christliche Nächstenliebe’ were not broadly acted upon. Why, then, did most people not respond to the entreaties of the Churches and carry their faith beyond church walls? As we have seen in the previous chapter, the harsh existential conditions had much to do with the alienation of people from church services. Empty pews of course diminished the resonance of the Christian gospel throughout society, though the church community itself was sometimes stale. These congregations, led by a small often-superannuated core, were largely not receptive to the message of social engagement. The divide between the churchman and the community was significant in many places as parishioners chose not to act in the way prescribed by the Churches. One final question begs an answer: were there any ‘true believers’ who brought their faith to bear in everyday life? Reports widely identify women as the heart of the community, and in many places Protestant Frauenhilfe groups were formed to offer solidarity to females and to the wider community. These were metaphorical ‘Trümmerfrauen’ – women who sustained and enlivened chapel life. The church authorities recognised the importance of women, and their contribution led to a liberalisation of gender roles in some places. The Churches also endowed aid organisations with all available resources. One of these was the Train Station Mission (Bahnhofsmission), which entailed volunteers greeting and helping refugees as they arrived in Germany. The women in Frauenhilfe and volunteers in the

Redrawing Nations: Ethnic Cleansing in East-Central Europe, 1944-1948 (Oxford, 2001), 264-70. Torsten Mehlhase calculates a total of 1,161,734 refugees in Saxony-Anhalt as of 1 November 1946: *Flüchtlinge und Vertriebene*, Anlage 40.

Bahnhofsmission most fully encapsulate the heart of church community in the post-war period because they externalised the Christian gospel through giving and self-sacrifice.

Lastly, an enormous amount of ink has been expended on refugees in post-war Germany especially. In the East, most research focuses on the integration of the refugees with attention to the policies of the secular authorities, the role of the newcomers in employment, and the Land Reform.⁵ The present investigation touches on some of these issues, though it is primarily focussed on exploring church social influence, about which there is little discussion. There is, similarly, little literature on the Churches' moral claims at the grassroots, on Frauenhilfe or the Bahnhofsmission.⁶

Post-war 'dissolution'

There was significant insecurity throughout Germany after the war, especially in 1945.⁷ Soviet excesses, ironically, often undermined local law and order with their criminality.⁸ As the mayor of Dessau reported in December 1945, German women rarely ventured outside their homes, especially between the hours of 1800 and 2000,

⁵ For good overviews, see: Connor, *Refugees and Expellees*, 2-4; J. Pilvousek, 'Katholische Flüchtlinge und Vertriebene in der SBZ/DDR. Eine Bestandsaufnahme', in R. Bendel (ed.), *Vertriebene finden Heimat in der Kirche* (Böhlau, 2008), 15-27.

⁶ On morality (primarily in West Germany), see: Herzog, *Sex after Fascism*; A. Grossmann, *Reforming Sex. The German movement for Birth Control and Abortion Reform, 1920-1950* (Oxford, 1995). On Frauenhilfe and the Bahnhofsmission, see: B. von Miquel, *Evangelische Frauen im Dritten Reich. Die Westfälische Frauenhilfe 1933-1950* (Bielefeld, 2006); C. Busch (ed.), *100 Jahre Evangelische Frauenhilfe in Deutschland: Einblicke in ihre Geschichte* (Düsseldorf, 1999); B. Nikles, *Soziale Hilfe am Bahnhof: zur Geschichte der Bahnhofsmission in Deutschland, 1894-1960* (Freiburg, 1994); W.-D. Talkenberger, *Nächstenliebe am Bahnhof: zur Geschichte der Bahnhofsmission in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone (SBZ) und der DDR* (Berlin 2003).

⁷ See, in general: Bessel, *Germany 1945*.

⁸ See above, p. 169.

when drunken Red Army personnel were often about. Soviet soldiers had dragged a number of women into the city ruins and raped them. In one instance, occupation troops gang-raped two elderly women and beat up passers-by.⁹ Popular contempt was imputed to the local police, which inspired little faith, especially given its widespread lack of effectiveness.¹⁰ In March 1948, for example, three men and two women were apprehended for 41 burglaries in the districts of Sangerhausen and Eckartsberga. The crew had specialised in cellar break-ins and the theft of cattle, and the police lamented that its investigation had suffered from insufficient vehicles and petrol.¹¹ Set against the widespread lack of law and order, both the religious and secular authorities publicly railed against the ‘dissolution’ and criminality they found in post-war Germany.

For the Churches, ‘dissolution’ was manifested in alleged impiety and licentious behaviour.¹² Immediately after the war, the Catholic priest at Lenterode remarked that secularism was apparent in lawlessness and anarchy.¹³ A clergyman from the East, writing to his former flock, cited the lament of the faithful who observed ‘godlessness’ throughout broad sections of society.¹⁴ One contributor to *Glaube und Heimat* regretted there were many ‘powers of destruction’ at work in German public life and complained of the widespread ‘moral morass’ reflected in the black market,

⁹ Ibid., OBM Zerbst to BP Dessau, 27/12/45.

¹⁰ See, for example: *ibid.*, ‘Stimmungsbericht’, Landpolizeimeister (Lindau), 27/11/45; *LHASA*, DE, KV KÖT, Nr. 82, LR Bernburg to BP Dessau, 27/12/45. See also Naimark, *The Russians in Germany*, 355.

¹¹ *LHASA*, MER, Kreisverwaltung Sangerhausen, nr. 96, KR Sangerhausen to LNA Halle/Saale, 20/3/48.

¹² Cf. Vollnhals, ‘Die evangelische Kirche zwischen Traditionswahrung und Neuorientierung’, 151ff. Grossmann, 191ff; Herzog, 66, 72ff.

¹³ *Kriegsende*, 282-4.

¹⁴ *BAM*, Geschichte des Kommissariates: Seelsorge (Komm.) allgemeine Lage, 1945-1947, ‘Seelsorgsbrief an meine Pfarrkinder. Vetschau, den 22. Februar 1946’, Pfr. K., undated.

‘egoism’ and ‘hard-heartedness’.¹⁵ The Protestant Yearbook in 1950 ironically stated that all regions in Germany after 1945 struggled with a considerable rise in ‘crimes and offences against morality’ in comparison to the war years.¹⁶ One Catholic report on returning prisoners of war bemoaned that the two major themes of conversation amongst men were eating and drinking and women.¹⁷ A priest noted a ‘heathen spirit’, a pursuit of pleasure that burdened the lives of Catholics at Leutenberg, while another Catholic report observed a decidedly ‘sexual atmosphere’ in the public sphere.¹⁸ Churchmen with conservative mores, however, had long decried declining public morality in Germany. In the *Kaiserreich*, a number of prominent clergymen and even women railed against so-called ‘asocials’ and increasing moral degeneracy. For example, Adolf Stoecker, a Protestant pastor and founder of the Christian Social Workers Party in 1878, was a vitriolic anti-Semite and critic of Socialism who propagated the corruption of ‘German morality’ in the late nineteenth century.¹⁹ Churchmen also castigated the rise of ‘immorality’ after World War I. The religious discourse on pervasive dissolution after World War II, then, was consistent with the

¹⁵ *GuH*, 2/18, 4/5/47, ‘Nichts besonderes’, 3.

¹⁶ *KJ*, 1945-1948, 481.

¹⁷ *BEA*, 3 III, Erfurt, St. Marien, Propststeipfarrkirche, 1942-1959, Gottesdienst und Seelsorge, ‘Seelsorge an den Männern, besonders an den heimkehrenden Soldaten’, undated. In the Protestant Church: *GuH*, 2/15, 13/4/47, ‘Hier spricht die Gemeinde – Bleibe deiner Kirche treu!’, H. Lorenz (Tabarz), 4.

¹⁸ *BEA*, BGVP bzw. Fulda, ‘Frühjahrsbericht 1947’, Leutenberg, 14/6/47.

¹⁹ A. Lees, *Cities, Sin and Social Reform in Imperial Germany* (Ann Arbor, 2002), 75-119; F. Mybes, ‘Die Anfänge der Evangelischen Frauenhilfe. Die Jahre 1899 bis 1932’, in *100 Jahre Evangelische Frauenhilfe in Deutschland*, 9-10; I. Lisberg-Haag, ‘“Die Unzucht – das Grab der Völker”’, in U. Röper/C. Jüllig (ed.), *Die Macht der Nächstenliebe. Einhundertfünfzig Jahre Innere Mission und Diakonie 1848-1998* (Berlin, 1998), 130-7.

past. What had disappeared almost entirely, however, was the anti-Semitism that had featured in *Kaiserreich* and post-World War I church colloquies.²⁰

Yet the Churches were not alone in their censures after 1945: the secular authorities too lamented ‘immorality’ amongst the general population.²¹ A doctor reported on the medical situation of the province of Saxony in 1946 and noted that there was a popular lack of interest in world happenings and life in general. He believed that this was reflected through a marked increase in sexually transmitted diseases, which represented ‘the social and moral decline into depravity’.²² Those people infected by a sexually transmitted disease were, in fact, listed in police reports on local criminality alongside thieves, burglars, rapists and murderers.²³ The police therefore sought to limit the movements of, to discredit, or to isolate the allegedly sexually promiscuous in the interests of the ‘public good’. In August 1946, for example, the police office in Quellendorf (Saxony-Anhalt) admitted 13 women between the years of 15 and 51 to hospital.²⁴ A police report from Dobritz in Saxony-Anhalt alleged that a refugee woman in Bärenthoren received Soviet soldiers in her house day and night. Her husband had not yet returned from captivity, and she had four children and no income. The report recommended that the children should be taken from this ‘unhealthy’ environment, and the woman placed in a work camp; this outcome would, furthermore, be of ‘great advantage’ to the people of Bärenthoren: Soviet soldiers

²⁰ Liedhegener, 469; Herzog, 3; Grossmann, 191.

²¹ Ibid., 192-3. In Thuringia: *BArch*, DO 1, 25033, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht für das Jahr 1947’, Volkspolizei Thüringen.

²² *BAM*, CDU: 1945-1949; 1953-1978, ‘Die Gesundheitslage in der Provinz Sachsen’, Dr. Busch, 1946.

²³ See for example: *LHASA*, DE, KV KÖT, Nr. 112, Kriminalkreisorts Polizeibehörde, Kreis Zerbst, Roßlau, Coswig, 30/10/45; 30/11/45.

²⁴ *LHASA*, DE, KV KÖT, Nr. 27, Landpolizei-posten Quellendorf, 19/8/46.

would then stop visiting the town.²⁵ Lastly, a photographer formerly apprehended by the Gestapo and sent to Buchenwald on the charge of undermining public morale was dragged before court on the charge of ‘economic sabotage’ in December 1945. In an effort to discredit him, the courts raised previous allegations of his promiscuity.²⁶ It was a question of authority for both the religious and secular establishments: as shown above in chapter three, while both often conflated apathy (or nihilism in the church lexicon) with hedonism, this implied an absence of effective social control.

The Churches’ response to the apparent ‘moral disintegration’ was to identify it with sin and then to proceed against it with an emphasis on the person of Jesus Christ and the Christian morality represented by the biblical Decalogue. One pastor understood the ‘dissolution’ in his district as a misguided longing for peace and justice, which could only be found in the Christian gospel.²⁷ According to Otto Dibelius, Jesus Christ was the redeemer, and hope for the future was founded on whether people accepted him. There was no hope for those who languished in ‘immorality’.²⁸ In a pastoral letter to communities within his jurisdiction, the Archbishop of Paderborn submitted that the widespread descent into ‘profligacy’ rendered a man impoverished: he did not possess the hope that came from faith in Jesus Christ.²⁹ The Churches also placed a particular emphasis on the Ten Commandments. After the war and the fall of the pro-Nazi German Christians (with their de-judaised ‘Botschaft Gottes’), the Old

²⁵ *LHASA*, DE, KV ZE, Nr. 113, Landespolizeiposten Dobritz to Landespolizeiamt Lindau, 20/5/46.

²⁶ *LHASA*, DE, KV ZE, Nr. 112, LR (Zerbst) to Staatsanwaltschaft, 13/10/45, 27/10/45; *ibid.*, Geschäftsstelle des Kreisgerichts (Roßlau), 3/12/45.

²⁷ *AEKE*, Graitschen I: 1.2.1946-28.12.1949, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht Graitschen (11/10/47-31/3/48)’, undated.

²⁸ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 469, 3879, Pressedienst Provinz Sachsen, Nr. 24 vom 23. Okt. 1946.

²⁹ *BAM*, Paderborn: Erzbischof – Korrespondenz – 1945-1955, ‘Hirtenwort des Hochwürdigsten Herrn Erzbischofs an die Katholiken des Erzbischöflichen Kommissariates Magdeburg’, Passionssonntag 1946.

Testament returned to prominence, at least in official church pronouncements. The author of a KPS circular in 1945 on the Christian responsibilities of the church community noted the absolute relevance of the Decalogue in all areas of life. He claimed that, rather than simply being theories to which nobody listened, the commandments were intended to be practical. The sixth through ninth commandments were particularly relevant to contemporary life and must be observed day-to-day.³¹ In March 1948, a text on ‘Christian responsibility in public life’, authored by a pastor from Brohna near Dresden, appeared in a circular sent to all districts in the KPS. It encapsulated the practical theology of the ‘Christian life’. The Ten Commandments were presented as *the* ‘order’ for human life, not only for the pious. They were a claim on the whole person, not just religious sensibilities. There were no ‘volunteers’ in the moral life, as all people were subject to the law of God. There was to be an ‘ethic of duty’ that would supplant naked ‘expediency’ (Zweckethik).³²

Secular and religious law even collaborated in the fight against ‘immorality’. In September 1945, Dr. Wagner wrote a memorandum for the Saxon-Anhalt Minister President in which he posited that religion was the ‘best guarantee for public morality’ (Volkssittlichkeit). He recommended that children must, at least, learn the Ten Commandments.³³ Though Wagner was a religious socialist, he was not the only state official who wished for the Churches’ collaboration in the interests of ‘public morality’. The exasperated cabinet of the Minister President resolved to have the Churches preach against theft from the pulpit. Kunisch wrote to church hierarchs in

³¹ AKPS, B1, 13, ‘In der Kirchengemeinde. Die Verantwortung für Stadt, Kreis’, Propstei Kurkreis, 29/7/45.

³² LHASA, MAG, K2, 810, 215, KL to Sups., 2/3/48.

³³ LA Magd. – LKA – K 10, MVb, Nr. 2237, Memorandum, Wagner, 7/9/45.

Saxony-Anhalt on 30 October 1947, urging clergy to prevail upon the collective and individual conscience in order to muster support against food and coal thieves.³⁴ The KPS subsequently ordered a sermon on the seventh commandment ('Thou shalt not steal') in all parishes sometime between the ninth and thirteenth Sundays after Trinity 1948. The church leadership also recommended more focussed pastoral care, instruction and sermons to the point of 'sharpening the conscience' and strengthening faith in the face of temptation.³⁵ In April 1948, again, the Saxon-Anhalt government called upon the Churches to help counteract 'demoralisation' manifested in instances of theft.³⁶

'Immorality' was apparently not just religious or communist rhetoric.³⁷ One witness (1923), who had sought out the church for its consolations after his expulsion from the Sudetenland in 1945, quoted a line from Berthold Brecht's 'Ballade über die Frage: Wovon lebt der Mensch?': 'Erst kommt das Fressen, dann kommt die Moral.' He noted that many young people did what they pleased. The post-war period was, in essence, a time of 'carnival' that inverted traditional norms and obviated peacetime social etiquette.³⁸ The reminisces of another eyewitness exemplify this idea well. Herr A. was born in Silesia in 1922 and was educated as an engineer with Junkers before the war. He served in the Luftwaffe as a mechanic from the outbreak of hostilities in 1939 and was taken prisoner by the Americans on 8 May 1945 in the modern-day Czech Republic. After 11 days the Americans withdrew and handed their prisoners,

³⁴ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 810, 215, Kunisch to Kons., 3/11/47.

³⁵ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 810, 215, KL to Superintendents, 22/11/47.

³⁶ *BAM*, Staatliche Behörden: Regierungsverordnungen 1946-1951, Landesregierung Sachsen-Anhalt to Churches and Volkssolidarität, 16/4/48.

³⁷ A court report (Meinsdorf) from December 1945 noted that where refugees were accommodated, 'Diebstähle...sind in Geflügel an der Tagesordnung': *LHASA*, DE, KV KÖT, Nr. 112, 'Stimmungsbericht', Geschäftsstelle des Kreisgerichts (Meinsdorf), 10/12/45. See, in general: *BArch*, DO 1, 25371, 25374-5.

³⁸ Questionnaire from Herr Kurt F., Köthen, 1923.

including Herr A., over to the Red Army. Herr A. was released on the grounds of ill health (tuberculosis) in early 1946. Unable to return to Silesia, he joined his brother in the almost totally destroyed city of Halberstadt, Saxony-Anhalt. Amongst the desolation, survival took precedence:

So... und... ja... das war eine, eigentlich eine, eine recht böse Zeit... Also, die Hauptsorge war: wie komme ich gut unter, woher bekomme ich Brennmaterial um zu heizen und was habe ich ... was bekomme ich zu essen, woher bekomme ich etwas, nicht? Das war das Hauptproblem. Also ich erzähl' Ihnen einmal, wie wir das damit umgegangen sind. Ich bringe die Familie mitten mit noch zwei Kinder, die waren – warten Sie mal – die waren 12 und 13 Jahre alt. Also ich bin nicht jede Nacht, aber eben sehr ruhig erstmal, Kohlen klauen gegangen ... zum ... in Richtung Bahnhof, dort wo Lokomotiven standen oder sonst irgendwie, ... das war natürlich alles bewacht und man durfte sich nicht erwischen lassen. Also man musste sehen wie man an Brennmaterial herankam, und das andere war genauso Lebensmittel. Kartoffeln von den Feldern holen, Rüben, Kraut irgendwo. Also ich habe fast alles gestohlen was man eben so, und so haben das alle anderen auch gemacht. Das war, das war die Situation in diesen Jahren.³⁹

At a higher level, Provost Neumann in Kemberg bemoaned the almost incessant theft of food and wood as flagrant contraventions of the biblical ethic. Presenting the viewpoint of his community, he wrote to the Minister President of the church concerns. The blatant contempt of God's commands, especially the seventh, was particularly infuriating for him. He sought to enlist the state's help with all means possible as, with ostensible hyperbole, he lamented that theft caused greater damage and caused more suffering than the war.⁴⁰ He could see the population slipping away from the Church's ideal morality. As churchmen recognised, God's commands had no resonance in and of themselves, and perpetrators only desisted where there was a realistic threat of punishment. In December 1947, a pastor in Halle expressed it in these terms:

³⁹ Interview with Herr Stefan A., Quedlinburg (Catholic), 1922, 28/3/2008.

⁴⁰ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 200, 769b, Probst Neumann to MP, 15/5/47.

Die göttliche Gebote gelten als solche nicht, die sta[a]tlichen nur insoweit, als sie sich Angst vor Strafe verschaffen können. Oberster Grundsatz des Hand[e]lns ist weithin[:] ‘es ist alles erlaubt, man darf sich nur nicht erwischen lassen oder man muss dann Beziehungen haben, um das Schlimmste abzuwenden.’⁴¹

It seems that the strictures of the church to adjust behaviours had little effect on parishioners, let alone the population at large.

Both the Churches and the German communists attempted to harness the population with the same means (law) and with similar language. Both sought to bring social order and morality to the populace in order to unite the population and establish the hegemony of their respective worldviews. They were, however, severely disadvantaged in this ambition. The greatest problem was that, whatever was the underlying reality of the religious and secular claims of immorality and criminality (or their extent), both authorities created an ‘immoral’ or criminalising environment. In the Churches, the moral absolutism of the Decalogue provided society with an acute sense of personal sinfulness: everyone was guilty. Clergymen therefore demanded repentance that could often only come with self-denial. As we shall see below, few, nonetheless, were willing to admit personal guilt and few were willing to make personal sacrifices for the sake of others. For the secular authorities, the criminalisation of public life is perhaps best exemplified in the area of ‘economic crimes’.⁴² The black market was, by all accounts, rampant in the post-war period; even receiving fruit and/or vegetables from friends and family was a crime. As a

⁴¹ *AKPS*, B1, 189, Pfr. K. (Halle) to Stadtsuperintendent (Oberkonsistorialrat) Hein, 1/12/47.

⁴² For example: *LHASA*, DE, KV KÖT, Nr. 82, LR Zerst to BP Dessau, 24/12/45; *LHASA*, MER, Kreisverwaltung Sangerhausen, nr. 96, KR Sangerhausen to LNA Halle/Saale, 10/1/48, 25/2/48, 4/3/48; *BArch*, DO 1, 25371, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht der Kriminalpolizei f.d. Monat Januar 1948’. In general, *BArch*, DO 1, 25274.

report from the Merseburg Information Office remarked, few people were aware that this was wrong.⁴³

The Churches, native Germans and refugees

The failure of the Churches (and the state authorities) to assert social control over the population at large is further shown by interactions between native Germans and refugees. The struggles and deprivations of refugees forced into the western and eastern zones were often severe and traumatic.⁴⁴ The senior pastor in Zeulenroda reported on the situation of many (religious) refugees in the following way:

Kein späterer Leser dieses Berichtes kann sich einen Begriff davon machen, wie bitter dieser Kampf ums Brot war. Keiner kann sich vor allem die jammervolle Not der Umsiedler vorstellen, die zu uns kamen. Was haben die Glieder unserer Kirchgemeinde, von denen in Vorstehenden überall die Rede war, die Kinder zur Taufe brachten, ihre Toten begruben, die unsere Gottesdienste besuchten, was haben die Eltern der Christenlehre-Kinder und der Konfirmanden, was haben sie alle gehungert und gefroren, gebangt und geseufzt und gelitten an Leib und Seele nicht monatelang, sondern nun schon Jahre hindurch!⁴⁵

The influx of newcomers was a serious social concern for both the Catholic and Protestant Churches, and their integration with native Thuringians and Saxons was perhaps the most important social issue in the post-war period. The Thuringian Landeskommision für Neubürger realised that only the cooperation of the entire

⁴³ Ibid., Merseburg Nachrichtenamt to LR Drese, 11/10/48.

⁴⁴ See Fenwick, 128ff. Also, in general: *Dokumentation der Vertreibung der Deutschen aus Ost-Mitteleuropa. Bd. I: Die Vertreibung der deutschen Bevölkerung aus den Gebieten östlich der Oder-Neisse*, ed. T. Schieder (Groß Denkte, 1954-61); *Die Vertriebenen in der SBZ/DDR. Dokumente*, 3 Vols., ed. M. Wille (Wiesbaden, 1996-2003).

⁴⁵ AEKZ, 'Chronik der evang.-luth. Kirchgemeinde Zeulenroda, 1944-1946', 27/2/47.

population could achieve success.⁴⁶ Just as the Churches understood the importance of refugees' souls for individual salvation and, broadly speaking, 're-Christianisation', the secular authorities endeavoured to fulfil the basic needs of the refugees in order to stabilise government and ultimately mobilise the newcomers for political activity.⁴⁷

The Churches therefore appealed to parishioners to welcome the newcomers. The Thuringian church, for instance, ran a number of articles in *Glaube und Heimat* encouraging integration and mutual respect between native Germans and refugees. 'Einheimische und Evakuierte' in February 1948 advocated an understanding that, despite different church traditions, would forge 'kein Nebeneinander, sondern ein Miteinander und Füreinander'.⁴⁸ Contributors also exhorted readers not merely to believe in God, but to *act* as Christians. This meant lending practical help and

⁴⁶ *LKAE*, A750/IV, 166, 'Sitzung der Landeskommission für Neubürger am 20. März 1948 in Weimar', undated. See also: *LKAE*, A593/I, Beirat des Kirchendienstes Ost to the LKR, 11/2/47; *ThHStAW*, 649, Ministerium für allgemeine Verwaltung, Amt für Neubürger, 'Jahresbericht 1946', 30/12/46. The official term 'Umsiedler' was coined in October 1945: P. Ther, 'Expellee Policy in the Soviet-occupied Zone and the GDR: 1945-1953', in D. Rock/S. Wolff (ed.), *Coming Home to Germany. The Integration of Ethnic Germans from Central and Eastern Europe in the Federal Republic* (New York, 2002), 60.

⁴⁷ See, for example: T. Mehlhase, 'Die SED und die Vertriebenen. Versuche der politischen Einflußnahme und der "Umziehung" in den ersten Nachkriegsjahren in Sachsen-Anhalt', in M. Wille/J. Hoffmann/W. Meinicke (ed.), *Sie hatten alles verloren: Flüchtlinge und Vertriebene in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands* (Wiesbaden, 1993), 159-77; J. Hoffmann/M. Wille/W. Meinicke, 'Flüchtlinge und Vertriebene im Spannungsfeld der SBZ-Nachkriegspolitik', in *Sie hatten alles verloren*, 12-26. For a history of SVAG and state government policies toward the refugees, see: Ther, 'Expellee Policy', 56-76; Schwartz, 625-1116; M. Wille, 'SED und "Umsiedler" – Vertriebenenpolitik der Einheitspartei im ersten Nachkriegsjahrzehnt', in D. Hoffmann/M. Schwartz (ed.), *Geglückte Integration? Spezifika und Vergleichbarkeiten der Vertriebenen-Eingliederung in der SBZ/DDR* (Munich, 1999), 91-104. Despite official collaboration between the Churches' aid organisations and the secular Volkssolidarität, there was an attempt to replace the Bahnhofsmision in Thuringia in 1946. The Churches were, of course, outraged, and the attempt described as reminiscent of 'the course of events after 1933' and an 'intolerable attack' on the Christian Church: *ThHStAW*, BMP, 79/866/22-23, Freusberg and Pfr. M. (KPS) to MP (Thuringia), 5/10/46. There were greater pressures from 1947: Schwartz, 546-51; Brennan, 228-71; W. Tischner, 'Wohlfahrtspflege zwischen den Diktaturen: Caritas, Innere Mission und Volkssolidarität in SBZ und früher DDR', in *Diktaturdurchsetzung in Sachsen*, 364-9.

⁴⁸ *GuH*, 3/5, 1/2/48, 'Einheimische und Evakuierte', Lange (Schmölln), 3. See, in general: Tischner, *Katholische Kirche*, 57.

encouragement to the *Umsiedler*.⁴⁹ In a similar vein, the KPS called upon congregations to give sacrificially. The church desired the transformation of ‘externally correct religiosity’ into a conscious everyday faith.⁵⁰ Another churchman expounded that God had a claim on all experiential spheres of each individual, and there ought not to be any compartmentalisation of life. A Christian ought to dedicate everything to Jesus Christ, and this meant showing Christian love in every situation, everyday.⁵¹ A Hilfswerk report maintained that a key task was the triggering of ‘Christian love and readiness to self-sacrifice’ throughout Saxony-Anhalt. The organisation enjoined parishioners to offer food, medicine, clothes and other help where possible.⁵² The importance of this message was not lost on some pastors. The clergyman at Allstedt understood that the healthy continuation of chapel life was dependent on overcoming existing tensions between local Thuringians and refugees.⁵³ A pastor at Zeitz in Anhalt sought to create a harmonious equilibrium between native Saxons and the *Umsiedler*.⁵⁴

In the Catholic Church, deacons in the Magdeburg Commissariat agreed a moral imperative to mobilise individual Christians and communities in the service of love (*Liebestätigkeit*) at a meeting in 1945. This was the greatest commandment of Jesus Christ, and the directive was incumbent upon all native Saxons.⁵⁵ Missionary activity throughout the Commissariat accordingly sought, amongst other objectives, to inspire

⁴⁹ *GuH*, 2/8, 23/2/47, ‘Nochmals ein offenes Wort an unsere Thüringer Landsleute’, 1.

⁵⁰ *AKPS*, B1, 189, Pfr. K. (Halle) to Stadtsuperintendent (Oberkonsistorialrat) Hein, 1/12/47.

⁵¹ *AKPS*, B1, 18, ‘Bericht über die kirchliche Lage im Kirchenkreis Magdeburg’, 27/8/46.

⁵² *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 469, 3881, ‘Bericht über die Hilfswerkarbeit’, undated (probably late 1948/early 1949).

⁵³ *LKAE*, A750/IV, 147-148, Pfr. (Allstedt/Helme) to LKR, 23/5/1947.

⁵⁴ *AKPS*, B1, 189, Pfr. (Zeitz) to Müller, 27/11/47.

⁵⁵ *BAM*, Dechanten: Allgemein, 1945-1972, ‘Dechantenkonferenz in Magdeburg am 28.8.45’.

and to strengthen a faith that would lead to manifest sacrificial love. The goal was that refugees would not merely feel as guests, but rather would be fully empowered and valid members of the church community. Gradual change was critical to encouraging ‘ausgleichende Befruchtung und gegenseitige Bereicherung’.⁵⁶

Both Churches introduced a number of initiatives to welcome refugees.⁵⁷ Talks, for example, sought to increase knowledge and encourage congregations to have concern for the plight of the new arrivals. Presentations in the Magdeburg Commissariat spoke to themes including: the ‘seelische Erlebnis’ of the refugees, the ‘zerstörte’ community, the problem of the ‘Aufnahmegemeinde’, the sense and meaning of ‘Heimsuchung’, and ‘Ende oder Anfang?’⁵⁸ The religious authorities in Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt also adapted church ceremonies to accommodate the refugees’ own traditions. Hugo Aufderbeck expressly wished that his clergy would prove themselves flexible and offer themselves in ‘unconditional willingness’ to integrate the customs and traditions of the refugees.⁵⁹ Freusberg in Erfurt too attempted to appeal to a sense of *Heimat* by celebrating the annual *Fronleichnamsprozession* at Alach in 1948 in the home traditions of refugees at nearby Schaderode.⁶⁰ Songbooks with hymns from the Sudetenland and Silesia were also in great demand.⁶¹

Clergy also invited the newcomers to attend church services. A service prepared for refugees in the Erfurt Cathedral on 14 September 1947 focussed on the Virgin Mary’s

⁵⁶ *BAM*, Seelsorgeamt, Generalia, 1948-1978, ‘Vorschläge für die Durchmissionierung der Dörfer’, 1948; *ibid.*, ‘Ziel und Vorschläge für die Seelsorge an den Evakuierten’, 1948.

⁵⁷ See, in general: Bendel, *Aufbruch aus dem Glauben?*

⁵⁸ *BAM*, Dechanten: Allgemein, 1945-1972, ‘Dechantenkonferenz in Magdeburg’, 9/10/46.

⁵⁹ *BAM*, Seelsorgeamt, Generalia, 1948-1978, ‘Ziel und Vorschläge für die Seelsorge an den Evakuierten’, 1948.

⁶⁰ *BEA*, Stellenakten, Alach, Freusberg to BM (Alach), 12/5/48.

⁶¹ *BEA*, BGVP bzw. Fulda, ‘Bericht aus der Seelsorgearbeit, besonders Religionsunterricht’, Bilzingsleben to BGVF, 25/4/47.

flight to Egypt with the baby Jesus. Attendees could not have missed the allegory.⁶² Catholic refugees were again personally invited to the celebration of St. Hedwig at the Erfurt Church of St. Severus in October 1946.⁶³ Although the Saxon-Anhalt authorities offered the Churches only a ‘subordinate role’ in the ‘Umsiedlerwoche’ from 22-29 February 1948, special services for refugees were held throughout the Magdeburg Commissariat.⁶⁴ In the Protestant churches, Mitzenheim directed initiatives to welcome refugees in a number of circulars. Pastors were instructed to visit refugees and offer empathy, for instance.⁶⁵ The *Martinskirche* in Heiligenstadt advertised services to refugees through posters that urged refugees to attend and feel at home.⁶⁶ At Zeitz, the local pastor distributed invitations amongst Protestant *Umsiedler* to all events and groups.⁶⁷ A refugee, Herr B. (1934) remembered that the pastors at the *Marienkirche* in Köthen visited the nearby refugee camp to invite people to ‘Vertriebenen-Veranstaltungen’ in order to ease integration. His family attended a number of these services.⁶⁸ There were numerous other ways in which church communities met the newcomers, often with varying degrees of participation and success. The Catholic community of Lüderode in Eichsfeld collected 2,949 RM for the care of refugees in 1946, as well as providing accommodation from 1947. The first transport of approximately 380 people arrived on 1 November 1947. Refugees

⁶² *BEA*, 3 III, Erfurt, St. Marien, Propststeipfarrkirche, 1942-1959, Gottesdienst und Seelsorge, ‘Liturgie’ and ‘Gebet für Mutter der Heimatlosen’, 14/9/47.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, poster, 10-13/10/1946.

⁶⁴ *BAM*, Dechanten: Allgemein, 1945-1972, Weskamm to deans, 13/2/48. The state authorities still saw the Churches an important ‘integrating factor’: Schwartz, 551. On the ‘Umsiedlerwoche’, see: J. Hoffmann et al, 24-5; Mehlhase, ‘Die SED und die Vertriebenen’, 174-7.

⁶⁵ *EZAB*, 2/149, Sammelrundschreiben, 7/48, 2/3/48. See also: *ibid.*, 14/47, 21/6/47; 8/46, 17/9/46.

⁶⁶ *AKPS*, B1, 26, St. Martinskirche (Heiligenstadt), flyer for refugees, undated.

⁶⁷ *AEKZeitz*, Pfr. K. (St Nicolai, Zeitz) to Protestant refugees, 23/8/47.

⁶⁸ Such events were banned in the DDR, condemned as revanchism, though the *Martinskirche* was reportedly ‘erfinderisch’ and continued to hold a ‘Heimat-und-Gemeinde-Abend’: Questionnaire from Herr Frank B., Köthen, 1934.

were placed in homes, the orphanage and the school. There were six persons to each room in some places. Many of these refugees travelled further into the Western zones, and new transports arrived every six to eight weeks.⁶⁹

Eyewitnesses testify to a full spectrum of native responses to the newcomers.⁷⁰ There were, firstly, reported instances where the local population embraced refugees. Herr G. (1923) returned to Gerbstedt from war service and POW internment in October 1945. He soon thereafter founded the Gerbstedt CDU office and was the church organist and head of the choir in the Catholic congregation. He remembered refugees from Silesia, East Prussia and the Sudetenland, and recalled how they integrated into the community:

Die Vertriebenen erlebten in der Pfarrgemeinde wieder ein Stück Heimat. Sie hörten bekannte Texte der Liturgie[. W]ir sangen oft Lieder, die [sie] aus der Heimat kannten. Sie waren in ihrem Leid nicht mehr isoliert, sondern waren wieder in einer Gemeinschaft aufgenommen.⁷¹

Frau S. (1918), apparently the first female in road construction (Straßenbau) in the DDR, observed in Camburg in 1945 that there was great readiness within the local Protestant congregation to help the refugees. The considerable deprivation experienced by native Thuringians and the new arrivals bound them together in community. All living space was occupied ‘bis auf Dach’. Her family housed a single mother with four children from Silesia. Frau S. and the mother became good friends, and Frau S. helped the three sons in their study at the *Gymnasium*. The breadwinner

⁶⁹ AKKL, Pfarrchronik, 1946-7.

⁷⁰ See, in general, for the West: Connor, *Refugees and Expellees*, 58-93.

⁷¹ Questionnaire from Herr Lukas G., Gerbstedt, 1923. On memory relating to expulsion, flight and settlement, including a review of various works, see: O. Pustejovsky, “‘Da Schlug der Blitz im Kopf ein – und die Bilder kamen zurück.’” Individuelles Erinnern und kollektives Gedächtnis. Zur Problematik von Geschichte und Erinnerungskultur’, in *Vertriebene finden Heimat in der Kirche*, 187-225. On memory in the West, particularly the general exclusion of individual experiences and memories from collective memory, see: R. Schulze, ‘The Struggle of Past and Present in Individual Identities: The Case of German Refugees and Expellees from the East’, in *Coming Home to Germany*, 38-55. A collection of testimonies from the SBZ is: A. von Plato/W. Meinicke: *Alte Heimat - neue Zeit*.

was the daughter, for whom Frau S. found employment at Carl Zeiss in Jena.⁷²

Another eyewitness, Herr K. (1923), an SED member from 1946, married a refugee in 1945 in Pößneck and described native Thuringians as ‘sehr gastfreundlich’.⁷³ These three eyewitnesses were, however, all indigenous to Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia, and may have been anxious to underscore personal hospitality and that of their communities. Herr K., as a former SED member, may have a further reason to remember the post-war situation selectively: the party was concerned with presenting the success of its assimilation policies.⁷⁴

Other eyewitnesses offer ambiguous testimonies. Herr W. (1925) from Brunnhartshausen stated that he had ‘divided’ recollections of the treatment of the refugees by native Thuringians.⁷⁵ Frau D. (1924), from Diesdorf in the Altmark, commented that she had had ‘sympathy’ with the refugees and had therefore helped them ‘here and there’. She described, nonetheless, how many native Saxons had despised the refugees as ‘aliens and interlopers’.⁷⁶ In Nitschareuth, Frau R. (1921) recounted that her family and most families in the town helped the refugees where they could.⁷⁷ A Catholic couple (1920, 1921) remembered the post-war period simply as ‘hunger years’. They had experienced few personal frictions at the beginning, though they were largely ‘detached’ from the refugees. In the course of the years, however, their relationships with the new citizens became ‘good to very good’.⁷⁸ Frau

⁷² Interview with Frau Anna S., Pillingsdorf (Camburg after the war), 1918, 26/6/2008.

⁷³ Questionnaire from Herr Simon K., Pößneck, 1923.

⁷⁴ See below, p. 216.

⁷⁵ Questionnaire from Herr Alois W., Brunnhartshausen (Rhön), 1925.

⁷⁶ Questionnaire from Frau Hannelore D., Diesdorf (Altmark), 1924.

⁷⁷ Questionnaire from Frau Beate R., Nitschareuth, 1921.

⁷⁸ Questionnaires from Herr Jakob and Frau Steffi U., Wendehausen, 1920 and 1921. There are many reports that relations were often peaceful initially, especially in cities: Connor, *Refugees and Expellees*, 59-60; R. Schulze, ‘Growing discontent: relations between native and refugee populations in a rural

N. (1918), who spent the years after 1945 in Großschweidnitz in Saxony, also had divided memories of the refugees: 'Einerseits bedauerte ich ihr Schicksal, andererseits wurden sie überall einquartiert und beansprucht die knappen Lebensmittelvorräte.'⁷⁹

There is a significant amount of evidence that reflects a great number of native Germans did not embrace the new arrivals as the Churches desired, or the secular authorities for that matter.⁸⁰ Ian Connor writes that, given the prevalence of Catholics in traditionally Protestant areas and the often-considerable differences in customary practices, religion was a 'divisive rather than unifying factor' in many rural areas of the Western zones.⁸¹ It was little different in the East as (Catholic) refugees were most often regarded as unwelcome strangers and intruders in traditionally Protestant areas.⁸² The KPS issued a statement in 1948 that acknowledged the lack of

understanding shown by native Saxons as their 'Mitgefühl und Hilfsbereitschaft' swiftly disappeared.⁸³ In the Magdeburg Commissariat, Aufderbeck's office composed a memorandum in 1948 on the goals of pastoral care that confirmed the

district in Western Germany after the Second World War', in R.G. Moeller (ed.), *West Germany under Construction. Politics, Society and Culture in the Adenauer Era* (Ann Arbor, 1997), 345; idem, 'The German Refugees and Expellees from the East and the Creation of a Western German Identity after World War II', in *Redrawing Nations*, 310. Questionnaires from Herr, Frau F., Wendehausen, 1920, 1921.

⁷⁹ Questionnaire from Frau Ilse N., Großschweidnitz, 1918.

⁸⁰ See, in general, *ThHStAW*, MdI, 649, 33, 'Jahresbericht 1946', 30/12/46; *GuH*, 1/33, 8/12/46, 'Einander erkennen – einander verstehen', F. Högner, 2; *GuH*, 2/8, 23/2/47, 'Nochmals ein offenes Wort an unsere Thüringer Landsleute', 1; *GuH*, 2/10, 9/3/47, 'Abermals ein offenes Wort an unsere Thüringer Landsleute', 1; J. Hoffmann et al, 18. On the situation in Saxony: Mitzscherlich, 564. In the Mark Brandenburg: G. Christopeit, 'Die Herkunft und Verteilung der Evakuierten, Flüchtlinge und Vertriebenen in der Provinz Mark Brandenburg und ihr Verhältnis zu der einheimischen Bevölkerung', in *Sie hatten alles verloren*, 97-108. In the West also: Connor, *Refugees and Expellees*, 74ff.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 80, 213; see also: idem, 'The Churches and the Refugee Problem in Bavaria 1945-49', *JCH*, 20/3 (1985), 404ff.

⁸² See: C.-E. Schott, 'Wandlungen in der Wahrnehmung. Die evangelische Kirche und ihre Vertriebenen', in *Vertriebene finden Heimat in der Kirche*, 148ff; A. Bauerkämper, 'Social Conflict and Social Transformation in the Integration of Expellees into Rural Brandenburg, 1945-1952', in *Redrawing Nations*, 295; P. Ther, *Deutsche und polnische Vertriebene. Gesellschaft und Vertriebenenpolitik in der SBZ/DDR und in Polen 1945-1956* (Göttingen, 1998), 288-9.

⁸³ *AKPS*, B1, 27, 'Die evangelische Kirche der Kirchenprovinz Sachsen an ihre Heimatsuchenden Brüder und Schwestern', undated (probably 1948).

failure of integration and accordingly sought to catalyse concern for refugees amongst the population.⁸⁴ In Erfurt, a report written in English (presumably for foreign observers), commented on the hard-heartedness of the population to the plight of the refugees. Most had no empathy and withheld shelter and clothing.⁸⁵ In Anhalt, a Zeitz pastor observed that, while the native residents had experienced few negative effects from the war, they nevertheless felt increasingly burdened by the refugees and had little empathy for their plight. The refugees consequently felt alienated by this attitude and complained to the pastor.⁸⁶ A pastor wrote in *Glaube und Heimat* about the criticisms he had received daily from refugees about the ‘hardheartedness’ and ‘lack of compassion’ amongst local Thuringians.⁸⁷ Secular reports also detailed considerable difficulties between local and ethnic Germans. Many of the newcomers felt treated like second-class citizens, maintained that they were viewed as ‘irksome intruders’ and wished to go home.⁸⁸

The home was one site of conflict, and it represents a useful case study for the relationship between native Germans and the refugees.⁸⁹ Many people were compelled to receive refugee families. Frau D. (1923) and her husband in Gerbstedt

⁸⁴ *BAM*, Seelsorgeamt, Generalia, 1948-1978, ‘Ziel und Vorschläge für die Seelsorge an den Evakuierten’, 1948.

⁸⁵ *BEA*, BGVE/BAE-M, 129, ‘The Work of Pastoral Care in (sic!) behalf of the East-Evacuated Catholics in Thuringia and its Difficulties’, undated. Refugees were labelled ‘trespassers’: *LKAE*, A750/IV, Pfr. (Allstedt/Helme) to LKR, 23/5/1947.

⁸⁶ *AKPS*, B1, 189, Pfr S. (Zeitz) to Müller, 27/11/47.

⁸⁷ *GuH*, 1/9, 23/6/1946, ‘Barmherzigkeit. Ein offenes Wort an die Thüringer’, 1.

⁸⁸ For example: *LHASA*, MER, Kreisleitung der SED Artern: Parteiorgane, Information: Informationsberichte, 12.3.46-13.11.46, IV/401/244, Ortsgruppe Kölleda to BL Halle/Saale, 6/9/46; *LHASA*, MER, Kreisleitung der SED Zeitz, ‘Berichte’, Januar 1946-Dezember 1948, IV/424/350, Ortsgruppe Droyssig, 22/5/47; *LHASA*, MER, Kreisleitung der SED Merseburg, ‘Informationsberichte’, März 1946- Dezember 1948, IV/414/346, SED Ortsgruppe Leuna, 24/6/48.

⁸⁹ See: Connor, *Refugees and Expellees*, 69-72, 202-6; Christopheit, 102; M. Rusche, ‘Die Eingliederung der Vertriebenen in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, dargestellt unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Wohnraumproblematik’, in *Sie hatten alles verloren*, 133-47; Schrammek, 158-66; *Die Vertriebenen in der SBZ/DDR. Dokumente, Bd. II*, 157-284; S. Kaltenborn, ‘Wohn- und Lebensverhältnisse von Vertriebenen 1948 in Thüringen’, in *Geglückte Integration?*, 273-87 (esp. 280-4); Mehlhase, *Flüchtlinge und Vertriebene*, 98-115.

accommodated no fewer than 25 refugees simultaneously.⁹⁰ In Magdeburg, according to one witness, there was no house without sub-letters.⁹¹ Many locals were not forthcoming in offering housing, and even churchmen were accused of denying shelter. The TheK youth pastor reported that, while en route to Neudietendorf, he had talked to two officials from the Gotha *Landratsamt* who had related that their business was to visit an old missionary who had complained about accommodating three refugees. They had lamented the hypocrisy of the situation: ‘Das sind die Leute, die christliche Nächstenliebe predigen. Am meisten Schwierigkeiten machen uns die Pfarrer und die Ärzte.’⁹² The men had also stated that Catholics were worse as they often refused to acknowledge government directives. While the latter pronouncement may be embellished to relativise Protestant unhelpfulness, instances of clerical obstinacy are attested elsewhere.⁹³ The mayor of Söllichau also levelled allegations against the local pastor and his wife for denying shelter to refugees. The pastor responded that three refugee families had lived in his house for years and had cooked on his stove; it was the mayor who had made negative comments such as: ‘Wer will bei dem wohnen!’⁹⁴ Whatever the truth behind these reports (they may have been the result of socialist anti-clericalism), they at least reflect the general frictions and conflicts that arose with the quartering of refugees amongst the local populace. It must be remembered that the burdens were also great amongst the clergy, and

⁹⁰ Questionnaire from Frau Maria D., Gerbstedt, 1923.

⁹¹ Questionnaire from Herr Siegfried Z., Magdeburg, 1925.

⁹² *LKAE*, A723, ‘Bericht über die Reise vom 25. Bis 27. Januar 1947 nach Neudietendorf und Gotha’, Pfr. Neumann to LKR, 28/1/47.

⁹³ See: Connor, *Refugees and Expellees*, 77-9, 213. Few wanted to be burdened with refugees: Kaltenborn, 284-5.

⁹⁴ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 769b, 200, Kons. to MP, 22/9/47.

churchmen themselves did not always act on the call to help the newcomers.⁹⁵ One pastor wrote to the Konsistorium in Magdeburg: ‘Wir predigen wahrhaft wie Sterbende den Sterbenden, hungernd und frierend den Hungernden und Frierenden.’ In these circumstances, clergy found it incredibly difficult to support themselves, let alone parishioners.⁹⁶

The problem of personal space often led to clashes within the home. In winter, for instance, fuel was scarce in most places, and families generally could only afford to operate a single fire, if at all. Indoor life played out in an often-crowded kitchen.⁹⁷

The daughter of a pastor at Staßfurt-Leopoldshall, Frau R. (1928), recalled how the refugees absorbed much her father’s time. She even accompanied him on visits to the local refugee camp. On relations with the refugees, she summarised in a questionnaire response:

Ich fürchte, wir haben als Einheimische die Flüchtlinge und Vertriebenen nicht mit offenen Armen aufgenommen. Selbst in kleinen Wohnungen mussten fremde Familien aufgenommen werden, wir saßen eng aufeinander. Von seiten der Flüchtlinge war oft Neid zu spüren (sie berichteten von ihren verlassenen Besitztümern), was von der Seite der Alteingesessenen zu Mißtrauen Anlaß gab.⁹⁸

Apart from testimonies offered by local Saxons and Thuringians, most refugees questioned or interviewed for this project described conflict with native Germans, and often posited communal living as a particularly onerous burden.⁹⁹ For instance, Frau

⁹⁵ Schwartz notes that the Catholic priesthood probably took the call to service in the ‘Diaspora’ much more seriously than the Protestant pastorate: 552-3.

⁹⁶ AKPS, B1, 189, Pfr. R. (Magdeburg) to Konsistorialrat A. (Magdeburg), 13/9/47.

⁹⁷ BEA, BGVE/BAE-M, 129, ‘Jahresbericht 1946 für die Arnstadt (Land)’, 2/2/1947. On conflict over kitchen facilities, see: BEA, BGVE/BAE-M, 125, 1947-1957, ‘Jahresbericht des Seelsorgebezirkes Gräfenroda über das Jahr 1946’, undated.

⁹⁸ Questionnaire from Frau Ingeborg R., Staßfurt-Leopoldshall, 1928. See also: Mehlhase, *Flüchtlinge und Vertriebene*, 102-5.

⁹⁹ Cf. in his interviews, Schulze notes that refugees often maintain vivid memories of the flight, and of the *Heimat* in which they were born. They also still feel the realities of past pain: R. Schulze, ‘The Struggle of Past and Present’, 44-51. Dagmar Semmelmann in her 15 interviewees from

W. (1913), her husband, son and father-in-law fled West Prussia in January 1945 and settled in Schlawe in Lower Pomerania. Without medical care, her son died of disease in mid-1945. In 1947, the family were evicted from Schlawe and moved on to Beuster in Saxony-Anhalt. The local authorities quartered the family in a local house, and there were significant frictions that only slowly dissipated. Frau W. lamented the hostility of some local Saxons in this way: ‘Wir waren bettelarm hier angekommen und viele nahmen uns nicht gern auf.’¹⁰⁰

Frau T. (1925) fled from East Prussia with her family to Kemberg in Saxony-Anhalt in 1945. She remembered how local inhabitants viewed the family as ‘intruders’. This was reflected in the living situation especially. The family lived and slept on the second floor and had to cook in the laundry in the courtyard.¹⁰¹ Herr B. (1934) was a teenager when his family was evicted from Obernigk near Breslau in May 1947. The family of parents and three children were placed first in a camp and then quartered with an older woman in Köthen. There was conflict in the house, especially as, Herr B. remembered, the children broke the woman’s furniture. While he was too young to understand the situation fully, time had made him more aware of the circumstances.¹⁰² Another youth in the post-war period, Herr K. in Erfurt (1930), wrote that conflict in the kitchen was ‘programmed’ insofar as the Sudeten refugees were used to ‘an

Eisenhüttenstadt notes several themes in the initial post-war years, including *inter alia* general negativity, feelings of anger, rejection, alienation, unwantedness. There was also a concentration on the necessities of life: D. Semmelmann, ‘Zur Integration aus lebensgeschichtlicher Sicht. Eingliederungsverläufe von Flüchtlingen und Vertriebenen in der SBZ/DDR dargestellt am Sonderfall Eisenhüttenstadt’, in *Geglückte Integration?*, 326-7. Similarly, born in 1926 near Stettin, Frau Magda T. (interview in Greiz, 8/5/2008), who had fled to Sangerhausen in late 1947, had vivid memories of her *Heimat*, though she did not want to return, even to visit.

¹⁰⁰ Questionnaire from Frau Lotte W., Beuster, 1913.

¹⁰¹ Questionnaire from Frau Waltraud T., Kemberg, 1925.

¹⁰² Questionnaire from Herr Frank B., Köthen, 1934.

excellent gastronomy' while Thuringian cuisine was much more simple.¹⁰³ Whether or not these preferences were relevant amidst the privation of the post-war period, it remains undoubtedly true that there were considerable cultural differences.

The secular authorities recognised the gravity of the problem and understood integration as an enduring process.¹⁰⁴ In Saxony-Anhalt, a local judicial office reported in December 1945 that the 'living together' of the locals and the newcomers was 'not as it should be'.¹⁰⁵ The presidential office noted in a circular from June 1946 that around 1.2 million people had entered the state and, whilst some initiatives had been successful, the greatest problems were 'Sesshaftmachung', 'Verwurzelung' and 'Verschmelzung'. Hübener evaluated the problem in pessimistic terms, noting that there was a considerable division between local Germans and the newcomers. He was left questioning why so many rejected the refugees:

Was berechtigt die Kernbevölkerung zu einem derart häßlichen Widerstand, zu einer derart starken beschämenden Ablehnung gegenüber dem Umsiedler?
Nichts! Einfach nichts! Und trotzdem besteht die ungeheure Kluft!¹⁰⁶

The political authorities in Thuringia, by contrast, seem to have been rather more sanguine about the integration of the refugees. The Minister of the Interior, Ernst Busse, called upon the Churches to aid in the assimilation process in early 1947, and, in its annual report for 1947, the Ministry cited the industrious work of anti-fascist organisations and the press in improving the relationship between natives and the

¹⁰³ Questionnaire from Herr Paul K., Erfurt, 1930.

¹⁰⁴ Connor, *Refugees and Expellees*, 210.

¹⁰⁵ *LHASA*, DE, KV KÖT, Nr. 112, 'Stimmungsbericht', Geschäftsstelle des Kreisgerichts (Meinsdorf), 10/12/45.

¹⁰⁶ *BAM*, Staatliche Behörden: Regierungsverordnungen 1946-1951, MP Sachsen to BL, LR and OBM, 7/6/46.

newcomers.¹⁰⁷ This evaluation seems overly optimistic. The report, prepared for the Office of the Minister President, may be self-justifying in overplaying the success of the Interior Ministry in uniting the population under the SED.¹⁰⁸ There was certainly dissatisfaction at the lower level. The chairman of the SED office in Seega propounded the party's effective measures in providing aid and integrating the refugees at a meeting in September 1947. The local pastor challenged this view: the efforts of the SED were not sufficient in the face of the refugees' need and their widespread rejection by native Thuringians.¹⁰⁹ This cut to the heart of the problem. As a report from Bernburg also observed, the conflicts between the two groups had significant negative effects on the political mobilisation of the entire population, especially the refugees.¹¹⁰ Although the SED claimed to have solved the refugee problem following the *Umsiedlerwoche* in February 1948, the reality was that the failure of integration in the Soviet zone incurred the failure of both the Churches' project of German moral regeneration and the SED's vision of a united and mobilised socialist society.¹¹¹

The divide between churchmen and their flock

¹⁰⁷ *ThHStAW*, MdI, 650, 157, 'Jahresbericht 1947', undated. On Busse's circular to the TheK pastorate, which was approved by Mitzenheim, see: Schwartz, 552.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Barthel/Fischer, 67.

¹⁰⁹ *ThHStAW*, BMP, 80/868/251-2, 'Bericht zu den reaktionären Äußerungen des Pfarrers Barz aus Göllingen in der SED Versammlung 18.9.47 in Seega', undated.

¹¹⁰ *LHASA*, DE, KV KÖT, Nr. 82, LR Bernburg to BP Dessau, 27/12/45.

¹¹¹ Mehlhase, 'Die SED und die Vertriebenen', 174-7; idem, *Flüchtlinge und Vertriebene*, 240-1; Wille, 'Compelling the Assimilation of Expellees', 272-3, 277-8; C.-E. Schott, 151.

As shown in the previous chapter, material deprivation and, to a lesser extent, the rise of socialism and the Churches' inadequacies conspired to prevent the realisation of 're-Christianisation' in terms of church attendance and membership. The situation of need also has explanatory power in understanding the widespread failure of the Churches to influence people to refrain from 'dissolution' and to embrace refugees.¹¹² Pontificating on the commandments and admonitions to love did not have the popular resonance that the church hierarchs desired. Life was dominated by material circumstances, the 'Magenfrage' as Michael Schwartz puts it.¹¹³ Conditions certainly did not improve in many places until well after the last refugee transports arrived in 1947.¹¹⁴

However, both locals and refugees evaluated 'need' with different registers.

Approaching the winter of 1947/8, the pastor of Schlagenthin in the Altmark noted that the only concern of native Saxons was the harvest. In 1947, corn, hay, turnips and potatoes had yielded less than the yearly average, while the tax burden (Soll) remained significant. Saxons had, nevertheless, stockpiled sufficient supplies in stark contrast to the refugees. The locals therefore remained relatively prosperous, but, fearing possible hunger, would not help the newcomers.¹¹⁵ Different assessments of need meant that, while refugees were often accepted in communities where both locals and the newcomers shared similar deprivations, they were reportedly rejected

¹¹² See, on need and the refugee situation in Saxony-Anhalt: Mehlhase, *Flüchtlinge und Vertriebene*, 244-5. The failure of integration was, of course, not only the fault of the Churches and indigenous Germans. Many refugees only wished to return home. See: Fenwick, 136; Schrammek, 260ff; Bendel, *Aufbruch aus dem Glauben?*, 491.

¹¹³ Schwartz, 731ff. See also: Mehlhase, *Flüchtlinge und Vertriebene*, 115-28.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 236.

¹¹⁵ *AKPS*, B1, 189, Pfr. A. (Schlagenthin) to provost (Magdeburg), 11/9/47.

in wealthier districts.¹¹⁶ The Thuringian Ministry of the Interior observed in December 1946, on the one hand, that the *Umsiedler* received much greater support and were integrated better in poorer districts. Relations were often bad, on the other hand, in more affluent areas, where there were sufficient resources.¹¹⁷ One former soldier from East Prussia, Herr V. (1925), came to Druxberge in Saxony-Anhalt after the war. His family had fled before the Soviet advance in 1944, though, of the 13 strong family, only one sister and his mother remained when Herr V. returned from a prisoner of war camp in 1945. He recalled that almost all the Druxberge inhabitants had been little affected by the war and had no appreciation for the refugees' plight, seeing them instead as aliens.¹¹⁸ This attitude is similarly attested at Bilzingsleben, north of Erfurt, while an article in *Glaube und Heimat* appealed to comparatively well-endowed Thuringians to overcome their stereotypical parsimony and to help the new citizens.¹¹⁹ The provost of Magdeburg was moved to accuse members of 'the middle-class' who did not act in faith and love.¹²⁰ There were, moreover, reported cases of exploitation where relatively wealthy individuals and/or families used the refugees for any advantage, especially material gain.¹²¹

¹¹⁶ A number of historians note that relations were often more harmonious in urban than rural areas, especially in cities where there was greater cosmopolitanism and (often) a narrower socio-economic divide: Connor, *Refugees and Expellees*, 61-4, 75-6, 210; P.-H. Seraphim, *Die Heimatvertriebenen in der Sowjetzone* (Berlin, 1954), 180; Christopheit, 98.

¹¹⁷ *ThHStAW*, MdI, 649, 33, 'Jahresbericht 1946', 30/12/46. There was a similar situation in the district of Celle in Lower Saxony: Schulze, 'Growing Discontent', 335ff.

¹¹⁸ Questionnaire from Herr Heinrich V., Druxberge, 1925.

¹¹⁹ *BFA*, BGVE, Kirche in der DDR 'Grundsätzliches' 1946-1959, Bilzingsleben to BGVE, 13/11/47; *GuH*, 2/10, 9/3/47, 'Abermals ein offenes Wort an unsere Thüringer Landsleute', 1.

¹²⁰ *AKPS*, B1, 17, 'Tätigkeitsbericht der Propstei Halle-Merseburg für das Jahr 1947', 18/5/48.

¹²¹ *BEA*, BGVE/BAE-M, 125, 1947-1957, 'Jahresbericht des Seelsorgebezirkes Gräfenroda über das Jahr 1946', undated; *ibid.*, 'Jahresbericht über das Jahr 1946', Gotha-Siebleben, 28/1/47; *BEA*, BGVP bzw. Fulda, 'Frühjahrsbericht 1947', Leutenberg, 14/6/47.

The social obligations imposed by the authorities on the local population ultimately required some degree of self-sacrifice from the population. To welcome the refugees was to take time and often share resources; to abstain from stealing was to put aside personal profit. As Herr F. (1923), a Sudeten German who settled in Köthen, wrote, local inhabitants in the post-war period often rejected refugees, believing that the new arrivals would take from them. All competed for the same resources.¹²² Many people evidently privileged their own material gain to the detriment of the Churches' gospel to love others.¹²³ The Churches certainly believed that the primacy of existential needs disadvantaged the 'spiritual' situation. One church report observed that people were slaves to their impulses: they selfishly sought to guarantee personal survival and comfort first.¹²⁴ As a Magdeburg pastor observed in September 1947:

Die Kohlennot bringt nicht nur kalte Wohnungen – und Kälte ist für den Mut der Seele noch verhängnisvoller als Hunger! – sondern auch kalte Kirchen und Gottesdiensträume.¹²⁵

An article in *Glaube und Heimat* in November 1948 also alleged the prevalence of selfishness: each only looked to one's own material interests.¹²⁶ Party and government documents reflect a similar interpretation. An author in the *Volkszeitung* put it in this way: 'Jeder hält seine eigenen kleinen Sorgen für endlich viel wichtiger als das Schicksal des Ganzen.'¹²⁷ An August 1945 report from the Buna factory in Schkopau, between Halle and Merseburg, noted that workers only did what they wanted to do: 'Bei diesen Leuten ist alles in Ordnung, wenn ihre persönlichen Wünsche erfüllt

¹²² Questionnaire from Herr Kurt F., Köthen, 1923. On competition for resources, see: Connor, *Refugees and Expellees*, 61ff; Christopeit, 102ff; A. Bauerkämper, 'Social Conflict and Social Transformation', 288-92.

¹²³ AKPS, B1, 29, Evang. Jungmädchenwerk to Mitarbeiter(innen) u. Freunde, 8/4/46.

¹²⁴ AKPS, B1, 18, 'Bericht über die kirchliche Lage im Kirchenkreis Magdeburg', 27/8/46.

¹²⁵ AKPS, B1, 189, Pfr. R. (Magdeburg) to Konsistorialrat A. (Magdeburg), 13/9/47.

¹²⁶ *GuH*, 3/46, 14/11/48, 'Was beunruhigt mich am meisten?', 2.

¹²⁷ AKPS, O3, 253, 'Der Lehrer und die demokratische Schule', *Volkszeitung*, 1945.

werden. Aber Opfer bringen, Unbequemlichkeiten hinnehmen...'¹²⁸ A circular of the Saxon-Anhalt Ministry of the Interior, which went out to all public offices in March 1948, lamented the considerable alienation between the authorities and the population and attributed it to the situation of need that had fostered a selfish mentality.¹²⁹

The upshot of the alleged self-centeredness was that few people heeded admonishments about their behaviour. The Rohrberg priest reported that the parish youth largely pursued pleasure, as was the case throughout Thuringia. He blamed parents for insufficient discipline and instruction in 'christliche Nächstenliebe'. He also observed that sermons concerning the pursuit of pleasure, alcohol, theft and the plight of refugees threatened good attendance at church services in general. Popular responses included scratching, coughing and interruptions. Most wanted to be comforted and not deal with the ethical demands of the church where these challenged personal habits or desires. Many were reduced to the basic fundamentals of existence. He adapted a Henrik Ibsen quote in closing: 'Es ist der Fluch der kleinen Verhältnisse, dass sie oft auch den Menschen klein machen.'¹³⁰ Ultimately, ideas of sin and repentance fell upon deaf ears as both of these required a degree of sacrifice and suffering. According to one pastor, writing to volunteers in the Jungmädchenwerk, Christians with greater resolve followed the law, stood in defiance of the world and embraced sacrifice. Resistance to the world incurred personal sacrifice.¹³¹ Suffering for the sake of Christianity was, however, too much to ask for

¹²⁸ *LHASA*, MER, P. 508, nr. 24, 'Stimmungsbericht über das Buna Werk to Bezirksleitung der KPD Halle-Merseburg', 1/8/45.

¹²⁹ *LHASA*, MER, Kreisverwaltung Merseburg, nr. 624, MdI to all offices, 16/3/48. See also: *Die Vertriebenen in der SBZ/DDR. Dokumente. Bd. III*, 152ff. The indigenous German population had also become increasingly opposed to the redistributive programs of the secular authorities: Ther, 'Expellee policy', 74.

¹³⁰ *BEA*, BGVP bzw. Fulda, Rohrberg to BGVF, 13/4/48.

¹³¹ *AKPS*, B1, 29, Evang. Jungmädchenwerk to Mitarbeiter(innen) u. Freunde, 8/4/46.

most, and it appears that people took what they required from the Churches – the occasional service, the rites of passage – but were not prepared to *act* in accordance with Christian principles outside church walls.

This divide, however, was not solely the result of existential circumstances.

Clergymen lamented that churchgoers in many parishes did little more than attend church, if indeed they did that much. Only a small minority volunteered time or effort in helping the local churchmen, and there was a general lack of dynamism amongst parishioners. The distance between churchmen and the population was vast in many locales. At Easter, the Archbishop of Paderborn was compelled to write in a

Hirtenbrief to parishioners:

Für allzu viele steht leider der Priester ganz am Rande ihres Lebens. Man braucht ihn zu Kindtaufen, Trauungen, Beerdingungen, um diesen Festen eine besondere Feierlichkeit zu geben. Zu anderen Stunden aber gilt der Priester ihnen nur als lästige Mahner, als unbequemes Hindernis, den Becher der Freude hemmungslos zu genießen.¹³²

In a similar vein, an author wrote in a *Glaube und Heimat* article entitled ‘Warum schweigen die Gemeindeglieder?’ that the pastor and parishioners were often greatly estranged from one another. Both pursued different agendas and affairs, and a churchman could not, therefore, expect a well-attended community event.¹³³ Another article, ‘Was beunruhigt mich am meisten?’, of November 1948 noted that the pastor was often ‘abandoned’ to his duties, and it was common to hear the statement: ‘Ich bin so überlastet’.¹³⁴ A pastor in Sudenburg, Magdeburg, reported on empty churches, the lack of workers and the general ‘helplessness’. He lamented further that those

¹³² *BAM*, Paderborn: Erzbischof – Korrespondenz – 1945-1955, ‘Hirtenwort des Hochwürdigsten Herrn Erzbischofs an die Katholiken des Erzbischöflichen Kommissariates Magdeburg’, Passionssonntag 1946.

¹³³ *GuH*, 2/41, 12/10/47, ‘Warum schweigen die Gemeindeglieder?’, Dr. Dawczewski, 2.

¹³⁴ *GuH*, 3/46, 14/11/48, ‘Was beunruhigt mich am meisten?’, 2.

who were 'moved' (ergriffen) by the Christian message were predominantly eccentrics who were mostly 'sectarians' or hypocritical 'Pharisees'.¹³⁵ Throughout the Magdeburg district, the church faithful were relatively small in comparison to the rest of the greater community. Ultimately, as the provost regretted, most communities in the district had an 'Ein-Mann-System' in which the pastor acted alone and largely without support from parishioners. Not only so, those who did volunteer suffered from an alleged lack of enthusiasm, and it was almost impossible to 'win' laypeople to collaborate in church affairs. This situation overtaxed the pastor, who sometimes did not have the patience to disciple helpers. Only when one could speak of a Lutheran 'church of universal priesthood' (Kirche des allgemeinen Priestertums) could Protestantism fulfil its mission to the German *Volk*. The first task, the provost posited, was to stir a passion within people for the 'soul of the German people'.¹³⁶

However, the basic prerequisites for effective action or collaboration were often lacking, and the nucleus of the congregation was not only numerically few, but also advanced in age and steeped in stale tradition. In Taupadel (Thuringia), for example, the pastor observed that church life focussed on a handful of faithful members.¹³⁷ The same was true at Bad Klosterlausnitz, where a small nucleus of individuals maintained church life.¹³⁸ Communion at Sassa in 1947 attracted 73 participants of whom nearly all were 'old or elderly' people.¹³⁹ A report from Tautenhain on church activities in 1949 reflected that the number of visitors to church services had dropped

¹³⁵ *AKPS*, B1, 189, Pfr. R. (Magdeburg) to Konsistorialrat A. (Magdeburg), 13/9/47.

¹³⁶ *AKPS*, B1, 83, 'Tätigkeitsbericht über die Propstei Magdeburg', 12/5/49;

¹³⁷ *AEKE*, Graitschen I: 1.2.1946-28.12.1949, 'Tätigkeitsbericht der Gemeindegemeinderäte des Kirchspiels Graitschen für die Zeit vom 11.10.1947 bis 31.3.48', 26/4/48.

¹³⁸ *AEKE*, Bürgel I: 27.1.1941 zum 14.12.1951, 'Tätigkeitsbericht des Ev. Pfarramtes Bad Klosterlausnitz für das Jahr 1947', 29/7/48.

¹³⁹ *AEKE*, 105.S.1, 'Zusammenfassender Bericht 1949-1958'.

in comparison to the previous two years. The reason, according to the pastor, was that several aged ‘faithful churchgoers’ had passed away.¹⁴⁰ Many churchgoers, in fact, attended chapel only out of habit. As a youth related to a *Glaube und Heimat* editor in February 1948:

Die Kirche erreicht nur noch eine ganz geringe Schicht unseres Volkes. Und zwar nur solche, die durch Tradition und Elternhaus dazu angehalten werden, sich unter das Wort der Kirche zu stellen.¹⁴¹

Similarly, many eyewitnesses from the post-war period stated that they had attended church simply as a matter of course. They had grown up with Christianity and had been socialised into a church life that, in turn, had created a frame of reference from which meaning was derived.¹⁴² Herr M. was born into a Protestant family in Schwiesau in 1930, and had since participated in church life as a ‘Selbstverständlichkeit’.¹⁴³ Another, Herr G. (1924) asserted that church attendance was axiomatic. He had been brought up in the Christian tradition, had attended regularly with his parents and continued to attend in Könnern in the post-war period ‘wenngleich sie [die Kirche] durch Krieg und Nazizeit bei [v]ielen an Glaubwürdigkeit verloren hat’.¹⁴⁴ On the other hand, regardless of whether or not my interviewees or questionnaire respondents could stand in for typical ‘German churchgoers’, there was little reference to life-changing religious ‘experiences’ or the religious dynamism that the post-war church authorities most ardently desired. One interviewee did relate his journey to faith, though this was a lengthy process and occurred without reference to the institutional Churches. Herr K. (1923) served as a

¹⁴⁰ *AEKE*, Tätigkeitsberichte: Tautenhain (Tabellen I u. II), ‘Tätigkeitsbericht des Gemeindegemeinderats Tautenhain für das Jahr 1949’, 18/2/1950.

¹⁴¹ *GuH*, 3/8, 22/2/48, ‘Wie die Jugend über die Kirche denkt’, 4.

¹⁴² See: Luckmann, 72ff.

¹⁴³ Questionnaire from Herr Kurt M., Schwiesau (Altmark), 1930.

¹⁴⁴ Questionnaire from Herr Erich G., Könnern, 1924.

soldier at the Eastern Front from 1943, and was wounded in action near Leipzig on 1 May 1945. He was removed to a field hospital the following day and placed beside a dying SS lieutenant. The lieutenant proudly maintained atheism up to the end, finally expiring from his wounds. Herr K. was confronted with an existential crisis and said to himself:

Lieber Gott, bin ich nach Hause gekommen [sic] werde ich ein anderer Mensch werden ja, und das hab' ich danach auch vollzogen über langerer Zeitraum nicht von heute auf morgen... so... ohne, ohne also so man sozusagen das vollzog sich zwischen mir und Jesus alleine... ohne, ohne Evangelisation, ja.¹⁴⁵

A number of provosts lamented that many communities throughout the KPS were rooted in the mechanical observance of tradition. Few people did more than attend church out of habit. The provosts desired, however, the collaboration of parishioners animated by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Inaction was especially apparent in the local church councils (Gemeindekirchenräte), where elders were tasked with fostering community life. It was common for many elders to maintain their roles in individual congregations for long stretches of time, simply because there were no replacements.¹⁴⁶ The provost of Halle-Merseburg reported in May 1948 that there were only rare signs of 'true spirituality' amongst members of church councils. A few 'faithful and understanding' elders distinguished themselves in providing help, but the majority of members were 'spiritually dead'. Positions were often long-standing posts held in perpetuity. The result was that, as the provost bemoaned, elders often had very little understanding for things like the 'renewal' (Erneuerung) of chapel music and the church service. Ultimately, council members were more of a hindrance than a help to the pastorate, and very seldom did clergymen call upon them for aid.¹⁴⁷ In the

¹⁴⁵ Interview with Herr Hermann K., Prettin, 1923, 4/6/08.

¹⁴⁶ *AEKE*, 105.S.1, 'Tätigkeitsbericht des Gemeindekirchenrates Sassa für das Jahr 1948', undated.

¹⁴⁷ *AKPS*, B1, 17, 'Tätigkeitsbericht der Propstei Halle-Merseburg für das Jahr 1947', 18/5/48.

Sudhärz, moreover, a pastor even refused to continue work at St. Nikolai-Mühlhausen because of the elders' refusal to change or alter existing songs.¹⁴⁸ Few also called upon the third person of trinity, the Holy Spirit, to inspire renewal. In Naumburg, the provost lamented that this had condemned any possibility of spiritual awakening amongst church elders.¹⁴⁹ The provost of the Altmark likewise commented on the prevalence of 'dead' communities: those lacking the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Such were characterised by the 'stamp' of Christian observance bound to stale habits and tradition. Few communities 'lived by faith'.¹⁵⁰ Lastly, regarding the population at large, the provost at Magdeburg declared the need for mission as he reported a 'dominant spiritual immaturity'.¹⁵¹

Followership in the church community

That the population and many church communities generally rejected church calls to a 'moral' life and refused to embrace the *Umsiedler* in their midst begs one salient question: what was the nature of church followership in the post-war period? True spirituality, in the opinion of the provost of Magdeburg, had much to do with the cultivation of a sense of mission or responsibility amongst community members for active involvement in church life. Only where a nucleus of like-minded, committed

¹⁴⁸ AKPS, B1, 26, Pfr. (Obersdorf) to Müller, 4/4/48.

¹⁴⁹ AKPS, B1, 83, 'Tätigkeitsbericht für das Jahr 1948', Propstei Naumburg, 13/1/49.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 'Tätigkeitsbericht', Propst der Altmark, 27/4/49.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 'Tätigkeitsbericht über die Propstei Magdeburg', 12/5/49.

individuals cohered could the church overcome unbelief.¹⁵² The dynamic followership that church hierarchs desired is perhaps best exemplified in the dedication of many women in the Frauenhilfe and volunteers in the Bahnhofsmision. Prelates encouraged the participation of laity in bearing faith beyond church walls and providing aid and alleviating suffering; embedded in a theological construct that moralised good works, the people of these organisations therefore represented the vanguard of church efforts to ‘re-Christianise’ the German population.

The unique post-war conditions and struggles of women are well documented by primary and secondary sources, and the Churches themselves took particular steps to offer religious consolation and material support to women.¹⁵³ The clergy in the Bernburg district met on 21 February 1945 and discussed their concerns about women who were in ‘great need’; they resolved to hold special services in the community.¹⁵⁴ After the war, the Protestant Innere Mission, for example, advised Thuringian pastors on 11 September 1946 about the particular tasks and requirements of giving help to women.¹⁵⁵ Weskamm in Magdeburg also passed on guidelines and advice to his priests about offering pastoral care to women. The document called for priests to disclose to each woman that she is ‘the bearer of the secrets concerning love and

¹⁵² Ibid., ‘Tätigkeitsbericht über die Propstei Magdeburg’, 12/5/49.

¹⁵³ In general, see: *Frauen in der Nachkriegszeit, Bd. I-II*, ed. A. Kuhn (Düsseldorf, 1984-6); *Wie wir das alles geschafft haben: alleinstehende Frauen über ihr Leben nach 1945*, ed. S. Meyer/E. Schulze (Munich, 1985); N. Möding, ‘Die Stunde der Frauen? Frauen und Frauenorganisationen des bürgerlichen Lagers’, in *Von Stalingrad bis zur Währungsreform*, 619-50. Also the many volumes of oral history authored by Margarete Dörr, e.g. *...und dann stand ich mit meinen drei Kleinen allein da. Frauenschicksale in der Kriegs- und Nachkriegszeit* (Frankfurt/Main, 1998).

¹⁵⁴ LKAD, Kreisoberpfarramt Bernburg 1945-1956, ‘Bericht über die christliche Besprechung der Geistlichen des Kirchenkreises Bernburg am 21. Februar 1945’, undated.

¹⁵⁵ AEKF, 270, Innere Mission to all pastors, 11/9/46.

life'.¹⁵⁶ The Churches also involved women in informal and formal capacities.

Throughout Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia, women were recruited in Catholic parishes as 'pastoral care helpers' who executed various tasks including: working in religious instruction, women's and youth groups, aiding in conferring the sacraments, offering invitations and material provisions, decorating the chapel and conducting pastoral care visits.¹⁵⁷

A number of historians have observed the 'feminisation' of religion in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹⁵⁸ This was true of the Protestant churches in Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia during and after the Second World War as women continued to comprise the core of many congregations. Chapel life was often predominated by women; this was so in Frose and Rudisleben in Anhalt for example.¹⁵⁹ In the absence of husbands in wartime and the post-war period, many pastors' wives maintained chapel life in holding church services, making pastoral care visits, transacting business etc.¹⁶⁰ After the war, women often came together to establish local chapters of Frauenhilfe.¹⁶¹ Frauenhilfe emerged out of a number of different local and regional organisations in Prussia in 1899, and the branch in the Church province of Saxony,

¹⁵⁶ *BAM*, Seelsorge: Frauen- und Mütterseelsorge, 1948-1979, 'Referat über Frauenseelsorge auf der Tagung des Seelsorgeamtes im Erzbischöflichen Kommissariat Magdeburg in Bad Kösen am 11. Mai 1948'.

¹⁵⁷ *BAM*, Seelsorgehelferinnen: Seelsorgehelferinnen-Seminar 1948-1968, Aufderbeck to Prälat G., 17/1/48. On helpers in the Catholic Church in Thuringia, see: Fenwick, 91.

¹⁵⁸ See: I.G. von Olenhusen, 'Die Feminisierung von Religion und Kirche im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert: Forschungsstand und Forschungsperspektiven (Einleitung)', in I.G. von Olenhusen (ed.), *Frauen unter dem Patriarchat der Kirchen* (Stuttgart, 1995), 9-21, esp. 9, nn. 1, 3; U. Baumann, 'Religion und Emanzipation: Konfessionelle Frauenbewegung in Deutschland 1900-1933', in *Frauen unter dem Patriarchat der Kirchen*, 90, n. 5; M. Phayer, *Protestant and Catholic Women in Nazi Germany* (Detroit, 1990), 28-9.

¹⁵⁹ *LKAD*, Kirchenvisitationen, 1945-48, KOP (Ballenstedt) to LKRA (regarding Frose), 8/9/47; *ibid.*, KOP (Ballenstedt) to LKRA (regarding Rudisleben), 17/9/47.

¹⁶⁰ *LKAD*, Kreispastoral Versammlungen, 1945-65, 'Ephoralbericht über das kirchliche Leben im Kirchenkreis Zerbst erstattet bei der Kreispastoralversammlung 19. Mai 1948 in Rosslau'.

¹⁶¹ *AKPS*, B1, 83, 'Tätigkeitsbericht für das Jahr 1948, Propstei Naumburg', 13/1/49. Women also volunteered for the Red Cross, for example, in the area of Frankenheim: *AEKF*, 190.

for example, begun in 1902 with 15 local chapters. The Frauenhilfe, however, had endured significant difficulties in the Third Reich and, while this had meant the virtual suspension of its duties in some places, many former employees and volunteers resurrected the organisation after the war.¹⁶²

The women of Frauenhilfe paid visits to parishioners, gathered donations for the needy, organised ‘women’s evenings’ and discussions, and volunteered for various tasks in local communities, including the Bahnhofsmission. In Zeulenroda, for instance, the 225 strong Frauenhilfe met for discussions, and knitted and sewed clothing for needy families at Christmas.¹⁶³ At St. Agnus in Köthen, women visited community members, especially those in difficulty or with ill health, helped the pastor with events such as weddings and confirmation, and spread awareness by inviting people to events. As Pfr. K. remarked: ‘Dieser Dienst ist um so wichtiger damit in den großen Gemeinden die Verbindung zwischen Kirche und Gemeindeglied[er] lebendig bleibt.’ It was important that each individual felt that the church sought him or her: no parishioner was to be indifferent to the church or to believe that he or she was simply another tithe-payer. In total, during the 12 months up to May 1947, the St. Agnus chapter had conducted ca. 1,100 visits amongst the community.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² See: Mybes, 12-9; S. Lekebusch, ‘Beharrung und Erneuerung. Evangelische Frauenhilfe in unterschiedlichen Gesellschaftlichen Systemen 1926-1946’, in *100 Jahre Evangelische Frauenhilfe in Deutschland*, 81-3. In general: *Frauen in der Kirche. Evangelische Frauenverbände im Spannungsfeld von Kirche und Gesellschaft 1890-1945*, ed. A. Kuhn (Düsseldorf, 1985); J.C. Kaiser, ‘Das Frauenwerk der Deutschen Evangelischen Kirche. Zum Problem des Verbandsprotestantismus im Dritten Reich’, in *Frauen unter dem Patriarchat der Kirchen*, 189-211. *AKPS*, B1, 29, ‘Anmerkungen zur Übersicht über die Geschichte der Evangelischen Frauenhilfe in der Kirchenprovinz Sachsen, 1902-1952’, June 1952. In Halle, the activities of Frauenhilfe resumed in November 1945: *AKPS*, B1, 17, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht der Propstei Halle-Merseburg für das Jahr 1947’, 18/5/48. In Zeulenroda: *AEKZ*, ‘Chronik der evang.-luth. Kirchgemeinde Zeulenroda, 1944-1946’, 27/2/47.

¹⁶³ *AEKZ*, ‘Chronik der evang.-luth. Kirchgemeinde Zeulenroda, 1944-1946’, 27/2/47.

¹⁶⁴ *LKAD*, Kirchenvisitationen, 1945-48, KOP (Köthen) to LKRA (regarding St Agnus [Köthen]), 23/4/47.

The St. Agnus Frauenhilfe was also central to the aid efforts of the community. The women gathered collections for the refugees and visited them in the hope of easing their ‘seelische Not’. This was a difficult process given the differences between the local population and the newcomers, but Frauenhilfe was tasked with helping refugees by making them feel welcome through personal invitations to church events. In all, Pfr. K. concluded, Frauenhilfe was more necessary in 1947 than ever before. Kreisoberpfarrer Karl Windschild agreed, and lauded the role of Frauenhilfe in promoting community and collaborating with the clergy in prayerful faithfulness to God. Such was the success of the group at St. Agnus that he wished to extend Frauenhilfe throughout all parishes in the Köthen district.¹⁶⁵

As at St. Agnus, the women of Frauenhilfe throughout Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt helped where needed and often spearheaded church directives. In Magdeburg, for example, the provost reported in 1949 on how Frauenhilfe had organised food collections for orphans.¹⁶⁶ In Thuringia, where the Ohrdruf superintendent reported that popular enthusiasm to alleviate the deprivation of refugees was ‘extremely slight’, Hilfswerk concluded that only the industrious work of Frauenhilfe could give impetus to an ‘awakening’ of locals to help the refugees. 60-70 members of the local *Frauenshilfsgruppe* responded to the call with alacrity and their success was couched in endearingly conspiratorial terms:

Das heimlich Erhoffte und Erwartete trat wirklich ein. Die Gemeinde antwortete auf alle Hilferufe dadurch, dass sie Kleidungsstücke und Wirtschaftsgeräte in einem Umfange spendete, wie es in den verflorbenen 2 Jahren seit Bestehen der Orts-u.Kreisstelle nicht gewesen ist.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ *AKPS*, B1, 83, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht über die Propstei Magdeburg’, 12/5/49.

¹⁶⁷ *AEKO*, A 3.5.Nr 5: Hilfswerk, 1947-, ‘Bericht über die Prüfung der Kinderspeisung in Ohrdruf’, Hilfswerk (Eisenach), 28/10/48.

Just as the Churches wished for church communities in general to embrace the refugees in ‘Christian neighbourly love’, women in Frauenhilfe were specifically called upon to offer ‘sisterly love’. Theology thus underpinned charity: Christian faith was externalised through good works, and this sacrificial giving was simultaneously an anthropomorphic theodicy (to prove the goodness of God) and an evangelising tool.

A considerable number of churchmen considered women, and Frauenhilfe in particular, the heart of the post-war church at the grass roots. The keynote speaker at a Catholic meeting on pastoral care to women in Bad Kösen in May 1948 addressed the special position and value of women in maintaining community and upholding Christian morality in the face of the ‘destruction’ of a ‘social ethic’, which had been replaced by ‘naked materialism and utilitarianism’. Women, he said, instinctively felt the ‘deprecation of human dignity’ precipitated by individualism.¹⁶⁸ It seems that clergy throughout Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia shared this sentiment. The Zerbst pastors’ conference at Rosslau in 1948 approvingly observed the establishment of Frauenhilfe branches in Natho, Grimme, Dobritz, Deetz and Nedlitz, and concluded that a chapter was desirable in every parish.¹⁶⁹ In the Altmark, the provost commented on the remarkable rise of Frauenhilfe facilitated by two women in particular, who had offered consolation to many throughout the district, and had founded many new branches in the course of 1946.¹⁷⁰ In the Halle region, the faithful work of a Fräulein E. catalysed a ‘revival’ (Belebung) amongst a number of communities. The provost

¹⁶⁸ *BAM*, Seelsorge: Frauen- und Mütterseelsorge, 1948-1979, ‘Referat über Frauenseelsorge auf der Tagung des Seelsorgeamtes im Erzbischöflichen Kommissariat Magdeburg in Bad Kösen am 11. Mai 1948’.

¹⁶⁹ *LKAD*, Kreispastoral Versammlungen, 1945-65, ‘Ephoralbericht über das kirchliche Leben im Kirchenkreis Zerbst erstattet bei der Kreispastoralversammlung 19. Mai 1948 in Rosslau’.

¹⁷⁰ *AKPS*, B1, 16, Provost Schapper (Altmark) to pastors, January 1947; *AKPS*, B1, 83, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht’, Schapper, 27/4/49.

pronounced Frauenhilfe foremost amongst the various church organisations and noted how much depends on Fräulein E.'s 'discretion und reliability'.¹⁷¹

Such was the influence of women in a number of communities in Anhalt that there was even a certain liberalisation within the LKA towards gender roles. This is most apparent in visitation reports. At Drosa, Frau Dr. I. organised the local chapter of Frauenhilfe and collaborated 'faithfully' with the pastor.¹⁷² In Radegast, the nucleus of the community was mainly comprised of women from Frauenhilfe who conducted house visits and discussion evenings. These discussion evenings were 'extremely well attended' and attracted many women 'open' to the Christian gospel. The sermon on the occasion of the visitation played on the image of the woman, or the mother, in faithfulness and service to God. The pastor addressed John VI.47-57, and spoke about God's free gift of grace that ought to be received in thankfulness, and which gave the individual strength to live day-to-day. It was women, and mothers, who queued for rationed food and ensured the survival of their families.¹⁷³ In receipt of the report, the pastoral leader of the LKA, Georg Fiedler, praised the church council at Radegast and Cösitz for promoting Frauenhilfe as the centre of church life.¹⁷⁴ They were also reportedly the heart of communities in Grosspaschleben, Gröbzig and Wörpen, contributing within and without church walls.¹⁷⁵ Elsewhere, given the absence of men and the difficulties of promoting a vibrant church life at Hundeluft-Weiden, the Kreisoberpfarrer at Zerbst offered that a Frauenhilfe branch was the only answer, and

¹⁷¹ *AKPS*, B1, 17, 'Tätigkeitsbericht der Propstei Halle-Merseburg für das Jahr 1947', 18/5/48.

¹⁷² *LKAD*, Kirchenvisitationen, 1945-48, KOP (Köthen) to LKRA (regarding Drosa), 1/10/45.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, KOP (Köthen) to LKRA, (regarding Grossbadegast, Prosigk and Radegast, Cösitz), 18/3/47.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, Fiedler to GKR (Radegast, Cösitz), 5/5/47.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, KOP (Köthen) to LKRA (regarding Groß Paschleben), 1/4/48; *ibid.*, KOP (Köthen) to LKRA (regarding Gröbzig), 26/4/48; *ibid.*, KOP (Zerbst) to LKRA (regarding Wörpen), 30/6/48.

it must represent the nucleus of the community.¹⁷⁶ At Cörmigk, Frauenhilfe was renowned as a small group of women who loved the church.¹⁷⁷ Fiedler observed the presence and work of Frauenhilfe at Cörmigk with ‘joy’, and recommended that the congregation would be greatly served by the election of women to the church council. The ‘starting point’ of the church could then be the relationship between mothers and children, as in many places throughout Anhalt.¹⁷⁸ In a letter to the church council at Klepzig, also, Fiedler urged the importance of Frauenhilfe in promoting a healthy church life.¹⁷⁹ In November 1948, Fiedler wrote to the church council at Osternienburg and urged the immediate establishment of a Frauenhilfe chapter to foster a vibrant church life.¹⁸⁰ Lastly, Pastor K. at St. Agnus wrote of Frauenhilfe in this way: ‘Eine moderne Gemeinde kann die Arbeit der Frauenhilfe nicht entbehren. Sie ist der verlängerte Arm des Pfarrers.’ Times were changing, he claimed: while former clergy at St. Agnus had once rejected Frauenhilfe, it and the *Mütterkreis* had now moved into the centre of church life.

While one can not speak of ‘emancipation’ in a feminist sense, the importance and influence of women in church communities in the LKA at least promoted a more liberal clerical interpretation of gender roles in the post-war period than had been the case in the past.¹⁸¹ For example, although the Confessing Church had been largely populated by women (Manfred Gailus calculates that three out of four BK members in Berlin were female), women rarely, if ever, occupied leadership roles. They did much

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., KOP (Zerbst) to LKRA (regarding Mundeluft), 29/11/45.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., KOP (Köthen) to LKRA (regarding Cörmigk), 6/11/45.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., Fiedler to Pfr. S. (Cörmigk), 30/11/45.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., Fiedler to GKR (Klepzig), 29/1/47.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., Fiedler to GKR (Osternienburg), 18/11/48.

¹⁸¹ See, for the background in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: von Olenhusen, 13-6, esp. 16; Baumann, 90. Following the *Kirchenkampf*, in general: Phayer, 151. Phayer notes that the collapse of the Third Reich brought the ‘breakthrough’ of women into ministry (in the West), 237ff.

to sustain community life, but only had voice in decision-making situations when men presented their opinions by proxy.¹⁸² The German Christian faction during the Third Reich, in contrast, attracted fewer women; it was a masculine movement through and through, both in terms of leadership and theology.¹⁸³ Furthermore, while the war promoted offered some ‘liberalisation’ of gender roles, insofar as women were called into full-time employment, National Socialism in general offered significant continuities with the generally patriarchal values of Imperial and Weimar Germany.¹⁸⁴ Returning to the post-war Anhalt church, that Fiedler especially recommended the election of women to the local church council at Cörmigk, as was ‘already’ the case elsewhere in Anhalt, reflects that women had representation in post-war leadership positions. This seems largely due to the respect that they had accrued from faithful, assiduous and sacrificial work in the local church milieu over many years.¹⁸⁵ Regarding Pastor K. at St. Agnus in Köthen, however, there may be another dynamic at work. He was a former German Christian pastor and, in promoting the position of women in his community, he implied his separation from a movement infamous for its strident masculinity. Still, this motive is nowhere made explicit, and his elevation of women could just as well be taken at face value.

¹⁸² Gailus, *Protestantismus und Nationalsozialismus*, 653; D. Herbrecht, ‘Die mutigen Frauen des Kirchenkampfes in einer protestantischen Männergesellschaft’, in *Nationalprotestantische Mentalitäten*. 343-59 (esp. 344-5).

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 652-3; Bergen, *Twisted Cross*, 61-81. Though there were certainly women involved in the movement: Phayer, 129-52, 227.

¹⁸⁴ The literature on women and gender in the Third Reich is vast. See: I. Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship* (London, 2000), 176 (n. 49), 228-9 (nn. 43-4), 265-6 (n. 84). During the war, see: U. Frevert, ‘Frauen an der Heimatfront’, in C. Kleßmann (ed.) *Nicht nur Hitlers Krieg: der Zweite Weltkrieg und die Deutschen* (Düsseldorf, 1989), 51-69. See also: R.G. Moeller, *Protecting Motherhood: Women and the Family in the Politics of Post-war Germany* (Berkeley, 1993), 15ff.

¹⁸⁵ See also: *Frauen in der Kirche*, 263; von Olenhusen, 11.

Any ‘liberalising’ developments regarding the church and gender should not be overstated, however.¹⁸⁶ Women rarely speak for themselves in post-war church documents, and certainly not in reports sent to the central church leaderships. Their voices are generally only heard through applications submitted to the religious authorities for postings as church teachers, requests for intercessions for their husbands, fathers or brothers in denazification cases, and in the circulars of the Jungmädchenwerk and Frauenhilfe.¹⁸⁷ For example, the circulars written by Frau Hedwig Pfeiffer and Frau Adelheid Eitner of the Frauenhilfe in Thuringia offered calls to action, encouragement and information about upcoming collections and events. The circular for December 1948 encouraged members of Frauenhilfe to bless neighbours through charitable acts, and, in so doing, to promote a sense of community. This would lead to sacrificial love toward refugees in particular:

Was immer Gott uns auch erleben lassen wird, es soll uns alle zum Segen dienen, unsere Glaubenskraft wachsen lassen und vor allem auch die Gemeinschaft untereinander, die besonders den Flüchtlingen und Ausgewiesenen unter uns in schwesterlicher, dienender Liebe gehören muss.¹⁸⁸

In content, then, they largely echo other church circulars, such as those of Bishop Mitzenheim.¹⁸⁹ There was almost total unanimity between male and female descriptions and interpretations of the tasks of the church community in the post-war

¹⁸⁶ For example: a Catholic priest spoke at a conference in May 1948 that there must be some balance between the opposite poles of ‘equality with men’ and ‘sexual enslavement’ (Sexualismus): *BAM*, Seelsorge: Frauen- und Mütterseelsorge, 1948-1979, ‘Referat über Frauenseelsorge auf der Tagung des Seelsorgeamtes im Erzbischöflichen Kommissariat Magdeburg in Bad Kösen am 11. Mai 1948’. In the West, the Protestant and Catholic Churches were bastions of conservatism in ‘determining women’s place’: Moeller, *Protecting Motherhood*, 84ff, 94-102.

¹⁸⁷ Job applications often reflect long-standing church-going and faithfulness to the Christian Church despite the political transitions and influences in Germany in the early twentieth century. See, for example: *AEKE*, 306.E.24: Die Katacheten, Eisenberg 1948-1951, ‘Lebenslauf von Frau Paula O.’, undated; *AEKF*, 246. A number of applicants were, however, ‘politisch belastet’: *AEKO*, 114/2: Christenlehre, 1947-1961, LKR to Superintendents, 29/7/47. Circulars of the Jungmädchenwerk: *AEKF*, 404, EJMdW to Superintendents, 7/3/47, 28/2/47, 25/8/46, 12/12/46.

¹⁸⁸ *AEKO*, Ev. Frauendienst, 1947-1977, Rundschreiben, 5/48, Evangelische Frauenhilfe (Thür.), 12/48.

¹⁸⁹ See: *Ein Lebensraum für die Kirche*.

period. This is further reflected in gender collaboration at Frauenhilfe conferences, where men often gave the main sermons. For example, Pastor Hartmut Gedow spoke to ‘Geist des Glaubens, Geist der Stärke’ at a Frauenhilfe meeting in Berlin at the turn of 1948-9.¹⁹⁰ In Thuringia, Pastor Liebe from Mattstedt gave the ‘keynote’ sermon at the third conference of Frauenhilfe in the Apolda superintendence on 15 September 1946. Fräulein Schäfer from Jena then gave a talk at the ‘debrief’ (Nachversammlung) and spoke about faithfulness in service to Jesus Christ, who alone was able to heal the wounds of war. The conference, finally, was closed by a man, the head pastor at Utenbach.¹⁹¹

The women of Frauenhilfe also collaborated in the initiatives of the Churches’ primary aid organisations throughout Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt.¹⁹² Both the Catholic Caritas and the Protestant Hilfswerk groups attempted to alleviate physical and spiritual need by helping orphans and returning prisoners of war to find care and support, and by aiding in the erection and functioning of kindergartens and the Bahnhofsmision.¹⁹³ In many places Catholics and Protestants worked alongside each other in the Bahnhofsmision.¹⁹⁴ The Protestant Bahnhofsmision began in Berlin in the last decade of the nineteenth century and its Catholic counterpart followed in Munich in 1897. Both organisations began with a view to helping prostitutes and

¹⁹⁰ *AEKO*, Ev. Frauendienst, 1947-1977, ‘Ordnung und Predigtmeditation für den Eröffnungsgottesdienst zur Jahresaufgabe 1948/49 der Evangelische Reichsfrauenhilfe’, undated.

¹⁹¹ *GuH*, 1/25, 13/10/46, ‘Thüringer kirchliche Chronik’, 4.

¹⁹² On the involvement of Frauenhilfe in Halle: *AKPS*, B1, 48, Ev. Stadtmission Halle to Provost Halle/Merseburg, 20/11/47.

¹⁹³ Hilfswerk in the Altmark fed 2,920 children and many over 70 years old. The thankfulness of these ‘sonst meist vergessenen Altchen’ was reportedly touching: *AKPS*, B1, 83, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht’, Provost in the Altmark, 27/4/49. Elsewhere: *LKAD*, Hilfswerk der evangelischen Kirche in Anhalt, 1945-67, ‘Leistungsbericht über das 1. Quartal 1947,’ undated, *BAM*, Caritas: Caritasverband Magdeburg 1947-1952/1954-1970, ‘Jahresbericht für 1947 der Stadt-Caritas von Magdeburg und der Pfarr-Caritas von St. Sebastian’, undated. In the Magdeburg Commissariat, see: Joppen, Vol. 11, 44-50.

¹⁹⁴ On inter-confessional collaboration in Thuringia, in general, see: Fenwick, 83-5.

poverty-stricken women, as well as warning new arrivals of the dangers of big city life. Branches soon emerged all over Germany, almost exclusively organised and led by women. This too had certain emancipatory effects, as noted by Bruno Nikles and Jutta Schmidt.¹⁹⁵ A commission established in 1910 facilitated Catholic and Protestant collaboration, while the *Bahnhofsmissionen* doubled in size during the 1920s.¹⁹⁶ After 1933, however, the Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt took over much of the work and impeded ongoing confessional activities, before finally, for apparently military reasons, they were brought to a halt in 1939.¹⁹⁷ After the war, train stations were important hubs, and the *Bahnhofsmission* in Magdeburg, for example, began in August 1945 with full cooperation between Catholics and Protestants.¹⁹⁸

Caritas, Innere Mission and Hilfswerk therefore devoted much of their energies to charity work at the train stations, where the deprivation was often greatest.¹⁹⁹ The *Bahnhofsmission* was perhaps the most important service. Great numbers of poverty-stricken persons arrived in trains from the East with nowhere to go, and, as we have seen, it was of absolute importance that the refugees felt at home in the new communities.²⁰⁰ One refugee described the experience in the following terms:

Bahnhof Dessau, Sonnabend, d[em] 17 Mai 1947 nachm[ittags] zwischen 4 u[nd] 5 Uhr. Nach der Ausweisung aus Schlesien, nach 18 Tagen Quarantänelager hinter Stacheldraht, nach Entlassung und Gepäckverladen abgerackert [sic!] auf der Fahrt ins unbekannte Vaterland zur neuen Ansiedlung, vor langer Weiterreise 1. Umsteigeaufenthalt von etwa einer Stunde. Hunderte

¹⁹⁵ Nikles, 15; J. Schmidt, “Die Frau hat ein Recht auf die Mitarbeit am Werke der Barmherzigkeit”, in *Die Macht der Nächstenliebe*, 138-49.

¹⁹⁶ Nikles, 222-3.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 231-4, 242ff, 265-6.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 281.

¹⁹⁹ *LKAE*, A700, ‘Die Innere Mission und Ihre Werke sind in Thüringen verfassungsmäßig unmittelbarer Lebensäußerungen der Kirche’, Mitzenheim to Hans Asmussen (EKD), 11/1/47; *ibid.*, LKR to the pastorate, 7/9/48.

²⁰⁰ *BAM*, Dechanten: Allgemein, 1945-1972, ‘Dechantenkonferenz in Magdeburg’, 9/10/46.

von Menschen auf dem Bahnsteig dichtgedrängt. [J]eder sich selbst überlassen. Wie ein Magnet zieht da das grosse Schild an, das über die Trümmer von der Stirnwand der Baracke zum Bahnhof herübergrüsst – und einlädt:
Bahnhofsmision!²⁰¹

Thereafter, evacuees were often greeted, given food, shelter and washing facilities, before a clergyman read a passage from the bible and remained with them until all formal registration procedures had been completed.²⁰² The women of *Frauenhilfe* were involved from the beginning.²⁰³ Frau L. (1925) worked in the *Zeit* *Bahnhofsmision* in 1946-47. She responded to a church circular for volunteers (see Figure III below), because of the lack of workers relative to the level of need. Frau L. was always on call, and was often notified at short notice when refugee trains arrived unscheduled.²⁰⁴

By the end of 1945, the Eichsfeld Caritas had provided for 157,386 refugees and others in need of aid.²⁰⁵ In Magdeburg, there were approximately 300 volunteers from both confessions, and, on 1 March 1947, they combined to form the ‘Christliche Bahnhofsdiens’. This organisation was active night and day, and employed four full-time staff and 12 volunteers.²⁰⁶ According to the annual report of the Magdeburg provost for 1948, all collaborated energetically to offer help to refugees. The provost even received permission from the secular authorities to give a church service in the

²⁰¹ *LKAD*, Beschwerden, 1947, Kirchenrat S. (Lower Saxony) to LKRA, 13/6/47. On this occasion the petitioner was rudely received by the Protestant attendant so he went and spoke with a Catholic priest. The LKRA reprimanded the employee and ordered a written apology: *ibid.*, LKRA to Evangelische Stadt- und Volksmission, 23/6/47.

²⁰² *LKAE*, A701/III, 20, ‘Die Arbeit und die Entwicklung unserer Thüringer Bahnhofsmissionen seit 1945’, 6/4/1950; *DAW*, NL Robert Kümmert, ‘Frustriert oder mitten in Leben, Erinnerungen von Pfr. Robert Kümmert’, 1984, 40.

²⁰³ *AKPS*, B1, 18, ‘Bericht über die kirchliche Lage im Kirchenkreis Magdeburg’, 27/8/46.

²⁰⁴ Questionnaire from Frau Helga L. (Zeit), 1925.

²⁰⁵ See Fenwick, 95-8.

²⁰⁶ *BAM*, Caritas: Caritasverband Magdeburg 1947-1952/1954-1970, ‘Jahresbericht für 1947 der Stadt-Caritas von Magdeburg und der Pfarr-Caritas von St. Sebastian’, undated.

waiting hall of the *Hauptbahnhof* on Christmas Eve 1948.²⁰⁷ In Stendal, the operation was ‘a great blessing’ to many. In early 1947, the provost in the Altmark wrote to his pastors that the efforts of Hilfswerk and the Bahnhofsmission had helped thousands and many were ‘erquickt mit Liebeserweisen, die aus dem Glauben kommen’.²⁰⁸ In terms of the numbers, in the first quarter of 1949, the mission in the Altmark had offered support to 10,613 refugees and returning prisoners of war. 4,959 warm meals and over 7,000 drinks had been distributed, while donations of bread were countless. Medicine and medical assistance had been offered to 1,049 persons, while volunteers and clergy had given pastoral care to 5,267 persons.²⁰⁹

The Magdeburg *Stadtmission* wrote of the immense volume of work in a circular at the end of 1945. It called upon the entire community to help in view of the great strain placed on the city and on the church. The Bahnhofsmission stood in the centre of efforts, and 4,000 refugees slept in the *Hauptbahnhof* bunkers on most nights.²¹⁰

Often the effort was not sufficient, however. According to one report from the Magdeburg Caritas in 1947, the increasing dependence and need of the dispossessed was viewed as a corresponding increase in the possibilities of the organisation to help others. It recorded the joys and thankfulness of many recipients of aid.²¹¹ Yet, despite this relatively optimistic picture, painted at the end of 1947, the mood was doleful by the conclusion of the following year. The Magdeburg yearly report for 1948 questioned at the outset:

²⁰⁷ AKPS, B1, 83, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht über die Propstei Magdeburg’, 12/5/49.

²⁰⁸ AKPS, B1, 16, Provost Schapper (Altmark) to pastors, January 1947.

²⁰⁹ AKPS, B1, 83, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht’, Provost (Altmark), 27/4/49.

²¹⁰ AKPS, B1, 48, Stadtmission (Magdeburg) circular, December 1945. See also: Mehlhase, *Flüchtlinge und Vertriebene*, 70, 75ff.

²¹¹ BAM, Caritas: Caritasverband Magdeburg 1947-1952/1954-1970, ‘Jahresbericht für 1947 der Stadt-Caritas von Magdeburg und der Pfarr-Caritas von St. Sebastian’, undated.

Was bedeutet unsere Hilfe gegenüber dem Übermass an Not? Das ist wohl die bedrängendste Frage, die im Jahre 1948 täglich vor uns aufstand. Ist gemessen an den Übermass der Not all unser Bemühen nicht fruchtlos oder zum mindesten unzureichend?²¹²

The conclusion was not entirely downcast though. It referenced the over-arching and inevitable goodness of God and the change, however small, to which the organisation had contributed. This included the distribution of foreign donations, the support of kindergartens, the aid of the Bahnhofsmision and its 'very good' relations with the state authorities. From within the Magdeburg community, 158 requests for aid and support could be filled, 70 could not.²¹³ While not all need was alleviated, then, the dedication of the volunteers who bore their Christian faith beyond chapel walls established the existence of a church community in the sense that the church hierarchs would have it: believers who were willing to act sacrificially in faith.²¹⁴

Conclusion

The Church wanted members of the church community to attend church and shape behaviours beyond chapel walls. As we saw in the previous chapter, the clergymen could not compel the majority to visit church services. They also could not, on the whole, influence people to adopt their conceptions of morality, including refraining

²¹² Ibid., 'Jahresbericht der Stadt-Caritas Magdeburg über das Jahr 1948', undated.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ *BEA*, BGVP bzw. Fulda, 'Bericht aus der Seelsorgsarbeit, besonders Religionsunterricht', Bilzingsleben to BGVF, 25/4/47.

from theft and embracing and welcoming refugees. One pastor in Magdeburg, in fact, wrote a 'lamentation' on the situation in his parish as 'a voice from front'.²¹⁵

The moral and social influence of the Churches was insufficient to manipulate the everyday behaviours of most people, and religious life was generally limited to sacred space: the chapel and the churchyard. Many church communities maintained static traditions safeguarded by superannuated, conservative local elders. Religious leaders had failed to recognise adequately the changing nature of the post-war world. As one youth adjudged: 'Die Kirche bildet sich ein, viel beachteter zu sein als dies in Wirklichkeit der Fall ist...[D]ie Kirche in ihrer Gesamtheit [hat] noch nicht einmal die Sprache für die Gegenwart gefunden.'²¹⁶ The Churches remained rooted in long-standing theological interpretations and traditions. As it had rationalised in the Early Modern period following natural disasters and the Thirty Years War, the Protestant Church suggested that the German defeat in 1945 was God's punishment for apostasy. Similarly, furthermore, the solution was offered in religious admonishments to moral improvement and religious piety. Yet, in the past where this instrumentalisation of catastrophic events had led to a consolidation of Church authority and 'Untertanentreue', as Hartmut Lehmann and Manfred Jakubowski-Tiessen have discussed, the post-war Churches had to contend with a society that recognised little authority, even secular authority.²¹⁷

The Churches ultimately desired a communally organised society, in which Christianity was 'lived-out' in inter-connectedness and self-sacrifice. While there was little mention of salvation in church discourses, redemption came through adherence

²¹⁵ *AKPS*, B1, 189, Pfr. R. (Magdeburg) to Konsistorialrat A. (Magdeburg), 13/9/47.

²¹⁶ *GuH*, 3/8, 22/2/48, 'Wie die Jugend über die Kirche denkt', 4.

²¹⁷ M. Jakubowski-Tiessen/H. Lehmann, 8, 12.

to communal mores. Within this conceptual milieu, the actions of the ‘moral’ individual enhanced social order and fortified the Churches’ control over societal behaviours. The major issue in the post-war period was, however, that the Churches could not reconcile people to suffering and self-denial, and the Churches resorted to moralising as a means of asserting social control. The world of the corporeal took precedence and, as the Churches lamented, ethical idealism was rare.²¹⁸ Vice-President Thape observed, at meeting of the Saxon-Anhalt cabinet on 26 June 1946 regarding social disorder and crime, that a viable public morality required much more than the strictures of the Ten Commandments, which had manifestly failed in the past, most notably in preventing disorder after 1918 and 1933.²¹⁹

Some communities, however, maintained a vibrant chapel life. Women were often at the centre of such congregations, and these women, collected in Frauenhilfe chapters, were genuine ‘Trümmerfrauen’ who sustained the church at the grass roots and collaborated in the ‘reconstruction’ of local congregations. As Michael Phayer has noted in reference to the Nazi period, women were central to the Churches’ attempts to resist ‘de-Christianisation’.²²⁰ The women of Frauenhilfe, and the employees and volunteers in the Bahnhofsmision, carried Christian ‘neighbourly love’ beyond church walls to those in dire need. The engagement and influence of women in church communities in the post-war period, as we have seen in Anhalt in particular, ostensibly brought a certain ‘liberalisation’ of gender roles. Women were called to occupy positions on the leadership councils of local congregations, and Frauenhilfe groups were considered absolutely necessary to the spiritual health of communities.

²¹⁸ *AKPS*, B1, 27, ‘Bericht über die theologische Woche des evang. Jungmännerwerkes’, 24/10/47; *AKPS*, B1, 181, ‘Entschließung’, Bundes evangelischen Volkskirche, 10/4/47.

²¹⁹ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 789, 207, ‘Bericht über Jugendverwahrlosung’, W. Ulbrich (AVB/Jugendreferat), 27/6/46.

²²⁰ Phayer, 234ff.

The post-war world remained, nonetheless, a patriarchal world where ultimate political and religious authority remained with males.

In closing, the 're-Christianisation' schema cast the Churches in complete moral antithesis to National Socialism.²²¹ There were, however, certain moralising affinities and/or continuities with the Third Reich.²²² Members of the Protestant Church had blamed secularisation on the Jews after World War I, while a number of churchmen had also welcomed Hitler in 1933 believing that he would reverse the moral 'degradation' of the Weimar Republic and 're-align' Germany with their own conservative mores.²²³ The Churches, moreover, like the Nazi authorities, decried juvenile delinquency. There are significant parallels in reports that often reflect on the 'political, moral and criminal subversion of youth'.²²⁴ Both drew unambiguous links between sexual and criminal degeneracy and rebellion from authority. The moral absolutism of the Churches and the criminalisation of society of the KPD/SED shared the same pretensions to social control as the Nazi dictatorship. Just as the Nazi dictatorship had decreed that listening to the BBC or American swing music (much less dancing to it) were illegal and immoral activities, the post-war dance hall was understood as a den of (often youthful) iniquity.²²⁵ Church discourses about secularisation, lastly, had a far more insidious subtlety: Nazism, as the dénouement of popular German alienation from God, was diametrically opposed to the Churches and the Christian ethic, and 'Re-Christianisation', according to this reading, was an alibi

²²¹ Herzog, 74-6, 186-7.

²²² Ibid., 105ff.

²²³ Ibid., 3-5.

²²⁴ D. Peukert, 'Youth in the Third Reich', in R. Bessel (ed.), *Life in the Third Reich* (Oxford, 1987), 29; *LKAD*, Kreisoberpfarramt Bernburg 1945-1956, 'Bericht über die christliche Besprechung der Geistlichen des Kirchenkreises Bernburg am 21. Februar 1945'.

²²⁵ Peukert, 'Youth', 32; idem, *Inside Nazi Germany. Conformity, Opposition and Racism in Everyday Life* (London, 1987), 166-7; *BEA*, BGVP bzw. Fulda, Rohrberg to BGVF, 13/4/48.

that dissolved any continuities and absolved the Churches from responsibility for National Socialism and its crimes.²²⁶

²²⁶ See: Y. Michal Bodemann, 'Eclipse of Memory: German Representations of Auschwitz in the Early Postwar Period', *New German Critique*, 75 (1998), 61-72.

St. Nicolai

Eingang: 20. April 1946

Tgb. Nr. 6/129

Herr. Hilfswerk der Evang. Kirche.

Zeitz, 18.4.46.

Ich bitte bei der Abmündigung der Osterkollektgeber auch
sonst in jedem Kreisbezirk sehr dringend zu werben für persönliche
Mitarbeit beim Hilfswerk.

Mit dringenden notwendig

1. Für die Bahnhofsmission (Bahnhofsdienst) junge Mädchen und
rüstige Frauen, die wöchentlich oder 14-tägig einmal 5 Stunden
Dienst auf dem Bahnhof tun. Es sind jetzt so wenige Helferinnen
vorhanden das oft gerade die Evang. Bahnhofsmission im Gegensatz
zur Kath. Mission weil bei Ausfall kein Ersatz da ist.
(Mindestbedarf noch etwa 10 Helferinnen.)

Mit dringenden notwendig

2. eine jederzeit einsatzfähige Gruppe von Helferinnen, die bei beson-
deren Gelegenheiten zur Verfügung stehen, z.B. Ankunft von Umzie-
lertransporten, Rückkehr von Kriegesgefangenen, Hauszusammenkünfte u. s. w.
(Mindestbedarf 50 Helferinnen, um bei Ausfall jederzeit
arbeitsfähig zu sein.)

Meldungen an die Bezirkspfarrer erbeten, von da Weitergabe an mich
als den Beauftragten des Hilfswerks, der auch jede weitere Auskunft
gibt.

Herrn Pfarrer

[Handwritten signature]

[Handwritten signature]

Figure III: A request for volunteers in the Bahnhofsmission at Zeitz, 18/4/46 (source: AEKZeitz).

Chapter 5:

The Protestant churches in the shadows of German Christianity and National Socialism

Already before the fall of the Third Reich, the Allies determined to excise all remnants of fascism from the German public sphere.¹ The ensuing denazification from 1945, fundamentally settled at the Potsdam conference in July/August 1945, was particularly rigorous in the Soviet zone as the SVAG and their German communist allies wished to conduct a far-reaching, exemplary process.² Both instrumentalised denazification to remake eastern Germany and introduce a ‘cultural renewal’ in the bureaucracy, legislature, economy and in the education sector for example.³ Initially, spontaneous, unsystematic denazification from April 1945 was propelled by ‘Anti-fascists’ in collaboration with the Soviet, British and American occupiers.⁴ Formal denazification under the auspices of the respective state governments then ensued from July 1945 under legislation passed, for example, on 23 July and 6 September in

¹ M. Wille, *Entnazifizierung in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands 1945-48* (Magdeburg, 1993), 7-11; L. Niethammer, *Die Mitläuferfabrik. Die Entnazifizierung am Beispiel Bayerns* (Berlin, 1982), 32-4. On denazification in the Soviet zone see also: D. van Melis, *Entnazifizierung in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. Herrschaft und Verwaltung 1945-1948* (Munich, 1999); *Die Entnazifizierungspolitik der KPD/SED 1945-1948, Dokumente und Materialien*, ed. R.-K. Rößler (Goldbach, 1994); H.A. Welsh, *Revolutionärer Wandel auf Befehl? Entnazifizierungs- und Personalpolitik in Thüringen und Sachsen, 1945-1948* (Munich, 1989); A. Sperk, *Entnazifizierung und Personalpolitik in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone Köthen/Anhalt* (Dössel, 2003); T. Vogt, *Denazification in Soviet-Occupied Germany. Brandenburg, 1945-1948* (Cambridge [Ma.], 2000).

² Wille, *Entnazifizierung*, 13-4.

³ *Ibid.*, 210; van Melis, *Entnazifizierung*, 1; *Entnazifizierung. Politische Säuberung und Rehabilitierung in den vier Besatzungszonen 1945-1949*, ed. C. Vollnhals (Munich, 1991), 43; Welsh, *Revolutionärer Wandel auf Befehl?*, 167.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 21-43; Wille, *Entnazifizierung*, 15-43; van Melis, 68ff; Niethammer, *Die Mitläuferfabrik*, 147ff.

Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt respectively.⁵ The Soviets closely supervised denazification and intervened to radicalise or reinvigorate the process at different stages, especially in late 1946/early 1947 with the belated but rigorous application of the Allied Control Commission directive 24 of 12 January 1946, and from 16 August 1947 with SVAG order 201.⁶ German communists occupied leadership positions on many denazification commissions throughout the Soviet zone in 1945, and the party expanded its control such that the SED dominated the majority of all appointments under the auspices of order 201.⁷ By the formal conclusion of denazification in mid-1948, one report stated that 512,990 people had been dismissed from their positions.⁸ In Thuringia, approximately 105,630 persons had suffered punitive measures, and a statement from the Saxon Anhalt government noted that, by 19 July 1948, 60,000 former NSDAP members or officials in Nazi satellite organisations had lost their jobs.⁹

The first half of this chapter investigates Church and State interactions set against this background: how did denazification proceed in the Thuringian and Saxon-Anhalt churches? Despite secular demands, the Protestant churches pursued independent proceedings that were limited in scope. As discussed in chapters one and two, the

⁵ Welsh, *Revolutionärer Wandel auf Befehl?*, 43-9; Wille, *Entnazifizierung*, 55ff. Sperk and Welsh describe the 'four stages' of denazification: war's end to July 1945; July/August 1945 to December 1946; December/January 1947 to August 1947; August 1947 to mid-1948: Sperk, 45-52; H.A. Welsh, "'Antifaschistisch-demokratische Umwälzung" und politische Säuberung in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands', in K.-D. Henke/H. Woller (ed.), *Politische Säuberung in Europa, die Abrechnung mit Faschismus und Kollaboration nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Munich, 1996), 86-96.

⁶ Wille, *Entnazifizierung*, 68-9, 91, 134-5, 144ff, 163ff; Welsh, *Revolutionärer Wandel auf Befehl?*, 67-85; van Melis, *Entnazifizierung*, 93-118. Directive 24 is at: *Die Entnazifizierungspolitik der KPD/SED*, 64-81; order 201: *ibid.*, 147-9.

⁷ Wille, *Entnazifizierung*, 60, 168-70.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 208-9; Sperk gives 520, 734 (but notes that this is 'weit überhöht'), 51.

⁹ Thuringian figures stated in: Wille, *Entnazifizierung*, 209; *BArch*, DO 1, 25447, 'Abschlussbericht zum Befehl 201', Mdl Thüringen, 31/3/50. *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 93, 475, '3 Jahre Demokratische Entwicklung', MP office, 19/7/48. On the Saxony-Anhalt figures resulting from Order 201, see: Sperk, 49.

Soviet authorities largely refrained from interference in church affairs, predominantly for reasons of *Bündnis-* and *Deutschlandpolitik*. This policy also held for denazification, and the Soviet occupiers did not sanction any intervention into the church process despite the agitation of some German communists. The churches vigorously defended their independence, and their denazification served to maintain the integrity of the sacred sphere and the Christian witness. Judgements within the pastorate were not based on Nazi party membership *per se*, but rather on membership in the German Christian movement. While some of these pastors were also party members, their affiliation to German Christianity was often more damning. It is more accurate therefore to describe the church process as ‘de-German-Christianisation’.

In the second half of this chapter, I shall analyse the success of ‘de-German-Christianisation’. Did former German Christians reform, and how were they received by their *Kirchenkampf* antagonists, members of the Confessing Church (BK)? While Doris Bergen, Björn Mensing and Rainer Lächele touch on aspects of these questions in West Germany, they do not discuss the situation in the Soviet zone, nor do they explore post-war German Christian and Confessing Church relations in any depth.¹⁰ The case study of an individual pastor in Anhalt, Erich Elster, is instructive regarding the ‘conversion’ demanded of former German Christians after the war. While many clergymen reformed, German Christian practices nonetheless died hard in some parishes and ‘de-German-Christianisation’ was not by any means comprehensive. While all three churches adopted the idea of ‘rehabilitation’ and held retreats and meetings to re-educate and unify the pastorate, there was no complete unity in the LKA and KPS. The emphasis placed on the Anhalt and Saxon-Anhalt churches in this

¹⁰ Bergen, *Twisted Cross*, 206-28; Mensing, 224ff; R. Lächele, *Ein Volk, Ein Reich, ein Glaube. Die ‘Deutsche Christen’ in Württemberg 1925-1960* (Stuttgart, 1994), 179ff.

chapter is due, firstly, to the rich source material, and, secondly, to the lack of existing historiography. I have treated Thuringia elsewhere, and TheK denazification especially is well documented by historians.¹¹

Denazification in the churches

According to the churches, the corruption of the Christian gospel and the ‘falling away’ of the German people from Christianity necessitated a purification of the post-war establishment. The churches wished to put their own houses in order, and did so, with the acquiescence of both the American and Soviet occupation forces.

German Christians had widely infiltrated the pastorates in Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt during the Third Reich. In Thuringia, they had occupied the church council and were well represented amongst clergy. The TheK, in fact, was known as the most nazified church in Germany, not least due to its promotion of the most radical German Christian faction, the Nationalkirchliche Einung (NKE).¹² Bishop Hugo Rönck had been a Nazi party member since 1928, while the church council had almost exclusively comprised German Christians, including the Gestapo (Geheime Staatspolizei) informer Paul Lehmann.¹³ The Thuringian Confessing Church, centred in Gera and Altenburg, had been comparatively weak as many pastors had either left

¹¹ Fenwick, 144-82; T. Seidel, *Im Übergang der Diktaturen*, 166-297; Koch-Hallas, *Die Lutherisch-Evangelische Kirche*, 97-111.

¹² *EZAB*, 2/148, Dr Werner to Asmussen (EKD), 23/10/45.

¹³ *Ibid.*, Dr. Werner to Asmussen, 23/10/45; *ibid.*, Memorandum of the EKD, 21/11/46; Meier, *Der evangelische Kirchenkampf*, 491; Stegmann, 74, 111; *EZAB*, 2/148, Mitzenheim to the EKD, 6/1/46; *LKAE*, NL Mitzenheim, 3, Herr D. to Mitzenheim, 18/6/45.

the TheK – repelled by its emphases – or migrated to it, enticed by its reputation.¹⁴ After the war, a December 1945 report prepared for the LVB identified 121 party members in the pastorate, including eight SS (Schutzstaffel) men. The author concluded that it had been ‘completely contaminated by Nazism’.¹⁵ Another post-war report stated that approximately 350 of 800 pastors in the church had been German Christians.¹⁶

The post-war KPS too had to contend with a German Christian legacy, albeit much less radical. The NSDAP member and German Christian Friedrich Peter had assumed the bishop’s office in October 1933. He had swiftly reordered the church according to the *Führerprinzip* and, despite his departure in 1936 following the agitation of the Confessing Church, German Christians maintained a significant presence in the KPS.¹⁷ In June 1938, German Christians numbered 147 out of 999 pastors, though there was a stalemate during the war given the balance of power amongst them, the Confessing Church and the neutrals.¹⁸ After 1945, the state authorities took careful stock and, according to figures supplied by Kunisch to the personnel department of the Saxony-Anhalt government in November 1946, 170 clergymen and officials had been former NSDAP members out of approximately 1,400.¹⁹

¹⁴ *EZAB*, 2/148, Dr. Werner to Hans Asmussen (EKD), 23/10/45; Koch-Hallas, *Die Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche*, 65, 76.

¹⁵ *ThHStAW*, MVB, Nr. 210, Bl. 30-40r, Regierungsrat H. to Landesdirektor (LVB) Wolf, 27/12/45. Cf. A Soviet report on the church districts of Eisenach and Gotha from June 1946: *Die Politik der sowjetischen Militäradministration in Deutschland (SMAD)*, 106.

¹⁶ *Die evangelische Kirche nach dem Zusammenbruch*, 17.

¹⁷ Onnasch, 160-1.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 249-50, 296-7; Großbölting, 212. There were 319 BK and 524 neutrals in 1938.

¹⁹ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 800, 211, AKW to the state personnel department, 29/11/46; *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 469, 3881, ‘Bericht über die kirchlichen Verhältnisse der Provinz Sachsen’, Hübener to SMA, 4/12/45. See also: H. Schapper, ‘Als Bischof der Kirchenprovinz Sachsen’, in *Die evangelische Diaspora, Ludolf Müller, Bischof zu Magdeburg*, Sonderdruck, Heft 2, 3/1961 & 1/1962, 56.

Lastly, German Christians in the Anhalt church had dominated leadership positions in the Nazi dictatorship.²⁰ They had taken control of the church council as early as 1933 and, in 1939, a canon banned Jewish converts to Christianity from participating in public worship and partaking in communion. The German Christian Rudolf Wilkendorf proclaimed himself Church President with unimpeachable powers in 1944. His lackey and the head of the pastorate, August Körner, rigorously enforced church discipline and adherence to the German Christian program. He was, according to post-war testimonies at least, an excitable and combative man who had tirelessly attacked antagonists in the Confessing Church. In total, approximately one half of the post-war pastorate had belonged to the NKE.²¹

Upon arrival in Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt, the American occupiers collaborated with Confessing Church and neutral pastors to remove German Christians from leadership positions. In Dessau, the Americans dismissed Wilkendorf, with the support of the newly-installed mayor and the BK, and took church council members into custody. The reconstituted church council subsequently stripped the incumbent five Kreisoberpfarrer of their leadership positions.²² In the KPS, Müller and a lawyer in the Konsistorium, Bernhard Hofmann, agreed in August 1945 to remove all superintendents who had been German Christians or had opposed the Confessing Church.²³ Former German Christians could not occupy leadership positions in the church as this was an issue of ‘public credibility’. 18 superintendents subsequently

²⁰ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 800, 211, Kons. to MP, MdI, Dr. Kunisch, 21/2/47. See, on the LKA in the Third Reich: M. Müller, *Kurze Chronik des Kirchenkampfes in der Evangelischen Landeskirche Anhalts von 1933-1945* (manuscript, ca. 1950).

²¹ *LKAD*, Berichte über die Zustände u. über die Verhältnisse der evang. Landeskirche Anhalts, 1948-52, Müller to EKD, 29/5/48. Unsurprisingly KOP Karl Windschild’s son is critical of Körner: Windschild, 31.

²² *Ibid.*, OBM Dr. Walter (Dessau) to Wilkendorf, 26/5/45; *ibid.*, Müller to EKD, 29/5/48.

²³ *AKPS*, B1, Nr. 61, Hofmann to Müller, 27/8/45.

lost their positions, all of whom had been party members.²⁴ In Thuringia, the post-war church leadership swiftly dismissed Rönck, German Christian superintendents, administrators and other employees for egregious political activism.²⁵

In due course, the Protestant churches in Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia legislated systematic denazification. The LKA passed denazification regulations on 26 October 1945 after distributing questionnaires to all clergy and employees and requiring them to declare former memberships and allegiances.²⁶ The legal framework for church denazification reflected a strong reliance on the analogous state regulations of 6 September. While the touchstones of secular denazification differed between the five *Länder* of the Soviet zone until late 1946, the Saxon-Anhalt and Thuringian administrations distinguished between ‘active’ and ‘nominal’ party members; denazification proceeded with full force against the former.²⁷ The head of the Anhalt pastorate, Georg Fiedler, subsequently requested declarations from former German Christian pastors in two circulars, 26 October 1945 and 27 November 1945. The intent was to separate ‘activists’ from ‘nominal’ German Christians on the basis of past and ongoing connections to German Christianity and the Nazi party. Each was required to conform to the post-war order of the church, to profess orthodox belief as presented in the bible and confession, and to partake equally in pastoral communion.²⁸

Judgements were reached by a commission staffed by four members of the church

²⁴ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 800, 211, ‘Deutsche Christen und Mitglieder der NSDAP als Amtsträger der Kirche’, undated; Schultze, ‘Kirchenprovinz Sachsen’, 584.

²⁵ In Thuringia: *EZAB*, 2/148, ‘Bericht’, Mitzenheim, 16/9/45; *ibid.*, Dr. Schanze to Bishop Wurm, 6/6/4; *EZAB*, 2/149, Sammelrundschreiben, 11/47, 30/4/47; *LKAE*, A239/III, 103, Dr. Schanze to Mitzenheim, 13/9/45; *ibid.*, ‘Niederschrift’, 13/7/45; *ibid.*, 41, ‘Fragebogen’, undated.

²⁶ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 800, 211, ‘Grundsätze über die Säuberung Verwaltung und die Pfarrerschaft der evangelische Landeskirche Anhalts vom. 26.10.1945’. *Ibid.*, LKRA (Müller) to MP (KW), 8/9/45. J.J. Seidel, *Aus den Trümmern*, offers a brief account of denazification in the LKA: 397-405.

²⁷ Wille, *Entnazifizierung*, 134ff.

²⁸ *EZAB*, 2/121, ‘Rundbrief an die früheren D.C.-Pfarrer in der Anh. Landeskirche, zugleich zur Kenntnis an alle Geistlichen’, Fiedler, 27/11/45.

council and a delegate from each of the four political parties (SPD, KPD, CDU, LDPD).²⁹ The tribunal sat twice formally, on 9 November 1945 and 8 February 1946, while further trials proceeded when evidence allowed and when individual churchmen returned from Allied captivity.³⁰ There were three sentences handed down: German Christians who had occupied positions of leadership were to be released from service; other, less prominent members were to be transferred to another post pending a sincere confession; and, lastly, ‘nominal’ members were to be left in office, also on the condition of a sincere confession.³¹ The 9 November 1945 sitting decreed the removal of seven church employees, including one pastor.³² By May 1946, three further churchmen had been released from the service of the church, while six others had been transferred to different parishes.³³

As in Anhalt, the Thuringian church council initially distributed questionnaires to the pastorate.³⁴ The council subsequently passed the so-called *Reinigungsgesetz* on 12 December 1945, which provided for an internal church hearing of four clergy to review submissions. A BK member and three neutrals sat on the panel.³⁵ In June 1947, Mitzenheim lauded the process as a great success, writing to the EKD

²⁹ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 800, 211, ‘Grundsätze über die Säuberung Verwaltung und die Pfarrerschaft der evangelische Landeskirche Anhalts vom. 26.10.1945’.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, LKRA to AKW, 10/5/46.

³¹ *Ibid.*, ‘Grundsätze über die Säuberung Verwaltung und die Pfarrerschaft der evangelische Landeskirche Anhalts vom. 26.10.1945’.

³² *Ibid.*, ‘Sitzung der Überprüfungscommission für die Säuberung der Verwaltung und des Pfarrerstandes der Ev.Landeskirche Anhalts’, 9/11/45.

³³ *Ibid.*, LKRA to AKW, 10/5/46.

³⁴ On the questionnaires, see: *LKAE*, A122/XVI, 71, 11/9/45. For an example of a *Lebenslauf*, see: *ThHStAW*, Mdl, 536, 69, *Lebenslauf*, Pf. H., undated.

³⁵ *LKAE*, A155, 59, ‘Die rechtliche Neuordnung der Thüringer evangelische Kirche’, Oberkirchenrat G. Lotz; *LKAE*, A122/XVI, 102, 2/10/45, 123, 13/11/45, 131-132, 23/11/45, 134, 11/12/45, 139; 158, 17/12/45; *EZAB*, 2/148, Mitzenheim to Bishop Wurm, 3/1/47. As in Anhalt, church legislation in the TheK also took impetus from the secular equivalent in Thuringia of 28 May 1945.

chancellery in Berlin that the German Christian ‘affair’ was now finished.³⁶ The Thuringian council formally dissolved the tribunal in May 1948 after 22 superintendents and 84 clergymen had been dismissed.³⁷ However, this comparatively high number did not necessarily reflect a particularly rigorous process, as Lothar Kreyssig in the KPS observed in a letter to Dr. Kunisch in July 1946; it merely reflected that the Thuringian church had been ‘totally swamped’ by NKE members.³⁸

The KPS leadership passed legislation to establish a denazification commission in January 1946.³⁹ The commission oversaw two tribunals and comprised a chairman and two members (one jurist, one churchman).⁴⁰ While German Christians in leadership positions were slated for immediate dismissal, the legislation applied to all other former German Christians, especially ‘activists’.⁴¹ As of 28 June 1946, 41 clergy and 34 employees had been tried before the church commission and a number of other cases were ongoing. While 25 pastors had been suspended from their duties temporarily, or relocation to another parish was pending, the commission retained the defendant in almost all cases.⁴² By November 1946, 19 cases remained undecided, while three more had been opened.⁴³ Altogether, according to AKW figures, the commission dismissed four churchmen from service, transferred six to other posts,

³⁶ *LKAE*, A776, 98, Mitzenheim to the EKD, 21/6/47.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, Mitzenheim to the EKD, 21/6/47; *LKAE*, A239/III, ‘Dankesschreiben’, 14/6/48. For an exhaustive discussion of the figures, see: T. Seidel, *Im Übergang der Diktaturen*, 256-8.

³⁸ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 800, 211, Kons. to Kunisch, 13/7/46. See also: *ibid.*, Kreyssig to Bezirkskommandatur (Magdeburg), 28/6/46.

³⁹ On denazification in the KPS, see: J.J. Seidel, *Aus den Trümmern*, 407-12.

⁴⁰ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 800, 211, Kons. to Kunisch, 13/7/46; Schapper, 56. *AKPS*, B1, 82, ‘Notverordnung zur Wiederherstellung eines an Schrift und Bekenntnis gebundenen Pfarrerstandes’, VKL, January 1946.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Schapper, 56; *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 800, 211, Kreyssig to Bezirkskommandatur (Magdeburg), 28/6/46. In July: *ibid.*, Kreyssig to Kunisch, 20/7/46.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, Müller to Kunisch, 6/11/46.

relocated 13 superintendents after demotion, placed four pastors on probation and advised 're-education' courses for approximately 90 others.⁴⁴ The church opened few prosecutions after 1946, despite state demands, and the Konsistorium formally closed proceedings after discussions with Minister President Hübener and Dr. Kunisch on 28 November 1947 and 15 December 1947.⁴⁵

The secular authorities and denazification in the churches

The secular authorities disapproved of the denazification results in the TheK and the KPS. They were well aware that former German Christians and NSDAP members remained in office. A Red Army officer, Major Arustamov, submitted a report on denazification in June 1946 that listed no fewer than 54 suspected former Nazis in the Gotha and Eisenach church districts. While the Major advised intervention, there was no action from the SVATH in Weimar.⁴⁶ Several months later, the head of the Propaganda Section of the SVATH, M.M. Varakin, reported to Tiul'panov in Karlshorst that:

Under the Nazi regime the [Thuringian] church was completely awash with reactionary elements. Even now scarcely any efforts are being made to cleanse the church of them. The present-day clergy gives an outward show of purging itself of former members of the 'Deutsche Christen', the most reactionary part of the former clergy. But as reactionary elements are dismissed, new ones are admitted in their place.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Ibid., AKW to Personnel Department, 29/11/46; cf. Schapper, 56.

⁴⁵ Although a few cases were ongoing: *LHASA*, K2, 800, 211, Konsistorium to MP, 28/1/48.

⁴⁶ *Die Politik der Sowjetischen Militäradministration in Deutschland (SMAD)*, 106.

⁴⁷ *SVAG i religioznye konfessii Sovetskoi zony okkupatsii Germanii, 1945-1949*, 182.

Despite this critique, nothing was done, and the Soviets did not intervene in either the Protestant or Catholic Churches. Concerned with a ‘unifying’ *Bündnispolitik* and the separation between Church and State, which would promote the KPD/SED agenda while also keeping Soviet options open *vis-à-vis* the West, the proclaimed ‘freedom of religion’ extended to church independence in denazification matters.

This policy notwithstanding, however, there were instances where zealous Red Army officers threatened the Church and State distinction. The pastor at Zwötigen, near Gera, remonstrated to the Thuringian church council that sweeping Soviet denazification measures threatened the local GKR.⁴⁸ In Saxony-Anhalt, Dr. Kunisch and the former Nationalkomitee Freies Deutschland support officer and head of the Propaganda Section of the SVAS-A, Major Bobkov, spoke on 17 April 1946 and agreed that intervention in church denazification was an ‘urgent task’.⁴⁹ Bobkov opposed unilateral church decision-making in denazification matters, and he urged the AKW to observe it while agitating for an acceleration of the process.⁵⁰ By November, however, there had been no secular intervention and Bobkov had changed his mind. He announced to Kunisch that the responsibility for denazification should remain with the Churches: there was no need for state involvement.⁵¹ This *volte-face* is unsurprising given that Bobkov was a low-level officer who only reported to his superiors (like Varakin in Thuringia) and never determined policy. The SVAG

⁴⁸ *LKAE*, A239/III, 152, Pfr. (Zwötigen) to Mitzenheim, 6/12/45.

⁴⁹ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 469, 3881, ‘Vermerk’, Bobkov/Kunisch, 18/4/46. On Bobkov, see: Foitzik, *Sowjetische Militäradministration*, 458.

⁵⁰ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 469, 3881, ‘Vermerk’, Bobkov/Kunisch, 18/4/46.

⁵¹ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 800, 211, AKW to Personnel department, 29/11/46.

maintained its distance and often ignored or restrained the agitations of individual Soviet officers and German communists.⁵²

Both the TheK and the KPS were compelled to defend their denazification measures from German communist critiques that pushed for the removal of all ‘compromised’ church officials.⁵³ One report, prepared for the Thuringian LVB in December 1945, maintained that the pastorate had retained the same personnel and organisation as in the Third Reich, and labelled two former party members in the Eisenach church administration as ‘dangerous revanchists’. The author recommended that the State appoint a churchman sympathetic to socialism to undertake a ‘political purification’. He also broached legal proceedings against the church leadership for sabotaging ‘political reconstruction’.⁵⁴ A subsequent report submitted to the LVB in early 1946 continued in the same vein, lamenting that the *Reinigungsgesetz* was in reality a ‘clever disguise’ (geschickte Tarnung) for incomplete denazification.⁵⁵

On 21 May 1946, the Weimar-based *Abendpost* published an article that attacked the church denazification process. This piece, ‘Wo steht die evangelische Kirche Thüringens?’, blamed Mitzenheim personally and condemned church policy in retaining ‘fascist reactionaries’ who sought to undermine the nascent ‘democracy’. The anonymous author claimed that Mitzenheim had brazenly refused to dismiss former party members and, therefore, had burdened the church and the Christian message with their political legacy. The author alleged, moreover, that 85 percent of the pastorate had been German Christians, even including the names of former

⁵² See, in general: J.J. Seidel, *Aus den Trümmern*, 390.

⁵³ See, in Thuringia, for example: *LKAE*, A239/IV, the FDGB to LKR, 4/10/45; *ibid.*, LKR to FDGB, 5/11/45.

⁵⁴ *ThHStAW*, MVB, Nr. 210, Bl. 30-40r., Regierungsrat H. to Landesdirektor (LVB) Wolf, 27/12/45.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, Bl.10-11r., ‘Nachtrag’, undated.

NSDAP members still in church office.⁵⁶ The church council was fearful that this public attack would incur a Soviet reaction and intervention into religious affairs. Exculpatory responses were accordingly swift and vigorous. One church official demanded an immediate retraction, while the council member Dr. Hertzsch refuted the ‘facts’ with a letter to the *Abendpost* editor and an article in the 16 June 1946 edition of *Glaube und Heimat*.⁵⁷ In the letter, Hertzsch maintained that only 13.3 percent of the pastorate had been German Christians at the end of the war; these few had since reformed and provided valuable service. Mitzenheim also protested, writing a letter to the Thuringian Minister President that challenged the reliability of the *Abendpost* evidence.⁵⁸ Church fears were unfounded, nonetheless, as Kolesnichenko took no action.

The Saxon-Anhalt AKW was critical of denazification in the KPS, and secular agitation for intervention was persistent. In November 1945, however, Dr. Wagner counselled the Minister of the Interior to avoid importing secular standards of denazification into the church. He reasoned that this would threaten and damage not only ‘democracy’ and the Christian Church, but the entire *Volk*.⁵⁹ This position was adjusted somewhat in the course of 1946. In a letter dated 3 July 1946, Dr. Kunisch recognised and criticised the ‘extreme leniency’ of church measures. He disapproved of the ‘simple’ and ‘insufficient’ sentence of transferring individual clergymen to

⁵⁶ *Abendpost*, 21/5/46, ‘Wo steht die evangelische Kirche Thüringens?’, anonymous, 1-2. See also: Koch-Hallas, *Die Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche*, 102-7; T. Seidel, *Im Übergang der Diktaturen*, 252-66; Fenwick, 147-9.

⁵⁷ *EZAB*, 2/148, Dr. Stiegel to *Abendpost*, 6/46; *GuH*, 1/8, 16/6/46, ‘Wie steht es um die Thüringer evangelische Kirche?’, Dr. Hertzsch, 3.

⁵⁸ *EZAB*, 2/148, Mitzenheim to the EKD, 4/6/46; *ibid.*, Mitzenheim to Präsidialdirektor Staas, 6/46.

⁵⁹ *LHASA*, K2, MAG, 800, 211, Wagner to Vizepräsident Siewert, 2/11/45.

other parishes within the church.⁶⁰ A subsequent report revealed Kunisch's exasperation as he railed against the Konsistorium for completely ignoring repeated calls for thorough denazification; approximately 150 'compromised' (belastet) pastors remained in the KPS.⁶¹

The Konsistorium, nonetheless, generally ignored secular complaints about individual churchmen. On 25 April 1946, Kunisch wrote to the church leadership regarding Pastor E. in Wansleben/See, who had sent a letter couched in nationalistic language to front-line soldiers in 1940.⁶² Pastor E. responded that the letter was merely an extension of his pastoral work. He was no Nazi, and he had even experienced conflicts with the local party leadership. Though they recognised militant nationalism in the missive, KPS hierarchs accepted E.'s defence and rejected Kunisch's investigations because 'diese Blindheit damals ein leider allzu verbreiteter Zustand, als dass hieraus gegen Pfarrer E. ein besonderer Vorwurf entnommen werden könnte.'⁶³ At least before the secular authorities, Protestant nationalism was not an egregious offence because it was 'widespread'. In another instance, the mayor in Herzberg/Elster informed the police in October 1946 that a former party member remained as the local pastor. The clergyman had allegedly joined the party on 1 November 1930 and held the membership number 9,356. The church authorities responded that the pastor had not been an 'activist', but rather had been persecuted by Nazis; his membership number, moreover, was 347,740, not 9,356. Kunisch

⁶⁰ Ibid., Kunisch to Kons., 3/7/46. Kreyssig responded that six church employees had lost their positions: *ibid.*, Kons. to Kunisch, 13/7/46.

⁶¹ *LHASA*, K2, MAG, 469, 3881, 'Bericht', Kunisch, Halle, 26/7/46.

⁶² *LHASA*, K2, MAG, 800, 211, Kunisch to Kons., 25/4/46; *ibid.*, Kunisch to Kons., Anlage, 25/4/46; *ibid.*, Kunisch to Kons., 3/6/46.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, Müller to AKW, 16/7/46.

subsequently informed the chief of police that the church ruling was final and the man would remain in office.⁶⁴

At the end of 1946 and early 1947, the SVAG implemented directive 24, which revoked previous 'rehabilitation' measures and standardised the definition of 'active' NSDAP members.⁶⁵ The changing ground, again with the application of order 201 from mid-1947, meant that many individuals were tried as many as three times before secular tribunals.⁶⁶ It is unsurprising, then, that 1947 brought fresh tension between Church and State. The Saxon-Anhalt government even mooted the imposition of state regulations into the KPS. In February 1947, Minister President Hübener sent his brother in law, Bishop Müller, a personal letter expressing concern at the perceived lack of denazification in the KPS. He condemned the retention of so many former German Christian pastors, men who had celebrated Hitler as the greatest 'Christian' (Tatchristen) who had ever lived. Hübener contended that the church reticence to denazify undermined its relationship with secular authorities: even officials who had formerly advocated the independence of the religious process had recently come to re-evaluate this opinion.⁶⁷ Just over two weeks later, representatives of the KPS and the LKA met with Dr. Kunisch to discuss legislation about trying church cases before secular tribunals.⁶⁸ Lothar Kreyssig brusquely rebuffed the proposal and, in a subsequent letter, alleged that any policy change would create considerable unrest. He argued that the KPS had introduced harsh measures (such as the removal of party

⁶⁴ Ibid., Police to AKW, 15/10/46; *ibid.*, Kunisch to Kons., 17/10/46. See also: *ibid.*, Kunisch to Police, undated; *ibid.*, Kons. to Kunisch, 8/11/46; *ibid.*, Sup. Herzberg to Kons., 4/11/46; *ibid.*, Kunisch to Police, 12/11/46.

⁶⁵ Wille, *Entnazifizierung*, 134ff.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 142ff, 200ff.

⁶⁷ AKPS, B1, 82, Hübener to Müller, 3/2/47.

⁶⁸ LHASA, MAG, K2, 800, 211, Kons. to MP, MdI, Dr. Kunisch, 21/2/47.

members from senior positions) out of loyalty to the state authorities, despite fundamental theological reservations. After all, the formalisation of church denazification guidelines on 15 February 1946 was a testament to the church's commitment to excise fascist influences, while the accused had already been tried and verdicts handed down; retrying cases would violate *ne bis in idem*.⁶⁹

The Ministry of the Interior, however, continued to put pressure on the KPS leadership. While the church acquiesced to re-establishing a denazification commission in March 1947, a party functionary stated in a letter of 24 April 1947 that its denazification had thus far offered 'no satisfactory result'.⁷⁰ There was ongoing discontent and, in June 1947, another letter to the KPS leadership indicated that intervention was 'urgent', and the state denazification commission (Säuberungsausschuss) would forthwith investigate church cases.⁷¹ The Konsistorium responded with alarm: the church must have responsibility for religious life and any state intervention would greatly impair Church and State relations.⁷² The secular threat, however, came to nothing; there was no interference, and prelates rebuffed subsequent complaints. For instance, the KPS tribunal ruled in November 1946 to retain the former NSDAP member, Pastor R., who had reportedly renounced Nazism in 1942 and entered the Confessing Church movement.⁷³ The regional and state denazification commissions also tried the case and decreed on 8 April 1948 that R. ought to be dismissed immediately. Bishop Müller inveighed against this infraction of

⁶⁹ Ibid., Kons. to MP, Minister des Innern, Dr. Kunisch, 21/2/47; *AKPS*, B1, 60, KL to Minister des Innern, 5/7/47.

⁷⁰ Ibid., Minister des Innern to KL, 24/4/47.

⁷¹ Ibid., Minister des Innern to KL, 19/6/47.

⁷² Ibid., Kons. to Minister des Innern, 25/6/47.

⁷³ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 800, 211, Kons. to AKW, 5/5/48. Ibid., Kreyssig to Kunisch, 6/11/46; *ibid.*, Kons. to MdI, 5/5/48.

church authority and he turned to the Soviet occupiers.⁷⁴ Following correspondence and a number of meetings, Major Belov sent an inquiry to Karlshorst. There was only silence, however, and Müller interpreted this as tacit confirmation of the church decision. Later, in December 1948, Belov overruled an earlier decision of the local Soviet commander in Calbe to ban Pastor R. from preaching altogether. Further German communist remonstrations about R. into 1949 were to no avail.⁷⁵ In all, both the TheK and the KPS deflected secular interventions into their denazification procedures with Soviet knowledge and indulgence. The unilateral attempts of local mayors, council and police officials to dismiss churchmen largely failed.⁷⁶

On the other hand, why the state government approved the Anhalt denazification process reveals why it criticised measures in the TheK and the KPS. It was not because the Anhalt church dismissed a greater number of pastors: only a tenth of former NSDAP members lost their jobs in both the Anhalt and Thuringian churches. According to the AKW, of the 20 clergymen in the Anhalt church who had been party members, and the 12 who had been affiliated to Nazi satellite organisations, two had been dismissed, four had been relocated and two had been demoted from the office of Kreisoberpfarrer by 29 November 1946. There were 36 other employees of the church who had been party members, and, of these, one had been fired. This was adjudged a satisfactory result, and the AKW accepted that those who remained in church office were 'acceptable' (tragbar).⁷⁷ The participation of representatives from the anti-fascist parties was fundamental to secular approval; they drafted questionnaires distributed

⁷⁴ Ibid., Kons. to AKW, 27/9/48.

⁷⁵ Ibid., Kons. to MdI, 27/3/49. Müller also describes this incident in his report on the 6 sitting of the church synod on 10 May 1949: *AKPS*, C1, 82, 'Bericht', Müller, 10/5/49.

⁷⁶ Schapper, 56.

⁷⁷ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 800, 211, AKW to Personnel department, 29/11/46.

amongst the pastorate and sat on the tribunal, possessing an important advisory role. The church and state authorities were also in regular contact. A member of the church council, for instance, assured the AKW in September 1945 that the questionnaires had been distributed amongst the pastorate and denazification charges were pending.⁷⁸ In a letter dated 12 December 1946, another council member responded to an AKW missive of 29 November, advising that recent proceedings had acquitted three pastors and two church officials. He provided rationales for the verdicts, including the two officials' positive attitudes to the SED.⁷⁹ The secular authorities were concerned primarily with participation and control. This was bloc politics at work in church denazification. The KPD/SED was able to partake in and influence the Anhalt denazification proceedings through representatives on the tribunals. The KPS and TheK leaderships, on the other hand, did not invite the participation of party functionaries and conducted processes wholly independent of the secular authorities.

Church resistance, 'de-German-Christianisation', forgiveness and pragmatism

Several considerations ensured that the Church province of Saxony and the Thuringian church rejected state involvement and prosecuted 'lenient' denazification, at least according to secular critics. Firstly, the churches presented themselves as opponents of National Socialism. Lothar Kreyssig described the church not only as the sole institution to avoid *Gleichschaltung* with the Nazi State, but also as the

⁷⁸ Ibid., Müller (LKRA) to AKW, 8/9/45.

⁷⁹ Ibid., LKRA (Körmigk) to AKW, 12/12/46.

singular source of effective ‘active and passive’ resistance. He understood the entire period of the Third Reich as a ‘self-purification’ in a letter to the state government:

In der Tat hat eher die Entnazifizierung als Akt der inneren Reinigung in der Kirche schon mit dem Kirchenkampf selbst, also 1933, begonnen und in einem 12-jährigen, nie zu Ende gekommenen Ringen zur vollkommenen Scheidung der Geister geführt... Die Kirche hatte 1945 bereits einen 12-jährigen Selbstreinigungsprozess hinter sich.⁸⁰

This position is understandable given Kreyszig’s history as an opponent of the Nazi euthanasia program. He was walking evidence for the resistance of the Church and the persecution that some churchmen had endured at Nazi hands. The end of the Third Reich and the vanquishing of the German Christians was, moreover, in one sense ‘self-purification’ in that it left the Confessing Church to guide post-war German Protestantism. The German Christians, furthermore, had not secured the upper hand in the KPS, like in other churches such as the LKA and the TheK. Only a few clergy remained German Christians up until the bitter end, while almost all renounced Nazism and German Christianity at least outwardly. The chaff had been stripped away; the grain remained. This did not mean for Kreyszig, however, that there was no guilt or church responsibility for which to atone (see below, p. 308).

Following from this, the KPS leadership alleged a quantitative distinction between the Church and State processes. That is, the number of ‘compromised’ individuals in the church was comparatively lower than in the secular administration. The Konsistorium questioned the Interior Ministry in July 1947: ‘Wo ist die weltliche Verwaltung, welche nach der Feindüberwältigung 1945 gleich der Kirche kaum mehr als 10% Parteimitglieder in Ihrem Reihen hatte?’⁸¹ The church’s claim, moreover, that Christians had resisted the Nazi State led to the impression that the two were

⁸⁰ Ibid., Kons. to MP, MdI, Dr. Kunisch, 21/2/47.

⁸¹ AKPS, B1, 60, Kons. to MdI, 25/6/47.

antagonists, sharing nothing in common. National Socialist elements in the church had subverted the essence of Christianity, and the church process was therefore ‘factually’ (sachlich) and ‘legally’ (rechtlich) different from secular denazification.⁸² The Thuringian church too, despite its reputation, presented a picture of church resistance to Nazism. The implication was, if one was a Christian, one could not have been a Nazi, or a Nazi collaborator for that matter.⁸³ This dichotomy was exemplified by representations of the persecution of the Christian Church during the Third Reich in *Glaube und Heimat*.⁸⁴ The first issue of the re-constituted newspaper, for instance, included an article entitled ‘Ein Christ erlebte Buchenwald’. The author remembered the courage and faith of Martin Niemöller, Paul Schneider and Alfred Leikam. The focus was Schneider, who had died in Buchenwald in July 1939.⁸⁵

Secondly, the emphasis of the KPS and the TheK was on ‘purifying’ the pastorate of former political ‘activists’. In this, the churches implicated former German Christians, while party members (almost all designated ‘nominal’) often escaped censure.⁸⁶

Where secular denazification was predicated on NSDAP membership, the process amongst the pastorate focussed on former German Christians. In this sense, denazification was actually ‘de-German-Christianisation’.⁸⁷ An internal Thuringian state report of early 1946 viewed the *Reinigungsgesetz* as an instrument of window-dressing as members of the LKR had already determined to keep former party members in employment. The author concluded that denazification was more directed

⁸² *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 800, 211, Kons. to MP, MdI, Kunisch, 21/2/47. On the figure of 10 percent, see also: *ibid.*, Kons. to Kunisch, 13/7/46.

⁸³ See Fenwick, 161-2, 170-1.

⁸⁴ See, for example: *GuH*, 1/2, 5/5/46, ‘Vor einem Jahr’, Mitzenheim, 1; *GuH*, 2/8, 23/2/47, ‘Pf. Ernst Otto zum Gedächtnis’, Sup. Bauer (Stadtroda), 3.

⁸⁵ *GuH*, 1/6, 2/6/46, ‘Ein Christ erlebte Buchenwald’, Stud.-Rat Kehrl, 3.

⁸⁶ On the criteria in general, see: Wille, *Entnazifizierung*, 51-2.

⁸⁷ Cf. Bergen on the American zone: *Twisted Cross*, 208-10.

against former German Christians than against Nazis; the church had proceeded against a certain religious ‘teaching’ (Lehrmeinung) and not against Nazism. Former Nazis who had been retained in office were even ‘esteemed’.⁸⁸ While the latter allegation was perhaps embroidered, the thrust of the report must be considered a largely accurate evaluation. Bishop Mitzenheim, for instance, interceded on behalf of an Eisenach church elder and former German Christian in 1947. The man was placed on trial in Darmstadt for his activities as a former party member. His allegiance to the Nazi party was, however, superfluous to Mitzenheim, who was concerned largely with the man’s relationship to German Christianity. As a German Christian, the bishop interceded, the man was not a radical and had not featured in the front ranks of the *Kirchenkampf*.⁸⁹

The corruption of the Christian gospel also provided the basis for indictment in the KPS. An ‘active’ German Christian had publicly harmed the gospel by his propagation of German Christianity and by his neglect of the pastoral ‘obligation to love’.⁹⁰ Party membership, though, was often excused if the defendant had served the Church faithfully. This was no exact science. In a letter to Minister President Hübener in early 1947, Müller admitted that it was difficult to know what was the appropriate evaluation method. He acknowledged that the ideas of Nazism had found significant resonance in the heady days of 1933 and 1934: any given pastor may have joined the Nazi Party to achieve laudable goals, including the evangelisation of the German *Volk*.⁹¹ Many ‘faithful’ pastors had indeed viewed National Socialism as a vehicle for

⁸⁸ *ThHStAW*, MVB, Nr. 210, Bl.10-11r, ‘Nachtrag’, undated.

⁸⁹ *LKAE*, A193/III, Mitzenheim to the chairman of the Darmstadt hearing, 24/6/47; see also: *ibid.*, Dr. Biehl to Mitzenheim, 8/2/48.

⁹⁰ *AKPS*, B1, 82, ‘Deutsche Christen und Mitglieder der NSDAP als Amtsträger der Kirche’, undated.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, Müller to Hübener, 2/47.

realising long-standing Christian hopes for re-Christianisation.⁹² This ‘evangelising’ intent was thus often accepted as a mitigating circumstance, as was a literal interpretation of Romans XIII (regarding obedience to authority), and an affiliation to the ‘Berlin German Christians’ (who were moderate than the NKE).⁹³ It was held, moreover, that many pastors had simply been deceived by believing earnestly in the substance and veracity of point 24 of the Nazi party program that postulated that the movement resided on the foundation of ‘positive Christianity’.⁹⁴ The anti-Semitic implications of point 24 apparently carried little force. Müller accordingly admitted to a certain understanding for former party members and/or German Christians:

Es sind z. T. nicht die schlechtesten Leute, denen es daran lag, über die Grenzen einer überlieferten Kirchlichkeit hinaus eine neue Möglichkeit der Verkündigung zu gewinnen und festzuhalten.⁹⁵

So it was that a pastor who was a former party member would only be prosecuted if he or she had ‘damaged’ the church community, not for membership in and of itself.

Thirdly, the ideas of forgiveness and rehabilitation framed church denazification in the TheK and the KPS. In assessing the progress of denazification within the Thuringian Church, Mitzenheim wrote to Bishop Wurm in Württemberg in early 1947 explaining that, from the very beginning, the church had approached the process with Christian forgiveness as a guiding principle in all decisions.⁹⁶ The goal was to win wayward pastors back to orthodoxy, rather than to exact revenge.⁹⁷ Forgiveness, however, did not preclude consequences for the most militant and active German

⁹² *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 800, 211, Kons. to MP, MdI, Dr. Kunisch, 21/2/47.

⁹³ *AKPS*, B1, 60, Kons. to MdI, 25/6/47; *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 800, 211, ‘Deutsche Christen und Mitglieder der NSDAP als Amtsträger der Kirche’, undated.

⁹⁴ See: <http://www.dhm.de/lemo/html/dokumente/nsdap25/index.html> (accessed 12/11/2010).

⁹⁵ *AKPS*, B1, 82, Müller to Hübener, 2/47.

⁹⁶ *EZAB*, 2/148, Mitzenheim to Bishop Wurm, 3/1/47.

⁹⁷ *LKAE*, A776, 98, Mitzenheim to the EKD, 21/6/47.

Christians, and, as Mitzenheim acknowledged, the credibility of the Christian gospel often depended on dismissing the most prominent German Christians.⁹⁸ There was a reliance on the central Lutheran conception of the centrality and redeeming nature of God's grace, which was broad enough to forgive even the greatest transgressions.⁹⁹ Looking back from the vantage point of 1955, Mitzenheim ultimately praised the process as 'founded on justice and compassion'.¹⁰⁰

The KPS too predicated denazification on the rehabilitation of former party members and German Christians.¹⁰¹ It was crucially important to Müller that each individual decided to part ways with Nazism and/or German Christianity and recognised his former 'diabolical shackling' (*dämonische Gebundenheit*).¹⁰² Forgiveness followed penitence in almost all cases, as the church sought to retrain 'compromised' churchmen. The KPS review commission preferred 'reconditioning' and many pastors, who 'elsewhere would have been dismissed', continued with opportunities to prove themselves.¹⁰³ The hearing itself provided a forum for dialogue between the defendant and members of the church council, and the verdict was as an act of 'pastoral care' premised on the common good.¹⁰⁴ At heart, then, the process was largely founded on a theology of public responsibility. As Kreyszig wrote to Kunisch in July 1946, it was essential that the community received orthodox teaching faithful to scripture following Nazism and the theological corruption instigated by German

⁹⁸ *LKAE*, A130/II, Pfr. Deter to Dr. Schanze, undated (probably late 1945, early 1946); *EZAB*, 2/148, Mitzenheim to Bishop Wurm, 3/1/47.

⁹⁹ Cf. Hockenos, 73-4.

¹⁰⁰ Mitzenheim, *50 Jahre im Dienste der Kirche*, 92.

¹⁰¹ Schapper, 56.

¹⁰² *AKPS*, B1, 82, Müller to Hübener, 2/47

¹⁰³ Schapper, 56.

¹⁰⁴ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 800, 211, Kons. to Kunisch, 13/7/46.

Christianity.¹⁰⁵ The greatest priority was the cure of souls who had been led astray, and the ‘broken trust’ between churchmen and their communities thus had to be overcome as soon as possible.¹⁰⁶

The rehabilitation of former German Christians was, above all, attempted through seminars and teaching programs. In Thuringia, these courses were intended to erode German Christian remnants and promote orthodox Lutheran theology.¹⁰⁷ Retreats were also designed to promote ‘brotherhood’ amongst the clergy; there was support to be found in bearing each other’s burdens, while the teaching sought to encourage a spirit of service.¹⁰⁸ In the KPS, there were four training seminars for 60 churchmen in Wernigerode and Hauteroda in early 1946, each lasting two weeks, and a training conference in Gladigau in the Altmark for former German Christians from 30 August to 1 September 1948.¹⁰⁹ The Anhalt church council also placed considerable importance on organised meetings for former German Christians. These obligatory gatherings were an ‘urgent’ matter of concern that sought to ‘revive’ the pastorate.¹¹⁰ The first ‘retreat’ (Rüstzeit) was held in Stecklenberg in January 1947.¹¹¹ The content was to be offered from a ‘clear BK point of view’ that would convince German Christians of the need to change:

Der Zweck war nicht nur der allgemeine, unsere Pfarrer theologisch weiterzubilden, besonders mit Rücksicht auf die Kriegszeit, die die

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., Kons. to Kunisch, 13/7/46.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., ‘Deutsche Christen und Mitglieder der NSDAP als Amtsträger der Kirche’, undated.

¹⁰⁷ *LKAE*, A130/II, Pfr. Deter to Dr. Schanze, undated (probably late 1945, early 1946).

¹⁰⁸ *LKAD*, Rüstzeiten der Geistlichen, 1946-1954, LKR (Thuringia) to the pastorate, 30/9/46.

¹⁰⁹ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 800, 211, Kons. (Kreyssig) to Bezirkskommandatur (Magdeburg), 28/6/46; *AKPS*, A, Gen. 3645, Pfr. (Gladigau) to Kons., 23/7/48; *AKPS*, B1, 83, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht’, Propst der Altmark, 27/4/49

¹¹⁰ *LKAD*, Kirchen- und Pfarrangelegenheiten, Köthen, 1945-50, LKR (Fiedler) to all Pfr., 17/8/45.

¹¹¹ *LKAD*, Rüstzeiten der Geistlichen, 1946-1954, Fiedler to the pastorate, 3/1/47. There were further retreats in 1948: *ibid.*, Fiedler to the pastorate, 4/12/47.

wissenschaftliche Arbeit unmöglich machte, sondern auch der besondere, die früheren D.C. in die Theologie der B.K. einzuführen (Barmen!) und dadurch zu tieferer Erfassung ihres Irrweges zu bringen.¹¹²

The Anhalt church's approach to the Nazi past, however, was somewhat different than in the TheK and KPS. In addition to training seminars, the church council demanded declarations from all pastors who had had some connection to German Christianity or Nazism. The LKRA also acknowledged that the church had fostered the German Christian movement, leading to a divided pastorate, and it sought to overcome this division through an appeal to the Christian conscience of churchmen.¹¹³ The KPS stressed individual repentance amongst former German Christians, which would maintain the credibility of the clergy and publicly uphold the Christian message.¹¹⁴ Mitzenheim, for his part, also stressed individual responsibility and jealously sought to protect the church from secular intervention.¹¹⁵ Yet, where the KPS and TheK focussed on shaping the outward presentation of the Christian message and the clerical vocation, the Anhalt church averred transformation amongst the pastorate from the inside out, if only amongst former German Christians.

Each process of church 'self-purification' was, however, considerably different from state denazification. This is best illustrated in the Church province of Saxony. With gross understatement Müller admitted that results of denazification along church lines 'may' yield different outcomes to those conducted in the secular sphere. In fact, he indicated that church resolutions might even go beyond secular regulations:

¹¹² Ibid., 'Pfarrerrüstzeit in Stecklenberg 27.-31. Januar 1947', Fiedler, 8/3/47.

¹¹³ *LKAD*, Rüstzeiten der Geistlichen, 1946-54, 'Tagungs-Verlauf, 27.1.-31.1.47'; *LKAD*, Kirchen- und Pfarrangelegenheiten, Köthen, 1945-50, LKR (Fiedler) to all Pfr., 17/8/45.

¹¹⁴ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 800, 211, 'Deutsche Christen und Mitglieder der NSDAP als Amtsträger der Kirche', undated.

¹¹⁵ See below, pp. 302-4.

Inbesondere verlangen wir von einem in der Partei oder der SA. nominell verbliebenen Mann der Kirche, dass er sich entschieden abgesetzt hat von allen Maßnahmen, die gegen das Gewissen gingen wie Beteiligung am Juden-Boycott usw.¹¹⁶

The church leadership viewed the responsibilities of clergy to the population as greater than those of secular officials.¹¹⁷ Religious considerations must take precedence over secular standards. According to a letter sent to the Interior Ministry in July 1947, the KPS hierarchs allowed the state a right to overall supervision of denazification, but the church would remain independent – holding forth the Christian gospel as its touchstone.¹¹⁸ The church owed fealty to God alone, and it was not concerned with placating secular government.¹¹⁹ Kreyssig opined that the state could not dictate the progress of church denazification because it did not have the best interests of the religious community at heart. He asserted that state pressure could not force clergymen to act contrary to the dictates of their own conscience.¹²⁰

To some degree, however, the KPS and the TheK leaderships were disingenuous in pressing the sole priority of Christian forgiveness in the denazification process. Forgiveness certainly preserved the integrity of the pastorate as the threat of state intervention loomed large, and it also ensured that the church could meet its pastoral obligations with as much manpower as possible. Denazification was not the most important post-war consideration of the KPS, the TheK or the LKA. Instead, the emphasis of the post-war churches was internal unity and the Christian mission to the

¹¹⁶ *AKPS*, B1, 82, Müller to Hübener, February 1947.

¹¹⁷ *AKPS*, B1, 60, Kons. to MdI, 25/6/47.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, KL to the MdI, 5/7/47.

¹¹⁹ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 800, 211, Kons. to MP, MdI, Kunisch, 21/2/47.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, Kons. to Kunisch, 13/7/46.

German people.¹²¹ The churches' 'public credibility' (öffentliche Vertrauenswürdigkeit) and the 'command' to pastoral care were foremost.¹²² While the KPS authorities argued that the 'purification' of clergy was a central component in ensuring that the church did not neglect its responsibilities to the wider community, the reality was that there were insufficient replacements and dismissals would have left communities without clerical succour.¹²³ One way to do this was to keep pastors in office and offer 're-education'. Kreyssig admitted as much in June 1946 when he stated that the lack of pastors in the church imposed limits on the sanctions available to the tribunals and the oversight commission.¹²⁴ The Thuringian church also suffered from a lack of replacements throughout the period of the Soviet zone and beyond.¹²⁵ One pastor at Jena urged Mitzenheim to worry *only* about the proclamation of Jesus Christ. This entailed setting aside denazification in the interests of focussing attention upon those 'seeking' Christianity.¹²⁶ In the Anhalt church, too, it was a matter of absolute necessity that the church put the Nazi past behind it in order to come to terms with the post-war conditions.¹²⁷

The secular process, however, was also not always governed by strict ideological imperatives. State endorsement of the Anhalt process, for instance, revealed that it was open to tactical compromises. The initial definition of 'active' and 'nominal'

¹²¹ See, in general: J.J. Seidel, *Aus den Trümmern*, p. 428; T. Seidel, 'Im Wechsel der Systeme. Anmerkungen zur evangelischen Landeskirche Thüringens 1919 bis 1989', in *Von der babylonischen Gefangenschaft der Kirche*, 341.

¹²² *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 800, 211, 'Deutsche Christen und Mitglieder der NSDAP als Amtsträger der Kirche', undated.

¹²³ *Berichte der Magdeburger Kirchenleitung*, 39-40.

¹²⁴ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 800, 211, Kons. (Kreyssig) to Bezirkskommandatur (Magdeburg), 28/6/46.

¹²⁵ For example, in Schmölln: *GuH*, 1/6, 2/6/46, 'Thüringer kirchliche Chronik', 3. Still, the increase in churchmen was dramatic: from 362 in 1944 to 794 in mid-1947: *LKAE*, A776, 98, Mitzenheim to the EKD, 21/6/47. Also see: Fenwick, 156-7.

¹²⁶ *LKAE*, A239/III, 170, Pfr. (Jena) to Mitzenheim, 10/12/45.

¹²⁷ *LKAD*, Kirchen- und Pfarrangelegenheiten, Köthen, 1945-50, LKR (Fiedler) to all Pfr., 17/8/45.

former NSDAP members was also ambiguous at best, and a comprehensive process in some areas was compromised.¹²⁸ For example, as with a lack of replacement pastors, there was often an insufficient qualified, experienced or trained cadre to assume postings vacated by former NSDAP members. This was especially true in education in 1945 and 1946. By 31 December 1946, there remained 2,362 former party members of a total 10,631 teachers in Thuringia, and 3,810 former members of 16,009 teachers in Saxony-Anhalt. Yet, while Soviet intervention ensured that many of the remaining former NSDAP members did eventually suffer denazification measures, other areas remained untouched.¹²⁹ The medical system and logistics sector were virtually unaffected, and many economic and financial experts escaped denazification measures, as did former party members in prominent law and order positions.¹³⁰ The SED also rehabilitated and re-employed a significant number of former party members in the late 1940s.¹³¹ The KPD/SED was, in conclusion, primarily interested in control, the establishment of socialist hegemony and social re-ordering, even if it meant compromising comprehensive denazification to the interests of expediency. This, in some measure, mirrored what was happening in the churches.

‘De-German-Christianisation’ on the ground: pastors in changing times

¹²⁸ This is shown especially well by Sperk in Köthen, 437-8. Also: Wille, 210-1; van Melis, *Entnazifizierung*, 96ff.

¹²⁹ Wille, *Entnazifizierung*, 92ff, 144ff; Sperk, 266-9; Welsh, *Revolutionärer Wandel auf Befehl?*, 87-109.

¹³⁰ Sperk, 430, 433-4; Welsh, *Revolutionärer Wandel auf Befehl?*, 167. Damian van Melis has shown that, in Mecklenburg/Vorpommern, refugees were also largely untouched by denazification measures in the interests of reconstruction and integration: *Entnazifizierung*, 111-8.

¹³¹ Wille, *Entnazifizierung*, 120ff.

So it was that many former German Christian pastors in Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt remained in the post-war pastorate and were required to conform to the ‘new’ order.

How successful, though, was the process of ‘de-German-Christianisation’? Did former German Christians reform, and did the church authorities effect the unification of the pastorate that they desired?

The case of Erich Elster was typical of ‘de-German Christianisation’ in Anhalt.

Elster’s experience encapsulated the adjustments required of the many German Christians in the post-war church.¹³² Elster was born on 17 January 1890 in Zerst, a small administrative centre in Anhalt. In 1914, he was drafted into the German Army and he served with distinction until the armistice in 1918.¹³³ After hostilities, Elster passed the first theology examination with the Konsistorium in Dessau and was formally ordained in 1920 after the second examination.¹³⁴ In 1928, Elster took over the care of two communities in the area of Dessau, *Ziebigk* and *Auferstehung*,¹³⁵ He remained in office at *Auferstehung* until 1961.

The vivid experiences Elster accrued at the Western front during World War I informed the rest of his life. His affinity for militarism and staunch belief in

¹³² Elster’s demoralisation after defeat in World War I, elation in 1933 and disappointment with Nazism by 1945 were mentalities widely apparent amongst German Christians: F. Becker, ‘Protestantische Euphorien. 1870/71, 1914 und 1933’, in *Nationalprotestantische Mentalitäten*. 36-44; F.-M. Kuhlemann, ‘Protestantische “Traumatisierungen”. Zur Situationsanalyse nationaler Mentalitäten in Deutschland 1918/19 und 1945/46’, in *Nationalprotestantische Mentalitäten*, 45-78; D. Bergen, ‘“War Protestantism” in Germany, 1914-1945’, in *Nationalprotestantische Mentalitäten*, 115-31; M. Gailus, ‘1933 als protestantisches Erlebnis. Emphatische Selbsttransformation und Spaltung’, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 29 (2003), 481-511.

¹³³ *LKAD*, PA Elster, Elster to LKR, 10/8/36. Elster was part of the ‘generation’ (1886-90 for Mensing in Bavaria; 1884-93 for Lächele in Württemberg; for Gailus in Berlin the average DC age in 1933 was 44.9 years) who were over-represented in the German Christian movement in the early 1930s: Mensing, 210-1; R. Lächele, *Ein Volk*, 225; Gailus, *Protestantismus und Nationalsozialismus*, 406.

¹³⁴ S. Schulze, *Erich Elster und Egon Bitzmann. Die ersten Pfarrer der Auferstehungsgemeinde: Gemeindevortrag anlässlich des 70. Kirchwehjubiläums am Samstag, 26. Februar 2000, in der Auferstehungsgemeinde in Dessau-Siedlung* (manuscript, 2000), 1-2.

¹³⁵ In 1933, *Auferstehung* became an independent parish under Elster.

Germany's destiny led him to become one of the first German Christian pastors in the Anhalt church.¹³⁶ On 6 August 1933, at the inauguration of a new *Auferstehung* church council, the elders and Elster entered the church in uniform accompanied by swastikas and the tolling of bells. The interior of the chapel was transformed into a nationalist shrine with a large Iron Cross displayed prominently above the altar (see Figure IV below). Elster was, furthermore, a part-time poet: he dejudised hymns and composed verse, including the 'Treuschwur', which was published in a 1935 collection (see Figure V below). The last section was to be pronounced by the congregation in chorus:

Du Sonnenrad¹³⁷
Im weißen Feld!
Wir stürmen an.
Wie Blut, so rot,
Das Kampfpanier!
Und ob auch eine ganze Welt
Uns hassend umdroht
Adolf Hitler, wir folgen dir!¹³⁸

¹³⁶ Schulze, 7.

¹³⁷ An esoteric symbol, part of the insignia of the German Christians.

¹³⁸ E. Elster, *Deutsches Herz im Kampf* (Dessau, 1935), 75.



Figure IV: The altar of the *Auferstehungskirche* in the Nazi period. Elster won the Iron Cross, first and second classes, in the First World War, and it is prominently displayed above the altar (Source: *AEKA*).

Elster supported both German Christianity and National Socialism throughout the 1930s. In May 1936, he published an article in the *Anhalter Anzeiger* on the near death experience of Carin Göring, Hermann Göring's wife. He identified it as an intervention of God for the sake of Germany.¹³⁹ Two years later, Elster pronounced the church oath of allegiance to the *Führer*, as was compulsory for all Anhalt pastors:

¹³⁹ *LKAD*, PA Elster, 'Der Sinn der Himmelfahrt', *Anhalter Anzeiger*, 20/5/36. One irate reader submitted a letter of complaint, alleging the 'gemeinste Beleidigung und Herabsetzung unseres Führers!': *ibid.*, Herr K. (Dessau) to Elster, 23/5/36.

Ich schwöre: Ich werde dem Führer des Deutschen Reichs und Volkes, Adolf Hitler, treu und gehorsam sein, die Gesetze beachten und meine Amtspflichten gewissenhaft erfüllen, so wahr mir Gott helfe.¹⁴⁰

Dem Batterieführer meiner
Traditionsbatterie,
Herrn Oberleutnant Schwarz,
als Dank, daß ich seiner
Batterie kameradschaftlich
meinen Dank.
Dersan / Großhans!
Kriegswachmann 1914.
Einer Elster.

Figure V: The hand-written dedication on the inside cover of a copy of Elster's *Deutsches Herz im Kampf* (1935) (Source: author's collection).

¹⁴⁰ Treueid (24/5/38) quoted in: Schulze, 5.

From 1939 to 1945, Elster was lieutenant of the reserve and chaplain to *Wehrmacht* members stationed in Dessau.¹⁴¹ His only entry in the *Pfarrchronik* for 1941 cast a look back upon the Nazi seizure of power in 1933: ‘Adolf Hitler schenkt uns ein neues starkes Deutschland. Dann aber setzte der satanische Hass ein. England und Juda wollten es nicht.’¹⁴² In 1944, Elster’s marriage fell apart. His wife of 25 years suffered from a severe mental illness that periodically led to violent outbursts.¹⁴³ This period had a telling effect on Elster, his health deteriorated and he applied for a transfer out of *Auferstehung*. The request was rejected due to the war, and Elster never left *Auferstehung*.¹⁴⁴ His only son, the 24-year-old Hans-Joachim, fell in action in April 1945.

As was standard practice, the post-war Anhalt church council sent an observer to visit one of Elster’s services at Dessau-Ziebigk on 12 August 1945.¹⁴⁵ The evening liturgy was reportedly well organised, and the chapel and altar had been beautifully adorned. Elster spoke about perseverance in trial: one must have patience and courage in waiting for stability and certainty about the whereabouts of loved ones.¹⁴⁶ The observer wrote that Elster had clearly spoken from personal experience, and the heart-

¹⁴¹ Elster experienced some difficulties in this period. In March 1941, the Gestapo interrogated Elster for providing parishioners with religious materials to send to relatives at the front in two separate instances. He escaped with a warning: *LKAD*, PA Elster, Elster to LKRA, 26/3/41.

¹⁴² *AEKA*, *Pfarrchronik*, 1941.

¹⁴³ *LKAD*, PA Elster, ‘Entscheidung’, Landgericht Dessau, 26/7/44. Perhaps noteworthy is that Elster signed a letter to the LKRA in April 1944 with ‘Heil Hitler’ (*ibid.*, Elster to LKRA, 17/4/44), yet, when he reported his divorce to the council in August, the salutation is notably missing, never to reappear in Elster’s correspondence: *ibid.*, Elster to LKRA, 4/8/44.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, ‘Ärztliche Bescheinigung’, Dr. S, Dessau, 11/10/44; *ibid.*, Elster to LKRA, 28/12/44; *ibid.*, LKRA to Elster, 26/1/45.

¹⁴⁵ Elster had assumed temporary supervision over the community due to the immediate post-war suspension of its former pastor, August Körner.

¹⁴⁶ He selected two bible passages: Ps. XXXVII.7: ‘Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him;/do not fret when men succeed in their ways,/ when they carry out their wicked schemes.’ Prov. X.28: ‘The prospect of the righteous is joy,/ but the hopes of the wicked come to nothing.’

felt sermon had a ‘manifestly touching effect’ upon the congregation. There were purportedly no German Christian influences.¹⁴⁷ This was precisely what the church council wished to hear. Three months later, Georg Fiedler wrote to Elster on the occasion of his 25th ordination anniversary. Fiedler imparted best wishes and blessings, though he nonetheless warned Elster to refrain from his former ‘subjectivism’ and predilection for ‘military things’.¹⁴⁸

The Anhalt council also required Elster to submit a declaration delineating his past and present relationship to Nazism and the German Christian movement.¹⁴⁹ Elster explained, in a letter of 14 November 1945, that he had ‘internally’ separated himself from German Christianity once he had recognised that the movement could not hinder the ‘terrible collapse of our *Volk*’.¹⁵⁰ The statement did not include enough detail for the council and it requested another submission. In his second letter, dated 12 March 1946, Elster claimed that he entered the movement not to seek the realisation of the NSDAP program, but rather to work towards the ‘religious renewal and church unification’ of the German people. Elster wrote that Nazi officials had made his pastoral work increasingly difficult, and his enduring membership was anchored in the belief that it would ‘one day’ work out for good. He judged: ‘Das war ein schwerer Irrtum meinerseits.’ Whilst Elster differentiated between Nazis and German Christians, he admitted complicity and located the cause of the German collapse in the folly of National Socialists who had abandoned love and patience, abolished justice and heeded no objective moral standard. The German Christians, with their church-political program, were likewise ‘torn’ alongside National Socialism into

¹⁴⁷ *LKAD*, Kirchenvisitationen, 1945-48, KOP (Dessau) to LKRA, 13/8/45.

¹⁴⁸ *LKAD*, PA Elster, Fiedler to Elster, 12/11/45. For Fiedler, presumably, the ‘subjectivism’ of German Christianity stood diametrically opposed to the ‘objective’ truth of Christian orthodoxy.

¹⁴⁹ I shall discuss these declarations below: pp. 322-33.

¹⁵⁰ *LKAD*, D.C. Erklärungen der Geistlichen 1945-1949, Elster to LKRA, 14/11/45.

collapse. Elster knelt before God's judgement and professed his loyalty to the new church council in Dessau, pledging to preach the gospel of the 'free grace' of Jesus Christ: 'Gott gebe mir dazu die Kraft!'¹⁵¹

This process from German Christian in the Third Reich to post-war 'penitent' was replicated in cases throughout the Anhalt church as many pastors, at least externally, reformed to the satisfaction of the church council, though often with little remorse (see chapter six below). On the whole, most former German Christians conformed to the post-war orthodoxy in Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia. As Mitzenheim enjoined, there was a new 'spirit' at work within the post-war TheK.¹⁵² At Gernrode in Anhalt, the visiting Kreisoberpfarrer observed, 'almost to my surprise', that the new liturgy was in service with its prescribed orthodox Christian creed. The sermon also contained no signs of German Christian theology, and the pastor enjoyed great support from a large congregation of approximately 165 people. The clergyman had reportedly devoted himself anew to the duties of community and chapel life, leading bible studies, classes for confirmation candidates, religion instruction and children's church. He worked with various lay helpers, was active in church music and regularly visited parishioners' houses. The Kreisoberpfarrer advised, however, that the pastor still had much to learn:

Das Ende des geschichtlich so flüchtigen deutschen Intermezzos bedeutet für ihn praktisch doch wohl den Beginn einer neuen Sicht... Wenn seine Entwicklung von der Kampfgruppe zur Gemeinde, von der Ideologie zur Theologie, vom Dritten Reich zum Reiche Gottes anhält, was bei besonnenen Einflüssen zu erwarten ist, so wird er nicht nur rein tragbarer Pfarrer der Landeskirche, sondern, wenn die kirchenpolitischen Gegensätze sich je länger,

¹⁵¹ Ibid., Elster to LKRA, 12/3/46.

¹⁵² *LKAE*, A776, 98, Mitzenheim to the EKD, 21/6/47.

je mehr mildern, ein brauchbares aktives Mitglied des anhaltischen Pfarrerstandes werden.¹⁵³

Elsewhere, a surprise visit of the Zerbst Kreisoberpfarrer to the Griebo community confirmed the orthodoxy of another former German Christian. The pastor had turned from his 'false path' to focus on Jesus Christ.¹⁵⁴

A number of former German Christian pastors, however, failed to reform to the satisfaction of the church authorities.¹⁵⁵ In a circular dated 17 August 1945, the Anhalt council noted that the problems of the 'deutsche Glaube' remained in local communities, while the pastorate was warned against propagating politics.¹⁵⁶ In November 1945, the German Christian songbook, *Größer Gott, wir loben dich*, was reportedly still in use in the Cörmigk church, and Fiedler requested its immediate removal.¹⁵⁷ In late 1946, the Köthen Kreisoberpfarrer, Karl Windschild, paid a visit to Pastor K. at the Church of St. Martin in Köthen. There, too, *Größer Gott, wir loben dich* remained and the nationalistic message of the book was reportedly apparent throughout the church service. The liturgy therefore did not follow the form prescribed by the LKRA, and the sermon lacked a focus on Jesus Christ. The local church council, along with K., did not realise the error, and Windschild wrote to the Anhalt council that it could not distinguish between heterodoxy and orthodoxy; it did not recognise the theological 'destruction' wrought by German Christianity.¹⁵⁸ Pastor K. certainly enjoyed popularity within his congregation: the service was well-attended

¹⁵³ LKAD, Kirchensitationen, 1945-48, KOP (Ballenstedt) to LKRA, 28/9/45.

¹⁵⁴ *ibid.*, KOP (Zerbst) to LKRA, 3/8/47.

¹⁵⁵ There is little historiography on enduring German Christian practices after the war. Lächele broadly discusses DC baptism and confirmation rites in Württemberg without any examples of these happening after 1945: *Ein Volk*, 179-80.

¹⁵⁶ LKAD, Generalia, Kreispastoral Versammlungen, 1945-65, LKRA to all Pfr., 17/8/45.

¹⁵⁷ LKAD, Kirchensitationen, 1945-48, KOP (Köthen) to LKRA, 6/11/45; *ibid.*, Fiedler to Pfr. (Cörmigk), 30/11/45. On *Größer Gott, wir loben dich* in general, see: Böhm, 151-70.

¹⁵⁸ LKAD, Kirchensitationen, 1945-48, KOP (Köthen) to LKRA, 7/11/46.

and the sermon made a good impression on parishioners. Regardless, Windschild directed K. and the St Martin's church council to conform to the official post-war liturgy and remove the songbook immediately. Fiedler also wrote to K. and the council, reiterating the aim of reform: to create a new *Heimat* in which people could reside as the children of God. The Anhalt council was subsequently compelled to release a circular on 20 December 1946 advising pastors to discard *Größer Gott, wir loben dich*. Pastor K. was also soon displaced to another parish, much to the discontent of the St Martin's community.¹⁵⁹

In Thuringia, the orthodox church service was officially re-introduced in October 1945, and it appears that there was significant uniformity.¹⁶⁰ There is some ambiguity however. Mitzenheim sent a circular to the pastorate in May 1946 about a recurrence of German Christian ceremony. A former German Christian had celebrated confirmation in a 'weltlich-völkisch' fashion, quoting Nietzsche instead of the requisite bible verses. Mitzenheim urged his pastors to refrain from such practices, and, as the pastor in question had claimed ignorance of the new regulations, the bishop reminded all churchmen that similar ceremonies were unacceptable.¹⁶¹ The following month, moreover, the LKR member Dr. Schanze wrote to the head office of the EKD, noting that denazification amongst the pastorate was an ongoing process; the task was a long-term undertaking that needed more 'tenacious work'.¹⁶²

As for the KPS, Minister President Hübener informed Müller in early 1947 that a pastor had conducted evening vespers in a 'German Christian fashion' (Sinne). The bishop, however, doubted the source and not his churchman. Officially, he found the

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., Fiedler to Pfr. K./GKR (Martinskirche), 3/1/47.

¹⁶⁰ Böhm, 209-10.

¹⁶¹ LKAE, A776, 92, Mitzenheim to all Pfr., 11/5/46.

¹⁶² EZAB, 2/148, Dr. Schanze to EKD, 16/6/46.

allegation disconcerting as it gave the impression of ‘careless’ denazification, and he declared that the incident was ‘improbable’ given the scope of the church process.¹⁶³ Müller nevertheless directed a report to the EKD in May 1948 in which he admitted the enduring, albeit diminishing, appearance of German Christian practices: ‘Die größten Auswüchse deutschchristlicher Überfremdung (Gottesfeier, Gesangbuch usw.) werden nach und nach abgestellt.’¹⁶⁴ It seems that Müller was rather duplicitous in this instance, being concerned primarily with presenting a front to the state authorities while speaking greater truth within the church. In April 1948, furthermore, there were reservations about the work of a former German Christian pastor in Dingelstädt. The churchman’s sermons reportedly did not adequately reflect the full profundity of the Christian gospel; he rather resorted to eloquence and personal charisma. According to a colleague, the pastor in question nonetheless endeavoured to overcome his ‘German Christian inadequacy’.¹⁶⁵

Despite these instances of reversion to German Christian practices, the post-war churches established Christian orthodoxy in Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia. This did not, however, ensure the unity of the pastorate. The Anhalt council called for peace between former antagonists so as to hold discussions without ‘reciprocal denunciation’.¹⁶⁶ Yet, while the churches sought to foster community between former

¹⁶³ *AKPS*, B1, 82, Müller to Hübener, 2/47.

¹⁶⁴ *LKAD*, Berichte über die Zustände u. über die Verhältnisse der evang. Landeskirche Anhalts, 1948-52, Müller to EKD, 29/5/48.

¹⁶⁵ *AKPS*, B1, 26, Sup. (Worbis) to Müller, 21/4/48.

¹⁶⁶ *LKAD*, Kreispastoral Versammlungen, 1945-65, Fiedler to KOP, Senioren, Pfr., 17/8/45.

German Christians and Confessing Church members, there were ongoing conflicts in some areas and little *détente*.¹⁶⁷

The Confessing Church did not dissolve after the war and, in Saxony-Anhalt for example, members continued to convene meetings.¹⁶⁸ Halle was the heart of the post-war movement in the KPS with three communities: Johannes, Paulus and Laurentius. Members met for the first time after the war on 19 November 1945 at the instigation of a Halle pastor, Walter Gabriel.¹⁶⁹ Gabriel had been incarcerated in Dachau from 9 January 1941 to 24 December 1942 for criticising the Nazi State and spreading division.¹⁷⁰ Gabriel was prohibited from rejoining the church after his release, and he became a carer to injured soldiers instead.¹⁷¹ After the war, Gabriel returned to pastoral office and he featured heavily in the post-war Confessing Church.¹⁷² He even interceded for a former German Christian pastor in late-1945. The Housing Office (Sonderwohnungsamt) in Halle had requisitioned Pastor M.'s house through denazification measures. Gabriel came to M.'s defence by writing that he had experienced a great number of conflicts with the Nazi authorities after parting ways with the movement. During the war, furthermore, M. had interceded for Gabriel when the latter was interned at Dachau.¹⁷³ M.'s congregation also protested the

¹⁶⁷ Bergen (*Twisted Cross*, 208) makes a reductionist statement that 'most of them [pastors and their flocks] preferred to close the book on old church political struggles'. Conflict is alluded to by Fulbrook: *Anatomy of a Dictatorship*, 93.

¹⁶⁸ The *Pauluskirche* in Halle, for example, was known as a 'Bekenntnis-Gemeinschaft' into the 1950s: *AKPS*, 03, 106, circulars of 1/1/53 and 6/1/1954. On the BK in the KPS during the Third Reich, see: Onnasch, *Um kirchliche Macht und geistliche Vollmacht*.

¹⁶⁹ *AKPS*, 03, 109, Pfr. D. to Müller, 22/11/45. Gabriel also drafted a form of manifesto for the post-war BK: *ibid.*, circular, Gabriel, undated. On Gabriel's internment in Dachau and a short biography, see: Onnasch, 285, 445.

¹⁷⁰ *AKPS*, 03, 129, Pfr. D. to EOKR Berlin, 15/10/42; *ibid.*, 'Memorandum', Gabriel, undated.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, Gabriel to Kons., 30/12/42.

¹⁷² *AKPS*, 03, 106, Pfr. G. to KL, 12/10/47.

¹⁷³ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 800, 211, Gabriel to Sonderwohnungsamt (Halle), 1/11/45.

denazification measures: the GKR and parishioners endorsed their pastor, including a former church employee whom M. had protected as a 'non-Aryan'.¹⁷⁴

A number of Confessing Church members and neutrals, however, resented the continuing involvement of German Christians in the churches. In Thuringia, five BK, one religious socialist, one neutral and one former ('nominal') German Christian populated the post-war church council.¹⁷⁵ Two of the BK members, though, harboured concerns at the belated start to the denazification process. Dr. Schanze wrote to Mitzenheim in May 1945 criticising his inaction against former German Christians; it was as if Mitzenheim wished to ignore the political implications of the collapse of German Christianity.¹⁷⁶ Walter Zimmermann concurred and urged immediate denazification.¹⁷⁷ Despite these complaints, the major internal post-war dispute in Thuringia concerned the legitimacy and legality of the re-constituted LKR, and, in this, the fault lines ran within the Confessing Church and within the neutrals.¹⁷⁸ The movement and individual German Christians in Thuringia largely faded into the background after 1945.

There were ostensibly greater divisions and different opinions in the post-war KPS pastorate, perhaps most saliently exemplified by the withdrawal of Lothar Kreyssig and others from the third day of the synod in October 1946.¹⁷⁹ The Confessing Church members in the KPS leadership, nonetheless, attempted to forge pastoral unity,

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., Pfr. M. (Halle) to Sonderwohnungsamt (Halle), 11/10/45; *ibid.*, Johanniskirche GKR (Halle) to Sonderwohnungsamt (Halle), 13/10/45.

¹⁷⁵ Koch-Hallas, *Die Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche*, 88-9. On the BK in the Thuringian church during the Third Reich, see: *ibid.*, 63-76; Stegmann, 28-33, 44ff, 53-9, 87-94, 109ff.

¹⁷⁶ *LKAE*, A130/II, Dr. Schanze to Mitzenheim, 16/5/45.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, Walter Zimmermann to Dr. Schanze, 18/5/45.

¹⁷⁸ See T. Seidel, *Im Übergang der Diktaturen*, 82-3, 284-95.

¹⁷⁹ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 469, 3879, AKW to Vizepräsident Siewert, 9/10/46. See above, p. 79.

though their ‘victory’ ensured that the often-hyperbolic mythology of resistance to Nazism was popular amongst the post-war pastorate, and BK membership became a device to secure primacy in all manner of affairs, just as German Christianity became anathema.¹⁸⁰ One pastor, for example, requested that Müller intervene in an internal dispute with his superintendent by putting an end to this ‘Kampf gegen mich als Pfarrer der B.K.’.¹⁸¹ Individual job applications often cited involvement in the Confessing Church. The so-called ‘BK-Gemeinde’ in Wernigerode sought a pastor who was a member of the Confessing Church. A refugee pastor applied, stressing his membership in the Confessing Church, for which he was persecuted during the Third Reich.¹⁸² In another instance, a prominent BK pastor in the Altmark supported the application of a clergyman who had experienced ‘conflicts’ under Nazism; he had been suspended from instructing confirmation classes for recasting the parable of the Good Samaritan: an SA (Sturmabteilung) man had walked obliviously past the injured man on the side of the road.¹⁸³ A refugee pastor, in pleading for employment in January 1946, was exasperated that a position he had applied for was allocated to a former German Christian.¹⁸⁴

Confessing Church pastors not only opposed former German Christians, but all non-BK. For example, the provost of Erfurt requested the placement of a Confessing

¹⁸⁰ In Bavaria: C. Vollnhals, *Evangelische Kirche und Entnazifizierung, 1945-1949: Der Last der Nationalsozialistischen Vergangenheit* (Munich, 1989), 157-8. On post-war frictions in general terms, see: K. Fischer-Hupe, ‘Der Kirchenkampfdiskurs nach 1945. Wie katholische und evangelische Theologen in der frühen Nachkriegszeit über den Kirchenkampf der Jahre 1933-1945 sprachen’, *KZG*, 15/2 (2002), 461-89, esp. 466-7.

¹⁸¹ *AKPS*, B1, 23, Pfr. (Großbarschla) to Müller, 19/2/46. Persecution in the Third Reich was a ‘badge’ of distinction: *AKPS*, B1, 22, Pfr. (Altmark) to Müller, 19/12/47.

¹⁸² *AKPS*, B1, 23, Pfr. (Großgräfendorf) to Müller, 1/8/45.

¹⁸³ *AKPS*, B1, 22, ‘Bericht über Pfr. L.’, Pfr. Schapper, 3/12/46.

¹⁸⁴ *AKPS*, B1, 26, Pfr. (Stolberg) to Müller, 24/1/46.

Church member in an empty parish in his jurisdiction.¹⁸⁵ Elsewhere, there was a dispute in the Weferlingen district about the election of a new superintendent.¹⁸⁶ The Confessing Church pastors did not want a former ‘neutral’, let alone a former German Christian; only a BK clergyman would do, yet the majority of clergymen – comprised of former neutrals and German Christians – were expected to (and did) elect a neutral.¹⁸⁷ In response to the question of whether there was no BK pastor suitable for the post, the influential Groß Möringen pastor, Helmut Schapper, stated that there were indeed many BK who would have been suitable for the post, but he was prevented (by the church leadership in Magdeburg) from appointing one.¹⁸⁸

Above all, there were BK concerns about the retention of German Christians in pastoral office. In August 1945, Confessing Church members in Halle requested that the church leadership order the suspension of the former German Christians pastors serving at St. Marien and St Johannes.¹⁸⁹ As Walter Gabriel wrote, one of these had been the regional superintendent; keeping him in office gave Gabriel grave concerns about the post-war order.¹⁹⁰ The former German Christian in question remained and another pastor, S., in Halle was moved to write a letter to Müller on 3 January 1946. He stated that it was intolerable that so many former German Christians remained in the church, preaching as if nothing had happened. Something had to be done, and Pastor S. sought the compulsory suspension of all German Christians until their cases

¹⁸⁵ AKPS, B1, 23, Provost (Erfurt) to Müller, 29/11/46.

¹⁸⁶ AKPS, B1, 22, Pfr. (Weferlingen) to Pfr. Schapper, 25/9/45.

¹⁸⁷ AKPS, 03, 106, Pfr. (Siestedt) to Müller, 17/9/45.

¹⁸⁸ AKPS, B1, 22, Schapper to Pfr. (Weferlingen), 7/11/45. Schapper was appointed to the post of Provost in 1946, see: U. Czubatynski, *Evangelisches Pfarrerbuch für die Altmark*, 2nd Edn (Rühstädt, 2006).

¹⁸⁹ AKPS, 03, 106, BK der Prov. Sachsen (Gabriel, Halle) to the VGL, 13/8/45.

¹⁹⁰ AKPS, B1, 144, Gabriel (Halle) to Müller, undated (probably August 1945).

had been heard before the church commission.¹⁹¹ Elsewhere, the pastor at Welbsleben wrote to Müller twice in January 1946. On 8 January, he relayed an accusation that former Nazi party members remained in clerical office. He was unsure if the allegations were accurate.¹⁹² On 20 January, he had personally identified former party members in church office and in positions of leadership within the pastorate, and anticipated that this would bring intervention from the secular authorities.¹⁹³ Another pastor learned that his wartime superior, Pfarrer V., although stripped of his leadership role, had been retained as the head churchman at the St Nicolai church in Burg. Having worked closely with the man, he confirmed that V. had promoted ideas of ‘Rasse, Blut und Boden’, and had spoken out publicly against the Confessing Church. He warned the church leadership that it was in danger of losing the trust of BK members.¹⁹⁴ On the other side, a former German Christian pastor in Naumburg wrote to Bishop Müller in May 1948 complaining of personal attacks instigated by Confessing Church clergy who had alleged that he was a ‘Nazi’ and a ‘nationalist’.¹⁹⁵

The KPS did little in response to these complaints. The church hierarchs concerned themselves with balancing the interests of all factions in the church body: they wished to remain above the divisions of ‘German Christianity’ and the ‘Confessing Church’. One clergyman wrote to Müller in November 1945 with concern, however, that the Confessing Church agenda was not primary in the reformation of the KPS.¹⁹⁶ In July 1946, the pastor at the Marienkirche in Halle provided an answer to the question

¹⁹¹ *AKPS*, B1, 24, Pfr. S. (Halle) to Müller, 3/1/46.

¹⁹² *AKPS*, B1, 210, Pfr. (Welbsleben) to Müller, 8/1/46.

¹⁹³ *AKPS*, B1, 82, Pfr. (Welbsleben) to Müller, 20/1/46.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.* Pfr. (Olvenstedt) to Müller, 3/1/46.

¹⁹⁵ *AKPS*, B1, 231, Pfr. (Naumburg) to Müller, 12/5/48.

¹⁹⁶ *AKPS*, O3, 109, Pfr. D. to Müller, 22/11/45.

‘Warum und warum noch Bekennende Kirche?’ He argued that there must be a split in the church: Christ had especially privileged John, Peter and James amongst the 12 disciples, and there had been a dispute in the early church when St. Paul parted ways with Peter. Division was essential in the post-war period if the legacy of the past was to be overcome and the missionary spirit of the church revived.¹⁹⁷ Another pastor complained that his superintendent in Binde had sabotaged the Confessing Church program; he could not and would not submit to him. The pastor believed that the post-war Konsistorium, as during the Nazi period, ‘ignored the struggle of the Confessing Church’.¹⁹⁸ Elsewhere, another pastor turned down the deputy chairmanship of the Sangerhausen synod because, *inter alia*, BK in the district had not made the decision; they were a minority in church councils throughout the district; and, a member of the electing synod had allegedly declared in 1934 that a pastor must be a National Socialist.¹⁹⁹

In Anhalt, finally, brief case studies of two pastors on opposite sides of the *Kirchenkampf* encapsulate, firstly, the desire of many former German Christians simply to forget the past and work unburdened in the post-war environment, and, secondly, the primacy of former allegiances in determining post-war German Christian/Confessing Church relations. Theodor Drebes was born in 1912 in Aßlar/Hessen and studied theology before accepting a post as a pastor in the Zerbst parish of the Anhalt church in 1940. He remained in the Anhalt church until 1960, when he left the DDR and joined the state church of Hessen-Nassau. Whilst at Tübingen University in the late 1930s, Drebes joined a student group of German

¹⁹⁷ AKPS, 03, 106, ‘Monatsgruß der Bekennenden Gemeinde Unser Lieben Frauen Halle-Saale (Marktgemeinde)’, Pfr. B., July 1946,

¹⁹⁸ AKPS, B1, 22, Pfr. (Beuster) to Müller, 26/10/45.

¹⁹⁹ AKPS, B1, 26, Pfr. (Gonna) to Sup. (Sangershausen), 20/5/46.

Christians, though he apparently lamented its lack of ‘Ringen um die Mitte’ (Mitte = Jesus Christ). He rejected, on the other hand, the Confessing Church as too political.²⁰⁰ He continued his studies at Jena amongst Thuringian German Christians and found them more ‘Christ focussed’ (christozentrisch) than their Confessing Church antagonists. He wrote: ‘So schlimm waren die “Deutschen Christen” nun auch nicht, warum sollte ich mich nicht mit ihnen an einen Tisch setzen?’ Drebes acknowledged that there were ‘sinners’ seated at both ‘tables’, but he chose to eat with sinners as Christ had done, while members of the Confessing Church only ate with the righteous.²⁰¹ There is considerable self-justification in this comment: he cast himself assuming the moral high ground in identifying with the German Christian movement. In Anhalt, August Körner gave Drebes his first independent posting at Reinstedt in the Harz in 1941. In the same year, he married at a ceremony led by Körner in Bernburg. Drebes entered the church to arms raised, perhaps disingenuously remembered not as the ‘Deutsche Gruß’ but as ‘Segensgruß’.²⁰²

Drebes wrote little of his own German Christian membership in his autobiography, and neglected to describe interactions amongst the Anhalt pastorate after 1945. He was, nevertheless, required by Fiedler to present an affidavit renouncing his former allegiance. He submitted this on 9 May 1946, admitting that the German Christian movement had pursued a ‘false path’, though he personally had blazed his own trail within the faction. He was, moreover, no anti-Semite, nor had he ever offered unconditional support to National Socialism; he had simply stood silent.²⁰³ As stated also in his memoir, Drebes’ rejection of politics was of primary importance. For

²⁰⁰ Drebes, 12-13.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 14.

²⁰² Ibid., 19.

²⁰³ *LKAD*, D.C. Erklärungen der Geistlichen 1945-1949, Pfr. Drebes to LKRA, 9/5/46.

instance, he criticised Martin Niemöller's outbursts against the Nazi regime; this instance, and Romans XIII, ensured that Drebes never spoke out against the government.²⁰⁴ Before the local Soviet commandant in August 1946, Drebes stressed the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ before any consideration of politics.²⁰⁵ As we shall see further in the following chapter, Drebes was representative of many former German Christians in the Anhalt pastorate after the war: he sought to put the affair behind him as soon as possible.

Drebes' affiliation to German Christianity, however, did not recommend him to his fellow pastors who had been, or were, members of the Confessing Church. The Ballenstedt Kreisoberpfarrer visited Drebes' Reinstedt parish in early 1947. He observed Drebes follow a well-conceived liturgy and deliver an orthodox sermon with a powerful voice. He found, however, that Drebes laboured under the weight of the past:

[Pfarrer] Drebes gestand mir seine Bedrückung darüber, dass die erwünschte und anzustrebende verständnisvolle Fühlung und Gemeinschaft der frühern D.C.-Pfarrer mit den anderen, hauptsächlich mit den B.K.-Amtsbrüdern noch immer auf sich warten lasse. Er gehört zu den jüngeren Amtsbrüdern, die dabei etwas entbehren, ohne doch zu wissen, wie und wann gangbare und gern bestrittene Brücken sich schlagen wollen.²⁰⁶

Predictably, none of this appears in Drebes' autobiography, but it does make the content of the memoir understandable: his post-war alienation apparently solidified his rejection of Confessing Church members ('who only ate with the righteous'), and compounded his disillusionment with politics within the church. The prejudices of non-German Christian churchmen seemingly ran deep. The Ballenstedt Kreisoberpfarrer, for example, admitted to discrimination against former German

²⁰⁴ Drebes, 21.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 30.

²⁰⁶ *LKAD*, Kirchenvisitationen, 1945-48, KOP (Ballenstedt) to LKR, 14/6/47.

Christian pastors. In the first couple of post-war years, he confessed to a ‘cool detachment’ and a disposition bordering on mistrust toward former German Christians. Yet, multiple interactions with these pastors and their families had altered his perception such that, as he wrote to the LKRA in January 1948, he and his wife now enjoyed a ‘natural’ and ‘warm’ friendship with them.²⁰⁷

Other Anhalt pastors, nevertheless, staunchly maintained attitudes reminiscent of the *Kirchenkampf* in the Third Reich. One of these was Karl Windschild. Windschild was born in Hecklingen/Anhalt in 1899, and, after passing his theology examinations, he received a post as the pastor of the *Jakobskirche* in Köthen. He joined the Pastor’s Emergency League (Pfarrernotbund) in 1933 and was a member of the Confessing Church Council (Landesbruderrat) in Anhalt from 1935. Windschild rejected the German Christian LKRA, and he endured Gestapo observation and various persecutions. Ill will between German Christians and Confessing Church members was especially prevalent in Köthen where August Körner vigorously pushed the German Christian agenda.²⁰⁸ In 1945, Windschild was appointed Kreisoberpfarrer of the Köthen district and he urged Fiedler to install Confessing Church members in the vacant Kreisoberpfarrer posts in Zerbst, Dessau and Ballenstedt.²⁰⁹ Accused by neutral pastors of ‘separatism’ for this, Windschild was admonished by the church council in August, though he waved the accusations away. He maintained a hard-line BK perspective and criticised the composition of the pastorate: former German Christians still predominated (there were only five BK in the Köthen district), and this asymmetry undermined the intent of scheduled monthly meetings designed to draw

²⁰⁷ Ibid., KOP (Ballenstedt) to LKR, 14/1/48.

²⁰⁸ Windschild, 116ff; M. Müller, *Kurze Chronik des Kirchenkampfes*.

²⁰⁹ *LKAD*, Generalia, Akten des evangelischen Landeskirchenrats für Anhalt, 1944/45-52, Windschild to Müller, 5/7/45.

pastors closer together and deepen theological understanding.²¹⁰ Windschild questioned how such men could not only remain in office, but also appoint church elders within their communities. In all, how could the reconstruction of church life centre upon such men?²¹¹ Indicative of this attitude, he opposed the placement of a former German Christian in the St Martin's parish in Köthen with an appeal to the Anhalt council in 1946.²¹² The Anhalt council, nonetheless, did not waver as it was determined to reach a compromise between former German Christians and Confessing Church members. Fiedler wrote a letter to Windschild in January 1947, reprimanding him to refrain from using constructions that seemed like orders, such as 'Ich ordne an...'. Fiedler also did not entirely accept Windschild's evaluation of the situation at the St Martin's Church, (see above, pp. 280-1). Windschild had, for example, mistaken the 'christozentrische Schau' of the sermon.²¹³

Despite this rebuke, Windschild continued to fight German Christian legacies.²¹⁴ At his prompting, on 29 May 1947, Fiedler wrote to the church council at St. Agnus in Köthen. He requested that the church remove the last traces of the German Christian *Gottesfeier*.²¹⁵ The following month, Windschild again wrote to the LKRA about a 1 June regional church meeting in nearby Großpaschleben. He expressed his opinion in this way:

²¹⁰ The Köthen district comprised 70 communities overseen by 20 clergy in all: Windschild, 170. See also: J.J. Seidel, *Aus den Trümmern*, 70-1.

²¹¹ *LKAD*, Kreispastoral Versammlungen, 1945-65, Windschild to LKRA, 23/8/45.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 180.

²¹³ *LKAD*, Kirchenvisitationen, 1945-48, Fiedler to Windschild, 2/1/47.

²¹⁴ However, Windschild did, as reported by his son, help a former German Christian pastor and soldier find employment in a small parish: Windschild, 181-2.

²¹⁵ *LKAD*, Kirchenvisitationen, 1945-48, Fiedler to GKR (St Agnus), 29/5/47. This was in reaction to: *ibid.*, Windschild to LKR, 23/4/47.

Ich bin der Ansicht, dass in den Gemeinden eine bedauerliche Renazifizierung vor sich gehe Schritt für Schritt mit dem Entstehen eines neuen Kirchenkampfes. Wieder trennen sich nach meiner Überzeugung die bibeltreuen Gemeindeglieder von denjenigen die an den Zielen der ehemaligen "Deutschen Christen" festhielten.

He described the situation as reminiscent of the people of Israel in the desert. That is, parishioners and clergy partial to German Christianity longed to live in the abundance of the pre-war period (in den Fleischtöpfen Ägyptiens), and simply did not recognise the guiding hand of God in the difficult post-war period.²¹⁶ A few weeks later at a church meeting, Windschild urged more rigorous denazification and the re-introduction of the right of parishioners to elect clergy.²¹⁷ These requests again fell upon deaf ears. In sum, it seems that Windschild's allegiance to the Confessing Church had been refined and solidified by persecution in the Third Reich. He would brook no compromise, which was, on the one hand, seemingly morally laudable, but on the other hand, detrimental to internal unity. He, for one, certainly did not accede to the church's 'de-German Christianisation' under the *leitmotiv* of rehabilitation.

Conclusion

One predominant post-war evaluation of the Christian Church during the Third Reich made a clear dichotomy between German Christians and their Confessing Church antagonists. The churches throughout the Soviet zone probed this past and dismissed the most visible and militant German Christians from positions of leadership in the immediate post-war period. Ultimately, the Thuringian Church released a far greater

²¹⁶ *LKAD*, Generalia, Kirchenkreisversammlungen, Kreiskirchentage, 1931-63, Windschild to LKRA, 2/6/47.

²¹⁷ *EZAB*, 2/145, 'Bericht über die Synodaltagung vom 23.6.47'.

number of churchmen than the KPS and LKA. This had much to do with the particular history of German Christian militancy in Thuringia. The KPS also determined to walk its own path: the church was responsible to the 'living God' and not to the State.²¹⁸ The procedure in Anhalt was entirely different. Church hierarchs allowed representatives from the KPD, SPD, CDU and LDPD to sit on the tribunal, and the council liaised closely with Kunisch's AKW. The result was that the secular administration in Saxony-Anhalt approved the LKA process even though the same proportion of pastors lost their positions in Anhalt as in Thuringia. Everywhere, however, the churches' self-purification was 'lenient' in comparison to secular denazification. The SVAG, in any case, pursued no punitive measures; this detachment was an extension of Soviet *Bündnis-* and *Deutschlandpolitik*.

The 'lenient' denazification was founded on several considerations. Firstly, the KPS and the TheK, especially, asserted that the Christian Church in general had been a bastion of resistance to National Socialism, and there were, therefore, fewer NSDAP members in church ranks. Secondly, the churches were primarily concerned with eliminating the corruption and politicisation of the Christian gospel perpetrated by German Christians. They therefore prosecuted 'de-German-Christianisation' processes that were not much concerned (in and of itself) with former NSDAP members; this was something entirely different to the secular process of denazification that predicated all verdicts on party membership. Thirdly, the three churches adopted the theological concept of forgiveness as their underlying precept and sought to 're-habilitate' the pastorate, often through retreats and meetings. The virtue of forgiveness was the principle that kept former German Christians in office, sometimes covering all manner of sins. Of not inconsiderable importance was that

²¹⁸ LHASA, MAG, K2, 800, 211, Kons. to AKW, 27/9/48.

‘lenient’ denazification, lastly, ensured that the churches could present a ‘justified’ front toward the secular authorities while sustaining the Christian witness amongst the population. Not only would have more thorough denazification exploded the idea of Church resistance, but there were also few replacements for dismissed clergy. The religious and secular processes were, nonetheless, similar insofar as neither was invariably predicated and executed according to immutable ideological imperatives; there were certain tactical compromises in the interests of authority, continuity and the social re-organisation.

There was, therefore, no religious ‘new order’ after the Second World War, at least in terms of personnel. A pastor from Stuttgart-Zuffenhausen wrote to Hans Asmussen in Berlin in October 1945, reporting that the only change in Thuringia was that German Christians did not espouse *Mein Kampf* from the pulpit. That is, only the external appearance of national socialist ideas had disappeared.²¹⁹ While a number of pastors were subsequently dismissed, the majority of former German Christians remained in office. This was common throughout the German Protestant churches, and the institutional continuity of the churches, in this way, ensured the ongoing presence of former right-wing sympathisers, sometimes into the 1960s and beyond.²²⁰

The three Protestant churches in Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia placed a premium on pastoral unity that promoted the Christian gospel amongst the populace. Like Erich Elster, a great many former German Christians were ‘re-educated’ and ‘re-conditioned’. Some former members, however, persisted with German Christian

²¹⁹ EZAB, 2/148, Dr. Werner to Hans Asmussen, 23/10/45.

²²⁰ See the essays in Gailus (ed.), *Von der babylonischen Gefangenschaft*. Also: Bergen, *Twisted Cross*, 224ff; Mensing, 210ff; Lächele, *Ein Volk*, 194-218. Vollnhals, *Evangelische Kirche und Entnazifizierung*, 141-8 (Bavaria), 180-99 (Württemberg). On the other hand, the Hessen church was comparatively thoroughly denazified with 43.6 percent of the total pastors (1168) being suspended or dismissed: *ibid.*, 216.

practices, and ‘de-German-Christianisation’ was an ongoing process during the period of the Soviet zone. Most communities, it seems, had no problems with retaining and accepting former German Christian pastors, and some even disputed the removal of their churchmen, such as in one Halle parish, in Diemitz and in Frankleben. The rapport in these communities was established through personal contact to the pastor, and there was little attention paid to political and/or theological sympathies.²²¹

Furthermore, regardless of whether former German Christians reformed or not, pastoral unity was a myth. The KPS and LKA pastorates were deeply divided and a number of Confessing Church members continued to prosecute the *Kirchenkampf* well after 1945.

In conclusion, church policy was assailed from within and without chapel walls: from BK remonstrations as well as communist agitations. Some Confessing Church members did not forgive German Christians as the church tribunals did, and there was a terrible irony in their post-war struggle: fortified on the ostensible moral high ground, they sought mastery of the KPS and the LKA pastorates and the subjection of their (former) antagonists. Yet, the church hierarchs had provided the forum for this conflict by pursuing forgiveness and placing the emphasis, firstly, on the church presence amongst the German population – and this required as much manpower as available in the difficult post-war environment – and, secondly, on the preservation of institutional integrity *vis-à-vis* the State. As much as the churches wished to focus on the present, though, the past proved difficult to forget for some.

²²¹ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 800, 211, Prof. S. (Halle) to Kons., 26/9/45; *ibid.*, Prof. B. to Kons., 10/10/45; *ibid.*, BM Diemitz to Kons., 15/10/45; *AKPS*, B1, 149, Frankleben community to Müller, 30/9/45. Manfred Gailus, however, presents an example from Berlin whereby a congregation in Lichtenberg ejected a former German Christian on account of his history: *Protestantismus und Nationalsozialismus*, 473-4.

Chapter 6:

Protestant Christianity and the question of German guilt

Wir leben in einer großen Zeit. Kommende Geschlechter werden uns einmal darum beneiden, dass wir das alles miterleben dürften und dass wir mitschaffen konnten an dem, was uns vergönnt ist.¹

So reads the first sentence of *Ein Christ erlebt die Probleme der Welt*, authored in 1933 by Reich Secretary Gustav Adolf Gekat of the CVJM. The ostensibly grandiose agenda of National Socialism inspired many churchmen to believe in a coming ‘re-Christianisation’ and revival of the *Volk* following its disastrous defeat in the First World War.² Many ‘ordinary’ Germans also luxuriated in an economic upswing and increasing prosperity in the mid-1930s.³ By 1945, however, the destruction and the miseries wrought by National Socialism ensured that the time spent under its government was less envied than lamented by broad sections of the German population. Most people dismissed personal responsibility, focused on present concerns and blamed Hitler and his ‘clique’ for the calamitous outcome.⁴

A number of theologians, philosophers, writers and other intellectuals, however, called for an exploration of the ‘question of guilt’.⁵ The Stuttgart Confession of Guilt (Stuttgarter Schuldbekentnis), agreed upon in convocation by clergymen of the EKD in October 1945, was the most prominent delineation of church responsibility in the immediate post-war

¹ G.A. Gekat, *Ein Christ erlebt die Probleme der Welt* (Stuttgart, 1933), 7.

² See above, chapter three.

³ See below, p. 340ff.

⁴ Vollnhals, *Evangelische Kirche und Entnazifizierung*, p. 37ff; G. Denzler/V. Fabricius, *Christen und Nationalsozialisten. Darstellung und Dokumente* (Frankfurt am Main, 1993), 228.

⁵ Karl Jaspers offered the first seminal investigation in 1946: K. Jaspers, *Die Schuldfrage* (Heidelberg, 1946).

period. Much has been written on the denazification of the churches in general, particularly in regard to the Stuttgart Confession.⁶ In English, the most comprehensive study of the Protestant Church and the Nazi legacy is Matthew Hockenos' *A Church Divided*.⁷ The German scholarship is much more prolific and wide-ranging, and Thomas Seidel and Thomas Friebel briefly treat the Protestant churches in Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt respectively.⁸ Where these two historians have an institutional focus, however, the purpose of this chapter is to examine the discourses about the Nazi legacy at each level: how did the TheK, the LKA and KPS treat the question of guilt? How did the population receive church admonitions to accept responsibility for 'falling away' from God and, in the KPS at least, Nazi crimes? Did former German Christians in Anhalt accept church ideas of guilt for corrupting the gospel? In all, did Christian belief make any difference in how people interpreted the question of responsibility for Nazism?

In sum, there was ultimately little difference in attitudes between sections of the clergy and laity, and Christianity did not seem to make a great deal of difference. It appears, above all, that common experiences conditioned this response: both 'ordinary' people and pastors experienced the hopes and relative prosperity of 1933 and the mid to late 1930s, and the disappointments of 1945 with its widespread deprivations.

Of course, the category of guilt for wrongdoing (outside the judicial system perhaps) is metaphysical and notoriously slippery.⁹ I intend to relay and explain church interpretations of guilt, and how these were received and/or disputed amongst the populace and pastorate.

⁶ On the Stuttgart Confession see, for example: C. Vollnhals, *Evangelische Kirche und Entnazifizierung*, 33ff; idem, 'Die evangelische Kirche zwischen Traditionswahrung und Neuorientierung', 130-6; Schmid, 146ff; G. Besier, *Wie Christen ihre Schuld bekennen: Die Stuttgarter Erklärung 1945* (Göttingen, 1985).

⁷ M. Hockenos, *A Church Divided*.

⁸ T. Seidel, *Im Übergang der Diktaturen*, 295-7; Friebel, 101-4.

⁹ From a Lutheran perspective, guilt in a religious sense remains between the individual and God. Guilt is a deeply personal and subjective phenomenon.

I have attempted to gather documentary evidence to corroborate personal testimonies (questionnaires/interviews) where possible. Yet, the difficulties of speaking about the Nazi period and its aftermath, and the particular issue of guilt, are encapsulated in the words of one pastor as he wrote me:

Die Zeitzeugen [...], die noch leben, teils auch immer noch Hemmungen haben, offen und unvoreingenommen über jene Zeit zu reden, den dass heißt ja [sic], u. U. auch über eigene Schuld und Verblendung reden zu müssen... und wer tut das schon gern?¹⁰

The witness testimonies presented here may not be, and probably are not, representative of ‘Germans’, but they do offer some insight into the lived experience of the Nazi legacy and – if only for the speaker – are unimpeachably valid.¹¹

Church theologies of the Nazi past

Following the cessation of hostilities in 1918, both the Protestant and Catholic Churches rejected Article 231 of the Versailles peace treaty, which assigned war guilt to Germany. Throughout the 1920s, the German Protestant Church continued to deny national responsibility for the First World War.¹² Following the Second World War, interpretations of the Nazi era were primarily split into two camps.¹³ On the one hand, there was the

¹⁰ Correspondence from Pfr. V. (Elxleben) to the author, 4 January 2008.

¹¹ On the methodology: I did not ask interviewees or questionnaire respondents to reflect back on National Socialism as ‘Christians’ as such. I had, nonetheless, posed questions about church life and personal faith before addressing the period of the Third Reich in the last part of the interview. I did not pose any direct question on guilt however, only what the respondent thought about National Socialism in 1945 and beyond. There was one primary reason for this approach: I wanted my respondents to reflect on Nazism as persons, as Germans, and to hear if they chose to offer an answer couched in religious phraseology or not, or an answer that broached responsibility at all.

¹² *Treysa 1945*, ed. F. Söhlmann (Lüneberg, 1946), 19-20; Friebe, 79. Kuhlemann, 56-7.

¹³ In general, see: G. Kretschmar, ‘Die Vergangenheitsbewältigung in den deutschen Kirchen nach 1945’, in C. Nicolaisen (ed.), *Nordische und deutsche Kirchen im 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen, 1982), 122-49; Fischer-Hupe, 475-83.

conservative, predominantly Lutheran leadership of the EKD who construed the Church as an opponent of Nazism, and posited that defeat was God's judgement on a wayward people. Foremost among these churchmen were the influential Bishop Wurm of Württemberg, Bishop Dibelius of Berlin-Brandenburg, Bishop Meiser of Bavaria and the pastor (and chairman of the EKD) Hans Asmussen.¹⁴ On the other hand, Martin Niemöller and Karl Barth, amongst others, favoured a theology largely informed by Calvinism that concretely implicated the Church in responsibility for Nazism and its crimes.¹⁵

The Stuttgart Confession of October 1945 was a vexed and highly contentious document that exemplified the conflict of interpretations within the German Church.¹⁶ Its very existence and ratification were in no small measure due to foreign pressure, and it hinged implicitly on the 'resistance' of the Church:

Wohl haben wir lange Jahre hindurch im Namen Jesu Christi gegen den Geist gekämpft, der im nationalsozialistischen Gewaltregiment seinen furchtbaren Ausdruck gefunden hat; aber wir klagen uns an, dass wir nicht mutiger bekannt, nicht treuer gebetet, nicht fröhlicher geglaubt und nicht brennender geliebt haben.¹⁷

Both Niemöller and Asmussen interpreted the Confession in different ways: where Niemöller located guilt within the church, Asmussen was a signatory only as a 'representative' of the German people. For him and other conservatives, the church's greatest failings were complacency and inadequacy.¹⁸ The Confession was limited in other ways too. It neglected to note, for example, that the primary object of religious

¹⁴ Hockenos, 50ff.

¹⁵ Ibid., 55-64. For Niemöller's position, see: M. Niemöller, *Martin Niemöller über die deutsche Schuld, Not und Hoffnung* (Zürich, 1946); *Die Schuld der Kirche. Dokumente und Reflexionen zur Stuttgarter Schulderklärung vom 18./19. Oktober 1945*, ed. M. Greschat (Munich, 1982), 184-211.

¹⁶ See: *LKAD*, Generalia, Die Stuttgarter Erklärung 18/19.10.45, *Verordnungs- und Nachrichtenblatt, Ämtliches Orgän der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland*, January 1946, 1-3; *ibid.*, February 1946, 1-4; Hockenos, 75-100. On the basis of the sources available to me, the *Darmstädter Wort* of August 1947 received no echo in Thuringia or Saxony-Anhalt and is therefore not treated here.

¹⁷ *Wie Christen ihre Schuld bekennen*, 62. On foreign pressure, see: Hockenos, 77-81.

¹⁸ Ibid., 81.

‘resistance’ in the Third Reich was often limited to safeguarding the institutional independence of the Protestant Church and preserving orthodox Christianity.¹⁹ The Confession also said nothing of collective guilt or the Jewish victims of genocide. The focus lay squarely on the struggles of the Church in the crucible of the Nazi dictatorship.

In Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt, the churches interpreted the Nazi past in different ways. Firstly, there was no TheK public confession in the immediate post-war period. Moritz Mitzenheim largely toed the conservative line, with the proposition that long-term popular alienation from God had led to Nazism. In the same vein, members of the post-war Thuringian LKR interpreted the calamities of the Nazi period and its aftermath in theological terms, as divine punishment for apostasy. According to Dr. Hertzsch, the legacy of Protestant Christianity in Germany had been irrevocably tarnished: it had descended from the triumphs of Martin Luther’s Reformation to the ruins of the Third Reich.²⁰ Another council member understood the collapse of National Socialism as the ultimate dénouement of secularisation in Germany.²¹ While the Thuringian Church did not explicitly admit responsibility, Mitzenheim did commend the Stuttgart Confession on its twenty-fifth anniversary in 1960. In particular, he lauded the foresight and courage of the authors as an act of repentance that had instigated ‘reconciliation’ at a difficult time. The authors had foreseen the importance of forgiveness for ‘new life’.²² In 1945, however, there was no church action on the Confession, and it was not distributed amongst parishioners.²³ This was

¹⁹ Ibid., 46-54; Friebe, 80.

²⁰ *GuH*, 1/8, 16/6/46, ‘Eines der unchristlichen Völker Europas’, Dr. Hertzsch, 1.

²¹ *GuH*, 1/12, 14/7/46, ‘Einzig Hoffnung’, Sup. Bauer (Stadtroda), 1.

²² M. Mitzenheim, *Aus Christlicher Verantwortung: Beiträge zu eine humanistische politische Diakone* (Berlin, 1971), 118.

²³ T. Seidel, *Im Übergang der Diktaturen*, 296.

consistent with the conduct of most other evangelical churches in Germany, which elected not to impress ideas of guilt – and the Stuttgart Confession in particular – upon individual congregations.²⁴ Popular antipathy determined this approach: where the Confession was presented, reactions ranged from outrage to acceptance, but the predominance of negative reactions condemned it to feature only in internal church discussions.²⁵ In particular, there were murmurs that the Confession did not mention Allied guilt, and questions about the legitimacy of the Protestant Church in speaking for all Germans.²⁶

As with other conservative Lutherans, Mitzenheim did not speak directly to the question of church guilt, though he did send a circular to all congregations at the end of 1945. The wording and the ideas of this pronouncement echoed the Stuttgart Confession in some measure. Mitzenheim made no mention of the crimes of the Nazi State, stating only that members of the pastorate had often failed to uphold Christian love and fidelity under Nazism.²⁷ Members of the pastorate were culpable for not loving *at all times* or remaining faithful *at all times*. Responsibility, therefore, lay with individuals and there was no admission of institutional or collective transgression. This was largely consistent with the traditional Lutheran interpretation of guilt as a personal affair before God; guilt could not be corporate.²⁸

²⁴ Vollnhals, *Evangelische Kirche und Entnazifizierung*, 38.

²⁵ Friebe, 101; Hockenos, 82-90.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 82-100; Schmid, 149; Vollnhals, *Evangelische Kirche und Entnazifizierung*, 37-8.

²⁷ *EZAB*, 2/149, Sammelrundschriften, 31/12/45; T. Seidel, 'Erblast und Erneuerungsversuche in Thüringen. Eine mitteldeutsche Landeskirche im Spannungsfeld von Besatzungsmacht und deutscher Verwaltung 1945-1949', *Herbergen der Christenheit*, 20 (1996), 92.

²⁸ Hockenos, 63-4.

There were, nevertheless, voices within the TheK that implicated the church in guilt and called people to repent of passivity in the Third Reich.²⁹ These pastors tended in the direction of Niemöller and Barth. The pastor at Zeulenroda, for example, wrote a probing entry in his church record for the years 1944 to 1946:

Wie war das alles möglich? Wie träumend faßt sich der Mensch an den Kopf. Wie konnte es dahin kommen? Wie konnte ein ganzes Volk auf eine so verderbenbringende Irrlehre, wie die Nazi Ideologie, hereinfliegen! Wie entsetzlich für uns: Durch [sic] Deutschland kam dieser Zweite Weltkrieg über die Völker! Nie können wir diese Schuld tilgen! Trägt nicht jeder Einzelne daran? Auch die Kirche hat ihr gerüttelt Maß Schuld! Und ist es nicht kurzsichtig, nur in politischem Sinn von Schuld zu sprechen?...Nun büßen Generationen! Der deutsche Name aber ist geschändet in aller Welt.³⁰

The editors of *Glaube und Heimat*, moreover, did not hesitate to print multiple articles on guilt.³¹ A contribution from Niemöller appeared on 9 June 1946 and spoke of a ‘mountain of guilt’; a popular return to God was Germany’s only hope for redemption and a new beginning.³² The following Sunday, the superintendent at Altenburg wrote a front-page article, *Die Schuldfrage*. He confessed to personal responsibility and asserted a form of collective guilt in these terms:

Die Schuldfrage ist Sache des Gewissens, dazu kommt, dass es unsere christliche Verantwortung vor Gott und den Menschen gebietet, getanes Unrecht ebenso wie die Versäumnis des Rechtes als Schuld zu bekennen, um selbst für unser Volk und mit unserem Volk wieder zu genesen... Die Schuldfrage ist inzwischen zu einer quälenden Gegenwartsfrage geworden. Im deutschen Volk liegt sie als besonderen Last einmal auf denen, die unheilbringendes Unrecht allmählich und immer deutlicher sahen, es aber nicht zu ändern vermochten. Wir quälen uns mit der Last der Frage: “Warum haben wir nicht wirksam genug geredet, nicht wirksam genug gewarnt? Warum sind

²⁹ Thomas Seidel’s claim (*Im Übergang der Diktaturen*, 295) that there was a popular denial of responsibility amongst the pastorate especially is reductionist and frankly erroneous.

³⁰ *AEKZ*, ‘Chronik der evang.-luth. Kirchgemeinde Zeulenroda, 1944-1946’, 27/2/47.

³¹ For example: *GuH*, 1/14, 28/7/46, ‘Ewigkeit in die Zeit, Der Einzelne’, *Elle* (Jena), 1; *GuH*, 2/3, 26/1/47, ‘Zur Problematik der Schuldfrage’, G. Bäumer, 2; *GuH*, 2/13, 30/3/47, ‘Das Kreuz Christi und unsere Schuld’, G. Säuberlich, 1.

³² *GuH*, 1/7, 9/6/46, ‘Tut Buße’, M. Niemöller, 2.

wir nicht genügend leidensbereit gewesen? Warum haben wir zuviel geschwiegen?”³³

The author saliently implicated not only those who committed crimes, but also those who neglected to act, while the Church too had ‘partial responsibility’ (Mitverantwortung). There was a challenge to the reader in this to acknowledge his/her passivity as a grounds for guilt. There were, therefore, contrasting interpretations of the Nazi past within the Thuringian Church: was guilt collective or individual? Was there guilt for a lack of faithfulness to the Church that had caused increasing secularisation, or was it guilt for the crimes of Nazism directly? All statements had one thing in common, however: the necessity of penitence and the hopeful conception of a future return where people would embrace Christianity.

The divergent interpretations of the Thuringian pastorate may be explained, firstly, by its composition. The pastorate comprised clergy with diverse pasts and theological emphases, and there was no official church position on the question of guilt handed down by Mitzenheim; he ostensibly preferred ambiguity. Secondly, as elsewhere, Mitzenheim withheld a more explicit delineation of responsibility because of the popular rejection of ideas of collective guilt.³⁴ He prioritised the promotion of the Christian gospel and the pre-eminence of present social engagement, not the legacy of the past. It must be remembered, furthermore, that *Glaube und Heimat* had only a limited print run, and most parishes in Thuringia received a single copy. This meant, presumably, that only the pastorate and the most pious or interested parishioners would seek out a copy and take the time to read. These people were probably the most willing to accept the strictures of religious guilt. The December 1945 circular, in

³³ *GuH*, 1/8, 16/6/46, ‘Die Schuldfrage’, Sup. (Altenburg), 1-2.

³⁴ For example, Hockenos, 83; J. Reilly, *Belsen. The liberation of a concentration camp* (London, 1998), 71-4.

contrast, was delivered to all parishioners from the pulpit and required greater circumspection.

In Anhalt, the church council accepted a collective guilt, but only in the sense of sinful humankind led astray from God.³⁵ For example, the LKRA issued the following statement to be delivered from the pulpit on 3 March 1946:

Unser Volk ist ein armes Volk geworden...“Wir sind Bettler. Das ist wahr”.
Dieses Wort zwingt uns zu ernster Besinnung, denn selbstsicherer
Überheblichkeit, deren man sich rühmte, hat Gott hart gestraft; nun stehen wir
mit unserem Volke in der Tiefe des gemeinsamen Leidens und der
gemeinsamen Schuld vor Gott mit leeren Händen, aber mit einem Herzen voll
Verlangen nach seiner vergebenden Gnade.³⁶

In this, the Anhalt church council implicated the German population in responsibility for alienation from God. Not only this, but responsibility also lay with the Church; there is no distinction between the church and the populace, simply ‘we’. This was, however, an ambivalent statement that did not delineate the precise grounds of guilt, and there was no mention of Nazism and its crimes. The declaration seems a compromise that neatly encapsulated the diversity of theological leanings in Anhalt and the structure of the leadership; the LKA was neither Reformed nor Lutheran and had no individual hegemon, such as a bishop, empowered to impose theological uniformity upon the church. Pastors spoke and discussed as apparent equals, and there were meetings, such as at Zerbst and Rosslau, where churchmen discussed the Stuttgart Confession.³⁷ There was, though, a sense that the church bore some responsibility. The ambiguously defined guilt, however, was made easier to bear given that almost all churchmen agreed that former German Christian pastors bore the

³⁵ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 804, 212, ‘Zum 1. Advent’, undated.

³⁶ *LKAD*, Berichte über die Zustände und über die Verhältnisse der evangelischen Landeskirche Anhalts, 1948-1952, Fiedler to all pastors, 22/2/46.

³⁷ *LKAD*, Kreispastoral Versammlungen, 1945-65, ‘Bericht über die Tätigkeit der Pastoralkonferenz in Zerbst von September 1945 bis Mai 1947’, Senior D. (Lindau), 21/5/47; *ibid.*, ‘Bericht über die Rosslauer Pastoralkonferenz von 1945 bis April 1948’, Pfr. (Mühlstedt), 18/5/48.

greatest responsibility. While the LKRA implicated all in falling away from God, former German Christians were guiltier than others as they had corrupted the Christian gospel.³⁸

Lastly, the Provincial Church of Saxony devoted considerable attention to the question of guilt. Similarly to the views of Barth and Niemöller, the KPS believed all Christians guilty of bringing the Church into disrepute and all Germans complicit in Nazi crimes to some extent.³⁹ The church position on guilt was a fundamental part of the ‘new beginning’ in the KPS, and it is best represented by discussions surrounding the Stuttgart Confession.⁴⁰ The church leadership wrote to the council of the EKD on 9 February 1946 stressing its fundamental agreement with the Confession. In fact, KPS hierarchs believed that the Confession had ‘wide-ranging importance’ not only for the public life of the church and the German people, but also for the ‘self-evaluation’ of every individual Christian. Each bore ‘partial guilt’ (Mitschuld) for turning from God. The statement admitted that the Church’s witness before secular government had been an equivocal *mélange*: ‘Lag das aber immer nur an mangelndem Bekennermut, trägem Gebet, kleinem Glauben, kärglicher Liebe?’⁴¹ The public responsibility of the church is apparent in this statement: clergy were urged to think and talk through the guilt question in the interests of the ‘inner convalescence’ of the people. Lothar Kreyssig was influential in discussions, and he wrote to Otto Dibelius the following day, stating that the question of guilt and the call to repentance

³⁸ *EZAB*, 2/121, ‘Rundbrief an die früheren D.C.-Pfarrer in der Anh. Landeskirche, zugleich zur Kenntnis an alle Geistlichen’, Fiedler, 27/11/45.

³⁹ On the reformed position see: Hockenos, 55-62.

⁴⁰ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 737, 191, Müller to all KPS pastors, 27/4/46. See also: *Die Schuld der Kirche*, 238-240; Friebe, 101ff. Cf. *AKPS*, O3, 253, ‘Wort der Bekenntnissynode der Evangelischen Kirche der altpreuussischen Union an die Gemeinden zum Buss- und Bettag 1943’; *AKPS*, O3, 49, ‘Wort der Bekenntnissynode an die Pfarrer und Gemeinden!’, undated (1945).

⁴¹ *Die Schuld der Kirche*, 238-40.

was a ‘primary’ task of the church.⁴² The leadership subsequently forwarded the Stuttgart Confession to the pastorate despite considerable logistical and technical difficulties.⁴³

As a former judge, moreover, Kreyssig followed the Nuremberg trials in 1945 and 1946 with a discerning eye. In the same letter to Dibelius, Kreyssig remarked that death sentences handed down to many of the defendants could scarcely be called unjust and ‘presumably’ showed ‘wisdom’. He felt a certain ‘solidarity in guilt’ (Schuldsolidarität) with the accused, however; their condemnation was a ‘German disgrace’ and, while they repulsed Kreyssig, he was profoundly conscious of the fraternal connection.⁴⁴ Lastly, in January 1949, the KPS issued a memorandum entitled ‘Wort der Kirche zu den politisch-wirtschaftlichen Fragen der Gegenwart’. The document set forth the primary task of the Church: to call Christians and all peoples to obedience to the will of God. The authors proceeded to confess that the Protestant Church had neglected this task in the past, and was therefore ‘partially guilty’ (mitschuldig) of causing the ‘catastrophe’. Without this confession, moreover, one could not achieve ‘peace’ or help others.⁴⁵ With these statements, it is apparent that the KPS wished to learn the lessons of the past: repentance for guilt would inform the present and shape the future of the church.

A particular issue for the church leadership was the extent and parameters of ‘obedience to authority’ delineated by Saint Paul in Romans XIII.⁴⁶ What was the

⁴² EZAB, 614/37, Kreyssig to Dibelius, 10/8/46; Friebe, 103.

⁴³ LHASA, MAG, K2, 737, 191, Müller to all KPS pastors, 27/4/46.

⁴⁴ EZAB, 614/37, Kreyssig to Dibelius, 10/8/46. Weiß quotes from the letter at length: 240-2. Kreyssig continued to dwell on the question of guilt and reconciliation in some depth and founded the *Aktion Sühnezeichen* in 1958: *ibid.*, 323ff.

⁴⁵ AKPS, B1, 181, ‘Wort der Kirche zu den politisch-wirtschaftlichen Fragen der Gegenwart’, 27/1/49.

⁴⁶ LHASA, MAG, K2, 737, 191, Müller to all KPS pastors, 27/4/46.

chapter's appropriate exegesis concerning the relationship between Church and State? The post-war discussions of guilt provided, therefore, a forum to discuss the ongoing relationship between the KPS and the secular authorities. One application of this was apparent in church reservations about the *Volksentscheid* on land reform in Saxony-Anhalt.⁴⁷ While there was an 'unquantifiable' burden of guilt and a need to punish those chiefly responsible for Nazi excesses, the church argued that many 'less guilty persons' (minder Schuldige) had already been totally impoverished by the war's vicissitudes. Land reform ought only to occur in circumstances that would promote peace.⁴⁸ In a letter to Minister President Hübener in July 1946, church leaders posited that the forthcoming plebiscite was self-exculpatory: it denied the 'partial guilt' (Mitschuld) of the Christian Church and the entire German people by blaming only the most visible Nazis.⁴⁹ In addition to the Thuringian and Anhalt proposition that Nazism and German defeat was the ultimate destination of alienation from God, the KPS recognised a corporate partial guilt for Nazism and its crimes.

Guilt and the population at large

A number of people in church communities expressed some recognition of guilt. The church teacher Herr K. acknowledged that he had entered the Nazi party in 1933 with 'excitement' (Begeisterung) that he was collaborating in the reconstruction of Germany. He became a party Blockleiter in 1936, though he soon lost the post after 'conflicts' with other Nazis. While he was not an 'active' member after 1939, he

⁴⁷ See above, pp. 45-6.

⁴⁸ AKPS, A, Gen. 8256, 'Volksentschied vom 30. Juni 1946 in Sachsen. Denkschrift', undated (probably May/June 1946).

⁴⁹ AKPS, A, 4061, Kons. to Hübener, 6/7/46.

admitted that, as a member, he was complicit in abetting Nazi crimes.⁵⁰ A former NSDAP member interned at Buchenwald by the Soviets wrote in his memoir that it was only in incarceration that he had come to the Christian faith and to the realisation that he bore some guilt. He had possessed greater knowledge about the injustices of the Third Reich than most people, yet he had done nothing and remained silent.⁵¹

Other parishioners wrote letters to the church establishment in recognition of German guilt. One, Dr. Hiß, submitted his thoughts to *Glaube und Heimat* in December 1946. He opined that all Germans shared guilt for the war before God, and only a recognition of divine grace offered expiation.⁵² Another letter, from the Altenburg community, was published the following week and explicitly stated the collective guilt of the German nation. The Church was also responsible for its sins of omission: it had warned too little and kept silent.⁵³ In Saxony-Anhalt, a layman in Bad Lauchstadt, Herr T., scrawled a letter to Bishop Müller, in which he castigated the Church for not living its confession. He critiqued the KPS' position on the recent past in this way:

Warum wollen wir Christen noch langer Gott täuschen[?] [H]aben wir ihm denn noch nicht genug getäuscht, oder wollen wir Christen noch weiter mit dem hochgelobten Gott und seinen Sohn Theater spielen[?] Ist denn die Strafe noch nicht gross genug, oder soll sie noch größer werden? Rufet das Volk, besonders die Christen zur Buße auf, die teilgenommen hatten, an die Regie von Hitler und am Krieg!⁵⁴

⁵⁰ *AKPS*, B1, 149, Herr K. (Cröllwitz) to OBM (Halle), 3/8/45.

⁵¹ Eichler, 7.

⁵² *GuH*, 1/33, 8/12/46, 'Hier spricht die Gemeinde – Heimkehrer und Kirche', Dr. Hiß, 2.

⁵³ *GuH*, 1/34, 15/12/46, 'Kirche, bekenne!', 2.

⁵⁴ *AKPS*, B1, 212, Herr T. (Bad Lauchstadt) to Müller, 6/3/48.

Müller replied but did not address the proposition regarding public repentance.⁵⁵ The man's complaint is especially interesting because the KPS, after all, had discussed the question of guilt in significant depth within church walls. It seems, however, that this discourse was either not radical enough or it had not filtered down to the laity. The latter is most likely, given that the discussions of guilt in the KPS were among church hierarchs or, in the case of the *Volksentscheid*, directed at the state authorities.

Otherwise, recognition of guilt in oral and written testimonies may reflect post-factum judgements, based on a process of reflection over a number of years.⁵⁶ The following two respondents contended, nevertheless, that the question of guilt was a topic of discussion in the immediate post-war period. One woman from Steinach, born in 1928, recounted that she had learned of German atrocities through her father, who had been a soldier in the East. She had therefore heard of the 'German guilt', and she had accordingly not anticipated surviving Allied vengeance in the wake of the war.⁵⁷ A man born in 1930 recalled discussions in school about German guilt and national pride:

Dass die Deutschen durch ihr Verhalten das NS-Regime unterstützt und gefördert hatten, wollte man allerdings nicht so gern hören. Wir waren ein Volk von "Mitläufern" geworden. In der Schule gab es Diskussionen, ob der Krieg ein "Naturgesetz" sei und ob man [bei] so viel Grund zur Scham doch auch etwas stolz sein durfte, ein Deutscher zu sein.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Ibid., Müller to Herr T. (Bad Lauchstadt), 12/5/48.

⁵⁶ Also questionnaires from: Frau Dagmar G., Leipzig, 1935; Herr Rudolf K., Rosian, 1925; Ernst-Wilhelm E., Elbingerode, 1924; Frau Ingeborg R., Staßfurt-Leopoldshall, 1928.

⁵⁷ Interview with Frau Dagmar M., Steinach, 1928, 1/5/2008. Lutz Niethammer offers a similar example of a person learning of crimes in the East through an acquaintance: *Die Volkseigene Erfahrung*, 598. Dorothee Wierling recounts the testimony of a woman who retrospectively viewed the post-war deprivation as a 'bill to be paid' for German excesses: *ibid.*, 429-40. See also: D. Wierling, 'A German Generation of Reconstruction. The Children of the Weimar Republic in the GDR', in L. Passerini (ed.), *Memory and Totalitarianism, Vol. 1* (Oxford, 1992), 75-6.

⁵⁸ Questionnaire from Herr Paul K., Erfurt, 1930.

Despite these examples, most Germans rejected any responsibility for either ‘turning away from God’, for Nazism, or for its crimes. The church authorities acknowledged this, and, in a circular to the pastorate dated 17 August 1945, Fiedler noted that there was little popular understanding of personal guilt in the Anhalt community; Nazi ideas remained widespread and were detrimental to the Christian message.⁵⁹

Bishop Müller too identified a popular dismissal of responsibility for the crimes of National Socialism. He stated at the KPS’ first Synod in October 1946 that the sufferings of others in the concentration camps and the murders perpetrated in the gas chambers no longer made any impression on people at large. This lack of ‘responsibility’ was the result of secularisation.⁶⁰ Elsewhere, a provost spoke on guilt in the context of a ‘theological week’ for the Jungmännerwerk on 20-24 October 1947. He stated that many youth suffered from an ‘intertwinement with evil’ and, although most young people knew of injustice, they did not recognise their own guilt or the necessity of penitence. They instead understood the post-war circumstances as the result of fate, and therefore the fault of God.⁶¹ In *Glaube und Heimat*, one author noted a lack of conscience amongst the population in April 1947, and when the newspaper held a poetry competition the following year, the judges lamented that few entrants had explored regret and guilt in their submissions.⁶²

Throughout Germany, in fact, many people refused to accept any responsibility for Nazism and its effects. This is particularly apparent in the results of surveys

⁵⁹ *LKAD*, Kirchen- und Pfarrangelegenheiten, Köthen, 1945-50, Fiedler to all pastors, 17/8/45.

⁶⁰ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 469, 3879, ‘Der Provinzial-Synode der Kirchenprovinz Sachsen vom 21. bis 24. Oktober 1946 in Halle (Saale)’, Pressedienst der Verwaltung für die Provinz Sachsen, 23/10/46.

⁶¹ *AKPS*, B1, 27, ‘Bericht über die Theologische Woche des Evang. Jungmännerwerkes des Landes Sachsen-Anhalt in Halle/Saale, Stadtmission vom 20.10.-24.10.1947’, Pfr. W.

⁶² *GuH*, 2/17, 27/4/47, ‘Gott verloren – auch den Menschen verloren’, 2; *GuH*, 3/19-20, 16/5/48, ‘Zu unserem Preisausschreiben’, Pfr. Waldmann, 4.

distributed by the Central Control Commission for Germany (British Element) (CCG-BE) and the Office of Military Government of the United States (OMGUS). The polls sought to gauge public opinion and attitudes to Nazism in the post-war period.⁶³ Six OMGUS surveys from 1 November 1945 to 5 January 1948 found that most respondents rejected the idea of collective guilt.⁶⁴ Other surveys documented continuing sympathy for National Socialism, especially as existential conditions did not significantly improve. In both the British and American surveys up to 1949, for instance, a majority of Germans believed that Nazism was a good idea executed poorly rather than a bad idea *per se*.⁶⁵ Over 70 percent of respondents believed that the Nazi leadership had corrupted the movement and that Hitler was personally responsible for the atrocities.⁶⁶ The British surveys noted that 64 percent of Protestants and 48 percent of Catholics adhered to this view.⁶⁷ In West Germany, where discussions persisted into the 1950s, there was a desire to put an end to this ‘unpleasant’ matter.⁶⁸

There were three mechanisms in particular that were cited to dismiss personal responsibility. Many people believed that they were victims of Nazism, and/or

⁶³ See in general: A. Kutsch, ‘Einstellungen zum Nationalsozialismus in der Nachkriegszeit. Ein Beitrag zu den Anfängen der Meinungsforschung in den westlichen Besatzungszonen’, *Publizistik*, 40/4 (1995), 415-48. The OMGUS surveys ran from 26 October 1945 up until the foundation of the *Bundesrepublik* in 1949: *Public Opinion in Occupied Germany. The OMGUS Surveys, 1945-1949*, ed. A.J. Merritt/R.L. Merritt (Urbana, 1970). See also: E.K. Scheuch, ‘Der Umbruch nach 1945 im Spiegel der Umfragen’, in U. Gerhardt/E. Mochmann (ed.), *Gesellschaftlicher Umbruch 1945-1990. Re-Demokratisierung und Lebensverhältnisse* (Munich, 1992), 9-25.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 17-19.

⁶⁵ Kutsch, 422ff, 440.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 424; Scheuch, 16.

⁶⁷ Kutsch, 430ff.

⁶⁸ N. Frei, *Vergangenheitspolitik. Die Anfänge der Bundesrepublik und die NS-Vergangenheit*, 2nd Edn (Munich, 1997), 397-406.

claimed prior ignorance of the crimes of the Third Reich, and/or blamed others.⁶⁹ Many historians have observed that existential anxieties and personal deprivations in the difficult post-war environment overwhelmed any popular appreciation for the magnitude of Nazi crimes committed against other peoples.⁷⁰ Many Germans believed themselves victims of National Socialism; nobody could have suffered more from Nazism than they themselves.⁷¹ Prevalent death and the struggle for survival embodied Nazi crimes committed against the German population. One man, born in 1930, noted that the memory of the survivors was of ‘eigene Opfer: die Männer, die im Krieg gefallen waren. Eine Frau hat 3 Söhne verloren...’.⁷² In the church community, the superintendent in Gotha wrote an article in *Glaube und Heimat* that explored how everyday concerns overwhelmed the Christian conception of sin:

In unseren Tagen wird von den Menschen viel gemurrt: gegen den Mangel an Nahrung und Heizung, gegen den lieben Nächsten, der nichts richtig macht, gegen den Herrgott und all das, was er über uns hat kommen lassen. Man hört nur ein Murren fast nie: das Murren gegen sich selbst und die eigene Sünde.⁷³

Even discussions and events surrounding the concentration camp apparatus after the war fed the victim complex of many Germans. This is exemplified by an episode concerning the small forced labour camp at Plömnitz, just to the north of Preußnitz, near Köthen in Anhalt.⁷⁴ The mayor of Preußnitz reported indignantly on 2 May 1945

⁶⁹ Cf. H. Marcuse, *Legacies of Dachau. The Uses and Abuses of a Concentration Camp, 1933-2001* (Cambridge, 2001), 74ff.

⁷⁰ See, for example: R.G. Moeller, *War stories. The search for a useable past in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Berkeley, 2001), 51-88; N. Naimark, ‘The Persistence of the “Postwar”. Germany and Poland’, in *Histories of the Aftermath*, 19; R. Bessel, *Nazism and War* (London, 2004), 150-82; F. Biess, *Homecomings. Returning POWs and the Legacies of Defeat in Postwar Germany* (Princeton, 2006), 52ff.

⁷¹ For instance: *GuH*, 1/5, 26/5/46, ‘Vergebung – Einigkeit – Bruderschaft’, 1; *GuH.*, 2/37, 14/9/47, ‘Ewigkeit in die Zeit – Sorgen?’, Pfr. (Pösneck), 1; *GuH*, 3/45, 7/11/48, ‘Flucht in des Nichts’, F. Högner, 1.

⁷² Questionnaire from Herr Kurt M., Schwiesau (Altmark), 1930.

⁷³ *GuH*, 3/1, 4/1/48, ‘Der Bußweg den sündigen Menschen’, Sup. (Gotha), 1.

⁷⁴ The Plömnitz camp was associated with the ‘Dora’ underground factory linked to KZ Buchenwald.

about the perceived injustices perpetrated by the occupying Americans against his townsfolk. According to the mayor's report, population of Preußlitz had to quarter and clothe the survivors of the Plömnitz camp, and, if this example of the 'sacrifices of the townsfolk' was not sufficient, the occupiers confiscated and re-distributed their personal belongings amongst the former prisoners. What was worse, moreover, was that the inhabitants of Preußlitz were forced to dig up and re-bury the bodies of 160 to 170 inmates. The psychological impact on the citizenry was reportedly significant, 'zumal sie als Unschuldige diese Ausgrabungen selbst durchzuführen hätten'.⁷⁵ The mayor railed against the compulsion of the innocent Preußlitz townspeople to attend to the effects of the Nazi concentration camp system. This coercion contributed to the sense of German victimhood and obscured the crimes committed at Plömnitz.⁷⁶

Members of the church community shared this attitude, and in Weimar they claimed ignorance of the horrors of the nearby Buchenwald concentration camp. Soon after the American arrival, the occupiers compelled several hundred Weimar inhabitants to walk through the abandoned camp. Such was the perturbation within the pastorate that the superintendent subsequently issued a proclamation from the pulpit:

Dort [Buchenwald] sind Vorgänge ans Licht gekommen, die uns bisher völlig unbekannt waren. Wir verurteilen die Grausamkeit und den Sadismus, mit denen Menschen behandelt und vielfach zu Tode gequält worden sind. Das alles ist nur möglich gewesen auf dem Boden einer Geisteshaltung, die mit dem Christentum völlig gebrochen hat, und unter der wir als Kirche auch sonst oft schmerzlich gelitten haben. So dürfen wir vor Gott bekennen, dass wir keinerlei Mitschuld an diesem Greueln haben.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ *LHASA*, DE, KV KÖT, Nr. 107, 'Bericht', Preußlitz, 2/5/45. Cf. the reaction of the Mayor of Dachau: Marcuse, 73ff.

⁷⁶ Marcuse totals some 24 cases (not including Plömnitz) where Germans were forced to view camps: 421-2. At Dachau, see: *ibid.*, 55-9. At Bergen-Belsen: *Unruhige Zeiten. Erlebnisberichte aus dem Landkries Celle 1945-1949*, ed. Rainer Schulze (Munich, 1990), 77, 83. On the filial of Buchenwald at Ohrdruf and at Thekla near Leipzig: Ziemke, 231ff, 244-5.

⁷⁷ *LKAE*, A860/III, 'Kanzelabkündigung Für die evangelische Sup. und Kirchgemeinde Weimar der Propst und Sup. Kade', undated. Stress in the original.

This statement not only alleged ignorance but also distanced the perpetrators from Christianity. Only those alien to the Church could commit such atrocities. The claim of ignorance is also well supported in existing literature and personal testimonies.⁷⁸ As one woman (1926), who grew up in the church and had always been a member, wrote in a questionnaire:

Wir wussten nicht von dem Unrecht, das sie [Nazis] taten. Das deutsche Volk hatte die Folgen zu tragen. Uns Deutsche traf es besonders hart. Es ist gut, dass der Nationalsozialismus zerschlagen wurde. Bei einem Sieg wären die Folgen furchtbar gewesen.⁷⁹

In this, not only did Frau H. not know of Nazi atrocities, but cast herself as a victim of National Socialism, an attitude that deflected responsibility onto others.

Lastly, as in areas of the Western zones, people recognised that there was fault to apportion, and scapegoats were the order of the day.⁸⁰ This responsibility was less, however, for ‘falling away’ from God or for Nazism and its crimes, but rather more for the post-war destruction of Germany and the deprivation of Germans. One author in *Glaube und Heimat* wrote that most people believed themselves innocent of the fate of Germany and the difficult post-war conditions. People pointed the finger at others and refused to accept responsibility for others’ crimes.⁸¹ In some places, Germans blamed the Allies for the post-war need.⁸² This took a number of forms and, as noted in chapter three, KPD/SED and Red Army personnel were widely feared and

⁷⁸ Wille, *Entnazifizierung*, 120. For an investigation of this claim, see: P. Longerich, “*Davon haben wir nichts gewusst!*” *Die Deutschen und die Judenverfolgung 1933-1945* (Munich, 2006). One example of this claim in memoir literature, for example, is: J. Voss, *Black Edelweiss. A Memoir of Combat and Conscience by a Soldier of the Waffen-SS* (Bedford [Penn.], 2002), 201-2.

⁷⁹ Questionnaire of Frau Marta H., Heyerode, 1926.

⁸⁰ Reflected in polls: Kutsch, 434-4.

⁸¹ *GuH*, 2/33, 17/8/47, ‘Versöhnung und Vergebung’, Prof. Dr. H. Schuster, 1.

⁸² Kutsch, 427. A number of Germans in the western zones also blamed the black market on the Allies: L.J. Hilton, ‘The Black Market in History and Memory: German Perceptions of Victimhood from 1945 to 1948’, *German History*, 28/4 (2010), 479-97. See also: J. Foschepoth, ‘German Reaction to defeat and occupation’, in R. Moeller (ed.), *West Germany under Construction* (Ann Arbor, 1997), 76-9.

disliked. A number of party functionaries observed that conversations often centered on the excesses of the Soviet occupiers despite vigorous efforts to emphasise the guilt of the German Army and SS in atrocities.⁸³ Rumours also blamed the Allies. One example of gossip maintained that the ‘atrocities’ committed in the concentration camps and ‘exposed’ in the media were merely Allied propaganda devised to sap German morale and undermine potential resistance. A pastor in Lauchröden (Thuringia) sent a report to his superintendent in Eisenach, who forwarded it to the LKR. The pastor reported that his niece, who worked in a hospital, encountered a patient who had been interned in Buchenwald. She asked him if he had seen the ‘Buchenwald film’. He smiled and answered in the affirmative: not only had he had seen it, but he had featured in it. He explained that the Buchenwald inmates had been detailed to fetch bodies from the rubble of Dresden and burn them in order to prevent an epidemic. Filming continued all the while, and now the film was being used to propagate Buchenwald ‘atrocities’.⁸⁴ This example is gruesomely ironic: the bodies from the Buchenwald film were held to be German, victims of the Allied firebombing of the city. It evoked, therefore, an attitude of victimisation instead of remorse.

For some, this attitude of victimisation by the Allies endures up to the current day.⁸⁵ Frau R. (1923) worked at the Junkers plant near Dessau and was evacuated to Zittau in Saxony with other employees as part of a ‘development program’ in early 1945. The transport lorry, however, broke down enroute and, instead of spending the night in Dresden on 17 February 1945, Frau R. arrived in the city the following day to a scene of total destruction (‘alles Kaputt’). She had narrowly, perhaps serendipitously,

⁸³ *LHASA*, MER, P. 508, 24, ‘Stimmungsbericht über das Buna Werk to Bezirksleitung der KPD Halle-Merseburg’, 1/8/45.

⁸⁴ *LKAE*, A860/III, Sup. (Eisenach) to LKR, 7/8/46.

⁸⁵ See, in general: N. Frei, *1945 und wir. Das Dritte Reich im Bewußtsein der Deutschen* (Munich, 2005).

avoided the Allied aerial bombardment and ensuing firestorm. In response to an observation about the cross recently gifted (in 2000) to the *Frauenkirche* in Dresden by British donors as a symbol of reconciliation, Frau R. offered: ‘Aber, ich gerne das Alte noch [sic]... Die Engländer können es niemals gutmachen, was sie da gemacht haben.’ To a subsequent question about German crimes against other peoples, Frau R. responded: ‘ja sicher, aber sie [Dresden] war so eine Kulturstadt, so sie zu zerstören... das kann ich nicht verstehen, kann ich nicht verstehen’.⁸⁶ Frau R.’s personal experience apparently crowded out testimonies about German atrocities. It is interesting, furthermore, that she chose to condemn the English on the basis of the destruction of a *Kulturstadt*, with no mention of the ca. 30,000 dead. One possible explanation may reflect a weighing of ca. 30,000 deaths against the vast number at the hands of Germans during the period of the Third Reich.⁸⁷

Many Germans also blamed Hitler and other prominent Nazis for a conflict that was widely understood as ‘Hitler’s war’.⁸⁸ The committee of the Thuringian Action against Need typified the general feeling, blaming Hitler and his ‘criminal war’ for people’s losses and everyday sufferings.⁸⁹ This scapegoating is apparent in popular attitudes regarding the Nuremberg war crimes tribunal. KPD/SED reports from Saxony-Anhalt reflected that almost all those questioned about the trials stated that the defendants deserved death. One March 1946 report from Merseburg noted that

⁸⁶ Interview with Frau Bettina R., Dessau, 1923, 12/6/2008.

⁸⁷ This would suggest a divided, conflicted memory: on the one hand, a subliminal acknowledgement of German crimes and their moral bankruptcy; on the other hand, the enduring traumatic memory of the aftermath of the Dresden firebombing.

⁸⁸ *Kriegsende*, 161-3; *LKAE*, A750/IV, 138, Pfr. (Gotha) to LKR, 11/3/1946; *GuH*, 1/11, 7/7/46, ‘Helfende Hände steuern der Not, Vom Hilfswerk der Thüringer Kirche in Eisenach’, Massow, 3; Siebert, p. 25. Even to the current day, it was Hitler who deprived a child of her parents: questionnaire from Frau Edith S., Piffhausen, 1934.

⁸⁹ *LKAE*, A750/III, 23, Landesausschluß der Thür.-Aktion gegen Not to the Thuringian pastorate, undated.

many people believed the proceedings were show-trials, and the accused should have been hanged long ago.⁹⁰ Reports from Halle and Lossa, though, noted that some people believed that the trials of the ‘criminals’ ought to be drawn out as long as possible to increase the suffering of the accused.⁹¹ Both views shared common ground however: the necessity of guilty verdicts and death sentences.⁹² The deaths of the Nazi elite were, in this way, ‘reconciliation’ (Versöhnung) for Nazi crimes committed against the German *Volk*.⁹³ Consistent with this mentality were instances of incomprehension that Franz von Papen, Hjalmar Schacht and Hans Fritzsche received acquittals.⁹⁴

Lower level NSDAP members too received opprobrium. One woman, aged 17 in 1945, blamed party members for the war, and for the fact that the German people had to bear the consequences.⁹⁵ Another woman (1933) raised in a Christian home recalled the abuse that her mother endured after the war (and into the DDR) for her husband’s membership in the Nazi Party. The mother was a teacher at a *Volksschule* in Bernburg, and she was ostracised by the school rector for being the wife of a ‘criminal’.⁹⁶ In Naumburg, a police report related an incident that took place in August 1948. During a house search conducted by the MGB, a picture of Hitler was

⁹⁰ *LHASA*, MER, Kreisverwaltung Merseburg, 414, 282, ‘Stimmungsbericht’, KPD Merseburg, 7/3/46.

⁹¹ *LHASA*, MER, P 506, 8, ‘Bericht’, BL (KPD), Halle, 30/12/45; *LHASA*, MER, IV/401/244, Ortsgruppe Lossa, Wiehe, to KL Kölleda, 8/6/46.

⁹² This attitude was, of course, not universally shared: M. Buddrus, ‘A generation twice betrayed: youth policy in the transition from the Third Reich to the Soviet Zone of Occupation 1945–1946’, in *Generations in Conflict*, 266. Vollnhals estimates that 80 percent believed that the judgements were fair: Vollnhals, ‘Im Schatten der Stuttgarter Schulderklärung’, 416.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, Ortsgruppe Kölleda to BL (SED), Halle, 28/9/46; *ibid.*, Ortsgruppe Wiehe to BL (SED), Halle, 2/10/46. In the West, OMGUS surveys found that half of respondents believed that the sentences were justified, one fifth believed them too lenient, and only nine percent draconian: *Public Opinion in Occupied Germany*, 35. Also: Kutsch, 435-6.

⁹⁴ *LHASA*, MER, KL der SED Merseburg, ‘Informationsberichte’, März 1946-Dezember 1948, IV/414/346, KL Merseburg, 18/3/46.

⁹⁵ Questionnaire from Frau Ursula N., Köthen, 1928.

⁹⁶ Questionnaire from Frau Bettina A., Bernburg/Hecklingen, 1933.

discovered under the linen cupboard and a copy of *Mein Kampf* found in a cupboard. Both belonged to the landlady's husband, who, she explained, had been compelled to join the Nazi party. The Soviets subsequently confiscated the house, and the report noted: 'Es ist für Frau B. unerträglich, mit den Nazi Verbrechern, Kriegsverbrechern, Kriegshetzern und aktiven Nazis auf eine Stufe gestellt zu werden.'⁹⁷ As a testament to the lingering influence of this view, three women brought up in Protestant homes, two born in 1931, one in 1934, identified Hitler as the sole cause of Germany's collapse. One of these, Frau Lotte V. (1931), also noted that Hitler's agenda was mediated through the heavy-handed mayor in Stendal.⁹⁸ All three women were very young at the end of the war (11, 13 and 14 years old), and their testimonies reveal, to the extent that they can, how the tendency to apportion blame to Hitler and his agents became an established post-war discourse. Certainly, the anti-fascist agenda of the SVAG and KPD/SED incurred a vilification of anything associated with Nazism, and the culture of silence in the DDR after 1949 – all citizens were necessarily 'anti-fascists' following 'comprehensive' denazification – may have cemented and 'incubated' this phenomenon.⁹⁹

Lastly, denunciations were a common phenomenon in the post-war period. Social anomie in many places often provided fertile ground for individuals to settle old scores while conveniently displacing any sense of personal responsibility. In effect, an accusation leveled against another distanced the complainant from National

⁹⁷ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 764, 178, Naumburg police report, Herr H., undated (relates events in August/September 1948).

⁹⁸ Questionnaires from Frau Rosemary B., Weferlingen, 1931; Frau Lotte V., Stendal, 1931; Frau Gisa A., Gräfenhainichen, 1934.

⁹⁹ This is nonetheless a complex narrative of memory, and further investigation is beyond the scope of this study. On the SED and the Nazi legacy, see below, pp. 340-1.

Socialism.¹⁰⁰ A man accused of murder, for example, had been a NSDAP member and former mayor of Bad Bibra in Saxony-Anhalt. The man claimed that he had always been an ‘anti-fascist’, and had indeed saved two people from concentration camps; whoever had informed had inculpated him in a personal vendetta.¹⁰¹

Denunciations were also deployed within church communities. For example, members of the Bendeleben congregation opposed the ongoing service of their local pastor, who had allegedly attempted to join the Nazi party and had volunteered for military service. They identified themselves as ‘anti-fascists’ and, as such, could not bear to listen to the pastor’s sermons. The man’s wife had, moreover, been an active NSDAP member who had often demanded the loud exclamation of ‘Heil Hitler’.¹⁰² It seems that the pastor and his wife were rather unpopular, not just because of their politics. Either way, the act of denunciation focussed feelings of victimisation, and ensured that the denounced assumed some responsibility for the German collapse.

Former German Christians in Anhalt

Clergymen also did not uniformly accept church ideas of guilt. This is most clear in Anhalt, where the church council member Georg Fiedler demanded affidavits from all former German Christians. While Fiedler did not explicitly apportion responsibility for Nazi crimes, he asserted the close relationship between German Christianity and

¹⁰⁰ Many denunciations, though, led to nought. The SED in Sangerhausen reported in early 1948 that the majority of denunciations were unsubstantiated and had recently led to 14 acquittals; only two people had been remanded pending further investigations: *LHASA*, MER, Kreisverwaltung Sangerhausen, 96, KR Sangerhausen to LNA (Halle), 25/2/48.

¹⁰¹ *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 764, 178, Herr W. (Bad Bibra) to Präsidialdirektor O., 26/10/45; *Ibid.*, Herr W. (Bad Bibra) to Präsidialrat Pfr. Dr. Wagner, 27/10/45.

¹⁰² *ThHStAW*, BMP, 79/866/68, Gemeinderat (Bendeleben) to LKR, 17/8/46.

Nazism. He alluded to race without mentioning the Jewish genocide: both movements pushed the absolute importance of racial consciousness for the German *Volk*.¹⁰³ The ‘Totalitätsanspruch des Rasseprinzips’ was a transgression of the First Commandment, though there was no comment on the victims of Nazi racism. The LKRA, to use Elizabeth I’s phrase, sought to make windows into men’s souls by demanding that inner change be manifested through pastors’ personal declarations. These statements, according to Fiedler, ought to reflect remorse and they, therefore, allow a unique insight into the situation and mentalities of former German Christians.¹⁰⁴

On the whole, there were few frank confessions of responsibility. A member of the first Anhalt German Christian-dominated church council in July 1933, nonetheless, penned an extraordinary confession. Pastor L. recognised his complicity with German Christianity and Nazism as he reflected in November 1945. He remarkably, almost uniquely, labelled himself a Nazi and sought redemption:

Es klingt natürlich heute unglaublich, wenn ein Nazi behauptet, er habe sein deutsches Vaterland aus tiefster Seele geliebt und für seine evangelische Kirche nur das Beste gewollt. Aber es ist doch nun einmal so gewesen. Ich habe daran geglaubt, dass der Nationalsozialismus die Kraft sein würde, die das deutsche Volk aus aller Zerrissenheit endlich zu einer brüderlich verbundenen Einheit zusammenführen könnte.¹⁰⁵

Pastor L. claimed that his motives were at heart righteous: he had never held a German Christian ‘Gottesfeier’, he had never compelled others to join the movement, and he had inwardly ‘disassociated’ himself from Nazism well before 1945. Though

¹⁰³ There is little mention of Jews explicitly in TheK, LKA and KPS discourses, and none at all in official church proclamations. On Christian discussions in Germany about Jews and the Holocaust after the war, see, in general: C. Raisig, *Wege der Erneuerung. Christen und Juden: Der Rheinische Synodalbeschluss* (Potsdam, 2002).

¹⁰⁴ *EZAB*, 2/121, ‘Rundbrief an die früheren D.C.-Pfarrer in der Anh. Landeskirche, zugleich zur Kenntnis an alle Geistlichen’, Fiedler, 27/11/45.

¹⁰⁵ *LKAD*, D.C. Erklärungen der Geistlichen 1945-1949, Pfr L. (Plötzkau) to LKRA, 12/11/45.

L. began with zeal and love for the project, he had experienced increasingly numerous ‘depressing’ moments and ‘bitter’ realisations. The watershed occurred during his service as a military chaplain, though he acknowledged that it was surely difficult for others to understand that the man who had returned in 1945 was different from the man who had left in 1939. Pastor L. did not wish, however, to lessen the weight of his responsibility for the crimes of Nazism, and he confessed with considerable pathos:

Bitte, fassen Sie aber das Gesagte nicht so auf, als wollte ich jetzt mein Eintreten für Partei und Deutsche Christen verkleinern. Das wäre lächerlich; denn es ist vor aller Augen erfolgt... Ich bin fast 5 Monate wieder daheim, aber die Bedrückung, das Schuldgefühl wird immer schlimmer und lastender, nachdem nun alle die entsetzlichen Dinge ins Tageslicht gekommen sind, die sich in den Konzentrationslagern und an allen möglichen sonstigen Orten abgespielt haben. Bei der Predigt, im Unterricht, im Gespräch – überall fühle ich mich unfrei in dem Gefühl, dass die Menschen mit Recht zu mir sagen können: du magst dich ja geändert haben, aber du bist doch damals dabeigewesen, hast jene Sache unterstützt und gutgeheissen und bist mitschuldig an unserem Elend. Wie und ob ich damit jemals zurechtkomme, das weiss ich heute noch nicht. In allem Glauben an den Nationalsozialismus und an die deutschchristliche Sache enttäuscht und gescheitert sein, jetzt vor dem eigenen Gewissen wie ein Verbrecher dastehen, nach aussen hin sich von dem bitteren Schmerz darüber nichts anmerken lassen dürfen, dabei andere Menschen in ihrem Leid noch trösten müssen, das ist – Sie dürfen es mir glauben – eine harte Strafe und drückt [mich] zu Boden, wenn ich mir auch täglich vorhalte, dass auch dieses nicht ohne Gottes gnädige Absicht geschieht.

¹⁰⁶

What is extraordinary and unique about this lengthy statement is that it goes far beyond what Fiedler required. L. confessed responsibility not only for corrupting the Christian gospel, but also for Nazi genocide and war crimes. It seems that the sense of shame occasioned by his affiliation to the German Christians and Nazism pushed him to the other extreme: to reject fascism in favour of socialism. He placed himself in the service of the post-war KPD, perhaps to moderate his profound self-condemnation.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., Pfr L. (Plötzkau) to LKRA, 12/11/45.

¹⁰⁷ One wonders how this decision turned out. The former NKFD man and bishop in Pommern from 1955, Friedrich Wilhelm Krummacher, questioned his actions in these terms: ‘Es stand aber die

On the other hand, the majority of former German Christians rejected or minimised Fiedler's postulations about personal responsibility.¹⁰⁸ Most presented themselves as 'nominal' members of the movement who had not actively promoted German Christianity. Many had been coerced to enter the movement and/or had experienced conflicts with radicals. These churchmen cast themselves as 'victims of facism', although, as Fiedler noted, they 'früher ihre Segel von diesem Zeitwinde willig haben schwellen lassen'.¹⁰⁹ For example, one pastor who entered the Anhalt church on 1 June 1937 blamed coercion for his subsequent entry into the NKE.¹¹⁰ A churchman from Dessau similarly wrote that he had not entered out of internal conviction but rather out of fear of discrimination if he had not joined the movement. He remarked, furthermore, that he had had little in common with the often brutal machinations of the church leadership, and wartime experiences had 'in the course of time' separated him 'internally' from German Christianity.¹¹¹ This admission acknowledged that, although he may not have joined the German Christian movement out of idealism, he had believed in its agenda at some stage.

A former Kreisoberpfarrer in Zerbst also asserted his reluctance to become involved with the Anhalt German Christians. He wrote Fiedler that he had rejected the post of Kreisoberpfarrer three times before finally acquiescing in 1936. He was also pressured into joining the NKE in February 1938, and had experienced conflicts with August Körner over his refusal to evaluate pastors on the basis of their fidelity to

schlichte Frage vor uns, ob wir [NKFD Pfarrer] durch offenes Reden oder durch Schweigen mehr Schuld auf uns laden würden.' F.W. Krummacher, '1945-1965', *Zeichen der Zeit* 19 (1965), 122.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Bergen's work predominantly on German Christians in West Germany: *Twisted Cross*, 219ff.

¹⁰⁹ *EZAB*, 2/121, 'Rundbrief an die früheren D.C.-Pfarrer in der Anh. Landeskirche, zugleich zur Kenntnis an alle Geistlichen', Fiedler, 27/11/45.

¹¹⁰ *LKAD*, D.C. Erklärungen der Geistlichen 1945-1949, Pfr T. (Köthen) to LKRA, 27/3/46.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, Pfr H. (Scheuder u. Dessau) to LKR, 5/1/46.

German Christianity.¹¹² A pastor in Niederlepte wrote that he had wished to remain ‘unpolitical’ at all times and had been compelled to enter the movement. He had favoured religious interests above political concerns and had therefore focused the ire of Körner, who had accused him of ‘lukewarmness’ to German Christianity.¹¹³ Elsewhere, Pastor G. reported that he had joined the movement on 27 April 1939 upon demand, though only to gain employment. He did not follow the German Christian guidelines or liturgy, and he continued to use the Old Testament.¹¹⁴ Yet another pastor disputed that he even needed to submit a declaration at all. He explained that Körner had pressured him into joining the ranks of the German Christians and his membership had never been formalised.¹¹⁵

Lastly, Pastor M., who had left the Hannover Church on account of his German Christian sympathies, claimed that he was co-opted to observe the particular rites of the Anhalt church. A German Christian since 1933, M. wrote Fiedler in March 1946 that he now had no connection to German Christianity, nor would he seek one.¹¹⁶ Fiedler criticised this comment as a ‘self-evident truth’: German Christianity did not exist as a movement in the post-war period.¹¹⁷ Fiedler’s handwritten scrawl on the original letter was pithy: ‘Nicht genügend in meinen Augen!’¹¹⁸ Fiedler, in fact, evaluated each case not only on the basis of pastors’ declarations, but also after consulting other evidence, such as eyewitness testimonies and written records. In this case, according to church documentation, M. and his wife had stressed their full

¹¹² Ibid., Pfr R. (Zerbst) to LKRA, 25/3/46.

¹¹³ Ibid., Pfr. S. (Niederlepte) to LKRA, 21/4/47.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., Pfr. G. (Bernburg) to LKRA, 5/12/45.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., Pfr. V. (Güsten) to Fiedler, 17/3/46; *ibid.*, Pfr. V. (Güsten) to LKRA, 18/3/46.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., Pfr M. (Raguhn) to LKRA, 1/3/46.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., Fiedler to Pfr. M. (Raguhn), 5/3/46.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., Pfr M. (Raguhn) to LKR, 1/3/46.

confidence in German Christianity when M. had applied for work in Anhalt. Now, Fiedler continued, M. presented himself in total opposition to the former movement. M. was mistaken if he believed he could transition seamlessly into the new church order without ‘rupture’, ‘re-education’ and ‘regret’. M. had not taken the declaration seriously enough: Fiedler had hoped that M., after all his experiences, would have ‘probed deeper’ (in die Tiefe graben).¹¹⁹

The reply from Pastor M. arrived soon after. He made an almost complete *volte-face* in admitting the incongruity between his statements during the Third Reich and those penned in March 1946. He had overlooked the differences between National Socialism and German Christianity as he sought a harmony that would have led to a great German, Christian future. Failure in this regard was the ‘greatest disappointment of my life’. He declared that he was guilty of following the ‘wrong path’, although, he noted, it would perhaps seem unbelievable that his re-orientation was genuine. The man professed his loyalty to the post-war LKRA and closed with an admission that he still required re-education.¹²⁰

Like Pastor M., most German Christians in Anhalt believed fully in the movement at the beginning in 1933.¹²¹ Some cited their pure motives – to reform Christianity, to unify the Church and to re-Christianise the German *Volk* – as mitigating circumstances in 1945 and 1946; they had done what they thought to be best for Germany and Christianity in general. For example, Pastor K. was ‘bedrückt’ from observing the alienation of broad swaths of the population from the gospel after the First World War, which he had personally experienced as a soldier. Turning to

¹¹⁹ Ibid., Fiedler (LKRA) to Pfr. M. (Raguhn), 5/3/46.

¹²⁰ Ibid., Pfr. M. (Raguhn) to Fiedler (LKRA), 21/3/46.

¹²¹ Similarly in the American zone: Bergen, *Twisted Cross*, 212ff.

theology in 1927, he sought a reform of the church and it was eventually, after Hitler's seizure of power in 1933, German Christianity that offered a vehicle for the revival he had envisioned. By 1947, he harked back to his good intentions in 1933 to explain his conduct.¹²² A number of other men stated that they had come to see the error of their ways, often whilst military chaplains at the front. Pastor Z. at Leopoldshall presented his history in these, almost typical, strokes. He initially wanted to win the German people back to Christianity and therefore left the 'stuttering' Confessing Church for the dynamism of the NKE. It was during war service from 1940 to 1945 that he rejected German Christianity, citing 1 Corinthians III.11.¹²³ Fiedler, however, accused the churchman of attempting to cast himself as a 'nominal' German Christian when, in actuality, he had published articles on German Christianity, and the testimonies of contemporaries suggested that he had been an 'activist'. Fiedler criticised that Z. cast himself in the best light possible: 'Woher nehmen Sie den Mut zu solcher Stellungnahme?'¹²⁴

Elsewhere, one churchman wrote that personal experiences of war and as a prisoner of war had triggered his alienation from the NKE program. Since then, he had preached the free grace of God and Jesus Christ.¹²⁵ A pastor in Köthen joined the German Christian movement in 1936 out of youthful enthusiasm for 'religious and evangelising' motives, confident that the movement could heal the divisions of Protestant Germany. He had not recognised the political machinations of the Anhalt church council, and had 'naturally' believed that he had to follow orders in faithful

¹²² *LKAD*, D.C. Erklärungen der Geistlichen 1945-1949, Pfr. K (Bernburg) to LKRA, 6/10/47.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, Pfr. Z. (Leopoldshall) to LKRA, 7/12/45. 1 Cor III.11: 'For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.'

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, Fiedler to Pfr. Z. (Leopoldshall), 4/3/46.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, Pfr H. (Grossbadegast) to LKRA, 5/2/49.

obedience to his superiors. The war, however, had dissolved his illusions and led him back to Jesus Christ as the sole foundation of the Christian gospel.¹²⁶

Despite these ‘conversions’, few German Christians were willing to rail against unadulterated National Socialism or condemn the original ideas of German Christianity after 1945.¹²⁷ Some blamed either Nazism, as exterior to German Christianity, or a clique of activists for corrupting the originally ‘pure’ aims of the movement. Pastor S., a leading figure in the Anhalt German Christian movement, claimed his efforts toward a unified Christian Church were admirable and that German Christianity had borne the gospel through ‘stormy times’. S. claimed that any connection between German Christianity and Nazism had never ‘consciously’ occurred to him. He blamed Nazism for plunging many people into misery and suffering. S. did, however, paradoxically admit that the German Christian program had reached its conclusion with the end of the war.¹²⁸ Fiedler, interested as ever in the ‘internal denazification’ of his clergy, jumped on this phraseology. He questioned what would be the case if Nazis had remained in government? Would this mean that the German Christian program was justified? Fiedler reminded S. that he must ‘internally’ part with German Christian dogma. He also inveighed against the language used by S.; it represented widespread post-war sentiments regarding Nazism: S. was ‘belogen und betrogen’ by the party. This terminology was ‘superficial’ and ‘too simple’ to be exculpatory, and Fiedler required a genuine

¹²⁶ Ibid., Pfr H. (Köthen) to LKRA, 26/6/46.

¹²⁷ For example: Ibid., Pfr Z. (Bornum) to LKRA, 28/3/46; *ibid.*, Pfr U. (Reinsdorf) to LKRA, 27/3/46; *ibid.*, Pfr. W. (Radegast) to LKRA, 30/1/46; *ibid.*, Pfr T. (Köthen) to LKRA, 27/3/46.

¹²⁸ Ibid., Pfr. S. (Thurau) to Fiedler, 7/12/45.

confession of guilt. The process was about internal change and not an ‘externally coerced confession of guilt’.¹²⁹

In a similar vein, Pastor D. at Kleinpaschleben claimed that the collapse of Nazism was the responsibility of a clique that had corrupted the movement and victimised German Christians. The degradation of pure National Socialism meant that German Christianity had lost its *raison d’être* and, therefore, became ‘invalid’ and ‘illusory’. D. had not recognised any heresy in German Christianity, but, with the collapse of the Third Reich, he acknowledged that it was a ‘false idea’. He alleged, moreover, that Nazi agents had persecuted him in his church work.¹³⁰ Pastor K. in Köthen maintained that there was an appreciable difference between National Socialism and Nazism. In effect, Nazis had hijacked unadulterated National Socialism and led it to collapse. The initial *Weltanschauung* had been corrupted, which had had an irrevocable effect on German Christianity.¹³¹

Finally, a former Kreisoberpfarrer in Bernburg not only rejected Fiedler’s request for a confession but explicitly maintained the continuing validity of aspects of the German Christian program.¹³² Pastor N. was a First World War veteran and a former member of the Stahlhelm and the SA. He wrote that he had entered the NKE in 1938 for religious rather than political reasons. He had sought the unity of the Church and the abolition of the confessions: ultimately, the re-Christianisation of the German people. He maintained that there was no problem with the idea of German Christianity in general, but its goals had been obstructed by ‘events’ (Ereignisse). He

¹²⁹ Ibid., Fiedler to Pfr. S. (Thurau), undated.

¹³⁰ Ibid., Pfr D. (Kleinpaschleben) to LKRA, 15/3/46.

¹³¹ Ibid., Pfr. K. (Köthen) to LKRA, 15/11/45.

¹³² Ibid., Pfr. N. (Zerbst) to LKRA, 10/11/45. This argument was shared by some German Christians in the Western zones: Bergen, *Twisted Cross*, 212-3.

maintained that the sacraments needed immediate reform; this would stimulate the Church in the post-war period, as it had done in the early years of the Third Reich when German Christians had provided impetus for reform by drawing together the combined theological work of the last 150 years in an attempt to reach Christianity's 'practical conclusions'. The question mark over the Old Testament, to his mind, remained unsolved, and he stated that the impiety and godlessness of many contemporaries was the result of Old Testament ideas. He praised, on the other hand, the German Christian translation of the New Testament, the so-called 'Botschaft Gottes'. He prophesied optimistically that posterity would gratefully receive and utilise this dejudaised presentation of the Christian gospel. For all the problems facing the church, he continued: 'Die D.C. hatten eine Lösung. Ob sie "richtig" war, wird verschieden beurteilt.' Though he admitted to a lack of clarity, he forged on in these terms:

Wenn ich aber in Reden und Schriften der NSDAP erforschen wollte, was eigentlich nat.[ionalsozialistische] Weltanschauung sei, stiess ich immer auf Gedanken, die auf Überwindung des Individualismus, Betonung der Volksgemeinschaft und des Satzes "Gemeinnutz geht vor Eigennutz" hinausliefen. Dagegen hatte ich keine Bedenken.

He also denied the power politics employed by Anhalt German Christians; it was, rather, German Christians who had been attacked and ridiculed by party members. While he pronounced himself ready to bear all the consequences of his position, he opined that if penitence was required, all churchmen, including those in the Confessing Church, ought to confess.¹³³ Fiedler demanded a revised statement, and that is what he received. N. submitted a declaration that could be mistaken for that of another person entirely. Perhaps seeing the end of his pastoral career and resultant loss of income, he dropped his prior obduracy and declared himself 'internally

¹³³ Ibid., Pfr. N. (Zerbst) to LKRA, 10/11/45.

separated' from German Christianity. He furthermore admitted that the racial claims of the movement, and its reliance on Nazism, were errors.¹³⁴

In all, the majority of former German Christians were eventually brought to *some* recognition of a 'false path'. Only in one case did this lead to a sense of complicity for Nazi crimes however. The general lack of remorse is consistent with the ideas of German Christianity, which was founded on a heroic, manly 'Christentum der Tat' that forsook orthodox concepts such as sinful man in desperate need of grace, or the necessity of man's humble submission before God.¹³⁵ Many former German Christians alleged alibis such as persecution in the name of the church, a conversion experience, the idealistic goal of evangelisation coupled with tragic ignorance, and/or obedience to authority. In theory, all of these propositions were in some measure morally laudable according to an orthodox Christian worldview, and the former German Christians not only shared some of them (victimisation, ignorance, scapegoating) with many 'normal' people, but also with former NSDAP members who were brought before secular tribunals. Manfred Wille and Lutz Niethammer, for instance, have observed that very few defendants admitted 'partial guilt' (Mitschuld). Most denied and/or trivialised allegations by positing that they had entered the NSDAP out of naïve idealism or against their will. Some maintained that they had attempted to turn active support for Hitler into resistance, and/or that they had joined as a means of defence against the totalitarian dictatorship.¹³⁶ It is also broadly apparent that former German Christians understood the NKE as unpolitical, just as

¹³⁴ Ibid., Pfr. N. (Zerbst) to LKRA, 5/6/46.

¹³⁵ Gailus, *Protestantismus und Nationalsozialismus*, 642-4.

¹³⁶ Wille, *Entnazifizierung*, 63-4; Niethammer, *Die Mitäuferefabrik*, 601-6. From Niethammer's sample 'M' of 373 cases in Bavaria (610), for example: 37 maintained that they were naïve or idealistic in joining the party; 65 maintained that they had been passive or had behaved 'honorably' (anständig); 102 entered for economic or employment reasons; 30 claimed that they had continued to attend church; 29 claimed to have helped persecuted minorities in the Third Reich. The remaining 110 offered other miscellaneous defences.

former NSDAP members maintained that they were unpolitical.¹³⁷ As Niethammer notes in reference to secular denazification proceedings in Bavaria, there was a widespread idea that former idealism was morally good, and a pervasive attitude maintained: ‘If I haven’t participated in crimes, then I’m not guilty.’¹³⁸ This is similarly attested by a SED report on popular attitudes to the Sachsenhausen trial in November 1947: only those directly engaged in the camp, the SS guards, were believed responsible.¹³⁹

Nazism, parishioners, clergy and the church authorities

The relationship among parishioners, clergy and the church authorities in regard to the Nazi past is perhaps most apparent in intercessions sought by many parishioners and their families. Those affected by the Land Reform from August 1945 and by individual denazification proceedings believed themselves, or their loved ones, unfairly punished and made requests to local clergy, who often bore their concerns further.

There are a number of common themes in these requests: the dispossessed/accused had been (and was) a Christian, and, in some cases, a member of the Confessing

¹³⁷ D. Wierling, ‘Generations as Narrative Communities. Some Private Sources of Public Memory in Postwar Germany’, in F. Biess/R. Moeller (ed.), *Histories of the Aftermath. The Legacies of the Second World War in European Perspective* (New York, 2010), 107; U. Herbert, “‘Die guten und die schlechten Zeiten’: Überlegungen zur diachronen Analyse lebensgeschichtlicher Interviews’, in L. Niethammer (ed.), *Die Jahre weiß man nicht, wo man die heute hinsetzen soll’: Faschismuserfahrungen im Ruhrgebiet* (Berlin, 1983), 67-96; Niethammer, *Die Mitläuferfabrik*, 603.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 611-2.

¹³⁹ *LHASA*, MER, KL der SED Merseburg, ‘Informationsberichte’, März 1946-Dezember 1948, IV/414/346, KV Merseburg, Ortsgruppe Leuna, 5/11/47.

Church; had been critical of National Socialism; had derived no benefit from party membership; had taken out membership for altruistic purposes (or at least had intended to block Nazi interference in personal or corporate endeavours); and had protected or supported Jews.¹⁴⁰ Two pastors in the Altmark, for example, wrote to the Konsistorium requesting help in regaining land taken from parishioners. One of these, a farmer in Breitenfeld, had been a member of the Nazi party, though he had not been a ‘Nazi’ but rather a faithful parishioner. In effect, as a Christian he could not have been a Nazi. The two churchmen relayed that the man in question expected the church to act on his behalf in the interests of ‘justice’ and ‘righteousness’.¹⁴¹ The pastor at Darlingerode in Saxony-Anhalt wrote to the Konsistorium in June 1946 stating that accused former Nazis, who were incumbent GKR members, would remain in office until new elections. Herr. R. had reportedly been compelled to enter the party in 1938 or 1939 for economic reasons, and in 1944 his membership book had been taken from him (no reason is given in the letter). Herr B. had entered the party in 1933, though he had been subsequently expelled with the words: ‘Sie sind für uns erledigt’. Herr G. was also a NSDAP member since 1933, and had been appointed Ortsbauernführer in 1937. He had assumed the office only with the blessing of the church community. The Darlingerode pastor reported that he had spoken with Herr B. and Herr G. during the Nazi period and therefore knew that they had always rejected Nazism. As such, Herr B. and Herr G. were ‘nominal’ party members.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ There are hundreds of these. See, for Thuringia: *LKAE*, A750, Beiakte zu IV; *LKAE*, A750/II; *LKAE*, NL Mitzenheim, 3. One intercession for a former NSDAP member includes all of these topoi: *ibid.*, Mitzenheim attestation (for Herr S.), 4/11/47.

¹⁴¹ *AKPS*, A, Gen. 7416, Pfrs. P. and J. to Kons., 15/10/45.

¹⁴² *LHASA*, MAG, K2, 800, 211, Pfr. (Darlingerode) to Kons., 17/6/46; *ibid.*, GKR (Darlingerode) to Antifa-Ausschuss (Darlingerode), 13/8/46. The AKW, however, caught wind of the actions at Darlingerode. The Konsistorium had ruled that Herr B. had belonged to the *Pfarrernotbund* and had had significant conflicts with the Party since 1933. No measures were to be undertaken against him as,

Intercession requests even arrived for individuals who had had ostensibly greater proximity to Nazi crimes. The Gräfentonna pastor sought to rescind the death sentence pronounced on a parishioner who had been a concentration camp guard (presumably at Buchenwald).¹⁴³ A number of women implored Mitzenheim to intercede on behalf of their husbands who had served in police divisions during the war. The men had been compelled to obey orders; otherwise, the women asked, what would have happened to them?¹⁴⁴ A pastor in Bernburg wrote to Bishop Dibelius in Berlin soliciting his intervention in the arrest of a woman who had been a Christian since 1903, and had managed the kitchen at a church hospital in Bernburg since 1915. She had worked at the Anhalt psychiatric clinic during the war years, which was a so-called ‘Reichsanstalt’ participating in the T-4 ‘euthanasia’ program. According to the clergyman, it was ‘impossible’ that she could have done anything to contravene Christian ethics.¹⁴⁵

The churches responded to these requests in various ways. A former party member and factory owner wrote to the Konsistorium in April 1946 that the occupiers had deconstructed his factory and shipped it back to the Soviet Union. He regretted that under SVAG Order 124 even a ‘simple’ and ‘nominal’ Nazi party member was slated for punishment, and he exhorted the Christian Church to gather the ‘courage’ to take a

according to church denazification guidelines, he was not an ‘Aktivist’. But at a later meeting, one of the members of the Konsistorium assured Kunisch that B. would be moved from Langeneichstadt: *ibid.*, Kunisch to the chief of police (Halle), 13/11/46.

¹⁴³ *LKAE*, A930/II, Pfr. (Gräfentonna) to LKR, 7/1/48; *ibid.*, Dr. M. to Pfr. (Gräfentonna), 23/12/47.

¹⁴⁴ *LKAE*, A750 Beiakte zu IV, 154, five wives (Gera) to Mitzenheim, 10/1/48; see also: *ibid.*, Frau K. to Mitzenheim, 2/2/48. This was a common justification deployed in post-war testimonies. E.g. at the trial of Otto Ohlendorf, commander of Einsatzgruppe D, in 1947: A. Streim, *Die Behandlung sowjetischer Kriegsgefangener im ‘Fall Barbarossa’* (Heidelberg/Karlsruhe, 1981), 80. See also: C. Browning, *Ordinary Men. Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (London, 1998); Recently, in the trial of Heinrich Boere: <http://www.spiegel.de/panorama/justiz/0,1518,685148,00.html> (accessed 23/2/2011).

¹⁴⁵ *LKAD*, Kirchen und Pfarrangelegenheiten, Bernburg 1945, Pfr. (Oberlinhaus) to Kommandant des Schlossgefängnisses (Bernburg), 9/11/45; *ibid.*, Pfr. (Oberlinhaus) to Bishop Dibelius (Berlin), 22/11/45.

public stand against the Soviet occupiers.¹⁴⁶ The Konsistorium replied the following month asserting that considerable tact was required *vis-à-vis* the occupation authorities: not everything was suited to public proclamation. The church had, in fact, taken ‘issues of conscience’ to the state administration and the SVAS-A multiple times before. One sentence, in particular, asserted the church’s public responsibility and implicitly indicted the factory owner: there had been and continued to be an ‘offene Bekenntnis unserer Schuld und Verantwortung, deren man ja nie vergessen darf’.¹⁴⁷ This comment is consistent with the KPS’ recognition of ‘partial guilt’ (Mitschuld) borne by each individual.

It seems that the Thuringian church, on the other hand, was more amenable to the complaints and requests of parishioners seeking redress of denazification measures. Bishop Mitzenheim personally offered numerous affidavits for church members. An NSDAP member and shopkeeper in Probstzella, for example, alleged that he had been a resister in helping Jews and had been persecuted by other Nazis. Mitzenheim obliged and signed a response that recapitulated the original request.¹⁴⁸ Elsewhere, Herr G. asked for Mitzenheim’s intercession for his wife, who was soon to appear before a secular denazification commission. He noted that Mitzenheim was sure to be surprised at a letter from a ‘missing person’ (Verschollene), and he assumed that the bishop remembered him and his family. Frau G. had been a leader in the BDM from 1932 to 1936, and her husband asked of Mitzenheim:

Ich bitte Sie deshalb, in Ihrer Eigenschaft als Landes-Bischof uns ein Schreiben auszustellen des Inhalts, dass Sie uns kannten, dass wir trotz Parteizugehörigkeit

¹⁴⁶ *AKPS*, A, Gen. 7416, Herr M. to Konsistorium, 25/4/46; *ibid.*, Herr M. to LR Kreises Schweinitz, 28/3/46.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, Kons. to Herr M., 18/5/46.

¹⁴⁸ *LKAE*, NL Mitzenheim, 3, Mitzenheim to Herr F. (Probstzella), 3/11/47.

der Kirche treu geblieben sind, also niemals überzeugte Nazi gewesen sein können, dass Sie den Bruder meiner Frau getraut, unsern Sohn getauft haben und dass ich im Bachchor mitgesungen haben.

Herr G. asserted further that, ‘as you could imagine’, his wife had entered the party out of ‘pure idealism’, had assumed the BDM office out of political naïvety, and would not have done so if she had recognised the ‘true face’ of National Socialism. He noted that he had found employment in Oberkotzau (Bavaria) with Siemens, and that he continued to sing in the church choir.¹⁴⁹ Mitzenheim took the man’s testimony and used it almost verbatim in a letter dated 19 May 1947.¹⁵⁰

Both the initial requests and Mitzenheim’s answers indicate that both parties understood Nazism and Christianity as irreconcilable opposites. The party swiftly became anathema: professed ‘anti-fascists’, the populace at large, and even former NSDAP members disavowed Nazism.¹⁵¹ The daughter (1924) of a post-war pastor in Langeln recalled that, after the war:

Die Meinung war beschämend. Die meisten Einwohner bekundeten nach dem Krieg besonders ihren Pfarrern, dass sie eigentlich nie “Nazis” gewesen seien – eben nur gezwungenerweise mitgemacht haben. Es fehlte die Einsicht eigenen Versagens.¹⁵²

The church was, in this way, viewed as a haven. In secular denazification cases, the Nazism/Christianity ‘paradox’ established an alibi for members of church communities. As Niethammer notes in his sample from Bavaria, 30 of 373 defendants offered a defence that claimed consistent church-going in the Third Reich; this was considered ‘non-conformity’ and thus morally laudable.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., Herr G. (Oberkotzau) to Mitzenheim, 8/5/47.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., Mitzenheim attestation (Herr G.), 19/5/47.

¹⁵¹ *LKAE*, A239 Loses, Herr W. to Mitzenheim, 5/9/46; *Die evangelische Kirche nach dem Zusammenbruch*, 79, 113-114, 230.

¹⁵² Questionnaire from Frau Bette G., Langeln, 1924.

¹⁵³ Niethammer, *Die Mitläuferfabrik*, 612.

As for Mitzenheim, his position aligns well with the Lutheran interpretation of personal guilt. He was determined to assert the absolute distinction between the Christian Church and Nazism, and he accordingly understood Germans, including former party members, as victims. A number of prominent churchmen, including Bishop Wurm of Württemberg, broadly shared Mitzenheim's standpoint. In December 1945, for instance, Wurm addressed a letter to English Christians alleging Allied victimisation of Germans.¹⁵⁴ Mitzenheim, though, was never so specific, and his 'alienation from God' rationale implicated nobody or any collective group. He was, after all, interested primarily in the everyday logistical issues of the post-war church, even if this meant undermining church calls to repentance to some degree.¹⁵⁵

The *Führerprinzip*, and the 'good' and 'bad' times dichotomy

It is evident that the population at large, former German Christian pastors and former NSDAP members used a number of the same mechanisms to dismiss responsibility. There was a common interpretative framework that evolved within and without church walls: many viewed themselves as persecuted victims and/or claimed ignorance and/or blamed others. Regardless of the various church ideas of German responsibility, almost all were united in the rejection of guilt. There are a couple of possible reasons for the ubiquity of these common rationalisations: a popular

¹⁵⁴ Hockenos, 50-1, 101-17. The text is at S. Herman, *The Rebirth of the German Church* (Rochester, 1946), 254-7. See also: Vollnhals, 'Im Schatten der Stuttgarter Schulderklärung', 416ff.

¹⁵⁵ *Ein Lebensraum für die Kirche*, 23. Thomas Seidel notes an institutional lack of contrition unique to the TheK: T. Seidel, *Im Übergang der Diktaturen*, 296. There is little evidence to substantiate this claim. Lutheranism rejected the notion of corporate guilt, but this was not unique to the TheK. Otherwise, accurate is Frank Biess' claim that the churches (with perhaps the exception of the KPS) were the most influential promoters of narratives about victimisation and were 'sites of popular mourning in the post-war period by emphasizing German victimhood': *Homecomings*, 56.

mentality conditioned by the *Führerprinzip*, and the selective memories of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ times that were common in the post-war period, often regardless of religious belief.

One reason for the widespread proclivity of Germans to blame prominent national and local Nazi party members is the concept of *Führerprinzip*.¹⁵⁶ The rigid system of top-down authority and bottom-up conformity in the Third Reich ensured that, while Hitler received credit for economic and military successes, people also blamed him and other prominent Nazis for the German collapse. The Thuringian LKR member Gerhard Bauer wrote in *Glaube und Heimat* that the mass killing that implicated Christians was only made possible by an obedience to ‘demonic’ authority promoted by the *Führerprinzip*.¹⁵⁷ For Hannah Arendt, Adolf Eichmann was the quintessence of the Third Reich bureaucrat bound to obedience and authority, and thus prepared to murder.¹⁵⁸ Many former German Christians in Anhalt, as we have seen, blamed their superiors and particularly August Körner. This attitude is also apparent in the testimony of a woman (1919) who was a former NSDAP member and tutor during the war to the daughter of the Thuringian Minister President, Willy Marschler. As she recounted, she was obligated to work for him as she feared the consequences otherwise. Frau R. maintained that she did not spend her discretionary time with other NSDAP members, but had to in the course of her work. One of her ‘duties’ was to eat Sunday lunch with Marschler’s family and she remembered that he was often drunk. Distancing herself from Nazism politically in this public/private dichotomy, she

¹⁵⁶ See, for example: D. Majer, *Grundlagen des nationalsozialistischen Rechtssystems : Führerprinzip, Sonderrecht, Einheitspartei* (Stuttgart, 1987), 77-116.

¹⁵⁷ *GuH*, 1/25, 13/10/46, ‘Der moderne Mensch im tiefsten Abgrund’, Sup. Bauer (Stadtroda), 1.

¹⁵⁸ H. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem. Ein Bericht über die Banalität des Bösen* (Munich, 2006), 92.

focused on the post-war fates of Marschler and the Gauleiter of Thuringia, Fritz Sauckel. Marschler and Sauckel were those to blame for Buchenwald in particular.¹⁵⁹

Secondly, some experiences were common to all Germans, whether Christian or not, clergy or laity. As a number of historians have observed, many Germans differentiated between ‘good’ times in the 1930s and ‘bad’ times from roughly 1943 onwards.¹⁶⁰ The reverse in 1945 especially offered a sense that fate was out of one’s hands. The contrast was especially salient as many people understood the ‘good’ times as unpolitical and often equated them with moral rectitude.¹⁶¹ For one pastor in Anhalt, looking back in 1943, the opportunity to win the *Volk* back to Christianity following the disastrous 1920s (when people left the Church in droves) was to be grasped with both hands. The 1930s were ‘glorious Spring days’: a new Reich, a new state, a change of season all gifted by God.¹⁶² On the other hand, there was ‘disappointment’ when German Christians suffered increasing conflicts, and when the Third Reich endured military reverses and eventually toppled in 1945.¹⁶³

Popular memories of National Socialism trace a similar trajectory from hope to disappointment, from the ‘good’ times to the ‘bad’. Contemporary eyewitnesses, of course, lived under a particular regime of memory from 1949 to 1989. The SED emphasised the sufferings of German communists in the Third Reich, increasingly to

¹⁵⁹ Interview with Frau Ilke R., Eisenberg, 1919, 2/5/2008. Allegedly not aware of Buchenwald when she worked for Marschler, she now understood his drunkenness: ‘und da konnt’ ich dann, dass sein Verhalten, das er sich gestellt hatte, einmal verstehen hinterher...und er war sehr zugänglich, sehr...’.

¹⁶⁰ See, for example: Herbert, “‘Die guten und die schlechten Zeiten’”; Wierling, ‘The Hitler Youth Generation’, 309ff. K.A. Redding, *Growing up in Hitler’s shadow: remembering youth in postwar Berlin* (London, 2004), 3-8; Fulbrook, ‘Demography, Opportunity or Ideological Conversion?’ 201-2.

¹⁶¹ Herbert, “‘Die guten und die schlechten Zeiten’”, 88ff; Wierling, ‘Generations as Narrative Communities’, 104.

¹⁶² Ewald Ganter, pastor at Schackstedt (1943-1960), sermon of 1943, quoted in: Schröter, 77.

¹⁶³ *LKAD*, D.C. Erklärungen der Geistlichen 1945-1949, Pfr. (Köthen) to LKRA, 14/12/45.

the detriment of other persecuted groups from the late 1940s and early 1950s. By the time of the inauguration of memorials at Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen in 1958 and 1961 respectively, the Jews had all but disappeared from official discourses on the ‘victims of fascism’. Furthermore, as denazification had purged eastern Germany of fascist elements, East Germans after 1949 were united as ‘anti-fascists’. This discouraged public discussion of the Nazi past in the DDR.¹⁶⁴ Given this background, it is no surprise that a number of witnesses related that this was the first time that they had written or spoken about the Third Reich and its aftermath.

Memories remain divided. Those of the relative prosperity that Nazism brought in the mid 1930s vividly endure. The Third Reich had provided employment for the jobless, the construction of the Autobahn and social welfare programs such as *Kraft durch Freude*, which allowed leisure activities and travel for working class families.¹⁶⁵

Memories of the war period and the end of the Third Reich, on the other hand, are often negative. The good/bad juxtaposition is reflected in many statements, such as those of two women born in 1921: ‘Die KZ und der Krieg hätten nicht sein dürfen’; ‘Nach 1933 ging es aufwärts, aber es hätten niemals die Judenverfolgung und KZ sein dürfen’.¹⁶⁶ One woman, born in 1917, testified: ‘Es war anfangs nicht alles schlecht. Beseitigung der Arbeitslosen zum Beispiel...Er [Hitler] hat nicht das gehalten, was am Anfang versprochen worden war.’¹⁶⁷ Another remembered the employment created by the Third Reich, as well as its concentration camps and the deaths and

¹⁶⁴ On the Nazi legacy in the DDR, see: J. Herf, *Divided Memory. The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys* (Cambridge [Ma.], 1997), 69-200; J. McLellan, *Antifascism and Memory in East Germany. Remembering the International Brigades 1945-1989* (Oxford, 2004), 200; S. Moller, *Vielfache Vergangenheit, Öffentliche Erinnerungskulturen un Familienerinnerungen an die NS-Zeit in Ostdeutschland* (Tübingen, 2003), 42-53.

¹⁶⁵ See also, for example, in the context of the HJ: von Plato, ‘The Hitler Youth Generation’, 212-4.

¹⁶⁶ Questionnaires from Frau Edda V., Wernigerode, 1921; Frau Helga B., Kruden/Pollitz, 1921.

¹⁶⁷ Questionnaire from Frau Erika J., Zschettgau, 1917.

destruction incurred by war.¹⁶⁸ A man (1924) recalled that, after the war, it ‘wurde als ein großer Fehler angesehen, auch die Vernichtung der Juden’. Otherwise one didn’t have such a bad opinion of Nazism.¹⁶⁹ Likewise, whilst there was modest prosperity at the beginning of the Third Reich, one woman, born in 1920 and left to raise her child alone in 1945, judged: ‘Aufgrund persönlicher Erlebnisse in der Kriegszeit, Verlust und Vertreibung und Tod vieler Familien Mitglieder [sic] zum Beispiel, lehnte ich die Nazizeit ab.’¹⁷⁰ A number of people remembered the order and relative prosperity of the pre-war state, which compared favourably with the post-war conditions.¹⁷¹

The ‘good’ and ‘bad’ times dichotomy therefore often rested on an existential foundation that esteemed times of economic prosperity and military success and denigrated those of personal loss and deprivation. In the difficult post-war conditions, both former German Christians and the majority of the population wanted to forget the past as soon as possible and manufacture a ‘new beginning’ that guaranteed existential subsistence. Present concerns were primary.¹⁷² In this vein, some pastors summarily dismissed German Christianity as a peripheral affair. They were, in effect, writing for the purpose of securing employment.¹⁷³ It is not surprising, then, that all pastors who were required to submit a second declaration wrote them with content agreeable to Fiedler. Whatever the ‘internal’ disposition of these men, to lose

¹⁶⁸ Questionnaire from Herr Siegfried Z, Madgeburg, 1925.

¹⁶⁹ Questionnaire from Herr Gotthold H., Diesdorf (Altmark), 1924.

¹⁷⁰ Questionnaire from Frau Susanne B., Kemberg, 1920.

¹⁷¹ Questionnaires from: Herr Andreas V., Bernburg, 1934; Herr Alois W., Brunnhartshausen (Rhön), 1925; Frau Hanna Z., Zittau, 1923. Cf. on the difficulties of ‘squaring’ these experiences: von Plato, ‘The Hitler Youth Generation’, 216.

¹⁷² Vollnhals, ‘Im Schatten der Stuttgarter Schulderklärung’, 382.

¹⁷³ For example: *LKAD*, D.C. Erklärungen der Geistlichen 1945-1949, Pfr T. (Sandersleben/Köthen) to LKRA, 20/10/45. Bergen also maintains that DC self-interest was a motivating factor after the war: *Twisted Cross*, 221.

employment in the post-war circumstances was to invite disaster upon them and their dependants.¹⁷⁴

Existential considerations were also key amongst the population at large, and the prevailing deprivation promoted an evolving myth that few had the time to consider the past and the legacy of National Socialism.¹⁷⁵ A number of respondents wrote that one furiously sought to secure daily survival, and there was little time or space ‘zum Nachdenken, zur Auseinandersetzung mit der Vergangenheit’.¹⁷⁶ Few wished to revisit the dark themes of the conflict and the memory of Nazism, and most trained their sights on coming to terms with the new everyday conditions.¹⁷⁷ A former soldier returned in 1945 without his brothers; one died aged 21, the other 17. He himself was badly wounded with shrapnel embedded in his skull and shoulder. According to him, the attitude amongst the population was defined by the ‘unbearable’ deprivation brought on by Nazism and the war.¹⁷⁸ As Dorothee Wierling has pointed out, there was a widespread desire for the normalisation of life, and everyday responsibilities became a welcome distraction to avoid ‘psychological crisis and reflection on personal responsibility’.¹⁷⁹ Present concerns became primary, and, for some members

¹⁷⁴ Even Fiedler recognised, as we have seen, the absolute priority of everyday social concerns: *LKAD*, Generalia, Kreispastoral Versammlungen, 1945-65, LKR to all pastors, 17/8/45.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. the questionnaires from: Herr Fritz D., Camburg, 1924; Herr Wilhelm B., Madgeburg, 1930; Herr Ludwig G., Zeutsch, 1933; Frau Elke A., Elbingerode, 1935.

¹⁷⁶ Questionnaire from Frau Elisabeth T., Langeln, 1930. Also questionnaires from Frau Lotte W., Beuster, 1913; Herr Kurt F., Köthen, 1923.

¹⁷⁷ Questionnaire from Frau Elke A., Elbingerode, 1935.

¹⁷⁸ Questionnaire from Ernst-Wilhelm E., Elbingerode, 1924.

¹⁷⁹ Wierling, ‘Generations as Narrative Communities’, 104; idem., ‘A German Generation of Reconstruction’, 84-5. See also: Fulbrook, ‘Changing States, Changing Selves’, 284ff.

of the ‘Hitler Youth generation’ in particular, fed discourses about hard work in post-war reconstruction.¹⁸⁰

If at all, then, full recognition of the legacy of Nazism often only came in the course of time.¹⁸¹ Unable to dynamise the majority of the population for the communist project, a KPD report of November 1945 blamed the popular ‘lethargy’ on a ‘morally ragged Volk’ and lamented that it would be a long time before people came to the ‘recognition that guilt and sin [were] inseparable’.¹⁸² With the benefit of hindsight, some eyewitnesses frankly acknowledged that the slow process of understanding was due to the initial economic and foreign policy successes of the 1930s and/or Nazi indoctrination. For example, one woman, aged 18 at war’s end, put it in these terms:

Die Kriminalisierung der Juden stand wohl für die meisten nicht im Vordergrund, sondern mehr das Gefühl der eigenen Sicherheit. Es gab Arbeit für alle, auch schöne Reisen durch KdF, Achtung der Frauen und Mütter. Die Aufarbeitung der Vergangenheit kam erst viel später.¹⁸³

A young man (1928), who had wished to become a career officer and had become enchanted with Nazism, experienced 1945 as a severe shock. He was forced to reorientate his life completely and did so only gradually.¹⁸⁴ Likewise a witness from Jena (1933), whose process of coming to terms with the past was ‘enormously

¹⁸⁰ On the ‘Hitler Youth generation’, see below, pp. 347-8. The success of the KPD/SED’s reconstruction programme amongst youth was limited; most were primarily interested in existential needs: Buddrus, ‘A Generation Twice Betrayed’, 263-5. Former members of the FDJ or SED nonetheless maintained their own hard work in reconstruction, see: von Plato, ‘The Hitler Youth Generation’, 223; McDougall, ‘A Duty to Forget?’

¹⁸¹ It seems that many people have never considered the issue of responsibility. For example, Björn Mensing interviewed 110 former pastors in Bavaria from 1988 to 1990, and this was the first time that many of them had seriously considered personal responsibility: Mensing, 18-20, 226-7.

¹⁸² *LHASA*, MER, P 506, 8, Ortsgruppe Magdeburg to BL der KPD, Halle, 3/11/45. The KPD/SED had ultimately abandoned ideas of German collective guilt by late 1946 as a function of its ‘unity’ campaign. See: Herf, 74ff.

¹⁸³ Interview with Frau Christine R., Magdeburg, 1927, 3/7/2008. Cf. questionnaire from Frau Ilse N., Großschweidnitz, 1918: ‘Erst viel später habe ich realisiert, was die Naziideologie hervorgebracht hatte, wohin sie eigentlich gezielt hat.’

¹⁸⁴ Questionnaire from Herr Horst G., Erfurt, 1928. See also: Fullbrook, ‘Changing States, Changing Selves’, 282-3.

difficult ' after she discovered the 'truth'.¹⁸⁵ Understanding at all was, and remains, a difficult endeavour for anybody at any time. There is a salient parallel between an article written by a churchman in *Glaube und Heimat* in October 1946 and the testimony of a man, born in 1921, and related in an interview in 2008. The pastor wrote:

Man fragt sich heute, wie es möglich war, dass ein derartiges System sich durchsetzen konnte. Dabei wird man freilich klar sehen müssen, dass der Nationalsozialismus einen glänzend vorbereiteten Boden vorfand und dass seiner Herrschaft viele Umstände zugute kamen. Wir kennen sie zum großen Teil. Es braucht hier nur erinnert zu werden an das Elend der Arbeitslosen, von dem sich keiner, der es nicht durchgemacht hat, eine rechte Vorstellung machen kann.¹⁸⁶

The eyewitness was a soldier on the Eastern front who had worked at his parents' cake shop (Konditorei) after the war before studying theology at Jena in 1948. His father had been interned at Buchenwald by the Soviets from February 1946 until August 1948. He remembered:

Ich erinnere mich nicht an Aufarbeitung des Nationalsozialismus. Das sollte sich später rächen...Die Abkehr vom Nationalsozialismus vollzog sich trotz des furchtbaren Krieges, den er verschuldete, nur langsam und teilweise...[weil] die Jahre 1933 bis 1939 eine wirtschaftliche Blütezeit waren...Erinnerungen daran sind noch nach 70 Jahren lebendig, und manche jungen Leute, die die Zeit nur vom Hörensagen kennen, haben eine verklärte Vorstellung.¹⁸⁷

The concepts of guilt, penitence and redemption were, and often remain, personal affairs.

Conclusion

¹⁸⁵ Questionnaire from Frau Frieda P., Jena, 1933.

¹⁸⁶ *GuH*, 1/25, 13/10/46, 'Der moderne Mensch im tiefsten Abgrund', Sup. Bauer (Stadtroda), 1.

¹⁸⁷ Interview with Herr Reinhard J., Leutenberg, 1921, 28/6/2008. Similarly: 'Kein Mensch, der Zeit seines Lebens [sic] in demokratischen Verhältnissen gelebt hat, kann sich ein davon machen, was in einer Diktatur möglich ist, wogegen sich keiner wehren kann, der leben will.' Questionnaire from Frau Ingeborg R., Staßfurt-Leopoldshall, 1928.

The churches all, in some measure, attributed blame for the rise of National Socialism and the disaster of 1945 to a drawn-out process of secularisation that had promoted a personal egoism which recognised no higher authority than the self. This interpretation was mediated to parishioners in the TheK and the LKA through circulars. The Thuringian church council also included articles in the weekly *Glaube und Heimat* that called people to repentance not only for forsaking Christianity, but also, in some instances, for Nazi atrocities. The Thuringian church was nonetheless heavily influenced by the Lutheran principle of personal, not institutional, guilt and it did not admit corporate responsibility. While the Anhalt church implicated all churchmen, German Christians bore concrete responsibility for corrupting Christian orthodoxy. Only the KPS formally broached the question of collective and church guilt for Nazi crimes. This position, however, was not propagated amongst the population.

People at large, regardless of faith, constructed similar rationales for rejecting any personal responsibility: whether for ‘falling away’ from Christianity, for Nazism and its crimes, or for the widespread situation of need. A number of themes recur: persecution/victimisation, claims of ignorance and scapegoating. In the American and British zones, at least, surveys reflected that over half of respondents had similar ideas: Nazism was a good idea, but poorly executed.

There were, nevertheless, some nuances. Some former German Christian pastors also made a distinction between German Christianity and Nazism, or between pure National Socialism and adulterated Nazism. There was also the ‘conversion experience’ whereby many German Christians claimed to have realised the error of

their ways, often in the course of the war. Though not investigated here, there were ‘conversion experiences’ of former members of the Hitler Youth generation who had grown up in the Third Reich, and were then ‘converted’ to socialism and committed to reconstruction in the post-war period.¹⁸⁸ Both ‘conversion experiences’ indirectly admitted a sense of former misdirection in some measure. Lastly, parishioners who were former NSDAP members could and did protest that, as Christians, they could not bear guilt for Nazism. For these people, if one had remained faithful to the church, then one could not have been a Nazi ‘activist’. In one sense, then, Christianity (or churchgoing) made no difference: almost all people denied any responsibility for Nazism and its effects; in quite another sense, Christianity (or churchgoing) made all the difference in the world: it offered a further, unique defence in dismissing responsibility.¹⁸⁹

The *Führerprinzip*, the pre-war aspirations and economic prosperity of the 1930s, followed by death and deprivation in the latter war years and post-war period made it difficult for people to comprehend the full extent of the Nazi legacy. As Norman Naimark has observed, Germans were indeed both perpetrators and victims of National Socialism.¹⁹⁰ It seems that, on the whole, Christianity and age/generation made little difference in terms of memory. Pre-war generations, the ‘Front Generation’ and the ‘Hitler Youth Generation’ all experienced the ‘good’ years of the

¹⁸⁸ McDougall, ‘A Duty to Forget?’, 32-42.

¹⁸⁹ Richard Steigmann-Gall’s recent book, *The Holy Reich*, is a challenge to the Christianity and Nazism dichotomy that was swiftly established after the fall of the Third Reich. The book, and the debate it whipped up, may be seen as an elaboration on whether the ‘Christian/church-going defense’ is at all admissible. See: R. Steigmann-Gall, *The Holy Reich. Nazi Conceptions of Christianity, 1919-1945* (Cambridge, 2003), and the January 2007 (46/1) issue of *JCH*.

¹⁹⁰ Naimark, ‘The Persistence of the “Postwar”’, 19.

1930s in some measure, and then the turning of the war and defeat from 1943.¹⁹¹

While Mary Fulbrook is correct in stating that ‘good’ times tend to be age-specific, it seems that even persons born in the 1930s picked up on the discourse of older generations in formulating opinions and creating memories of the 1930s and 1940s.¹⁹² The material gathered here from individuals, most of whom were born into Christian families in the ‘Hitler Youth generation’, reflects the same common experiences observed elsewhere: youthful idealism and perceived unpolitical ‘good’ times were devastated by military reverses and eventual defeat, leaving the survivors to eke out existence in the ‘bad’ times.¹⁹³

¹⁹¹ Fulbrook, ‘Demography, Opportunity or Ideological Conversion?’ 201-2. On the Front generation, see: M. Wildt, *Generation des Unbedingten* (Hamburg, 2002); R. Bessel, ‘The “Front Generation” and the Politics of Weimar Germany’, in *Generations in Conflict*, 121-36.

¹⁹² Fulbrook, ‘Demography, Opportunity or Ideological Conversion?’ 201-2; H. Welzer, ‘Familiengedächtnis. Über die Weitergabe der deutschen Vergangenheit im intergenerationellen Gespräch’, *Werkstatt 30* (2001), 49-52. Family ties reproduced the ‘good’/‘bad’ times dichotomy, and it endured longer (with some exceptions) in the East than the West: Wierling, ‘Generations as Narrative Communities’, 104, 107; idem, *Geboren im Jahr Eins*, 24-59, 77ff, 130ff.

¹⁹³ Wierling believes that the German defeat in 1945 hit those born in the 1920s more than the older generations: ‘A German Generation of Reconstruction’, 84-5; idem, ‘The Hitler Youth Generation in the GDR’, 309-10. On the common experiences and differences between the ‘first’ and ‘second Hitler Youth generations’, see: Fulbrook, ‘Demography, Opportunity or Ideological Conversion?’ 189-93. It is difficult, on the basis of the evidence available to me, to evaluate Fulbrook’s interesting argument that the ‘ego-documents’ of the ‘Second Hitler Youth Generation’ reflect pragmatism instead of ideology, and present a picture of heroic survival rather than the ‘German as victim’ paradigm (199). This seems eminently plausible, however, given the absolute priorities of every-day living. Still, none of the present sample were, in any way, communist activists in the post-war period, and were often raised in Christian families. A number encountered persecution in the DDR as a result of their faith and therefore view their lives as a narrative of victimisation. For example, interview with Herr Harold W., Jena, 1925, 10/5/2008; interview with Herr Joachim B., Schönbach, 1928, 13/5/2008. The latter spent 11 years (until 1956) in a Soviet gulag on the charge of being a member of a *Werwolf* resistance group.

Conclusion:

Religion and the people in the Soviet zone

While the KPD/SED – with the support of the Red Army – sought popular dynamism for the communist project in Eastern Germany after 1945, the Churches attempted to ‘re-Christianise’ the *Volk* and reverse secularisation. The population at large was, however, largely impervious to these grandiose societal blueprints.¹ People on the ground were no passive objects who meekly received top-down directives.² On the contrary, many ‘ordinary people’ engaged in a latent social revolt against authority, and did not acknowledge the claims of either the party or the Churches.³ This is shown from an investigation of three levels: ‘religio-politics’, the pastorate/priesthood, and the population on the ground.

‘Religio-politics’

The Soviet Military Administration in Germany was the supreme political authority in the Eastern zone, and its KPD/SED allies dominated key appointments to local and

¹ After 1949: see, for instance, R. Jessen, ‘Die Gesellschaft im Sozialismus. Probleme einer Sozialgeschichte der DDR’, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 21 (1995), 96-110.

² Cf. T. Lindenberger, ‘Die Diktatur der Grenzen. Zur Einleitung,’ in T. Lindenberger (ed.), *Herrschaft und Eigen-Sinn in der Diktatur. Studien zur Gesellschaftsgeschichte der DDR* (Cologne, 1999), 13-44.

³ Cf. the argument made by Mitter and Wolle about a latent civil war between State and Society during the DDR, even tracing this through to 1989: A. Mitter/S. Wolle, *Untergang auf Raten: Unbekannte Kapitel der DDR-Geschichte* (Munich, 1993). This seems rather reductionist however: Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship*, 15.

state offices. Otherwise, the Churches were the only mass organisations to survive the conflagration of 1945, and they enjoyed a general freedom to worship granted by both the American and Soviet occupation forces. There were, however, definite boundaries to this freedom as the secular authorities often applied pressure on the Churches either to legitimate, or to maintain distance from, various initiatives. In 1946, for example, the KPS was enjoined to lend support to the *Volksentscheid* on Land Reform, but warned from engaging in political electioneering for the CDU especially.

As time went on, Church and State relations were often determined by how low-level conflicts were received and negotiated. In lieu of an authoritative secular *Religionspolitik* transmitted from the leadership to the grass-roots, executive power devolved to local units, and the ambiguous ‘freedom of religion’ was often subject to the inclinations and whims of local commandants and functionaries. In the KPS, problems arose with anti-clerical officials, for example, and the church received little redress. On the other hand, Major-General Kolesnichenko in Thuringia received Bishop Mitzenheim with cordiality and sometimes upbraided his subordinates in the interest of the TheK. Mitzenheim was, for his part, willing to speak publicly on political questions, notably at the first *Volkskongress* in December 1947. The Catholic Church, in contrast, withdrew from the political sphere and focussed on the pressing demands of pastoral care in the post-war Diaspora. These relationships, forged in the short period of the Soviet zone, were carried further into the early DDR: anti-totalitarian persuasions in the KPS, most notably apparent in the ‘radicalism’ of the first Konsistorium President, Lothar Kreyssig, continued out of the Third Reich, through the SBZ, into the DDR; Mitzenheim walked his accommodationist *Thüringer Weg*; and the Catholic Church favoured political abstinence.

The importance of local level events and their resolution or non-resolution in determining Church and State relations is also apparent in the question of the next generation. The Churches and the KPD/SED placed a premium on children and youth as a means of guaranteeing the future. Young people were crucial to the cycle of religious regeneration on the one hand, while the party desired mobilisation and support at the grass-roots on the other, not least to create a zealous cadre. The German communists realised that whilst they would probably be unable to excise religion root and branch from society in the short term, they could definitely restrict its influence and presence in the public sphere by curtailing and overshadowing the church mission to children and youth. The State regulated religious education in the *Grundschule* and the Churches' youth work, while individual actors often took license in interpreting the legislation to obstruct events in the localities. There were also abortive attempts to subsume religious youth groups, and isolated local incidents of *Jugendweihe* attempted to seize the hearts and minds of youth by replacing church confirmation entirely. Low-level persecution and harassing of *Junge Gemeinde* members increased as the FDJ expanded in size and influence in many places, and church representatives on the FDJ central committee eventually withdrew in June 1949. Much that occurred after 1949, therefore, including the official introduction of *Jugendweihe* in 1954, was foreshadowed before the establishment of the DDR.

The priesthood and pastorate

As the SED tightened its grip on public life in the zone, a significant number of clergy complained to the state authorities or to the church leaderships about certain actions

that were reminiscent of persecution under the Third Reich. Many reports were animated with regret and trepidation, and even disappointment, that the Churches should face yet another a powerful secular adversary so soon after the fall of the Nazi dictatorship. This was a particularly painful realisation for Protestant churchmen, who sought negotiation and interaction with the State. Otherwise, Catholic priests largely kept from the public sphere in the interests of fortifying an insular sub-culture, though many clergymen did feel a sense of abandonment by their own authorities. Those at the grass-roots often struggled with under-resourcing and health problems associated with the great distances between towns assigned to each parish; higher up, Freusberg and Weskamm regretted the apparent lack of support provided by their superiors in Fulda and Paderborn respectively.⁴

The Protestant pastorate also suffered considerable internal conflict. One particular source of friction concerned how the churches dealt with the Nazi past. At the highest level, while a number of churchmen, in the LKA and the TheK for example, viewed the destruction of 1945 as God's judgement for popular apostasy (as in 1918), this did not often amount to a corporate confession of guilt.⁵ In fact, claiming that the collapse of Nazism was the final destination of secularisation was, to some degree, the 1945 equivalent of the 'stab in the back myth'.⁶ Where the Churches had sided with the military and blamed 'outsiders' (liberals and socialists) for the German capitulation in 1918, a number of churchmen blamed an irrevocable external process (secularisation) for the *Zusammenbruch* of 1945. Therefore, just as the SED looked back upon a heroic past of resistance in the Third Reich to legitimate its *imperium*, the churches

⁴ See further, in general: Fenwick, 77-99.

⁵ On mentalities in 1918, see: Kuhlemann, 55-6; G. Brakelmann, 'Der Kriegsprotestantismus 1870/71 und 1914-1918. Einige Anmerkungen', in *Nationalprotestantische Mentalitäten*. 104-5, 113.

⁶ On popular mentalities in 1918, see: *ibid.*, 120.

cast themselves in antithesis to Nazism, and sought to seize the post-war ‘opportunity’ for ‘re-Christianisation’. The KPS position was more nuanced, however: in internal discussions, and in a submission to the Saxon-Anhalt government regarding the *Volksentscheid* in June 1946, the church leadership recognised the ‘partial responsibility’ of all Germans for Nazi excesses, including Christians in the Confessing Church. At least within church walls, these hierarchs discussed bearing responsible before the German population, being the conscience of the *Volk*.

For the TheK, the LKA and the KPS, nevertheless, denazification was ultimately conditioned by church ‘resistance’ in the Third Reich, an emphasis on ‘de-German-Christianisation’ and forgiveness. There was also a certain pragmatism that sought a strong and unified pastorate capable of pastoral care throughout the population.

Mitzenheim, furthermore, desired a close working relationship with the secular authorities that guaranteed ‘living space’ for the church. Pastoral unity, regardless, was a myth. Confessing Church members sometimes disputed the continuing employment of former German Christians, and favoured the appointment of fellow BK to vacant posts. ‘De-German-Christianisation’ and the post-war recriminations amongst the pastorate inevitably had an alienating effect on a number of the former German Christian clergy. While they were deemed guiltier than other churchmen, most rejected imputations of guilt, and most cast themselves and their actions in a morally laudable light. As German Christians in Anhalt wrote about themselves and their life histories, for example, there was almost a heroic, tragic romance about it all: witnessing the failure of the Protestant Church after 1918, and not seeing evangelising possibilities for traditional religion, they fought as idealistic Christian storm troopers against secularisation after 1933. They bore the cross in faith (often in the face of persecution), until undergoing a ‘de-conversion experience’, which at last unveiled

the true face of Nazism. Disappointment, reservation and selective memory, not remorse, were predominant post-war mindsets. In 1945, the Protestant churches persisted with, or reverted to, the traditional formats of worship and liturgy that the former German Christians had once rejected out of hand. This is some irony in this: the post-war church hierarchs once more hailed a ‘great hour’ for Christianity and sought a dynamism within and without church walls that was again a form of ‘Christentum der Tat’ (albeit within the bounds of Protestant orthodoxy), though there was no danger of hopes a second time for ‘re-Christianisation’ amongst former German Christians.

Amongst the population in the pews and at the grass-roots

Politics at the highest level and disputes within the pastorate, however, belied tumultuous personal lives and a disrupted, fractured society. Though eastern Germany was under new ownership, the population was not indivisible and individuals did not always respond to official directives or institutional aspirations. The Churches’ project of ‘re-Christianisation’ was one of these, and it had two primary goals: attracting believers to church services, and propagating and realising a Christian ethic of ‘neighbourly love’. However, despite an apparently superficial religious revival in 1945 (manifested by high participation in a number of locales), the hoped-for ‘re-Christianisation’ of the German population had not occurred by 1949. People at large did not attend church regularly, and often only participated in certain religious festivals and rites of passage to lend a certain solemnity and gravitas to life’s milestones. The church authorities also decried the ubiquity of ‘immorality’ and crime

within society, and regretted that many indigenous Saxons and Thuringians failed to exhibit ‘Christian neighbourly love’ toward the enormous numbers of refugees who flooded into the Soviet zone after the war.

The project of ‘re-Christianisation’ was frustrated, above all, by long-lived secularisation that was largely contingent on the post-war material deprivation in many areas of Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia. Many people were only concerned with daily existence. The emotion is almost impossible to mistake; observers after 1945 and present-day testimonies both attest that the post-war conditions cannot be understood by those who did not live through them. While this mentality may serve as a form of alibi for transgressions in the Nazi period or after, it was, and is, a substantive part of the post-war experience and memory (and identity) formation. Set against this mentality, the KPD/SED found no greater resonance; it was unable to counter the need, and functionaries were often identified with feared Red Army personnel. In this respect, the post-war years were a continuation of the war years: anxiety once provoked by the air raid siren was now roused by the arrival and proximity of Red Army troops who often undermined law and order through criminal excesses in 1945 and 1946 especially.⁷ In all, the war, the widespread deprivation and the Soviet occupation dislocated society in a way that led to a latent social revolt. This was not just a ‘latent civil war’ between the refugee and native populations, as Ian Connor has described post-war German society, but a popular rebellion against all forms of authority.⁸ Ultimately, the post-war material conditions, and their emotional and spiritual effects, led to a rejection of grand narratives and the promotion of religious individualisation. A ‘revolution’ of sorts had eroded obedience, or the

⁷ On continuities, see p. 9, n. 2 above.

⁸ Connor, *Refugees and Expellees*, 85 (n. 160).

internalisation of authority.⁹ Few heeded church imperatives to engage in a degree of self-sacrifice by attending church or helping refugees.

One pastor lamented the results of secularisation in that the modern ‘Diesseitmensch’ had disconnected him- or herself from a conscience anchored in God’s word and commands. While the colossus with clay feet had fallen, modern man had endured a descent into the depths which none had previously thought possible. People had committed themselves to the ‘offer of a strong Weltanschauung’ where good was what was of use to the State.¹⁰ The Churches, however, attempted to re-calibrate people’s moral compasses and establish ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ with an emphasis on the biblical Decalogue. These strictures gained little traction, and the Churches interpreted a popular rejection of spiritual authority as ‘nihilism’.

One particular burden on the Christian ethic was to reconcile people to the idea of suffering. Yet, many people rejected the traditional theological redemptive process that invested crisis with ultimate meaning: the disaster was God’s punishment, which demanded human repentance, which in turn was acknowledged by the gift of grace – an act of divine benevolence. According to this schema, the German collapse was deserved and required repentance. The latent social revolt against authority, then, is further apparent in the popular self-representation of victimhood in the post-war world as many rejected the necessity of repentance. The failure of church theodicies and the widespread religious indifference was linked inextricably, therefore, to a popular mentality of innocence as many people blamed others for their predicament. This mentality stood in defiance of the Christian salvific meta-narrative: man was a

⁹ The classic study on obedience and the internalisation of authority is that of Stanley Milgram: *Obedience to Authority: an Experimental View* (London, 1974), 176ff. Cf. Ruff (195) notes that the Catholic Church in the West suffered a ‘de-mystification’ of authority in the period 1945 to 1965.

¹⁰ *GuH*, 1/25, 13/10/46, ‘Der moderne Mensch im tiefsten Abgrund’, Sup. Bauer (Stadtroda), 1.

sinner, and only Jesus Christ could elevate his or her condition. The superintendent in Altenburg wrote in *Glaube und Heimat* in June 1946:

Nur die Gleichgültigen sind an der Schuldfrage für sich uninteressiert und sehen ihre Rechtfertigung allein in der billigen Beschuldigung anderer. Gewiß hat die Schuld der geschichtlichen Weltstunde ihren Ursprung nicht allein im Herzen des deutschen Menschen.¹¹

As with many former German Christian clergymen, most people rejected all postulations of responsibility: for Nazism and its crimes, for falling away from God, and for the post-war privation. Disillusionment and disappointment were common within and without church walls. Many had greeted Hitler's seizure of power with enthusiasm and experienced the economic upswing in the 1930s, but then endured first-hand the horrors of the war years and the collapse in 1945. As an SED report on refugees in the area of Merseburg in early 1948 stated, the demoralisation of many of the newcomers was understandable given the 'grossen Hoffnungen jeder einzelne von uns auf die Zukunft aller Deutschen gesetzt hatte'.¹² Many people blamed Hitler and his cronies, while present worries reportedly overwhelmed people and drew a shroud over the past. Difficult material conditions had enveloped people after 1945 and before 1933, and both times dictatorships ensued, albeit from opposite poles of the political spectrum. While the Church attempted to unify the population under the cross, society did unify, but largely, ironically, only in its rejection of guilt.

The often-harsh material conditions, however, did not alone condemn the 're-Christianisation' project. In 1945, the Protestant churches continued with, or reverted to, the traditional pattern of worship that had apparently motivated a number of clergy to enter the German Christian movement after 1933. In at least one case, the vigour

¹¹ *GuH*, 1/8, 16/6/46, 'Die Schuldfrage', P. (Altenburg), 1-2.

¹² *LHASA*, MER, Kreisverwaltung Merseburg, nr. 624, 'Stimmungsbericht über die Umsiedler des Kreises Merseburg', KR Merseburg, undated (early 1948).

and forcefulness in oratory that reportedly characterised German Christian pastors was criticised by a senior churchman as dangerous, particularly given the perceived paralysing effect that it had on allegedly weak-willed women.¹³ In *Glaube und Heimat*, one pastor mused over why so few people attended church and concluded that there was competition from radio and newspapers: one did not need to come to services to hear news, while concerts and theatres kept people entertained. Churchmen were simply not ‘captivating’ (hinreißend).¹⁴ A pastor, lastly, involved in youth work in Saxony-Anhalt bemoaned that core Christian values became increasingly irrelevant, and his ‘flock’ looked elsewhere.¹⁵ In this way, the Protestant Church did not adequately adjust to the times. Habit shaped by upbringing was often the only motivation to church involvement amongst the minority of native Thuringians and Saxons who attended church. As a number of reports attested, furthermore, elderly persons populated the councils of many congregations, and few of these people were animated by the Holy Spirit. Churchmen themselves admitted that such conditions were not ideal for a religious ‘revival’.

All this is not to say that there was no church community, nor did the Churches, or values traditionally associated with Christianity, pale into insignificance in the post-war period.¹⁶ As shown by the statistics, the development from religious indifference to secession from the Churches and/or outright atheism was gradual and increased only in the course of the German Democratic Republic.¹⁷ For some, church tradition was the attraction and the one consolation in a world beyond personal control. In fact,

¹³ *LKAD*, Kirchenvisitationen, 1945-48, KOP (Ballenstedt) to LKR, 28/9/45.

¹⁴ *GuH*, 2/7, 16/2/47, ‘Glaube und Gottesdienst’, Dr. Deter (Gera-Untermhaus), 1.

¹⁵ *AKPS*, B1, 27, ‘Bericht über die theologische Woche des evang. Jungmännerwerkes’, 24/10/47.

¹⁶ See: *GuH*, 1/18, 25/8/46, ‘Der Auszug des modernen Menschen aus dem Vaterhaus’, Sup. Bauer (Stadtroda), 1.

¹⁷ See: Pollack/Olson, 191-220.

the Churches did show some adaptation in the post-war world: services were often held according to the traditions of refugees, and *Heimat* religious texts were printed and distributed. As the Catholic sub-culture evolved after 1945, it often centred on the particular piety of refugees from the East.¹⁸ The arrival of these people invigorated religious life in many locales and they, along with local women's groups, provided the backbone of church life.¹⁹ Women especially responded to church calls to exhibit 'Christian neighbourly love' and self-sacrifice. They comprised the metaphorical heart of many congregations, and were often far from weak-willed. Volunteers were grouped in the Protestant *Frauenhilfe*, of which chapters were established in many communities throughout Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt. These women offered 'sisterly love', giving of their time to visit parishioners, organise events, gather donations and help in the *Bahnhofsmision*. Church authorities recognised their contribution, and, as in Anhalt, women were sometimes promoted to leadership positions in what was a traditionally patriarchal world.

In summary, National Socialist remnants, Christian faith and communist ideology met in the alleged 'moral vacuum' of 1945. The net result of the post-war period for the Churches, despite eager hopes in 1933, was depressing. Perhaps in one respect alone, the secular authorities, many churchmen and most people were united: the vilification of the Nazi past. Hopes for 're-Christianisation' were soon extinguished and, as the Protestant Church authorities noted in the 1951 yearbook, this failure had not been simply the result of godless Nazism. The Third Reich had simply been the wind that

¹⁸ It is difficult to posit an 'erosion of the milieu' solely on the basis of the years 1945 to 1949. Mark Ruff (2, 187ff), however, has observed erosion in the West from 1945 to 1965. Amongst his reasons is an observed lack of church adaptation, though this was apparently a struggle to come to terms with aspects of modernity, including the culture of consumption in the BRD.

¹⁹ Ther, *Deutsche und polnische Vertriebene*, 289. However, Lutz Niethammer has written on how a number of these refugees did not remain in the Church in the long term: *Die Volkseigene Erfahrung*, 229.

had shaken wilting leaves from the tree.²⁰ It seems that the idea of ‘re-Christianisation’ though was largely a chimera. Clergy complained of secularisation, declining morality and influence after 1945, as they had done before in Imperial Germany and in the Weimar Republic.²¹ These men had never personally witnessed a ‘Christian society’ and their hopes were founded upon individual conceptions of a religious utopia: a nowhere, no-time Elysium. In the end, the decisive social dislocation of 1945 and the difficulties of subsequent years disrupted German society in significant ways that, as posterity has proven, have lent themselves to the process of secularisation. Many people fell into an ideological apathy that ignored both the Churches and the SED, though ultimately the political power of the party, promoted by the Soviet occupation authorities and manifested in anti-clerical policies after 1949 especially, trumped the spiritual claim of the Churches. As one churchman wrote in *Glaube und Heimat* in November 1948:

Unsere Gegner kennen diese Müdigkeit nicht. Sie sind von morgens bis abends am Wühlen. Sie haben wirklich ihre Siege ehrlich verdient...Mich beunruhigt, dass die Kirche oft wieder in eine schwachliche Defensive gedrängt ist, obwohl wir alle wissen, dass der wahre Glaube im Angriff ist.²²

A senior churchman in Magdeburg put it similarly in May 1949 when he lamented that the Church found itself in the ‘Verteidigungsstellung’.²³

²⁰ *KJ*, 1951, 381-3.

²¹ Gailus, *Protestantismus und Nationalsozialismus*, 639; Becker, 30ff, 37; Brakelmann, 117.

²² *GuH*, 3/46, 14/11/48, ‘Was beunruhigt mich am meisten?’, 2.

²³ *AKPS*, B1, 83, ‘Tätigkeitsbericht über die Propstei Magdeburg’, 12/5/49.

Looking ahead at developments after 1949

By October 1949 and the establishment of the DDR, East German society was anything but ‘shut down’ (Stillgelegt).²⁴ The SED may have had control over politics, economics and culture, but it, and the Churches, possessed little social influence. As Ralph Jessen has argued, particularly for the early years of the DDR, many of the party’s policies were determined by expediency and defined by improvisation. While the SED did undoubtedly pursue its ideological goals, the party was ultimately not bound to these; it inherited no societal *tabula rasa* upon which it could easily impose order and control.²⁵ The German collapse had incited and perpetuated popular disaffection. Many people struggled simply to subsist and master fears concerning perceptions and realities of the Soviet occupation. This was not an ideal population upon which to impose further fundamental societal changes and alter ideological allegiances, as attempted by the SED in the early 1950s. Yet, nor was society entirely apolitical: the indifference and apathy apparent amongst many people carried political weight in a culture that actively encouraged engagement.

On the other hand, perhaps the disintegration of society into local units and individualism in the latter war years and the post-war period may have had some positive utility for the imposition of the SED dictatorship. While this splintering – largely founded on widespread demoralisation – spelled trouble for attempts on the part of the German communists to forge ‘true believers’ amongst the population, it

²⁴ S. Meuschel, *Legitimation und Parteiherrschaft. Zum Paradox von Stabilität und Revolution in der DDR* (Frankfurt am Main, 1992); idem, ‘Überlegungen zu einer Herrschafts- und Gesellschaftsgeschichte der DDR’, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 19 (1993), 5-14.

²⁵ Jessen, 99; R. Bessel/R. Jessen (ed.), *Die Grenzen der Diktator: Staat und Gesellschaft in der SBZ/DDR* (Göttingen, 1996).

did, nevertheless, promote a citizenry upon which the establishment of party rule could be accomplished with little (initial) substantive resistance. The population at large then may have indulged in a ‘benign neglect’ of politics and acquiesced before the establishment of total SED political power, but this did not entail the total subjugation of society before the authority of the state.²⁶ While the political environment dictated and shaped societal parameters and vice versa, the individual could at least *attempt* to do whatever he/she wished. It seems that the aversion of many to politics in the Soviet zone was the result of individual agents treating their personal needs and space as sacrosanct.

The SED certainly suffered from a lack of legitimacy amongst the populace in the Soviet zone and in the early period of the DDR.²⁷ While the evidence presented here, from 1945 to 1949, cannot in and of itself adequately explain subsequent events in the DDR, it seems that the latent social revolt against authority of the mid to late 1940s found ultimate expression in the rising of 17 June 1953. One catalyst for open protest was economic reform, including redoubled efforts at collectivisation and an increase in work hours and commodity prices in Spring 1953. Still, the revolt may also have been the eventual manifestation of simmering, deep-seated popular disaffection that was radicalised by governmental encroachments into the lives of the citizenry.²⁸ In this sense, the events of 17 June 1953 saw a coalescing and co-incidence of individual

²⁶ Cf. Lindenberger, 36.

²⁷ Though it seems that the DDR population, to a large degree, accepted the SED government from the 1960s and 1970s, see: H. Niemann, *Hinterm Zaun. Politische Kultur und Meinungsforschung in der DDR – die geheimen Berichte an das Politbüro der SED* (Berlin, 1995); Fulbrook, ‘Changing States, Changing Selves’, 256, 284-91.

²⁸ There were of course many grounds for popular disaffection: V. Koop, *Der 17. Juni 1953. Legende und Wirklichkeit* (Berlin, 2003), 15-69. See also the essays in: K. Frotscher/W. Krug (ed.), *17. Juni 1953. Der Streit um sein Wesen* (Berlin, 2004); B. Eisenfeld/I.-S. Kowalczuk/E. Neubert, *Die verdrängte Revolution. Der Platz des 17. Juni 1953 in der deutschen Geschichte* (Bremen, 2004), 31ff.

interests on the basis of *Eigen-Sinn*.²⁹ While a number of historians have argued that the uprising was ultimately politically motivated, with people demanding free elections and the overthrow of the SED, it also seems an attempt on the part of many ‘ordinary’ people, shaken from their post-war political abstinence, to dispute party rule as it encroached upon their lives, especially economically.³⁰ Ultimately, self-interest had political, economic and ideological implications in the DDR, and it had already condemned the societal aspirations of both the Churches and the KPD/SED in the Soviet zone.

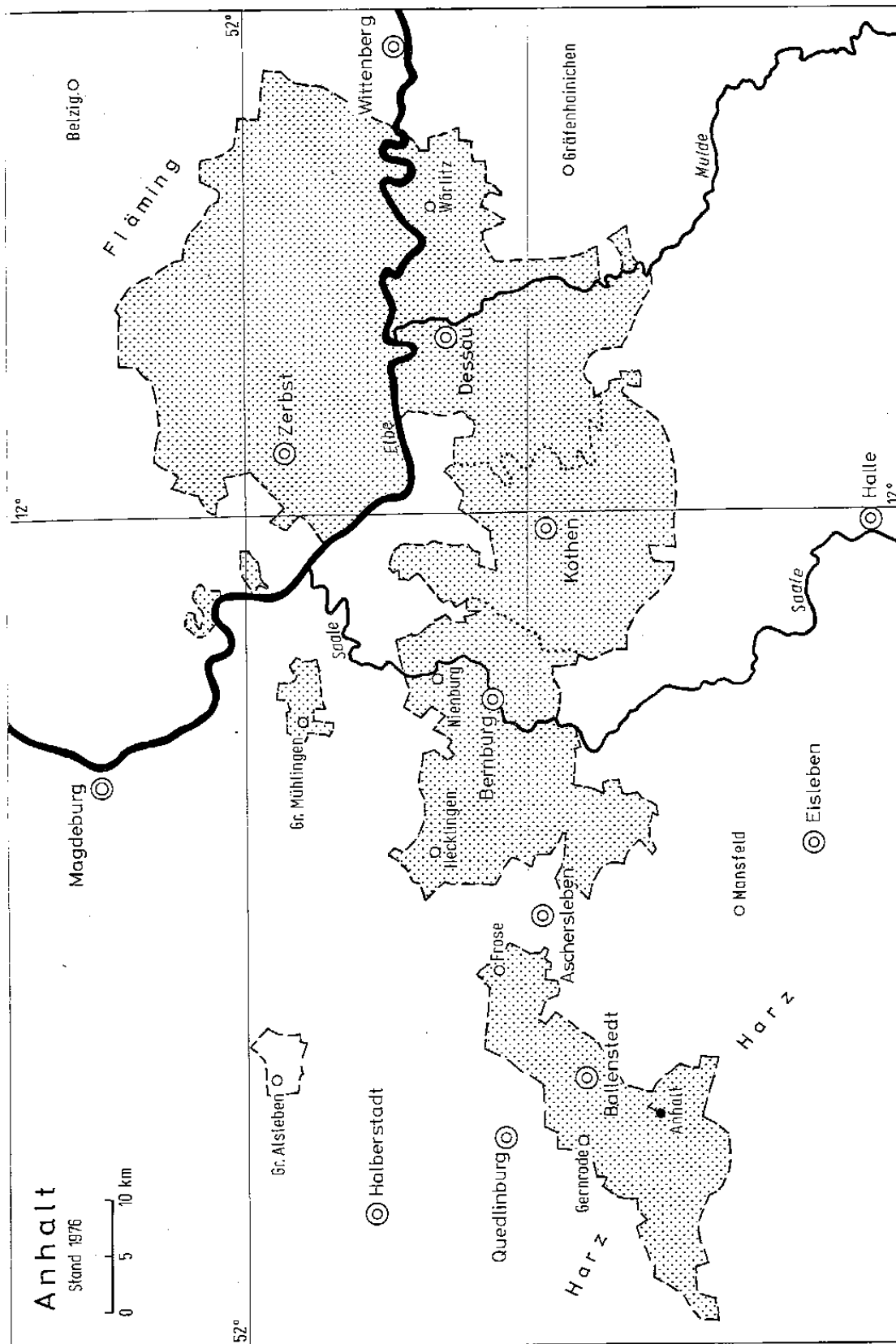
²⁹ Broad sections of the population engaged in the uprising in Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt: Neubert/Auerbach, 57-69; H.-P. Löhn, *Spitzbart, Bauch und Brille – sind nicht des Volkes Wille! Der Volksaufstand am 17. Juni 1953 in Halle an der Saale* (Bremen, 2003), 202-4. Halle, Magdeburg, Erfurt and Gera numbered amongst the areas with the greatest participation in the uprising: K. Frotscher/W. Krug, ‘Vorwort’, in *17. Juni 1953*, 15. See, in general: I.-S. Kowalczyk, *17. 6.1953: Volksaufstand in der DDR. Ursachen – Abläufe – Folgen* (Bremen, 2003), 103-243. The Protestant Church as an organisation kept its distance, however: *LA – Magd.*, 18, 181, ‘Methoden und taktische Massnahmen des Gegners am 17.6.53’, DVPM, 20/6/53. There were allegations of the involvement of *Junge Gemeinde* in Erfurt and Magdeburg, and of the influence of the Christian Church (since 1968!) in Magdeburg: *ThHStAW*, IV/2/1, 032, ‘Erklärung des Zentralkomitees der SED über die Lage und die unmittelbaren Aufgaben der Partei’, 25/6/53; *LHASA*, MAG, M24, 179, ‘Analyse über gegnerische Tätigkeit und Methode sowie Stimmung der Bevölkerung nach dem 17. Juni 1953’, DVPM, 22/10/53; W. Lübeck, ‘Der 17 Juni in Magdeburg. “Wenn die Freunde nicht dagewesen wären, wäre es zu einer Niederlage kommen”’, in H.J. Rupieper et al (ed.), ‘...und das wichtigste ist doch die Einheit’. *Der 17. Juni 1953 in den Bezirken Halle und Magdeburg* (Münster, 2003), 131-2. More concretely, the pastors of Bad Tennstedt and Eckolstädt, Gerhard Sammler and Edgar Mitzenheim (Moritz’s brother) respectively, supported the rebels in Thuringia, and Mitzenheim was sentenced to six years imprisonment in the aftermath: Neubert/Auerbach., 65; Kowalczyk, 214-9. On the involvement of church members in general, see: Eisenfeld/Kowalczyk/Neubert, 122. The lack of institutional engagement from the Protestant Church is no surprise given its rapprochement with the SED leaders at meetings on 10 and 11 June 1953, which had followed state persecution of the *Junge Gemeinde*, especially in 1952 and early 1953: Besier, *Der SED-Staat und die Kirche*, 106-39; Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship*, 94ff; Eisenfeld/Kowalczyk/Neubert, 118-23. On Mitzenheim’s position especially, see: *BArch* DO 4, 84008, ‘Ansprache des Landesbischofs Mitzenheim in der Kirche in Gräfentonna am Sonntag, den 9.10.1955’.

³⁰ For example: Bruce, 159-217; I.-S. Kowalczyk/A. Mitter/S. Wolle, *Der Tag X, 17. Juni 1953: Die “Innere Staatsgründung” der DDR als Ergebnis der Krise 1952/54* (Berlin, 1995). On the demands for better living conditions, see, for instance: Löhn, 26ff. On the difficulty inherent to separating political and economic motives, see: Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship*, 168.

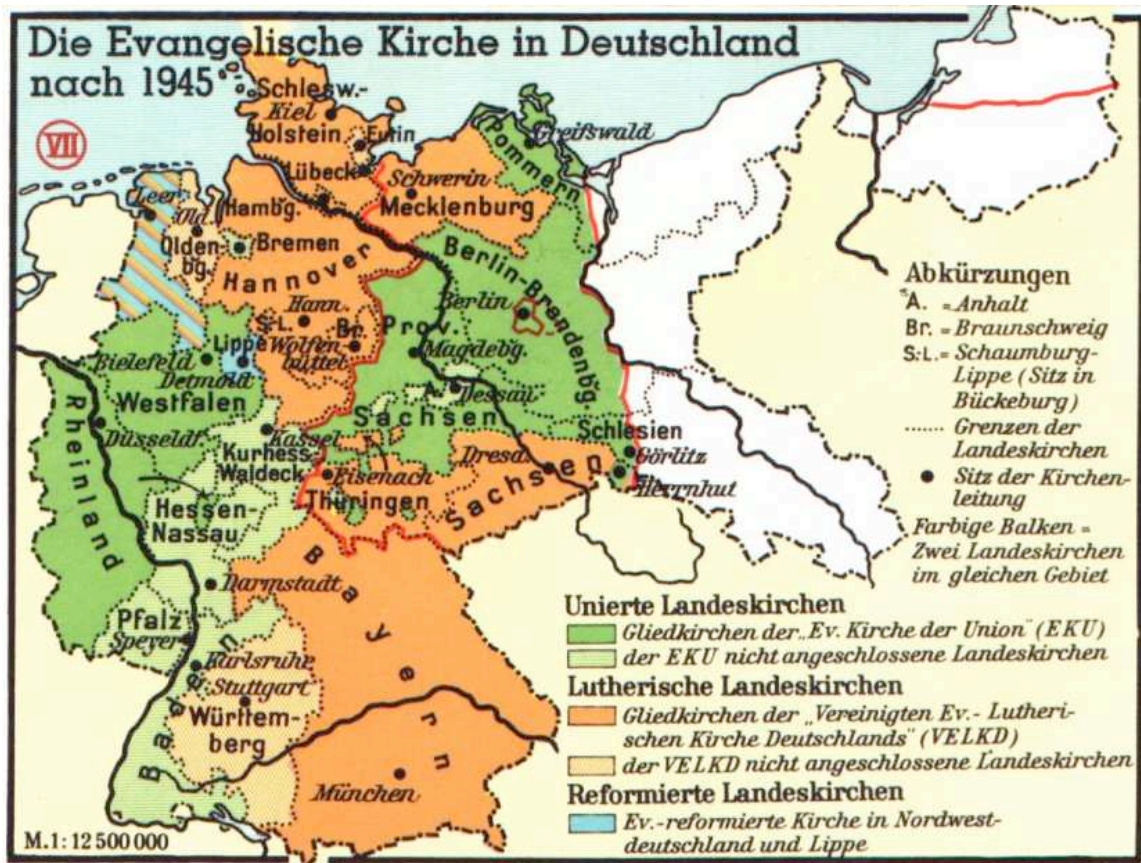
Maps



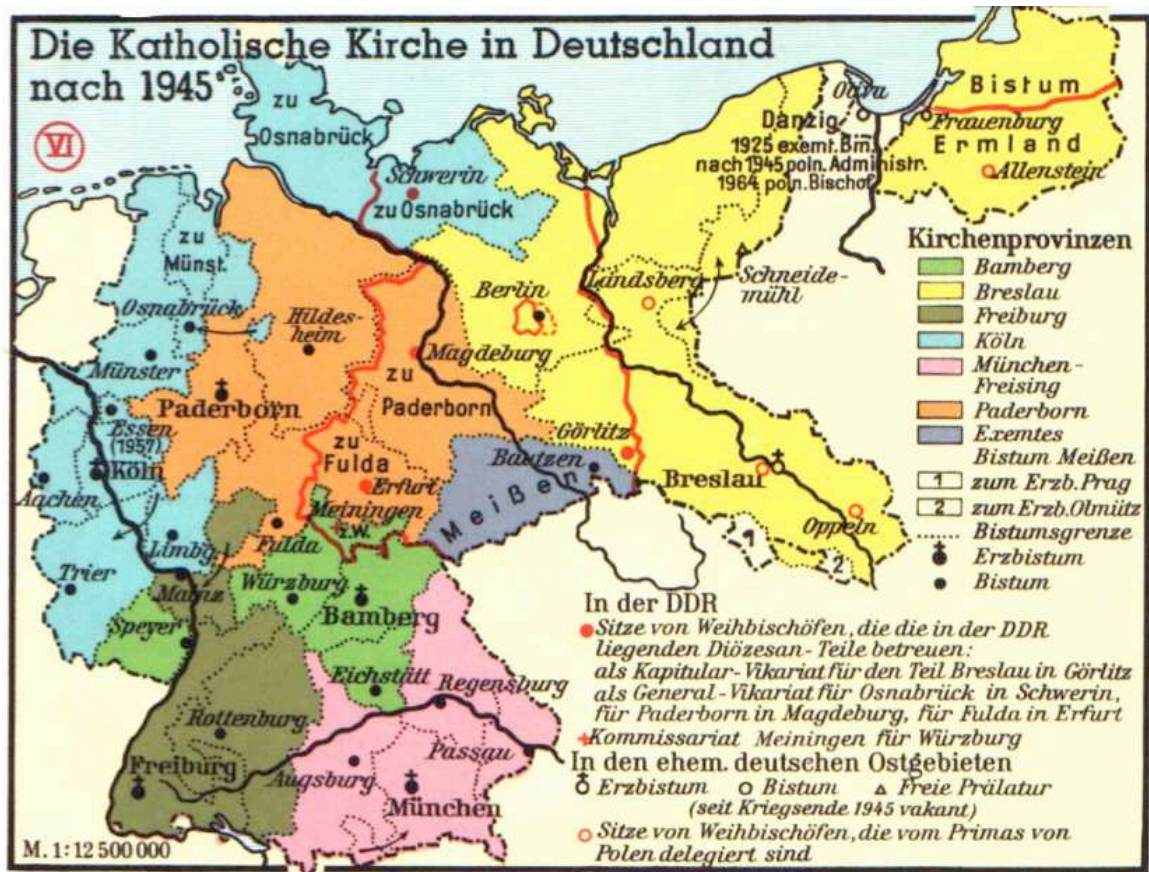
Map I: The Kirchenprovinz Sachsen prior to its merge with the Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Thüringen in January 2009 (to form the Evangelische Kirche in Mitteldeutschland). While the internal organisation/demarcations were different in the period of the SBZ, the area was the same (Source: <http://www.theologie.uni-halle.de/st/tanner/kirchbauvereine/> [accessed 28/5/2011]).



Map II: The Landeskirche Anhalts in 1945. The five districts (Kirchenkreise) were administered from Ballenstedt, Bernburg, Dessau, Köthen and Zerbst. (Source: *TRE*, 2, between 734-5).



Map IV: The Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) after 1945. (Source: *Völker, Staaten und Kulturen - ein Kartenwerk zur Geschichte* [Braunschweig, 1980])



Map V: The Catholic Church in Germany after 1945 (Source: *Völker, Staaten und Kulturen - ein Kartenwerk zur Geschichte* [Braunschweig, 1980])

Bibliography

Manuscript and archival sources:

Archiv für Christlich-Demokratische Politik (ACDP), Sankt Augustin:

Landesverband Thüringen 03-031-006, 010, 243

Archiv der Evangelischen Kirche Auferstehung, Dessau (AEKA):

Pfarrchronik

Archiv der Evangelischen Kirche Eisenberg (AEKE):

105.S.1: Tätigkeitsberichte des GKR Sasse, 1947-1958

105.E.2: Tätigkeitsberichte des GKR Eisenberg, 1947-1956

111.E.8: Niederschriften über Sitzungen des Kirchenvorstandes Eisenberg, 1929-1952

306.E.24: Die Katacheten, Eisenberg 1948-1951

Bad Klosterlausnitz I: 12.9.1934 - 24.12.1952

Buergel I: 27.1.1941 to 14.12.1951

Chronik von Sassa

Graitschen I: 1.2.1946-28.12.1949

Koenigshofen: von 1939-Dez. 1955

Petersberg I: von 1944-31.12.1952

Seifartsdorf: Juli 1937-Dez. 1955

Taupadel

Serba: Januar 1932-Dezember 1954 I

Sup. Eisenberg Rodigast; Statistik, Tätigkeitsberichte, 1942-1966

Sup. Eisenberg Graitschen; Statistik, Tätigkeitsberichte, 1947-1966

Sup. Eisenberg 122: Äusserungen des kirchlichen Lebens (Tabelle II) 1934-1957

Tabellen II u. III: Tätigkeitsberichte Hainspitz

Tabellen II u. III: Tätigkeitsberichte Rodigast

Tabellen II u. III: Tätigkeitsberichte Thalbuergel

Tätigkeitsberichte: Tabellen I u. II. Tautenhain

Archiv der Evangelischen Kirche Frankenheim (AEKF):

Akten: 144, 190, 220, 227, 230, 236, 246, 255, 270, 404.

Archiv der Evangelischen Kirche Mihla (AEKM):

A.I.2: Kirchenchronik von Mihla 1945-

Mihla Bestattungsbuch 1930-

Archiv der Evangelischen Kirche Ohrdruf (AEKO):

114/2: Christenlehre, 1947-1961
A.I.5a.3: Statistik: Äusserungen des kirchlichen Lebens
A.I.9: Andere Religionsgesellschaften
A.I.15: Der Gemeindedienst im Allgemeinen, 1947-
A.II.5.1: Die Dienstaufsicht über Vermögens- und Bauangelegenheiten im
Allgemeinen
A 3.5.Nr 5: Hilfswerk, 1947-
B: Der Pfarrer und die Pfarrstelle in Gossel
B.I: Die Pfarrer und die Pfarrstelle, 1947-
B.I.1: Hohenkirchen: Die Pfarrer und die Pfarrstelle
B.III.10.3: Krankenpflege
Evangelischer Frauendienst, 1947-1977
Miscellaneous unfiled documents

Archiv der Evangelischen Kirche Tiefenort (AEKT):

Protokollbuch der Kirchenvertretung Tiefenort
Thüringisches Kirchenblatt, A & B 1944-45
Traditionsbuch, ab 1948. Wichtige Beschlüsse
Verordnungsblatt der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland, 1946-

Archiv der Evangelischen Kirche Rohr (AEKR):

Kirchliche Nachrichten aus der Gemeinde Kühndorf von 1938-1952
Protokollbuch des Gemeindegemeinderats Kühndorf

Archiv der Evangelischen Kirche Zeitz (AEKZeit):

Miscellaneous unfiled documents

Archiv der Evangelischen Kirche Zeulenroda (AEKZ):

Pfarrchronik

Archiv der Katholischen Kirche Lüderode (AKKL):

Pfarrchronik

Archiv der Kirchenkreises Stendal (AKKS):

Chronik Dom St. Nikolaus
Gemeindeblatt St. Petri zu Stendal
Miscellaneous unfiled documents

Archiv der Kirchenprovinz Sachsens (AKPS), Magdeburg:

Rep A Gen. 3602: Kirche u. Staat. Atom und Wasserstoffbomben, Bd. I 1948-55

Rep A Gen 3606 -- Kirchenleitung, Worte der Kirche zu den politischen und wirtschaftlichen Fragen der Gegenwart, Bd. 1 1947-66

Rep A Gen 2364: Kirche und Gesellschaft. Verhältnis der Kirche zu Staat, Parteien und Organisationen, Bd. 1 1948-86

Rep A Gen 1472: Provinzregierung Sachsen-Anhalt, Bd. 1 1946-51

Rep A Gen 7112: Landesregierung Thüringen, Bd. 1 1945

Rep A Gen 2871: Meldungen der Superintendenten über etwaige Störungen des Weihnachtsfestes von Seiten staatlicher Stellen

Rep A Gen 7118: Stellung der Kirche zum Staat

Rep A Gen 8256: 'Volksentschied vom 30. Juni 1946 in Sachsen – Enteignung von Nazi- und Kriegsverbrecher (Kirche und Staat), 1946

Rep A Gen 3817: Predigtverbot, Ausweisungen aus der DDR, Vernehmungen von kirchliche Amtsträger, Bd. 1 1947-82

Rep A Gen 3448: Kirche und Staat. Angriffe gegen Kirche, Bd. 1 1948-(6)2

Rep A Gen 7416: Bodenreform, Bd. 1 1948-50

Rep A Gen 94: Verhandlung kirchlicher Stellen mit staatlichen Dienststellen, 1946

Rep A Gen 4061: Kirche und Staat. Sowjetische Militär-Administration in Deutschland (SMA) 1948

Rep A Gen 3818: Verhältnis von Kirche und Staat (Stellung der Kirche innerhalb der staatlichen Rechtsordnung) Allgemeines und Grundsätzliches, Bd. II 1947-82

Rep A Gen 3645: 'Kirche und Staat. Kirchliche Veranstaltungen – Anzeigepflicht. Allgemeines und Grundsätzliches, Bd. 1 1947-54

Rep A Gen 3539, Bd. 1, Kirche und Politik

Rep B1, 26, Propstei Südharz – persönlicher Schriftwechsel, 1945-55

Rep B1, 15, Studentengemeinden, 1947-55

Rep B1, 21, Propstei Südharz – dienstlicher Schriftwechsel, 1946-56

Rep B1, 32, Innere Mission – Abteilung Volksmission, 1945-55

Rep B1, 42, Innere Mission, 1946-55

Rep B1, 20, Propstei Quedlinburg – dienstlicher Schriftwechsel, 1945-55

Rep B1, 25, Propstei Quedlinburg – persönlicher Schriftwechsel, 1945-55

Rep B1, 19, Propstei Naumburg – dienstlicher Schriftwechsel, 1947-54

Rep B1, 83, Tätigkeitsberichte der Propste, 1949-55

Rep B1, 16, Propstei Altmark – dienstlicher Schriftwechsel, 1945-55

Rep B1, 244, Kirchliche Presse, Gemeindeblatt, 1947-

Rep B1, 53, Weltluthertag 1952

Rep B1, 2, Männerwerk, 1946-55

Rep B1, 29, Evangelische Frauenhilfe in der KPS, 1945-55

Rep B1, 64, Jungmädchenwerk, 1946-55

Rep B1, 27, Jungmännerwerk, Jugendkammer und Jugendarbeit, 1945-55

Rep B1, 69, Jugendkammer der KPS und Jugendkammer Ost, 1945-55

Rep B1, 48, Stadtmissionen, 1945-54

Rep B1, 6, Pfarrermangel, 1948, 1950, 1954-5

Rep B1, 224, Auseinandersetzungen zwischen Pfr. Ansorge und Sup. Eggebrecht in Schleusingen, 1945-54

Rep B1, 206, Superintendenturbesetzung Kirchenkreise Eisleben, Nordhausen und Eilenburg, 1934-5, 1946-52

Rep B1, 230, Emil Grosse: Erfahrungbericht, 1954

Rep B1, 235, Angelegenheit Pfarrer Gester, 1946-8

Rep B1, 229, Pfarrstellenbesetzung, 1947-9

Rep B1, 149, Schriftwechsel in Sachen Pfarrstellen- und
 Superintendenturbesetzung, 1945-55
 Rep B1, 231, Pfarrbesetzungsangelegenheiten und Personalfragen, 1948-50
 Rep B1, 11, Propstei Halle – persönlicher Schriftwechsel, 1945-52
 Rep B1, 17, Propstei Halle – dienstlicher Schriftwechsel, 1945-55
 Rep B1, 13, Propstei Kurkreis – dienstlicher Schriftwechsel, 1945-54
 Rep B1, 191, Propstei Erfurt. Gesuche um Unterstützungen, Beschwerden,
 Personalangelegenheiten, 1945-54
 Rep B1, 14, Propstei Erfurt – dienstlicher Schriftwechsel, 1945-55
 Rep B1, 23, Propstei Erfurt – persönlicher Schriftwechsel, 1945-55
 Rep B1, 18, Propstei Magdeburg – dienstlicher Schriftwechsel, 1946-55
 Rep B1, 12, Propstei Naumburg – persönlicher Schriftwechsel, 1945-55
 Rep B1, 22, Propstei Altmark – persönlicher Schriftwechsel, 1945-55
 Rep B1, 234, Auseinandersetzung mit Pfr. Dr. Kitzig in Brefleben, 1948-58
 Rep B1, 159, Beziehungen zur Katholischen Kirche, 1946-55
 Rep B1, 40, Konfirmation und Jugendweihe, 1946-55
 Rep B1, 181, Kirche und Staat, 1942, 1945-7
 Rep B1, 167, Denkschriften und Gutachten, 1943, 1947
 Rep B1, 210, Eingaben, Anregungen zur Verbesserung der kirchlichen Arbeit,
 1945-52
 Rep B1, 212, Seelsorgerliche Schreiben auch Seelsorge in Krankenhäusern und
 anderen Einrichtungen, 1948-55
 Rep B1, 176, Auseinandersetzung mit Kirchenpräsident Dr. Martin Niemöller,
 1945-55
 Rep B1, 87, 400-Jahrfeier des Todes von M. Luther, 1946
 Rep B1, 189, Berichte über die Lage in den Gemeinden, 1947
 Rep B1, 109, Denkschriften, Betrachtungen, 1946-54
 Rep B1, 120, Ideologische Auseinandersetzungen, 1950-4
 Rep B1, 60, Entnazifizierung, 1947
 Rep B1, 82, Entnazifizierung – Gesuche für Fürsprache, 1946-50
 Rep B1, 61, Vorläufige Geistliche Leitung, 1945-6
 Rep B1, 94, Evangelische Frauenhilfe, 1947-9, 1957-8
 Rep B1, 125, Kirche und Staat, 1951-2
 Rep B1, 221, Berichte der Pröpste und Generalkirchenvisitation, 1951-3
 Rep O3, 30, Druckschriften, Rundschreiben der Deutschen Christen, 1933-46
 Rep O3, 49, BK Schriften, hauptsächlich Broschüren
 Rep O3, 106, BK nach 1945, 1945-55
 Rep O3, 109, BK nach 1945, 1949-53
 Rep O3, 129, Verschiedenes, 1934-46
 Rep O3, 182, Bruderkreis Sandau, 1935-7, 47
 Rep O3, 253, Verschiedenes, 1945-7

Bischöfliches Archiv Magdeburg (BAM):

Berliner Bischofskonferenz/Berliner Ordinarienkonferenz 1945-58
 Seelsorgeerschwernde: Kartoffelkäfersuchaktion
 Seelsorgeerschwernde: Seelsorgeerschwernde 1946-76
 Seelsorgeamt: Generalia, 1948-78
 Caritas: Caritasverband Magdeburg 1947-52/1954-70
 CDU: 1945-9; 1953-78

Mitteilungen: Verordnungsblatt des Erzbischöflichen Kommissariat Magdeburg 1946-51
 Mitteilungen: Bischofsworte an die Mitbrüder 1946-76
 Bonifatiusverein: Generalia, 1945-69
 Finanzen: Kirchensteuer – Zwangsbeitreibungen, 1948-58
 FDJ: 1945-53. Werk der Jugend, Junge Pioniere, Jugendausschüsse
 Finanzen: Errichtung von Kirchengemeinden. Generalia: 1947, 1949, 1951, 1953, 1956, 1964.
 Finanzen: Erzbischöfliches Generalvikariat Paderborn/ Korrespondenz/ Generalia. 1946-78.
 Finanzen: Kirchensteuer Generalia III
 Dechanten: Allgemein, 1945-72
 Seelsorgehelferinnen: Seelsorgehelferinnen-seminar 1948-68
 Evangelische Kirche: Schriftwechsel 1946-55
 Verlagswesen: Drucksachen, Druckgenehmigungen 1945-69
 Paderborn: Erzbischof – Korrespondenz – 1945-55
 Staatliche Behörden: Regierungsverordnungen 1946-51
 Geschichte des Kommissariates: Akte I/2: Geschichte des Kommissariates 1951-4/1961
 Geschichte des Kommissariates: Geschichtsschreibung 1950/1956/1957
 Geschichte des Kommissariates: Verzeichnis über die Errichtung von Seelsorgestellen im Kommissariatsbezirk
 Geschichte des Kommissariates: ‘Die Flucht im Winter 1945’ Tagebuchblätter, Pfarrer Ferdinand Weber
 Gottesdienst: Benutzung evangelischer Kirchen – Allgemein – 1944/1947-50/1953
 Gottesdienst: Benutzung evangelischer Kirchen
 Una – Sancta: Bericht über die letzten Kriegstage in Berlin. Von Schwester Judith
 Geschichte des Kommissariates: Seelsorge (Komm.) allgemeine Lage, 1945-7
 Kultus: 1945-68
 Katholikentag: Allgemein, 1948-64
 Jugendseelsorge: Generalia 1945-79
 Jugendweihe: Jugendweihe, 1946/1946/1956-9/1971
 Jugendseelsorge: Vervielfältigungen, 1945-64
 Kollekten: Ostflüchtlingskollekte, 1946-48
 Katechetisches Amt: Generalia I, 1946-62
 Caritas: Sandau – Kindererholungsheim/ Altersheim – 1946/1947/1950/1955-61/1969/1974-8
 Kirchliche Einrichtungen: Kindergärten 1945/1948/1950
 Paderborn: Generalvikariat – Korrespondenz – 1945-55
 Orden: Schriftverkehr, Allgemein, 1945-7/1950/1954-67
 Staatliche Behörden: Gnadengesuche für Verhaftete und Kriegsgefangene 1950-79
 Seelsorge: Strafgefängnisseelsorge 1946-69
 Seelsorgeamt: Generalia, 1948-78
 Politisches: Volkskongress 1948/1949
 Priester: erfolglose Anwerbungen, 1945-17/1950
 Priester: Bischof Maximilian Kaller, 1945-9
 Schule: Allgemein/Religionsunterricht, 1945-60
 Schule: katholische Schulen – Forderung nach konfessionallen
 Schulen/Bekenntnisschulen – 1945/1946
 Schule: Provinzialregierung, 1945-9

Schule: RU in Schulräumen, 1945-59/1967
Statistik: Allgemein: Generalia, 1948-64/1977
Statistik: Flüchtlingsstatistik, 1945-8/ 1957 (Akte/Finanzen XII/4)
Statistik: Seelenzahl des Erzbischöfl. Komm. Generalia 1946-8/1951/1954/1955/1957
Seelsorgehelferinnen: Diasporaseelsorgehelferinnen im Bonifatiuswerk (DSB).
Schriftwechsel und Chronik, 6.11.1946-1.1.1984
Seelsorge: Seelsorgeerschwerisse, 1946-76
Seelsorge: Frauen- und Mütterseelsorge, 1948-79
Staatliche Behörden: Der Präsident der Provinz Sachsen, Provinzialregierung der Provinz Sachsen-Anhalt, 1945-Juni 1947.
Staatliche Behörden: Landesregierung Sachsen-Anhalt. Der Ministerpräsident von Sachsen-Anhalt, Juli 1947-52.

Bistum Erfurt Archiv (BEA), Erfurt:

Bischöfliches Generalvikariat Erfurt/Bischöfliches Amt Erfurt/Meiningen,
Zentralregistratur:

125, 1946, Evakuiertenseelsorge
125, 1947-57, Evakuiertenseelsorge
128, 1943-8, Evakuiertenseelsorge
129, 1943-9, Evakuiertenseelsorge
126, 1943-51, Umsiedlerpriester
163, 1946-9, Strafgefangenenseelsorge
202, 1946-69, Bonifatius-Hilfswerk
306, 1947-69, Seelsorgebezirke-Neubildung
1947-50, Abgewandertenseelsorge
C II a 1, 1948-68, Verhältnis Kirche und Staat
C II a 4, 1947-61, Ministerium des Innern (des Landes Thüringens)
C II a 16, 1945-53, SMATh (Sowjetische Militäradministration Thüringens)
Stellenakten

Bischöfliches Generalvikariat Paderborn bzw. Fulda: Pfarreien, Dekanate,
Stiftungen, Einrichtungen etc. auf dem Gebiet der Heutigen Diözese Erfurt
(including):

Apolda, Bad Salza, Berntarode, Bilzingsleben, Blakenburg, Elrich, Erfurt, Bad
Frankenhausen, Friedrichslohra, Friedrichsrodra, Glassehausen, Gotha,
Heiligenstadt, Holungen, Ichtershäusen, Kalteneber, Kella, Kirchgandern,
Königsee, Küllstedt, Langensalza, Leinefelde, Leutenberg, Mackenrode,
Mühlhausen, Niedersachswerfen, Nordhausen, Reinhalterode, Rohrberg,
Rudolstadt, Ruhla, Schmalkalden, Silberhausen, Sömmerda, Sondershausen, Suhl,
Triptis, Uder, Weida, Weissenborn, Wendehausen, Worbis

Erfurt, St Marien, Propsteipfarrkirche:

3 III, Erfurt, St. Marien, Propsteipfarrkirche, 1942-59, Gottesdienst und
Seelsorge
Erfurt, St. Marien, Propsteipfarrkirche Kriegssache, 1939-47

Bistum Fulda Archiv (BFA):

Bischöfliches Generalvikariat Fulda:

Kirche in der DDR 'Grundsätzliches', 1946-59

T3: Gottesdienst und Seelsorge: Bad Salza, Bremen, Dermbach, Geisa, Geismar, Neustadt, Schleid, Spahl, Uder, Zalla/Rhon

Bundesarchiv, Lichterfelde (BArch):

DO4 (Staatssekretär für Kirchenfragen) Nr. 2891: Evangelische Kirche der Kirchenprovinz Sachsens, 1950-1956.

DO4 84014: Akten über die Kirchenleitung der Kirchenprovinz, 1956-.

DO4 84015: Akten über den Bischof, Thüringen, 1952-1961.

DO4 84016: Akten über 'Mitglieder der Kirchenleitung', 1956-1968.

DO4 84018: Religionsunterricht (Christenlehre in den Schulen), 1953-1956.

DO4 84018: Evangelische Jugendarbeit, insbesondere 'Junge Gemeinde', 1950-1956.

DO4 84018: Stellvertreter der Ministerpräsidenten Nuschke: Jugendweihe, Bd. 1, 1955-1956.

DO4 84018: Jugendweihe und Konfirmation, 1954-1956.

DO4 84019: Evangelische Jugendarbeit, insbesondere 'Junge Gemeinde', 1949-1953.

DO1 25033: Entwicklung der Volkspolizei des Landes Thüringen (Jahresbericht) 1947.

DO1 25264: Protokolle von Tagungen und Besprechungen der Schutzpolizei in den Ländern, 1948-1949.

DO1 25275: Monatsberichte über sichergestellte und beschlagnahmte Waren in den Ländern Sachsen/Anhalt, Thüringen 1948.

DO1 25370: Berichte und statistische Analysen über die kriminalpolizeiliche Arbeit der Jahre 1947, Sachsen-Anhalt

DO1 25371: Berichte und statistische Analysen über die Kriminalpolizeiliche Arbeit der Jahre 1948-1949, Sachsen-Anhalt.

DO1 25374: Berichte und statistische Analysen über die kriminalpolizeiliche Arbeit des Jahres 1947 bis 1949, Thüringen.

DO1 25375: Berichte und statistische Analysen über die kriminalpolizeiliche Arbeit des Jahres 1947 bis 1949, Thüringen.

DO1 25438: Berichte aller Art der LBdVP Thüringen zur Arbeit gem. Befehl 201, 1947-1949.

DO1 25440: Berichte aller Art der LBdVP Sachsen-Anhalt zur Arbeit gem. Befehl 201, 1947-1950.

DO1 25445: Statistiken und Berichte über die Ergebnisse der Arbeit zum Befehl 201 im Bereich der sowjetischen Besatzungszone, 1947-1950.

DO1 25446: Statistiken und Berichte über die Ergebnisse der Arbeit zum Befehl 201 im Bereich der sowjetischen Besatzungszone der LBdVP Sachsen-Anhalt, 1947-1950.

DOI 25447: Statistiken und Berichte über die Ergebnisse der Arbeit zum Befehl 201 im Bereich der sowjetischen Besatzungszone der LBdVP Thüringen, 1947-1950.

Diözesan Archiv Würzburg (DAW):

Bischöfliches Kommissariat Meiningen:

K2, 0.2.2.1, 0.2.2.2, 0.2.3, 0.2.5, 5.4

K3, 13.2.1, 13.2.2

K4, 28

Dokumentation – Personen:

Nachlaß – Kümmert, Robert

Evangelisches Zentralarchiv, Berlin (EZAB):

602 A7, 1, Zeitungsartikel

614/37, Theologisches

Bestand 2 Nummer 121

Bestand 2 Nummer 142

Bestand 2 Nummer 148 – Thüringen

Bestand 2 Nummer 149 – Thüringen

Bestand 2 Nummer 242 – Entnazifizierung

Bestand 2 Nummer 323

Bestand 4 Nummer 341 – Evangelische Landeskirche Anhalts, 1945-51

Bestand 4 Nummer 448 -- Beziehung von Kirche und Staat im Allgemeinen, Bd. 1

Bestand 4 Nummer 469 – Kriegsverbrecherprozesse, Bd. 1

Bestand 4 Nummer 472 – Kriegsgefangenen-, Flüchtlings-, und Umsiedlungsfragen, Bd. 1

Bestand 4 Nummer 473 – Kriegsgefangenen-, Flüchtlings-, und Umsiedlungsfragen, Bd. 2

Bestand 4 Nummer 474 – Kriegsgefangenen-, Flüchtlings-, und Umsiedlungsfragen, Bd. 3

Bestand 4 Nummer 539 – Film, 1946.12-1965.12

Bestand 4 Nummer 834 -- Theologische Wissenschaft

Bestand 6 Nummer 7656. 11.45-09.56

Glaube und Heimat (GuH), Weimar:

Issues from 21 April 1946 to end 1949

Landesarchiv Magdeburg (LA Magd.)

Rep K10, Ministerium für Volksbildung, Kunst und Wissenschaft (MVB), 2237

Rep K10, MVB, 4300

Rep M1, BT1/RdB, 234, 363, 3681

Rep M24, Ministerium des Innern, Bezirksbehörde der Deutschen Volkspolizei
Magdeburg (BDVP), 1952-60:
179, Berichte und Analyse der Abteilungen der BDVP Magdeburg über den
faschistischen Putschversuch vom 17.6.1953.

Landeshauptarchiv Sachsen-Anhalt, Dessau (LHASA, DE)

BV DE, 82, Berichte über die Stimmung der Bevölkerung
KV Ballenstedt, 48, Aufdeckung von Diebstählen, 1946-7
KV Ballenstedt, 185, Meldung der Kirchengaustritte
KV Ballenstedt, 127, Zusammenfassende Berichte
KV KÖT, 18, Handakte des Landrats Reickert zu Kirchenfragen, 1946-51
KV KÖT, 27, Umfangreicher Schriftwechsel zu strafbaren Handlungen, 1945-8
KV KÖT, 108, Berichte verschiedener Bürgermeister über Vorgänge in den
Gemeinden, 1945
KV ZE, 112, 113, 854
KV ZE, 855, Evangelische Kirchenangelegenheiten, 1946
KV ZE, 856, Katholische Kirchenangelegenheiten, 1948

Landeshauptarchiv Sachsen-Anhalt, Magdeburg (LHASA, MAG)

Rep K2: Ministerpräsident:

443, 82, Tätigkeitsberichte der Landesregierung an die SMA für 1. Quartal 1948
444, 82, Tätigkeitsberichte der Landesregierung an die SMA für 2. Quartal 1948
475, 93, Tätigkeitsberichte 1947/1948
695, 175, Denkmäler, Friedhöfen
696/I, 176, Organisation der Katholische Kirche, Bd. I, 1945-1948
696/II, 176, Organisation der Katholische Kirche Bd. II, 1948-1951
476, 94, Tätigkeitsberichte der Ministerium, 1947-1948
650: 158, Rundschreiben 1948
657, 163: Flugblätter der Bekennenden Kirche
693, 174, Kirchliches Amtsblatt für die Erzdiözese Paderborn, 1945-9
722, 186, Sonntagsheiligung und kirchliche Feiertage, 1945-52
734, 190, Kirchenangelegenheiten, Besprechungen über kirchen Angelegenheiten,
1946-51
737, 191, Amtsblätter des evangelischen Konsistoriums in Magdeburg, 1946-7
745, 193, Kirche und Politik, 1945-50
746, 193, Universität Halle – Theologische Fakultät, 1945-9
764, 178, Personalfälle, 1945-52
768 I, II, 199, Religionsunterricht, 1945-51
769a, 200, Beschwerde in kirchlichen Angelegenheiten, 1946-1950 (a-g)
769b, 200, Beschwerde in kirchlichen Angelegenheiten, 1946-1950 (h-z)
782, 206, Schulangelegenheiten, 1945-51
800, 211, Entnazifizierung innerhalb der Kirche, 1945-8
804, 212, Nachrichtenblätter der Evangelischen Landeskirchenrates für Anhalt u.
Dessau, 1946-50
789, 207, Kirchjugendarbeit und Kindergarten, 1945-50
791, 207, Kirchliches Presse- und Verlagswesen, 1945-51

792, 207, Zeitungsausschnitte betr. Verschiedene Kirchenangelegenheiten, 1946-7
793, 208, Kirchengaustritte, 1946-51
810, 215, Nachrichtenblätter des Evangelischen Konsistoriums in Magdeburg, 1947-9
814, 216, Kirchliche Krankenpflegeanstalten, 1945-8

Landeshauptarchiv Sachsen-Anhalt, Merseburg (LHASA, MER):

Staatsarchiv Merseburg:
Krschw. Delitzsch, 111
Krschw. Torgau, 105
Krschw. Sangerhausen, 96
Krschw. Merseburg, 414 and 624

KPD-BL der Provinz Sachsen:
P 506 Nr. 8, Informationsberichte von KPD-Leitungen, Aug. 1945-März 1946
P 506 Nr. 9, Informationsberichte von KPD-Leitungen des Unterbezirks
Magdeburg, Febr.-März 1946
P 506 Nr. 10, Informationsberichte von KPD-Leitungen des Kreises Bitterfeld,
Febr.-März 1946
P 507, Nr. 4, KPD-Organisationseinheiten in Unterbezirk Dessau

SED-Landesleitung:
P 515, IV/L-2/55/2a, Informationsberichte des Informationsdienstes, Nov. 1945-
Juni 1946

KPD-Kreisleitung Artern:
P 517 Artern, IV/401/244, Informationsberichte, März-Nov. 1946
P 507 Nr. 4, Berichte und Informationen, Aug. 1945-Mai 1946

SED-Kreisleitung Merseburg:
P 517 Merseburg, IV/414/282, Stimmungs- und Arbeitsberichte, Aug. 1945-Juli
1951
IV/414/346, Informationsberichte, März 1946-Dez. 1948

SED-Kreisleitung Zeitz:
P 517, IV/424/350, Berichte, Jan. 1946-Dez. 1948

Ortsleitung Buna-Werk:
P 508 Nr. 24, Informationsberichte, Juni 1945-Jan. 1946

BV Merseburg:
KV Torgau:
Nr. 105, Allgemeine Informationsberichte über die Lage der Bevölkerung, 1949
KV Sangerhausen:
Nr. 96, Berichterstattung an die Landesregierung und Presse, 1948-9
KV Merseburg:
Nr. 624, Informationen der Pressestelle des Kreises, 1947-50
KV Delitzsch:

Nr. 111, Informationsberichterstattung im Kreis Delitzsch, 1948-51

Landeskirchenarchiv Dessau (LKAD):

Generalia:

Kreisoberpfarramt Bernburg: 1945-65
Kirchen und Pfarrangelegenheiten, Bernburg 1945
Beschwerden, 1947
Bekenntnisstand in Anhalt
Pfarrangelegenheiten Dessau (allgemein), 1946-53
Pfarrangelegenheiten Dessau (allgemein), 1946-53
D.C. Erklärungen der Geistlichen 1945-1949
Rüstzeiten der Geistlichen, 1946-54
Gesetz und Verordnungsblatt für Anhalt, 1943-1968
Gemeindehelfer und Gemeindehelferinnen, 1945-51
Gustav Adolf Werk, 1946-65
Hilfswerk der evangelischen Kirche in Anhalt, 1945-67
Kreisoberpfarramt Köthen, 1945-1965
Kirchen und Pfarrangelegenheiten, Köthen, 1945-50
Förderung des Theologiestudiums, 1945-51
Kreisoberpfarramt Bernburg: 1945-65
Kirchen und Pfarrangelegenheiten, Bernburg 1945
Die Fürsorge fuer die konfirmierte Jugend, 1938-49
Theologischer Nachwuchs – Theologiestudenten – 1946-52
Kirchengeschichtlicher Kammer, 1947-66
Kirchenversammlung Treysa, 1945/46
Die Stuttgarter Erklärung 18/19.10.45
Kirchenkreisversammlungen, Kreiskirchentage, 1931-63
Kirchenvisitationen, 1945-1948
Die Regelung des Konfirmanden-Unterrichts, 1922-49
Die Benutzung der Schulräume zum Konfirmanden-Unterricht, 1933-64
Berichte ueber die Zustände und über die Verhältnisse der evangelische
Landeskirche Anhalts, 1948-52
Akten des evangelischen Landeskirchenrats für Anhalt in Dessau betr. den
evangelischen Landeskirchenrates für Anhalt, 1944/45-52
Kirchen Aus- und Eintritte, 1945-52
Kriegsgefangenen, 1945-50
Statistik, Gemeinden, 1944-53
Kreispastoral Versammlungen, 1945-65
Rundfunk, 1932-67
Reformationsfest, 1945-67
Sonn- und Festtage, 1945-68

Personalakte Erich Elster

Landeskirchenarchiv Eisenach (LKAE):

A122/XVI-XIX, Sitzungen des Landeskirchenrats
A156/III, Glaube und Heimat

A130/II, II Beiakte, Der Landeskirchenrat und seine Mitglieder
 A239, Politische Betätigung der Pfarrer und Kirchenbediensteten, betr.
 Spruchstelle
 A239/III, Reinigung vom Nazismus (1945)
 A239/IV, Politische Betätigung der Pfarrer und Kirchenbediensteten, 'Kirche und
 Politik'
 A239, Loses, 'Spruchstelle beim LKA für Reinigung der Verwaltung vom
 Nationalsozialismus'
 A250, Angelegenheiten der Pfarrstelle. Politische Betätigung der Pfarrer und
 Angestellten
 A510/I, Seelsorge an Krankenhäusern und Heilanstalten
 A430/I-VI, Weihehandlungen der politischen Parteien und sonstigen
 Organisationen
 A520, Seelsorge an Strafanstellten. Allgemeines
 A527/II, Seelsorge in Internierungslagern und Betreuung politische Häftlinge
 durch die Kirchen
 A550/II, Gehörlosenseelsorge
 A590/I, Studentenseelsorge
 A610, Kirchliche Statistik. Allgemeines
 A612, Kirchliche Statistik über Äusserung kirchlichen Lebens
 A616a/I, Statistik über Kirchenkreise, Kirchengemeinden und Pfarrstellen
 A700/III, Innere Mission. Allgemeines Brot für die Welt
 A720/1-10, Kirche und Jugend
 A723, Landes- und Kreisjugendpfarrer der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche in
 Thüringen, 1933-52
 A750/II, III, IV, IV Beiakte, Soziale Betätigung der Kirche in Allgemeines
 A776, Deutsche Christen
 A830, Schulfragen und Religionsunterricht, 1944-8
 A830/V Verhandlungen mit den staatlichen Stellen aus den Jahren 1945/46 über
 die Wiedereinführung des Religionsunterrichts
 A860/III, VI, VII, IX, Politik und Kirche, 1945-54
 A866/I-IV, Angriffe gegen Kirche und Christentum, 1948-53
 A930/II, Kriegsmaßnahmen und Kriegseinwirkungen. Verschiedenes
 A930/III, Kriegsmaßnahmen und Kriegseinwirkungen. Umgang mit
 Kriegsgefangenen Russen. Verschiedenes
 A930/IV, Kriegsmaßnahmen und Kriegseinwirkungen. Verschiedenes
 Anschriftenmitteilungen
 A930/V, Kriegsmaßnahmen und Kriegseinwirkungen. Verschiedenes

Nachlaß Moritz Mitzenheim:

3, Persönlicher Briefwechsel, 1945-8
 18, Konzepte für Artikel, Predigten und Vorträge
 27, Manuskripte zu Rundfunkansprachen und Predigten, Evangelischen
 Morgenfeiern und zu Veröffentlichungen in verschiedenen Zeitungen, 1949
 36, Zeitungen und Zeitungsausschnitte verschiedener Zeitungen, 1940, 1948, 1953,
 1963, 1970

Thüringisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Weimar (ThHStAW):

Land Thüringen – Ministerium des Innern:

649, Jahresbericht 1946
650, Jahresbericht 1947

Land Thüringen – Büro des Ministerium 1945-52:
79/863
79/866
80/867
80/868
81/892

Land Thüringen – Ministerium für Kirchenfragen 1953-60:
Ki – 8, 9, 15, 18, 19, 20, 34. 44

SED – Landesvorstand Thüringen:
IV/2/1 – 032

SED BPA Erfurt:
IV/2.3-115

Interviews (deployed in the thesis):

Herr Stefan A., Quedlinburg (Catholic), 1922, 28/3/2008.
Frau Ute J., Gispersleben/Erfurt, 1917, 16/5/2008.
Herr Reinhard J., Leutenberg, 1921, 28/6/2008.
Frau Ingrid K., Langeln, 1924, 17/3/2008.
Herr Hermann K., Prettin, 1923, 4/6/08.
Frau Dagmar M., Steinach, 1928, 1/5/2008.
Bishop Axel Noack, Magdeburg, 1949. 17/4/2008.
Frau Bettina R., Dessau, 1923, 12/6/2008.
Frau Christine R., Magdeburg, 1927, 3/7/2008.
Frau Ilke R., Eisenberg, 1919, 2/5/2008.
Frau Anna S., Camburg (interview in Pillingsdorf), 1918, 26/6/2008.
Frau Magda T., Sangerhausen (interview in Greiz), 1926, 8/5/2008.
Herr Harold W., Jena, 1925, 10/5/2008.

Questionnaires (deployed in the thesis):

Frau Bettina A., Bernburg/Hecklingen, 1933.
Frau Elke A., Elbingerode, 1935.
Herr Frank B., Köthen, 1934.
Frau Helga B., Kruden/Pollitz, 1921.
Frau Susanne B., Kemberg, 1920.
Herr Wilhelm B., Madgeburg, 1930.
Herr Fritz D., Camburg, 1924.
Frau Hannelore D., Diesdorf (Altmark), 1924.
Frau Maria D., Gerbstedt, 1923.

Herr Ernst-Wilhelm E., Elbingerode, 1924.
 Herr Kurt F., Köthen, 1923.
 Frau Bette G., Langeln, 1924.
 Frau Dagmar G., Leipzig, 1935.
 Herr Erich G., Könnern, 1924.
 Herr Horst G., Erfurt, 1928.
 Herr Ludwig G., Zeutsch, 1933
 Herr Lukas G., Gerbstedt, 1923
 Herr Gotthold H., Diesdorf (Altmark), 1924.
 Frau Marta H., Heyerode, 1926.
 Frau Erika J., Zschettgau, 1917.
 Herr Werner J., Leimbach, 1931.
 Herr Paul K., Erfurt, 1930.
 Herr Rudolf K., Rosian, 1925.
 Herr Simon K., Pößneck, 1923.
 Frau Elfriede L., Mühlhausen, 1920.
 Frau Helga L., Zeitz, 1925.
 Herr Kurt M., Schwiesau, 1930.
 Frau Ilse N., Großschweidnitz, 1918.
 Frau Ursula N., Köthen, 1928.
 Frau Frieda P., Jena, 1933.
 Frau Beate R., Nitschareuth, 1921.
 Frau Ingeborg R., Staßfurt-Leopoldshall, 1928.
 Frau Edith S., Pfiffhausen, 1934.
 Frau Elisabeth T., Langeln, 1930.
 Frau Waltraud T., Kemberg, 1925.
 Herr Jakob and Frau Steffi U., Wendehausen, 1920 and 1921.
 Herr Heinrich V., Druxberge, 1925.
 Herr Andreas V., Bernburg, 1934.
 Frau Edda V., Wernigerode, 1921.
 Herr Alois W., Brunnhartshausen (Rhön), 1925.
 Frau Lotte W., Beuster, 1913.
 Frau Hanna Z., Zittau, 1923.
 Herr Siegfried Z, Magdeburg, 1925.

Unpublished manuscripts:

Franck, Walther, *Familienchronik der Familie Franck* (manuscript, undated), 65-6.

Müller, Martin, *Kurze Chronik des Kirchenkampfes in der Evangelischen Landeskirche Anhalts von 1933-1945* (manuscript, ca. 1950).

Schulze, Siegfried, *Erich Elster und Egon Bitzmann. Die ersten Pfarrer der Auferstehungsgemeinde: Gemeindevortrag anlässlich des 70. Kirchwehjubiläums am Samstag, 26. Februar 2000, in der Auferstehungsgemeinde in Dessau-Siedlung* (manuscript, 2000).

Seidel, Thomas A., *Die Zeitzeugen berichten aus der Ollendorfer Ortschronik (Ollendorf 1933-1953)* (manuscript, 1994).

“...wir sahen nur einen roten Feuerball...” *Das Kriegsende in Creuzburg. Zeitzeugen berichten*, ed. S.M. Breustedt (manuscript, 2005).

Ziemann, Benjamin, *Religion and the Search for Meaning, 1945-1990* (manuscript, 2010).

Published primary sources:

Die Anfangsjahre der CDU in Thüringen und auf dem Eichsfeld (1945-1950), ed. Rigobert Wenzel (Duderstadt, 2000)

Auf dem Weg zur SED. Die Sozialdemokratie und die Bildung einer Einheitspartei in den Ländern der SBZ, ed. A. Malycha (Bonn, 1996).

Berichte der Magdeburger Kirchenleitung zu den Tagungen der Provinzialsynode 1946-1989, ed. Harald Schultze (Göttingen, 2005).

The Communist International, 1919-1943, Documents, Vol. 2: 1923-1928, ed. Jane Degras (London, 1971).

Datenatlas zur religiösen Geographie im protestantischen Deutschland: von der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts bis zum Zweiten Weltkrieg. Bd. 2: Osten, ed. Lucian Hölscher (Berlin, 2001).

DDR. Dokumente zur Geschichte der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1945-1985, ed. Hermann Weber (Munich 1986).

Dokumentation der Vertreibung der Deutschen aus Ost-Mitteleuropa. Bd. I: Die Vertreibung der deutschen Bevölkerung aus den Gebieten östlich der Oder-Neisse, ed. Theodor Schieder (Groß Denkte, 1954-61).

Drebes, Theodor, *Im Ringen um die Mitte. Erlebnisse eines Pfarrers* (Stuttgart, undated).

Eichler, Wolfgang, *Ein Wort ging um in Buchenwald: Erlebnisbericht aus den Jahren 1945 bis 1950* (Jena, 1992).

Elster, Erich, *Deutsches Herz im Kampf* (Dessau, 1935).

Entnazifizierung. Politische Säuberung und Rehabilitierung in den vier Besatzungszonen 1945-1949, ed. Clemens Vollnhals (Munich, 1991).

Entnazifizierung und Selbstreinigung im Urteil der evangelischen Kirche. Dokumente und Reflexionen 1945-1949, ed. Clemens Vollnhals (Hamburg, 1989).

- Die Entnazifizierungspolitik der KPD/SED 1945-1948, Dokumente und Materialien*, ed. Ruth-Kristin Rößler (Goldbach, 1994).
- Die evangelische Kirche nach dem Zusammenbruch. Berichte ausländischer Beobachter aus dem Jahre 1945*, ed. Clemens Vollnhals (Göttingen, 1988).
- Frankl, Viktor, *...trotzdem Ja zum Leben sagen. Ein Psychologe erlebte den Konzentrationslager* (Kösel, 1977).
- Frauen in der Kirche. Evangelische Frauenverbände im Spannungsfeld von Kirche und Gesellschaft 1890-1945*, ed. Annette Kuhn (Düsseldorf, 1985).
- Frauen in der Nachkriegszeit, Bd. I-II*, ed. Annette Kuhn (Düsseldorf, 1984-6).
- Freie Deutsche Jugend. Berichte und Dokumente zur Entwicklung und Tätigkeit der kommunistischen Jugendorganisation*, ed. Hans-Peter Herz (Munich, 1957).
- Gedat, Gustav Adolf, *Ein Christ erlebt die Probleme der Welt* (Stuttgart, 1933).
- Die 'Gruppe Ulbricht' in Berlin April bis Juni 1945*, ed. Gerhard Keiderling (Berlin, 1993).
- Geschichten aus Gebesee im Thüringer Land*, ed. Friedemann Steiger (Bad Dübén, 2004).
- Hat die Kirche geschwiegen? Das öffentliche Wort der evangelischen Kirche aus den Jahren 1945-1964*, 3rd Edn, ed. Günter Heidtmann (Berlin [West], 1964).
- Hennig, Karl, "In eine Kinderseele eingebrannt". *Erlebnisse 1945*, *Heimatkalender für das Jeseener Land* (2006), 101-2
- "In eine Kinderseele eingebrannt". *Erlebnisse 1945 (Fortsetzung)*, *Heimatkalender für das Jeseener Land* (2007), 43.
- Herman, Stewart, *The Rebirth of the German Church* (Rochester, 1946).
- Hochschuloffiziere und Wiederaufbau des Hochschulwesens in Deutschland 1945-1949. Die Sowjetische Besatzungszone*, ed. Manfred Heinemann (Berlin, 2000).
- Honecker, Erich, *Aus meinem Leben* (Frankfurt, 1980).
- Hübener, Erhard, *Lebenskreise: Lehr- und Wanderjahre eines Ministerpräsidenten* (Cologne, 1984).
- Inventar der Befehle des Obersten Chefs der Sowjetischen Militäradministration in Deutschland (SVAG) 1945-1949*, ed. Jan Foitzik, (Munich, 1995).
- Jaspers, Karl, *Die Schuldfrage* (Heidelberg, 1946).
- Jüchen, Aurel von, 'Warum Christentum und Sozialismus einander begegnen müssen', *Zeichen der Zeit*, 6 (1947), 62-74.
- Kirchliches Handbuch: amtliches statistisches Jahrbuch der katholischen Kirche Deutschlands, Band XXIII, 1944-51*, ed. Franz Groner (Cologne, 1951),

- Kirchliches Jahrbuch für die Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland*, 1945-54, ed. Johannes Schnieder, Joachim Beckmann (Gütersloh, 1950-5),
- Klemperer, Victor, *So sitze ich denn zwischen allen Stühlen. Tagebücher 1945-1949* (Berlin, 1999).
- Kolesnichenko, Ivan S., *Bitva posle vojny* (Moscow, 1987).
- Kriegsende in Bremen. Erinnerungen, Berichte, Dokumente*, ed. H. Müller, G. Rohdenburg, 3rd edn (Bremen, 2005).
- Kriegsende und Neubeginn im Landkreis Eichsfeld 1945/1946. Eine zeitgenössische Dokumentation*, ed. Thomas Müller, Maik Pinkert (Heiligenstadt, 2003).
- Ein Lebensraum für die Kirche. Die Rundbriefe von Landesbischof D. Mitzenheim 1945-1970*, ed. Thomas Björkman (Lund, 1991).
- Leonhard, Wolfgang, *Die Revolution entlässt ihre Kinder* (Köln, 1955).
- Löwenstein, F. Prinz zu, 'Religiöse Einkehr in Internierungslagern', *Frankfurter Hefte*, 2 (1947), 463-70.
- Mitzenheim, Moritz, *50 Jahre im Dienste der Kirche. Festgabe zum Gold. Ordinationsjubiläum am 18. Oktober 1964*, ed. Ingo Braecklein (Berlin, 1964)
- *Aus Christlicher Verantwortung: Beiträge zu eine humanistische politische Diakonie* (Berlin, 1971).
 - *Politische Diakonie. Reden, Erklärungen, Aufsätze 1946-1964* (Berlin, 1964).
- Niemöller, Martin, *Martin Niemöller über die deutsche Schuld, Not und Hoffnung* (Zürich, 1946).
- Nikitin, Piotr, *Zwischen Dogma und gesundem Menschenverstand : wie ich die Universitäten der deutschen Besatzungszone "sowjetisierte": Erinnerungen des Sektorleiters Hochschulen und Wissenschaft der Sowjetischen Militäradministration in Deutschland* (Berlin, 1997).
- Preysing, Konrad Graf von, *Hirtenworte in ernster Zeit. Kundgebungen des Bischofs von Berlin Konrad Kardinal von Preysing in den Jahren 1945-47* (Berlin, 1947).
- Public Opinion in Occupied Germany. The OMGUS Surveys, 1945-1949*, ed. Anna J. Merritt/Richard L. Merritt (Urbana, 1970).
- Die Protokolle der Kirchlichen Ostkonferenz 1945-1949*, ed. Michael Kühne (Göttingen, 2005).
- Quellen zur Geschichte Thüringens, 1945-1952*, Vols. 1-2, ed. Jürgen John (Erfurt, 1999).
- Quellen zur Geschichte Thüringens. Erinnerungen an die Zeit zwischen 1930 bis 1947*, ed. Gudrun Braune (Erfurt, 1996).
- Schaefer, Aloys, *Lebensbericht. Landrat im Eichsfeld. Zeuge der Besatzungszeit* (Heiligenstadt, 1993).

- Schapper, Helmut, 'Als Bischof der Kirchenprovinz Sachsen', in *Die evangelische Diaspora, Ludolf Müller, Bischof zu Magdeburg*, Sonderdruck, Heft 2, 3/1961 & 1/1962.
- Die Schuld der Kirche. Dokumente und Reflexionen zur Stuttgarter Schulderklärung vom 18./19. Oktober 1945*, ed. Martin Greschat (Munich, 1982).
- SED und Kirche. Eine Dokumentation ihrer Beziehungen. Band I: 1946-1967*, ed. Frédéric Hartweg (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1995).
- Selbstbewahrung oder Selbstverlust. Bischöfe und Repräsentanten der evangelischen Kirchen in der DDR über ihr Leben. 17 Interviews*, ed. Hagen Findeis/Detlef Pollack (Berlin, 1999).
- Siebert, Heinz, *Das Eichsfeld unter dem Sowjetstern*, ed. B. Opfermann (Duderstadt, 1992).
- Söhlmann, Fritz (ed.), *Treysa 1945. Die Konferenz der evangelischen Kirchenführer 27. - 31. August 1945* (Lüneberg, 1946).
- Sowjetische Politik in der SBZ 1945-1949, Dokumente zur Tätigkeit der Propagandaverwaltung (Informationsverwaltung) der SMAD unter Sergej Tjul'panow*, ed. Bernd Bonwetsch et al (Bonn, 1998).
- Speziallager Nr. 2 Buchenwald: zur Geschichte des Lagers Buchenwald 1945 bis 1950*, ed. Bodo Ritscher (Weimar-Buchenwald, 1993).
- SVAG i religioznye konfessii Sovetskoj zony okkupats'ii Germanii, 1945-1949: sbornik dokumentov*, ed. V. V. Zakharov (Moscow, 2006)
- Tjul'panow, Sergej, *Deutschland nach dem Kriege (1945-1949). Erinnerungen eines Offiziers der Sowjetarmee*, ed. S. Doernberg (Berlin [East], 1986).
- Unruhige Zeiten. Erlebnisberichte aus dem Landkries Celle 1945-1949*, ed. Rainer Schulze (Munich, 1990).
- Die Vertriebenen in der SBZ/DDR. Dokumente*, 3 Vols., ed. Manfred Wille et al (Wiesbaden, 1996-2003).
- Voss, Johann, *Black Edelweiss. A Memoir of Combat and Conscience by a Soldier of the Waffen-SS* (Bedford [Penn.], 2002).
- Wie wir das alles geschafft haben: alleinstehende Frauen über ihr Leben nach 1945*, ed. Sibylle Meyer/Eva Schulze (Munich, 1985).
- Zähn, Günther, 'Thüringer Blickpunkte 1933-1945 aus der Sicht eines Dorfpfarrers damaliger Zeit', in Thomas A. Seidel/Dietmar Wiegand (ed.), *Thüringer Gratwanderungen* (Leipzig, 1998), 244-55.

Published secondary works:

- Allinson, Mark, *Politics and popular opinion in East Germany 1945-68* (Manchester, 2000)
- Andrees, Beate, 'Auf der Flucht in ein neues Leben. Flüchtlinge, Vertriebene und Umsiedler 1945 in Thüringen', in Marina Moritz (ed.), *Zeitbrüche – Lebensbrüche. Frauenalltag in Thüringen 1945* (Erfurt, 1995), 101-14.
- Arendt, Hannah, *Eichmann in Jerusalem. Ein Bericht über die Banalität des Bösen* (Munich, 2006).
- Badstübner-Peters, Evemarie, 'Durchkommen und Überleben', in Marina Moritz (ed.), *Zeitbrüche – Lebensbrüche. Frauenalltag in Thüringen 1945* (Erfurt, 1995), 25-54.
- "Lassen wir tanzen..." Nachkriegsjugend und moderne Freizeitkultur in SBZ und früher DDR', in Helga Gotschlich/Katharina Lange/Edeltraud Schulze (ed.), *Aber nicht im Gleichschritt. Zur Entstehung der Freien Deutschen Jugend* (Berlin, 1997), 66-78.
- Barthel, Horst, *Die Wirtschaftlichen Ausgangsbedingungen der DDR* (Berlin, 1979).
- Barthel, Rolf/Fischer, Martin, *Major M.B. Dsilichow, erster sowjetischer Kommandant des Kreises Eichsfeld 1945/1946* (Heiligenstadt, 1984)
- Bauer, Theresia, 'Krise und Wandel der Blockpolitik und Parteineugründungen 1948', in Dierk Hoffmann/Hermann Wentker (ed.), *Das letzte Jahr der SBZ* (Munich, 2000), 65-83.
- Bauerkämper, Arnd, 'Auf dem Wege zum "Sozialismus auf dem Lande." Die Politik der SED 1948/49 und die Reaktionen in dörflich-agrarischen Milieus', in Dierk Hoffmann/Hermann Wentker (ed.), *Das letzte Jahr der SBZ* (Munich, 2000), 245-268
- 'Social Conflict and Social Transformation in the Integration of Expellees into Rural Brandenburg, 1945-1952', in Philip Ther/Ana Siljak (ed.), *Redrawing Nations: Ethnic Cleansing in East-Central Europe, 1944-1948* (Oxford, 2001), 285-306.
 - 'Zusammenfassung', in Ulrich Kluge/Winfrid Halder/Katja Schlenker (ed.), *Zwischen Bodenreform und Kollektivierung. Vor- und Frühgeschichte der "sozialistischen Landwirtschaft" in der SBZ/DDR vom Kriegsende bis in die fünfziger Jahre* (Stuttgart, 2001), 277-87.
- Baumann, Ursula, 'Religion und Emanzipation: Konfessionelle Frauenbewegung in Deutschland 1900-1933', in Irmtraut Götz von Olenhusen (ed.), *Frauen unter dem Patriarchat der Kirchen* (Stuttgart, 1995), 89-119.

- Beck, Wolfgang, *Westfälische Protestanten auf dem Weg in die Moderne: die evangelischen Gemeinden des Kirchenkreises Lübbecke zwischen Kaiserreich und Bundesrepublik* (Paderborn, 2002).
- Becker, Frank, 'Protestantische Euphorien. 1870/71, 1914 und 1933', in Manfred Gailus/Hartmut Lehmann (ed.), *Nationalprotestantische Mentalitäten. Konturen, Entwicklungslinien und Umbrüche eines Weltbildes* (Göttingen, 2005), 36-44.
- Beer, Mathias, 'Alteingesessene und Flüchtlinge in Deutschland 1945-1949: Eine Konfliktgemeinschaft', in *Der Neubeginn. Deutschland zwischen 1945-1949*, (Hamburg, 2005), 88-103.
- Behrenbeck, Sabine, *Der Kult um die toten Helden: Nationalsozialistische Mythen, Riten und Symbole 1923 bis 1945* (Vierow bei Greifswald, 1996).
- Bendel, Rainer, *Aufbruch aus dem Glauben? Katholische Heimatvertriebene in den gesellschaftlichen Transformationen der Nachkriegsjahre 1945-1965* (Cologne, 2003).
- Bendel-Maidl, Lydia/Bendel, Rainer, 'Schlaglichter auf den Umgang der deutschen Bischöfe mit der nationalsozialistischen Vergangenheit', in Rainer Bendel (ed.), *Die katholische Schuld? Katholizismus im Dritten Reich zwischen Arrangement und Widerstand* (Münster, 2002), 245-71.
- Bergen, Doris, *Twisted Cross. The German Christian Movement in the Third Reich* (London, 1996).
- "'War Protestantism" in Germany, 1914-1945', in Manfred Gailus/Hartmut Lehmann (ed.), *Nationalprotestantische Mentalitäten. Konturen, Entwicklungslinien und Umbrüche eines Weltbildes* (Göttingen, 2005), 115-31.
- Besier, Gerhard, 'Aus der Resistenz in der Kooperation. Der "Thüringer Weg" zur "Kirche im Sozialismus"', in Günther Heydemann/Lothar Kettenacker (ed.), *Kirchen in der Diktatur. Drittes Reich und SED-Staat* (Göttingen, 1993), 182-212.
- *Die evangelische Kirche in den Umbrüchen des 20. Jahrhunderts. Gesammelte Aufsätze. Band 2: Von der ersten Diktatur in die zweite Demokratie, kirchlicher Neubeginn in der Nachkriegszeit; Kirchen, Parteien und Ideologien im Zeichen des Ost-West-Konflikts* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1994).
 - 'The German Democratic Republic and the State Churches, 1958-1989', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 50/3 (1999), 523-47.
 - *Kirche, Politik und Gesellschaft im 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 2000).
 - 'Kommunistische Religionspolitik und kirchlicher Neuanfang', in Hartmut Mehringer/Michael Schwartz/Hermann Wentker (ed.), *Erobert oder befreit? Deutschland im internationalen Kräftefeld und die sowjetische Besatzungszone (1945/46)* (Munich, 1998), 121-145.
 - *Der SED-Staat und die Kirche. Der Weg in die Anpassung* (Munich, 1993).
- Besier, Gerhard/Sauter, Gerhard, *Wie Christen ihre Schuld bekennen. Die Stuttgarter Erklärung 1945* (Göttingen, 1985)

- R. Bessel, 'The "Front Generation" and the Politics of Weimar Germany', in Mark Roseman (ed.), *Generations in Conflict: Youth Revolt and Generation Formation 1770-1968* (Cambridge, 1995), 121-36.
- *Germany 1945. From War to Peace* (London, 2009).
 - 'Hatred after War: Emotion and the Postwar History of East Germany', *History and Memory*, 17/1-2 (2005), 195-216.
 - *Nazism and War* (London, 2004).
 - 'The shadow of death in Germany at the end of the Second World War', in Alon Confino/Paul Betts/Dirk Schumann (ed.), *Between Mass Death and Individual Loss. The Place of the Dead in Twentieth-Century Germany* (New York, 2008), 51-68.
- Bessel, Richard/Jessen, Ralph (ed.), *Die Grenzen der Diktator: Staat und Gesellschaft in der SBZ/DDR* (Göttingen, 1996).
- Biddiscombe, Perry, *The Last Nazis: SS Werewolf Guerrilla Resistance in Europe 1944-1947* (Stroud, 2004).
- *Werewolf! The History of the National Socialist Guerilla Movement, 1944-1946* (Cardiff, 1998).
- Biess, Frank, 'Feelings in the Aftermath: Toward a History of Postwar Emotions', in Frank Biess/Robert G. Moeller (ed.), *Histories of the Aftermath. The Legacies of the Second World War in European Perspective* (New York, 2010), 30-48.
- 'The History of Emotions', *German History*, 28/1(2010), 67-80.
 - *Homecomings. Returning POWs and the Legacies of Defeat in Postwar Germany* (Princeton, 2006).
- Birke, Adolf M., 'Katholische Kirche und Politik in der Phase des Neubeginns 1945-1949', in Victor Conzemius/Martin Greschat/Hermann Kocher/Andreas Lindt (ed.), *Die Zeit nach 1945 als Thema kirchlicher Zeitgeschichte* (Göttingen, 1988), 180-193.
- Black, Monica A., 'Reburying and Rebuilding: Reflecting on Proper Burial in Berlin after "Zero Hour"', in Alon Confino/Paul Betts/Dirk Schumann (ed.), *Between Mass Death and Individual Loss. The Place of the Dead in Twentieth-Century Germany* (New York, 2008), 69-90.
- Blessing, Benita, *The Antifascist Classroom: Denazification in Soviet-Occupied Germany 1945-1949* (New York, 2006).
- Bodemann, Y. Michal, 'Eclipse of Memory: German Representations of Auschwitz in the Early Postwar Period', *New German Critique*, 75 (1998), 61-72.
- Böhm, Susanne, *Deutsche Christen in der Thüringer evangelischen Kirche* (Leipzig, 2008).
- Bordjugow, Gennadij, 'Das ZK der KPdSU(B), die Sowjetische Militäradministration in Deutschland und die SED 1945-1951', in Ulrich Mählert (ed.), *Terror. Stalinistische Parteisäuberungen 1936-1953* (Paderborn, 1998), 283-311.

- Brakelmann, Günter, 'Der Kriegsprotestantismus 1870/71 und 1914-1918. Einige Anmerkungen', in Manfred Gailus/Hartmut Lehmann (ed.), *Nationalprotestantische Mentalitäten. Konturen, Entwicklungslinien und Umbrüche eines Weltbildes* (Göttingen, 2005), 103-14.
- Broszat, Martin/Braas, Gerhard (ed.), *SBZ-Handbuch: staatliche Verwaltungen, Parteien, gesellschaftliche Organisationen und ihre Führungskräfte in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands 1945-1949*, 2nd Edn (Munich, 1993).
- Broszat, M. et al (ed.), *Bayern in der NS-Zeit*, 6 vols. (Munich, 1977-83).
- Browning, Christopher, *Ordinary Men. Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (London, 1998).
- Bruce, Gary, *Resistance with the People. Repression and Resistance in Eastern Germany, 1945-1955* (Lanham, 2003).
- Bruce, Steve, *God is Dead: Secularization in the West* (Oxford, 2002).
- Büchner, Robert/Freundlich, Hannelore, 'Zur Situation in den zeitweilig englisch oder amerikanisch besetzten Gebieten der sowjetischen Besatzungszone (April bis Anfang Juli 1945)', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung*, 14 (1972), 992-1006.
- Buddrus, Michael, 'Anmerkungen zur Jugendpolitik der KPD 1945', in Helga Gotschlich/Katharina Lange/Edeltraud Schulze (ed.), *Aber nicht im Gleichschritt. Zur Entstehung der Freien Deutschen Jugend* (Berlin, 1997), 139-53.
- 'A generation twice betrayed: youth policy in the transition from the Third Reich to the Soviet Zone of Occupation 1945-1946', in Mark Roseman (ed.), *Generations in Conflict. Youth Revolt and Generation Formation in Germany 1770-1968* (Cambridge, 1995), 247-68.
- Buscher, Frank, 'The Great Fear: The Catholic Church and the Anticipated Radicalization of Expellees and Refugees in Post-War Germany', *German History*, 21/2 (2003), 204-24.
- Büscher, Wolfgang, 'Unterwegs zur Minderheit: eine Auswertung konfessionsstatistischer Daten', in Reinhard Henkys (ed.), *Die evangelischen Kirchen in der DDR. Beiträge zu einer Bestandsaufnahme* (Munich, 1982), pp. 422-436
- Chauliac, Marina, 'Die Jugendweihe', in Martin Sabrow (ed.), *Erinnerungsorte in der DDR* (Munich, 2009), 161-8.
- Christopeit, Gerald, 'Die Herkunft und Verteilung der Evakuierten, Flüchtlinge und Vertriebenen in der Provinz Mark Brandenburg und ihr Verhältnis zu der Einheimischen Bevölkerung', in Manfred Wille/Johannes Hoffmann/Wolfgang Meinicke (ed.), *Sie hatten alles verloren: Flüchtlinge und Vertriebene in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands* (Wiesbaden, 1993), 97-108.
- Chumachenko, Tatiana, *Church and State in Soviet Russia: Russian Orthodoxy from World War II to the Khrushchev Years* (London, 2002).

- Confino, Alon, 'Death, Spiritual Solace, and Afterlife. Between Nazism and Religion', in Alon Confino/Paul Betts/Dirk Schumann (ed.), *Between Mass Death and Individual Loss. The Place of the Dead in Twentieth-Century Germany* (New York, 2008), 219-231.
- Connor, Ian, 'The Churches and the Refugee Problem in Bavaria 1945-49', *JCH*, 20/3 (1985), 399-421.
- *Refugees and Expellees in Post-war Germany* (Manchester, 2007).
- Creuzberger, Stefan, *Die sowjetische Besatzungsmacht und das politische System der SBZ* (Weimar, 1996).
- Dähn, Hörst, 'Grundzüge der Kirchenpolitik von SMAD und KPD/SED', in Hartmut Mehringer/Michael Schwartz/Hermann Wentker (ed.), *Erobert oder befreit? Deutschland im internationalen Kräftefeld und die sowjetische Besatzungszone (1945/46)* (Munich, 1998), 147-162.
- 'Kirchen und Religionsgemeinschaften', in Martin Broszat/Gerhard Braas (ed.), *SBZ-Handbuch: staatliche Verwaltungen, Parteien, gesellschaftliche Organisationen und ihre Führungskräfte in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands 1945-1949*, 2nd Edn (Munich, 1993), 815-845.
 - *Konfrontation oder Kooperation? Das Verhältnis von Staat und Kirche in der SBZ/DDR 1945-1980* (Opladen, 1982).
- Daiber, Karl-Fritz, 'Kirche und religiöse Gemeinschaften in der DDR', in Franz-Xaver. Kaufmann, Bernd Schäfer (ed.), *Religion, Kirchen und Gesellschaft in Deutschland* (Opladen, 1988), 75-88.
- Dale, Gareth, *Popular Protest in East Germany, 1945-1989* (London, 2005).
- Dalton, Margaret S., *Catholicism, Popular Culture, and the Arts in Germany, 1880-1933* (Notre Dame, 2005).
- Damberg, Wilhelm, *Abschied vom Milieu? Katholizismus im Bistum Münster und in den Niederlanden 1945-1980* (Paderborn, 1997).
- Davis, Nathaniel, *A Long Walk to Church. A Contemporary History of Russian Orthodoxy* (Boulder, 1995).
- Denzler, Georg/Fabricius, Volker, *Christen und Nationalsozialisten. Darstellung und Dokumente* (Frankfurt am Main, 1993).
- Diederich, Georg/Schäfer, Bernd/Ohlemacher, Jörg, *Jugendweihe in der DDR. Geschichte und politische Bedeutung aus christlicher Sicht* (Schwerin, 1998).
- Döhnert, Albrecht, 'Die Jugendweihe', in Etienne Francois/Hagen Schulze (ed.), *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte*, Vol. 3 (Munich, 2009).
- Dörr, Margarete, *Durchkommen und Überleben, Frauenerfahrungen in der Kriegs- und Nachkriegszeit* (Frankfurt am Main, 1998).
- *Vertrieben, Ausgebombt, auf sich gestellt, Frauen meistern Kriegs- und Nachkriegsjahre* (Frankfurt am Main, 1998).

- ...und dann stand ich mit meinen drei Kleinen allein da. *Frauenschicksale in der Kriegs- und Nachkriegszeit* (Frankfurt/Main, 1998).

Fischer, Christian, *Wir haben euer Gelöbniß vernommen. Konfirmation und Jugendweihe im Spannungsfeld* (Leipzig, 1998).

Fischer-Hupe, Kristine, 'Der Kirchenkampfdiskurs nach 1945. Wie katholische und evangelische Theologen in der frühen Nachkriegszeit über den Kirchenkampf der Jahre 1933-1945 sprachen', *KZG*, 15/2, (2002), 461-89.

Ehlert, Florian, "'Suchet der Stadt Bestes!': Bischof Mitzenheims Bemühungen um Einvernehmen mit dem Staat', *Kirche im Sozialismus*, 14/3 (1988), 97-101.

Eisenfeld, Bernd/Kowalczyk, Ilko-Sascha/Neubert, Ehrhart, *Die verdrängte Revolution. Der Platz des 17. Juni 1953 in der deutschen Geschichte* (Bremen, 2004).

Eley, Geoff, 'Foreward', in Alf Lüdtke (ed.), *The History of Everyday Life. Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life* (Princeton, 1995), VII-XIII.

- 'Labor History, Social History, "Alltagsgeschichte": Experience, Culture, and the Politics of the Everyday – A New Direction for German Social History?', *The Journal of Modern History*, 61/2 (1989), 297-343.

Elm, Martin, *Die kleine Herde: die katholische Kirche in der SBZ und im sozialistische Staat DDR* (Münster, 2007).

Fandel, Thomas, *Konfession und Nationalsozialismus. Evangelische und katholische Pfarrer in der Pfalz 1930-1939* (Paderborn, 1997).

Foitzik, Jan, *SMAD-Handbuch: die Sowjetische Militäradministration in Deutschland 1945-1949* (Munich, 2009).

- *Sowjetische Militäradministration in Deutschland. Struktur und Funktion* (Berlin, 1999)
- 'Zum Verhältnis zwischen SED und Besatzungsmacht: Konkordanz und Dissens', in Dierk Hoffmann/Hermann Wentker (ed.), *Das letzte Jahr der SBZ* (Munich, 2000), 55-64.

Foschepoth, Josef, 'German Reaction to defeat and occupation', in Robert G. Moeller (ed.), *West Germany under Construction* (Ann Arbor, 1997), 73-89.

Frei, Norbert, *1945 und wir. Das Dritte Reich im Bewußtsein der Deutschen* (Munich, 2005).

- *Vergangenheitspolitik. Die Anfänge der Bundesrepublik und die NS-Vergangenheit*, 2nd Edn, (Munich, 1997).
- 'Wir waren blind, ungläubig und langsam. Buchenwald, Dachau und die amerikanischen Medien im Frühjahr 1945', *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 35 (1987), 385-401.

- Frevert, Ute, 'Frauen an der Heimatfront', in Christoph Kleßmann (ed.) *Nicht nur Hitlers Krieg: der Zweite Weltkrieg und die Deutschen* (Düsseldorf, 1989), 51-69.
- Friebel, Thomas, *Kirche und politische Verantwortung in der sowjetischen Zone und der DDR 1945-1969: eine Untersuchung zum Öffentlichkeitsauftrag der evangelischen Kirchen in Deutschland* (Gütersloh, 1992).
- Fritze, Eduard, *Die letzten Kriegstage im Eichsfeld und im Raum Mühlhausen vom 3. bis 10. April 1945* (Bad Langensalza, 2002).
- *Struth am 7. April 1945: die letzten Kriegstage im Eichsfeld* (Witzenhausen, 1995).
- Fritzsche, Peter, *Life and Death in the Third Reich* (Cambridge, MA., 2008).
- Frotscher, Kurt /Krug, Wolfgang (ed.), *17. Juni 1953. Der Streit um sein Wesen* (Berlin, 2004).
- Fuchs, Ludwig, 'Die Besetzung Thüringens durch die amerikanischen Truppen. Die Behinderung des Kampfes der KPD um die Neuformierung ihrer Reihen und um die Entwicklung einer breiten antifascistischen Bewegung zur Herstellung antifascistisch-demokratischer Verhältnisse (April-Juli 1945)', *Beiträge zur Geschichte Thüringens* (1968), 53-111.
- Fulbrook, Mary, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship: inside the GDR, 1949-1989* (Oxford, 1995).
- 'Changing States, Changing Selves: Generations in the Third Reich and the GDR', in Mary Fulbrook (ed.), *Uncivilizing Processes? Excess and Transgression in German Society and Culture: Perspectives Debating with Norman Elias* (New York, 2007), 255-94.
 - 'Demography, Opportunity or Ideological Conversion? Reflections on the Role of the "Second Hitler Youth Generation", or "1929ers", in the GDR', in Paul Corner (ed.), *Popular Opinion in Totalitarian Regimes. Fascism, Nazism, Communism* (Oxford, 2009), 184-207.
 - *Piety and Politics. Religion and the Rise of Absolutism in England, Württemberg and Prussia* (Cambridge, 1983).
- Gailus, Manfred, '1933 als protestantisches Erlebnis. Emphatische Selbsttransformation und Spaltung', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 29 (2003), 481-511.
- *Protestantismus und Nationalismus. Studien zur nationalsozialistischen Durchdringung des protestantischen Sozialmilieus in Berlin* (Köln, 2001).
- Gatz, Erwin, *Die Bischöfe der deutschsprachigen Länder, 1945-2001. Ein biografisches Lexikon* (Berlin, 2002).
- George, Stefan, *Bestattung und katholische Begräbnisliturgie in der SBZ/DDR. Eine Untersuchung unter Berücksichtigung präskriptiver und deskriptiver Quellen* (Würzburg, 2006).

- Geyer, Michael, “‘There is a Land Where Everything is Pure: Its Name Is Land of Death’”. Some Observations on Catastrophic Nationalism’, in Marcus Funck/Greg Eghigian/Matthew P. Berg (ed.), *Sacrifice and National Belonging in Twentieth-Century Germany* (College Station, 2002), 118–47.
- Goeckel, Robert, *The Lutheran Church and the East German State: Political Conflict and Change under Ulbricht and Honecker* (Ithaca, 1990).
- Goerner, Martin Georg, *Die Kirche als Problem der SED* (Berlin, 1997).
- Goeschel, Christian, ‘Suicide at the end of the Third Reich’, *JCH*, 41/1 (2006), 153-73.
- *Suicide in Nazi Germany* (Oxford, 2009)
- Greschat, Martin, ‘Kirche und Öffentlichkeit in der deutschen Nachkriegszeit (1945-1949)’, in Armin Boyens/Martin Greschat/Rudolf von Thadden (ed.), *Kirchen in der Nachkriegszeit. Vier zeitgeschichtliche Beiträge* (Göttingen, 1979), 100-24.
- ‘Die Kirchen in den beiden deutschen Staaten nach 1945’, *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht*, 42/5 (1991), 267-84.
 - ‘Kontinuität und Neuanfang in der evangelischen Kirche in den ersten Jahren nach 1945’, *Zeichen der Zeit*, 40 (1986), 85-94.
 - “‘Rechristianisierung” und “Säkularisierung”. Anmerkungen zu einem europäischen interkonfessionellen Interpretationsmodell’, in Jochen-Christoph Kaiser/Anselm Doering-Manteuffel (ed.), *Christentum und politische Verantwortung. Kirchen im Nachkriegsdeutschland* (Stuttgart, 1990), 1-24.
 - ‘Römer 13 und die DDR. Die Streit um das Verständnis der “Obrigkeit” (1957-1961)’, *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, 105 (2008), 63-93.
 - ‘Weder Neuanfang noch Restauration. Zur Interpretation der deutschen evangelischen Kirchengeschichte nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg’, in Ursula Büttner (ed.), *Das Unrechtsregime. Bd. 2: Verfolgung – Exil – Belasteter Neubeginn* (Hamburg, 1986), 326-57.
 - ‘Zwischen Aufbruch und Beharrung. Die evangelische Kirche nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg’, in Victor Konzemius/Martin Greschat/Hermann Kocher/Andreas Lindt (ed.), *Die Zeit nach 1945 als Thema kirchlicher Zeitgeschichte* (Göttingen, 1988), 99-126.
- Großbölting, Thomas, ‘Evangelische Christen im Nationalsozialismus und in der frühen DDR. Die Kirchenprovinz Sachsen’, in Manfred Gailus/Wolfgang Krogel (ed.), *Von der babylonischen Gefangenschaft der Kirche im Nationalen. Regionalstudien zu Protestantismus, Nationalsozialismus und Nachkriegsgeschichte 1930 bis 2000* (Berlin, 2006), 197-221.
- Grossmann, Atina, *Reforming Sex. The German movement for Birth Control and Abortion Reform, 1920-1950* (Oxford, 1995).
- Hauschild, Wolf-Dieter, *Konfliktgemeinschaft Kirche: Aufsätze zur Geschichte der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland* (Göttingen, 2004).
- Hallberg, Bo, *Jugendweihe. Zur deutschen Jugendweihetradition* (Göttingen, 1978).

- Heilbronner, Oded, *Catholicism, Political Culture, and the Countryside: A Social History of the Nazi Party in the Countryside* (Ann Arbor, 1998).
- Herbert, Karl, *Kirche zwischen Aufbruch und Tradition. Entscheidungsjahre nach 1945* (Stuttgart, 1989).
- Herbert, Ulrich, “‘Die guten und die schlechten Zeiten’: Überlegungen zur diachronen Analyse lebensgeschichtlicher Interviews’, in Lutz Niethammer (ed.), *‘Die Jahre weiß man nicht, wo man die heute hinsetzen soll’: Faschismuserfahrungen im Ruhrgebiet* (Berlin, 1983), 67-96.
- Herbrecht, Dagmar, ‘Die mutigen Frauen des Kirchenkampfes in einer protestantischen Männergesellschaft’, in Manfred Gailus/Hartmut Lehmann (ed.), *Nationalprotestantische Mentalitäten. Konturen, Entwicklungslinien und Umbrüche eines Weltbildes* (Göttingen, 2005), 343-59.
- Herf, Jeffrey, *Divided Memory. The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys* (Cambridge [Ma.], 1997)
- Hermann, D. Rudolf, *Thüringische Kirchengeschichte. Band II* (Waltrop, [2000]).
- Herrlitz, Hans-Georg et al, *Deutsche Schulgeschichte von 1800 bis zur Gegenwart: Eine Einführung*, 5th edn (Weinheim, 2009).
- Herzog, Dagmar, *Sex after Fascism: memory and morality in twentieth-century Germany* (Princeton, 2005).
- Hilton, Laura. J., ‘The Black Market in History and Memory: German Perceptions of Victimhood from 1945 to 1948’, *German History*, 28/4 (2010), 479-97.
- Hockenos, Matthew, *A Church Divided: German Protestants Confront the Nazi Past* (Bloomington, 2004).
- Hoffmann, Dierk/Krauss, Marta/Schwartz, Michael (eds.), *Vertrieben in Deutschland. Interdisziplinäre Ergebnisse und Forschungsperspektiven*, (Munich, 2000).
- Hoffmann, Johannes/Wille, Manfred/Meinicke, Wolfgang, ‘Flüchtlinge und Vertriebene im Spannungsfeld der SBZ-Nachkriegspolitik’, in Manfred Wille/Johannes Hoffmann/Wolfgang Meinicke (ed.), *Sie hatten alles verloren: Flüchtlinge und Vertriebene in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands* (Wiesbaden, 1993), 12-26.
- Husband, William, ‘Godless Communists’. *Atheism and Society in Soviet Russia, 1917-1932* (DeKalb, 2000).
- Iannaccone, Laurence A., ‘Religious Markets and the Economics of Religion’, *Social Compass*, 39/1 (1992), 123-31.
- Iseli, Andrea/Kissling, Peter, ‘Säkularisierung – Der schwierige Umgang mit einem grossen Begriff. Ein Diskussionsbericht’, in Peter Blickle/Rudolf Schlögl (ed.), *Die Säkularisation im Prozess der Säkularisierung Europas* (Epfendorf, 2005), 563-72.

- Jakubowski-Tiessen Manfred/Lehmann, Hartmut, 'Religion in Katastrophenzeiten: Zur Einführung', in Manfred Jakubowski-Tiessen/Hartmut Lehmann (ed.), *Um Himmels willen. Religion in Katastrophenzeiten* (Göttingen, 2003), 7-13.
- Jessen, Ralph, 'Die Gesellschaft im Sozialismus. Probleme einer Sozialgeschichte der DDR', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 21 (1995), 96-110.
- Joppen, Rudolf, *Das Erzbischöfliche Kommissariat Magdeburg: Geschichte und Rechtsstellung bis zur Eingliederung in den Diözesanverband Paderborn*, 13 vols. (Leipzig, 1965-91).
- Kaiser, Jochen-Christoph, 'Das Frauenwerk der Deutschen Evangelischen Kirche. Zum Problem des Verbandsprotestantismus im Dritten Reich', in Irmtraut Götz von Olenhusen (ed.), *Frauen unter dem Patriarchat der Kirchen* (Stuttgart, 1995), 189-211.
- Kaltenborn, Steffi, 'Wohn- und Lebensverhältnisse von Vertriebenen 1948 in Thüringen', in Dierk Hoffmann/Michael Schwartz (ed.), *Geglückte Integration? Spezifika und Vergleichbarkeiten der Vertriebenen-Eingliederung in der SBZ-DDR* (Munich, 1999), 273-87.
- Kappelt, Olaf, *Die Entnazifizierung in der SBZ sowie die Rolle und der Einfluß ehemaliger Nationalsozialisten in der DDR als ein soziologisches Phänomen* (Hamburg, 1997).
- Kars, Hans, 'Anhalt', *TRE*, 2 (1978), 734-41.
- Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship. Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation* (London, 2000).
- "'Working Towards the Führer.'" Reflections on the Nature of the Hitler Dictatorship', *Contemporary European History*, 2/2 (1993), 103-18.
- Klein, Thomas, 'Ein halbes Jahrhundert Forschung zur neueren Geschichte Sachsen-Anhalts', *Sachsen und Anhalt. Jahrbuch der Historischen Kommission für Sachsen-Anhalt*, 18 (1994), 141-338.
- Klenke, Dietmar, *Das Eichsfeld unter den deutschen Diktaturen. Widerspenstiger Katholizismus in Heiligenstadt* (Duderstadt, 2003).
- Kleßmann, Christoph, *Die Doppelte Staatsgründung. Deutsche Geschichte 1945-1955* (Göttingen, 1982).
- Knauft, Wolfgang, *Katholische Kirche in der DDR. Gemeinden in der Bewährung, 1945-1980*, 2nd edn (Mainz, 1980).
- Koch-Hallas, Christine, *Die Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Thüringen in der SBZ und der Frühzeit der DDR (1945-1961): eine Untersuchung über Kontinuitäten und Diskontinuitäten einer landeskirchlichen Identität* (Leipzig, 2009).
- *Die junge Gemeinde der evangelischen Landeskirchen in Sachsen und Thüringen 1945-1953: dargestellt unter der besonderen Berücksichtigung des Konfliktes zwischen Staat und kirchlicher Jugendarbeit* (Regensburg, 2000).

- Koch, Ernst, 'Thüringen', *TRE*, 33 (2001), 497-523.
- 'Thüringer Wege im "Dritten Reich", Aktionsschwierigkeiten in Landeskirchenrat, Landesregierung und deutschchristlicher Bewegung nach 1933', in Thomas A. Seidel (ed.), *Thüringer Gratwanderungen. Beiträge zur fünfundsiebzigjährigen Geschichte der evangelischen Landeskirche Thüringens* (Leipzig, 1998), 80-93.
- Kocka, Jürgen, '1945: Neubeginn oder Restauration', in Carola Stern/Heinrich A. Winkler (ed.), *Wendepunkte deutscher Geschichte 1848-1990* (Frankfurt, 1994), 141-68.
- Köhler, Joachim/van Melis, Damian (ed.), *Siegerin in Trümmern: Die Rolle der katholischen Kirche in der deutschen Nachkriegsgesellschaft* (Stuttgart, 1998), 10-7.
- Koop, Völker, *Der 17. Juni 1953. Legende und Wirklichkeit* (Berlin, 2003).
- Kösters, Christoph, *Katholische Verbände und Moderne Gesellschaft: Organisationsgeschichte und Vereinskultur im Bistum Münster 1918 bis 1945* (Paderborn, 1995).
- Kowalczuk, Ilko-Sascha, *17. 6.1953: Volksaufstand in der DDR. Ursachen – Abläufe – Folgen* (Bremen, 2003).
- Kowalczuk, Ilko-Sascha/Mitter, Armin/Wolle, Stefan, *Der Tag X, 17. Juni 1953: Die "Innere Staatsgründung" der DDR als Ergebnis der Krise 1952/54* (Berlin, 1995).
- Kretschmar, Georg, 'Die Vergangenheitsbewältigung in den deutschen Kirchen nach 1945', in Carsten Nicolaisen (ed.), *Nordische und deutsche Kirchen im 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen, 1982), 122-49.
- Kuhlemann, Frank-Michael, 'Protestantische "Traumatisierungen". Zur Situationsanalyse nationaler Mentalitäten in Deutschland 1918/19 und 1945/46', in Manfred Gailus/Hartmut Lehmann (ed.), *Nationalprotestantische Mentalitäten. Konturen, Entwicklungslinien und Umbrüche eines Weltbildes* (Göttingen, 2005), 45-78.
- Kutsch, Arnulf, 'Einstellungen zum Nationalsozialismus in der Nachkriegszeit. Ein Beitrag zu den Anfängen der Meinungsforschung in den westlichen Besatzungszonen', *Publizistik*, 40/4 (1995), 415-48.
- Lächele, Rainer, *Ein Volk, Ein Reich, ein Glaube. Die 'Deutsche Christen' in Württemberg 1925-1960* (Stuttgart, 1994).
- 'Religionsfreiheit und Vergangenheitsbewältigung. Die Deutschen Christen und die Besatzungsmächte nach 1945', *Evangelische Theologie*, 51/2 (1991), 131-54.
- Lange, Gerhard, 'Staatliche Kirchenpolitik in der DDR. Versuch einer Bilanz aus katholischer Sicht', *Die neue Ordnung*, 46 (1992), 326-43.

- Lautenschläger, Gabriele, 'Der Kirchenkampf in Thüringen', in Detlef Heiden/Gunther Mai (ed.), *Nationalsozialismus in Thüringen* (Weimar, 1995), 463-486.
- Lees, Andrew, *Cities, Sin and Social Reform in Imperial Germany* (Ann Arbor, 2002)
- Lehmann, Hartmut, 'Der Pietismus', in Etienne Francois/Hagen Schulze (ed.), *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte*, Vol. 1 (Munich, 2002), 571-84.
- *Säkularisierung. Der europäische Sonderweg in Sachen Religion* (Göttingen, 2004).
- Lekebusch, Sigrid, 'Beharrung und Erneuerung. Evangelische Frauenhilfe in unterschiedlichen Gesellschaftlichen Systemen 1926-1946', in Christine Busch (ed.), *100 Jahre Evangelische Frauenhilfe in Deutschland. Einblicke in ihre Geschichte* (Düsseldorf, 1999), 41-95.
- Liedhegener, Antonius, *Christentum und Urbanisierung: Katholiken und Protestanten in Münster und Bochum 1830–1930* (Paderborn, 1997).
- Lindenberger, Thomas, 'Die Diktatur der Grenzen. Zur Einleitung,' in Thomas Lindenberger (ed.), *Herrschaft und Eigen-Sinn in der Diktatur. Studien zur Gesellschaftsgeschichte der DDR* (Cologne, 1999), 13-44.
- Lisberg-Haag, Isabell, "Die Unzucht – das Grab der Völker", in Ursula Röper/Carola Jüllig (ed.), *Die Macht der Nächstenliebe. Einhundertfünfzig Jahre Innere Mission und Diakonie 1848-1998* (Berlin, 1998), 130-7.
- Löhn, Hans-Peter, *Spitzbart, Bauch und Brille – sind nicht des Volkes Wille! Der Volksaufstand am 17. Juni 1953 in Halle an der Saale* (Bremen, 2003).
- Löhr, Wolfgang, 'Rechristianisierungsvorstellungen im deutschen Katholizismus 1945-1948', in Jochen-Christoph Kaiser/Anselm Doering-Manteuffel (ed.), *Christentum und politische Verantwortung. Kirchen im Nachkriegsdeutschland* (Stuttgart, 1990), 25-41.
- Longerich, Peter, "Davon haben wir nichts gewusst!" *Die Deutschen und die Judenverfolgung 1933-1945* (Munich, 2006).
- Lübeck, Wilfried, 'Der 17 Juni in Magdeburg. "Wenn die Freunde nicht dagewesen wären, wäre es zu einer Niederlage kommen"', in Hermann-Josef Rupieper/Daniel Bohse/Inga Grebe (ed.), '...und das wichtigste ist doch die Einheit': *der 17. Juni 1953 in den Bezirken Halle und Magdeburg* (Münster, 2003), 106-39.
- Luckmann, Thomas, *The Invisible Religion* (London: Macmillan, 1967)
- Lüdtke, Alf, *Eigen-Sinn. Fabrikalltag, Arbeitererfahrungen und Politik vom Kaiserreich bis in den Faschismus. Ergebnisse* (Hamburg, 1993)
- (ed.), *Herrschaft als sozialer Praxis. Historische und sozio-anthropologische Studien* (Göttingen, 1991).

- 'Introduction. What is the history of everyday life and who are its practitioners?', in Alf Lüdtke (ed.), *The History of Everyday Life. Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life* (Princeton, 1995), 3-40.

Mählert, Ulrich, *Die Freie Deutsche Jugend 1945-1949* (Paderborn, 1995).

Mählert, Ulrich/ Stephan, Gerd-Rudiger, *Blaue Hemden – Rote Fahnen. Die Geschichte der Freien Deutschen Jugend* (Opladen, 1996).

Majer, Diemut, *Grundlagen des nationalsozialistischen Rechtssystems : Führerprinzip, Sonderrecht, Einheitspartei* (Stuttgart, 1987).

Malycha, Andreas, *Die SED. Geschichte ihrer Stalinisierung* (Paderborn, 2000).

Malycha, Andreas/Winters, Peter-John, *Die SED. Geschichte einer deutschen Partei* (Munich, 2009).

Marcuse, Harold, *Legacies of Dachau. The Uses and Abuses of a Concentration Camp, 1933-2001* (Cambridge, 2001).

Mau, Rudolf, *Eingebunden in den Realsozialismus? Die evangelische Kirche als Problem der SED* (Göttingen, 1994).

- *Der Protestantismus im Osten Deutschlands (1945-1990)* (Leipzig, 2005).

McDougall, Alan, 'A Duty to Forget? The "Hitler Youth Generation" and the Transition from Nazism to Communism in Postwar East Germany, c. 1945-49', *German History*, 26/1 (2008), 24-46.

- *Youth Politics in East Germany: the Free German Youth Movement, 1946-1968* (Oxford, 2004).

McLellan, Josie, *Antifascism and Memory in East Germany. Remembering the International Brigades 1945-1989* (Oxford, 2004).

Mehlhase, Thomas, *Flüchtlinge und Vertriebene nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg in Sachsen-Anhalt: ihre Aufnahme und Bestrebungen zur Eingliederung in die Gesellschaft* (Münster, 1999).

- 'Die SED und die Vertriebenen. Versuche der politischen Einflußnahme und der "Umziehung" in den ersten Nachkriegsjahren in Sachsen-Anhalt', in Manfred Wille/Johannes Hoffmann/Wolfgang Meinicke (ed.), *Sie hatten alles verloren: Flüchtlinge und Vertriebene in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands* (Wiesbaden, 1993), 159-77.

Meier, Kurt, *Der evangelische Kirchenkampf. Band 3: Im Zeichen des Zweiten Weltkrieges* (Göttingen, 1984).

- 'Volkskirchlicher Neuaufbau in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone', in Victor Conzemius/Martin Greschat/Hermann Kocher/Andreas Lindt (ed.), *Die Zeit nach 1945 als Thema kirchlicher Zeitgeschichte* (Göttingen, 1988), 213-234.

- Meinicke, Wolfgang, 'Die Entnazifizierung in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone 1945 bis 1948', *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, 32 (1984), 968-979.
- 'Zur Integration der Umsiedler in die Gesellschaft 1945-1952', *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, 36 (1988), 124-144.
- Melis, Damian van, *Entnazifizierung in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. Herrschaft und Verwaltung 1945-1948* (Munich, 1999)
- 'Der katholische Episkopat und die Entnazifizierung', in Damain van Melis/Joachim Köhler (ed.), *Siegerin in Trümmern: die Rolle der katholischen Kirche in der deutschen Nachkriegsgesellschaft* (Stuttgart, 1998), 42-69.
 - "'Strengthened and purified through ordeal by fire". Ecclesiastical Triumphalism in the Ruins of Europe", in Richard Bessel/Dirk Schumann (ed.), *Life after Death. Approaches to a Cultural and Social History of Europe during the 1940s and 1950s* (Cambridge, 2003), 231-41.
- Mensing, Björn, *Pfarrer und Nationalsozialismus. Geschichte einer Verstrickung am Beispiel der evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche in Bayern* (Göttingen, 1998).
- Meuschel, Sigrid, *Legitimation und Parteiherrschaft. Zum Paradox von Stabilität und Revolution in der DDR* (Frankfurt am Main, 1992).
- 'Überlegungen zu einer Herrschafts- und Gesellschaftsgeschichte der DDR', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 19 (1993), 5-14.
- Milgram, Stanley, *Obedience to Authority: an experimental view* (London, 1974).
- Miner, Steven, *Stalin's Holy War* (Chapel Hill, 2003).
- Miquel, Beate von, *Evangelische Frauen im Dritten Reich. Die Westfälische Frauenhilfe 1933-1950* (Bielefeld, 2006).
- Mitter, Armin/Wolle, Stefan, *Untergang auf Raten: Unbekannte Kapitel der DDR-Geschichte* (Munich, 1993).
- Mitzscherlich, Birgit, *Diktatur und Diaspora. Das Bistum Meißen 1932-1951* (Paderborn, 2005)
- Möding, Nora, 'Die Stunde der Frauen? Frauen und Frauenorganisationen des bürgerlichen Lagers', in M Broszat et al (ed.), *Von Stalingrad bis zur Währungsreform* (Munich, 1990), 619-50.
- Moeller, Robert G., *Protecting Motherhood: Women and the Family in the Politics of Post-war Germany* (Berkeley, 1993).
- *War stories. The search for a useable past in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Berkeley, 2001).
- Moller, Sabine, *Vielfache Vergangenheit, Öffentliche Erinnerungskulturen und Familienerinnerungen an die NS-Zeit in Ostdeutschland* (Tübingen, 2003).
- Müller, Ingo, *Hitler's Justice. The Courts of the Third Reich* (London, 1991).

- Müller, Rolf-Dieter / Ueberschär, Gerd. R., *Kriegsende 1945. Die Zerstörung des Deutschen Reiches* (Frankfurt am Main, 1994).
- Müller, W., 'Jugendverbände und "offene Jugendarbeit". Die organisationsmüdigkeit der jungen Generation nach der bedingungslosen Kapitulation des Dritten Reiches' in Helga Gotschlich/Katharina Lange/Edeltraud Schulze (ed.), *Aber nicht im Gleichschritt. Zur Entstehung der Freien Deutschen Jugend* (Berlin, 1997), 62-5.
- Münch, Maria-Theresia, 'Die Jugendweihe als Erziehungsinstanz in der DDR – Intentionen politisch-ideologischer Erziehung in den Jugendstunden', in Stephan Eschler/Hartmut M. Griese (ed.), *Ritualtheorie, Initiationsriten und empirische Jugendweiheforschung* (Stuttgart, 2002), 110-35.
- Murken, Jens, 'Bodenreform-kampagne und politische Kultur in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern', in Ulrich Kluge/Winfrid Halder/Katya Schlenker (ed.), *Zwischen Bodenreform und Kollektivierung. Vor- und Frühgeschichte der "sozialistischen Landwirtschaft" in der SBZ/DDR vom Kriegsende bis in die fünfziger Jahre* (Stuttgart, 2001), 51-71.
- Mybes, Fritz, 'Die Anfänge der Evangelischen Frauenhilfe. Die Jahre 1899 bis 1932', in C. Busch (ed.), *100 Jahre Evangelische Frauenhilfe in Deutschland: Einblicke in ihre Geschichte* (Düsseldorf, 1999), 9-40.
- Naimark, Norman, 'The Persistence of the "Postwar". Germany and Poland', in Frank Biess/Robert G. Moeller (ed.), *Histories of the Aftermath. The legacies of the Second World War in Europe* (New York, 2010), 13-29.
- *The Russians in Germany. A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945-1949*, (Cambridge [Mass.], 1995).
- Neubert, Ehrhart/Auerbach, Thomas, 'Es kann anders werden'. *Opposition und Widerstand in Thüringen 1945-1989* (Cologne, 2005).
- Niemann, Heinz, *Hinterm Zaun. Politische Kultur und Meinungsforschung in der DDR – die geheimen Berichte an das Politbüro der SED* (Berlin, 1995).
- Niemczik, Günther, *Menschen auf dem Wege. Eine Chronik der Caritasarbeit in Thüringen* (Erfurt, 1996).
- Nikles, Bruno, *Soziale Hilfe am Bahnhof: zur Geschichte der Bahnhofsmision in Deutschland, 1894-1960* (Freiburg, 1994).
- Olenhusen, Irmtraut Götz von, 'Die Feminisierung von Religion und Kirche im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert: Forschungsstand und Forschungsperspektiven (Einleitung)', in Irmtraut Götz von Olenhusen (ed.), *Frauen unter dem Patriarchat der Kirchen* (Stuttgart, 1995), 9-21.
- Onnasch, Martin, *Um kirchliche Macht und geistliche Vollmacht: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Kirchenkampfes in der Kirchenprovinz Sachsen 1932-1945* (Frankfurt am Main, 2010).

- Opfermann, Bernhard, *Das bischöfliche Amt Erfurt-Meiningen und seine Diaspora: Geschichte und Gegenwart: ein Handbuch* (Leipzig, 1988).
- *Das Bistum Fulda im Dritten Reich* (Fulda, 1987).
 - *Die kirchliche Verwaltung des Eichfeldes in seiner Vergangenheit* (Leipzig, 1958).
- O'Sullivan, Michael E., 'From Catholic Milieu to Lived Religion: The Social and Cultural History of Modern German Catholicism', *History Compass*, 7/3 (2009), 837-61.
- 'An eroding milieu? Catholic Youth, Church Authority, and Popular Behavior in Northwest Germany during the Third Reich, 1933-1938', *The Catholic Historical Review*, 90/2 (2004), 236-59.
 - 'West German Miracles. Catholic Mystics, Church Hierarchy, and Postwar Popular Culture', *Zeithistorische Forschungen/Studies in Contemporary History*, Online-Ausgabe, 6 (2009) H. 1, URL: <http://www.zeithistorische-forschungen.de/16126041-OSullivan-1-2009> (accessed 25/4/11).
- Niethammer, Lutz, *Die Mitläuferfabrik. Die Entnazifizierung am Beispiel Bayerns* (Berlin, 1982).
- Niethammer, Lutz/von Plato, Alexander/Wierling, Dorothee, *Die volkseigene Erfahrung: Eine Archäologie des Lebens in der Industrieprovinz der DDR* (Berlin, 1991).
- Noack, Gert, 'Die Gründung der Freien Deutschen Jugend. Kommunistische Strategien – Realisierungen – Ergebnisse', in Michael Herms/Katharina Lange/Gert Noack (ed.), 'Das neue Leben muß anders werden...' *Studien zur Gründung der FDJ* (Berlin, 1996), 9-62.
- Overesch, Manfred, *Hermann Brill, Ein Kämpfer gegen Hitler und Ulbricht* (Bonn, 1992).
- *Machtergreifung von links. Thüringen 1945/6* (Hildesheim, 1993).
- Paul, Gerhard/Mallmann, Klaus, *Milieus und Widerstand. Eine Verhaltensgeschichte der Gesellschaft im Nationalsozialismus, Widerstand und Verweigerung im Saarland, 1935–1945* (Bonn, 1995).
- Peris, Daniel, *Storming the Heavens. The Soviet League of the Militant Godless* (Ithaca, 1998).
- Petrov, Nikita, 'Zur Geschichte der sowjetischen Repressionsorgane (NKVD/MVD-MGB) in der SBZ 1945/46', in Andreas Hilger et al (ed.), *Diktaturdurchsetzung. Instrumente und Methoden der kommunistischen Machtsicherung in der SBZ/DDR 1945-1955* (Dresden, 2001), 31-8.
- Peukert, Detlev, *Inside Nazi Germany. Conformity, Opposition and Racism in Everyday Life* (London, 1987).

- 'Youth in the Third Reich', in Richard Bessel (ed.), *Life in the Third Reich* (Oxford, 1987), 25-40.
- Phayer, Michael, *Protestant and Catholic Women in Nazi Germany* (Detroit, 1990)
- Pike, David, *The Politics of Culture in Soviet-Occupied Germany, 1945-1949* (Stanford, 1992).
- Peterson, Edward, *Russian Commands and German Resistance: the Soviet Occupation, 1945-1949* (New York, 1999),
- Pilvousek, Josef, 'Die Geschichte der katholischen Kirche im Eichsfeld', in Heinz-Josef Durstewitz (ed.), *Kirchliche Kunst im Eichsfeld* (Duderstadt, 1997), 9-16.
- 'Katholische Flüchtlinge und Vertriebene in der SBZ/DDR. Eine Bestandsaufnahme', in Rainer Bendel (ed.), *Vertriebene finden Heimat in der Kirche* (Cologne, 2008), 15-27.
 - 'Die Katholische Kirche in der DDR' in Horst Dähn (ed.), *Die Rolle der Kirchen in der DDR* (Munich, 1993), 56-73.
- Plato, Alexander von/Meinicke, Wolfgang, *Alte Heimat - neue Zeit, Flüchtlinge, Vertriebene, Umsiedelte in der SBZ und DDR* (Berlin, 1991).
- Plato, Alexander von, 'The Hitler Youth Generation and Its Role in the Two Postwar German States', in Mark Roseman (ed.), *Generations in Conflict: Youth Revolt and Generation Formation 1770-1968* (Cambridge, 1995), 210-26.
- Pollack, Detlef, 'Abbrechende Kontinuitätslinien im deutschen Protestantismus nach 1945', in Manfred Gailus/Hartmut Lehmann (ed.), *Nationalprotestantische Mentalitäten. Konturen, Entwicklungslinien und Umbrüche eines Weltbildes* (Göttingen, 2005), 454-66.
- *Kirche in der Organisationsgesellschaft. Zum Wandel der Gesellschaftlichen Lage der evangelischen Kirche in der DDR* (Stuttgart, 1994).
 - 'Von der Volkskirche zur Minderheitskirche. Zur Entwicklung von Religiosität und Kirchlichkeit in der DDR', in Hartmut Kaelble, Jürgen Kocka, Hartmut Zwahr, *Sozialgeschichte der DDR* (Stuttgart, 1994) 271-294.
- Pollack, Detlef/Pickel, Gert, 'Religious Individualization or Secularization. An Attempt to Evaluate the Thesis of Religious Individualization in Eastern and Western Germany', in Detlef Pollack/Daniel V. A. Olson (ed.), *The Role of Religion in Modern Societies* (New York, 2008), 191-220.
- Pritchard, Gareth, *The Making of the GDR, 1945-53. From antifascism to Stalinism* (Manchester, 2000).
- 'Schwarzenberg 1945: Anti-fascists and the "Third Way" in German Politics', *European History Quarterly*, 35/4 (2005), 499-522.
- Projahn, Michael, 'Konfrontation oder Zusammenarbeit? Die ländliche Gesellschaft in der Altmark 1945-1951', in Ulrich Kluge/Winfrid Halder/Katja Schlenker (ed.), *Zwischen Bodenreform und Kollektivierung. Vor- und Frühgeschichte der*

- “sozialistischen Landwirtschaft” in der SBZ/DDR vom Kriegsende bis in die fünfziger Jahre (Stuttgart, 2001), 125-40.
- Pustejovsky, Otfried, “Da Schlug der Blitz im Kopf ein – und die Bilder kamen zurück.” Individuelles Erinnern und kollektives Gedächtnis. Zur Problematik von Geschichte und Erinnerungskultur’, in Rainer Bendel (ed.), *Vertriebene finden Heimat in der Kirche* (Cologne, 2008), 187-225.
- Raabe, Thomas, *SED-Staat und Katholische Kirche. Politische Beziehungen 1949-1961* (Paderborn, 1995).
- Raisig, Christoph, *Wege der Erneuerung. Christen und Juden: Der Rheinische Synodalbeschluss* (Potsdam, 2002).
- Redding, Kimberly A., *Growing up in Hitler's shadow: remembering youth in postwar Berlin* (London, 2004).
- Reilly, Joanne, *Belsen. The liberation of a concentration camp* (London, 1998).
- Reppen, Konrad, ‘Die Erfahrung des Dritten Reiches und das Selbstverständnis der deutschen Katholiken nach 1945’, in Victor Konzemius/Martin Greschat/Hermann Kocher/Andreas Lindt (ed.), *Die Zeit nach 1945 als Thema kirchlicher Zeitgeschichte* (Göttingen, 1988), 127-179.
- Rodden, John, *Painting the Little Red Schoolhouse: A History of East German Education, 1945-1995* (Oxford, 2002).
- Roesler, Jörg/Siedt, Veronika/Elle, Michael, *Wirtschaftswachstum in der Industrie der DDR 1945-1970* (Berlin, 1986).
- Röllli-Alkemper, Lukas *Familie im Wiederaufbau. Katholizismus und bürgerliches Familienideal in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1945–1965* (Paderborn, 2000).
- Ross, Corey, *Constructing Socialism at the Grass-roots. The Transformation of East Germany, 1945-65* (Hampshire, 2000).
- *The East German Dictatorship. Problems and Perspectives in the Interpretation of the GDR* (London, 2002).
- Rowell, Geoffrey, *The Liturgy of Christian Burial* (London, 1977).
- Rudolph, Hartmut, *Evangelische Kirche und Vertriebene 1945 bis 1972. Band I: Kirchen ohne Land. Die Aufnahme von Pfarrern und Gemeindegliedern aus dem Osten im westlichen Nachkriegsdeutschland: Nothilfe – Seelsorge – kirchliche Eingliederung* (Göttingen, 1984).
- Ruff, Mark, *The Wayward Flock, Catholic Youth in post-war West Germany* (Chapel Hill, 2005).
- Rusche, Michael, ‘Die Eingliederung der Vertriebenen in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, dargestellt unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Wohnraumproblematik’, in Manfred Wille/Johannes Hoffmann/Wolfgang Meinicke (ed.), *Sie hatten alles verloren: Flüchtlinge und Vertriebene in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands* (Wiesbaden, 1993), 133-47.

- Scherstjanoi, Elke, 'Die deutschlandpolitischen Absichten der UdSSR 1948. Erkenntnisstand und forschungsleitende Problematisierungen', in Dierk Hoffmann/Hermann Wentker (ed.), *Das letzte Jahr der SBZ* (Munich, 2000), 39-54.
- E. Scherstjanoi, 'Die Jugendpolitik der SMAD 1945/46', in Helga Gotschlich/Katharina Lange/Edeltraud Schulze (ed.), *Aber nicht im Gleichschritt. Zur Entstehung der Freien Deutschen Jugend* (Berlin, 1997), 125-32.
- Scheuch, Erwin K., 'Der Umbruch nach 1945 im Spiegel der Umfragen', in Uta Gerhardt/Ekkehard Mochmann (ed.), *Gesellschaftlicher Umbruch 1945-1990. Re-Demokratisierung und Lebensverhältnisse* (Munich, 1992), 9-25.
- Schmid, Josef, 'Verdrängungen, Instrumentisierungen und einzelne Einsichten: Die frühe Schulddebatte', in *Der Neubeginn. Deutschland zwischen 1945 und 1949* (Hamburg, 2005), 146-155.
- Schmidt, Jutta, "'Die Frau hat ein Recht auf die Mitarbeit am Werke der Barmherzigkeit'", in Ursula Röper/Carola Jüllig (ed.), *Die Macht der Nächstenliebe. Einhundertfünfzig Jahre Innere Mission und Diakonie 1848-1998* (Berlin, 1998), 138-49.
- Schmidt, Thomas/Wohlrab-Sahr, Monika, 'Still the most areligious part of the World: developments in the religious field in Eastern Germany since 1990', *International Journal of Practical Theology*, 7/1 (2003), 86-100.
- Schneider, Dieter M., 'Sachsen-Anhalt', in Martin Broszat et al (ed.), *SBZ-Handbuch. Staatlich Verwaltungen, Parteien, gesellschaftliche Organisationen und ihre Führungskräfte in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands 1945-1949* (Munich, 1990), 147-66.
- Schott, Christian-Erdmann, 'Wandlungen in der Wahrnehmung. Die evangelische Kirche und ihre Vertriebenen', in Rainer Bendel (ed.), *Vertriebene finden Heimat in der Kirche* (Cologne, 2008), 147-62.
- Schrammek, Notker, *Alltag und Selbstbild von Flüchtlingen und Vertriebenen in Sachsen, 1945-1952* (Frankfurt am Main, 2004).
- Schröter, Christoph, 'Die (innere) Situation der Pfarrerschaft unmittelbar nach 1945 in Anhalt', *Herbergen der Christenheit*, 20 (1996), 77-86.
- Schultze, Harald, 'Kirchenprovinz Sachsen', *TRE*, 29 (1998), 580-9.
- Schulz, Felix R., 'Disposing of the Dead in East Germany, 1945-1990', in Alon Confino/Paul Betts/Dirk Schumann (ed.), *Between Mass Death and Individual Loss. The Place of the Dead in Twentieth-Century Germany* (New York, 2008), 112-28.
- E. Schulze, 'Die Jahre 1946 und 1947 – ein statistischer Lagerbericht', in Helga Gotschlich/Katharina Lange/Edeltraud Schulze (ed.), *Aber nicht im Gleichschritt. Zur Entstehung der Freien Deutschen Jugend* (Berlin, 1997), 159-66.

Schulze, Rainer, 'The German Refugees and Expellees from the East and the Creation of a Western German Identity after World War II', in Philip Ther/Ana Siljak (ed.), *Redrawing Nations: Ethnic Cleansing in East-Central Europe, 1944-1948* (Oxford, 2001), 307-26.

- 'Growing discontent: relations between native and refugee populations in a rural district in Western Germany after the Second World War', in Robert G. Moeller (ed.), *West Germany under Construction. Politics, Society and Culture in the Adenauer Era* (Ann Arbor, 1997), 53-72.
- 'The Struggle of Past and Present in Individual Identities: The Case of German Refugees and Expellees from the East', in David Rock/Stefan Wolff (ed.), *Coming Home to Germany. The Integration of Ethnic Germans from Central and Eastern Europe in the Federal Republic* (New York, 2002), 38-55.

Schwartz, Michael, *Vertriebene und "Umsiedlerpolitik". Integrationskonflikte in den deutschen Nachkriegs-Gesellschaften und die Assimilationsstrategien in der SBZ/DDR 1945-1961* (Munich, 2004).

Seidel, J. Jürgen, 'Abkehr vom "Deutschen Christentum", Die "Thüringer evangelische Kirche" im Jahre 1945', *Kirche im Sozialismus*, 6 (1983), 39-47.

- *Aus den Trümmern 1945. Personeller Wiederaufbau und Entnazifizierung in der evangelischen Kirche der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands. Einführung und Dokumente* (Göttingen, 1996).
- 'Die evangelische Kirche in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands in den Nachkriegsmonaten des Jahres 1945', *Chronik*, 13/8 (1985), 25-48.
- "Neubeginn" in der Kirche? Die evangelischen Landes- und Provinzialkirchen in der SBZ/DDR im gesellschaftspolitischen Kontext der Nachkriegszeit (1945-1953) (Göttingen, 1989)

Seidel, Thomas A., 'Befreiung oder Besatzung? Das Kriegsende in Thüringen', *Palmbaum*, 3/1 (1995), 32-42.

- 'Deutsch-christliche Hypothek und Neuordnungskompromisse. Die evangelische Kirchgemeinde Jena nach 1945', in Rudiger Stutz (ed.), *Macht und Milieu. Jena zwischen Kriegsende und Mauerbau* (Jena, 2000), 103-33.
- 'Erblast und Erneuerungsversuche in Thüringen. Eine mitteldeutsche Landeskirche im Spannungsfeld von Besatzungsmacht und deutscher Verwaltung 1945-1949', *Herbergen der Christenheit. Jahrbuch für deutsche Kirchengeschichte*, 20 (1996), 87-105.
- *Im Übergang der Diktaturen. Eine Untersuchung zur kirchlichen Neuordnung in Thüringen 1945-1951* (Stuttgart, 2003).
- 'Im Wechsel der Systeme. Anmerkungen zur evangelischen Landeskirche Thüringens 1919 bis 1989', in Manfred Gailus/Wolfgang Krogel (ed.), *Von der babylonischen Gefangenschaft der Kirche im Nationalen. Regionalstudien zu Protestantismus, Nationalsozialismus und Nachkriegsgeschichte 1930 bis 2000* (Berlin, 2006), 331-359.
- "...in Sturm und Gericht der Gegenwart": Kirchliche Neuordnung in Thüringen 1945-1951', in Thomas A. Seidel (ed.), *Thüringer Gratwanderungen, Beiträge zur fünfundsiebzigjährigen Geschichte der evangelischen Landeskirche Thüringens* (Leipzig, 1998), 166-188.

- Semmelmann, Dagmar, 'Zur Integration aus lebensgeschichtlicher Sicht. Eingliederungsverläufe von Flüchtlingen und Vertriebenen in der SBZ/DDR dargestellt am Sonderfall Eisenhüttenstadt', in Dierk Hoffmann/Michael Schwartz (ed.), *Geglückte Integration? Spezifika und Vergleichbarkeiten der Vertriebenen-Eingliederung in der SBZ-DDR* (Munich, 1999), 321-36.
- Seraphim, Peter Heinz, *Die Heimatvertriebenen in der Sowjetzone* (Berlin, 1954).
- Siegele-Wenschkewitz, Leonore, 'Mitverantwortung und Schuld der Christen am Holocaust', in Leonore Siegele-Wenschkewitz (ed.), *Christlicher Antijudaismus und Antisemitismus. Theologische und kirchliche Programme Deutscher Christen* (Frankfurt/Main, 1994), 1-26.
- Sonne, Hans-Joachim, *Die politische Theologie der Deutsche Christen. Einheit und Vielfalt deutsch-christlichen Denkens, dargestellt anhand des Bundes für deutsche Kirche, der Thüringer Kirchenbewegung 'Deutsche Christen' und der Christlich-deutschen Bewegung* (Göttingen, 1982).
- Sperk, Alexander, *Entnazifizierung und Personalpolitik in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone Köthen/Anhalt* (Dössel, 2003).
- Stanke, Völker, *Die Gestaltung der Beziehungen zwischen dem Land Sachsen und der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Landeskirche Sachsens von 1945 bis 1949* (Frankfurt am Main, 1993).
- Stark, Rodney/Bainbridge, William Sims, *The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival and Cult Formation* (Berkeley, 1985).
- Stark, Rodney/Finke, Roger, *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion* (Berkeley, 2000).
- Stark, Rodney/Innaccone, Laurence A., 'A Supply-Side Reinterpretation of of the "Secularization" of Europe', *Journal for the Scientitific Study of Religion*, 33/3 (1994), 230-52.
- Stegmann, Erich, *Der Kirchenkampf in der Thüringer evangelischen Kirche 1933-1945. Ein Kapitel Thüringer Kirchengeschichte* (Berlin, 1984).
- Steigmann-Gall, Richard, *The Holy Reich. Nazi Conceptions of Christianity, 1919-1945* (Cambridge, 2003).
- Steiner, André, 'Die deutsche Wirtschaftskommission – ein ordnungspolitisches Machtinstrument?', in Dierk Hoffmann/Hermann Wentker (ed.), *Das letzte Jahr der SBZ* (Munich, 2000), 85-105.
- Streim, Alfred, *Die Behandlung sowjetischer Kriegsgefangener im 'Fall Barbarossa'* (Heidelberg/Karlsruhe, 1981).
- Talkenberger, Wolfgang-Dieter, *Nächstenliebe am Bahnhof: zur Geschichte der Bahnhofsmision in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone (SBZ) und der DDR* (Berlin, 2003).

- Tempel, Irmtraut, *Bischofsamt und Kirchenleitung in den lutherischen, reformierten und unierten deutschen Landeskirchen* (Munich, 1966).
- Ther, Philipp, *Deutsche und polnische Vertriebene. Gesellschaft und Vertriebenenpolitik in der SBZ/DDR und in Polen 1945-1956* (Göttingen, 1998).
- 'Expellee Policy in the Soviet-occupied Zone and the GDR: 1945-1953', in David Rock/Stefan Wolff (ed.), *Coming Home to Germany. The Integration of Ethnic Germans from Central and Eastern Europe in the Federal Republic* (New York, 2002), 56-76.
- Tischner, Wolfgang, *Katholische Kirche in der SBZ/DDR 1945-1951. Die Formierung einer Subgesellschaft im entstehenden sozialistischen Staat*, (Paderborn, 2001)
- 'Die Kirchenpolitik unter Konrad von Preysing 1945-1950', in Christoph Kösters/Wolfgang Tischner (ed.), *Katholische Kirche in SBZ und DDR* (Munich, 2005), 37-62.
 - 'Wohlfahrtspflege zwischen den Diktaturen: Caritas, Innere Mission und Volkssolidarität in SBZ und früher DDR', in Rainer Behring/Mike Schmeitzner (ed.), *Diktaturdurchsetzung in Sachsen. Studien zur Genese der kommunistischen Herrschaft 1945-1952* (Cologne, 2003) 349-69.
- Überschär, Ellen, *Junge Gemeinde im Konflikt. Evangelische Jugendarbeit in der SBZ/DDR, 1945-1961* (Stuttgart, 2003).
- Vogt, Timothy, *Denazification in Soviet-Occupied Germany. Brandenburg, 1945-1948* (Cambridge [Ma.], 2000).
- Vollnhals, Clemens, 'Die evangelische Kirche zwischen Traditionswahrung und Neuorientierung', in Martin Broszat/Klaus-Dieter Henke/Hans Woller (ed.), *Von Stalingrad zur Währungsreform: Zur Sozialgeschichte des Umbruchs in Deutschland*, 3rd Edn (Munich, 1990), 113-167.
- 'Die Hypothek des Nationalprotestantismus. Entnazifizierung und Strafverfolgung von NS-Verbrechen nach 1945', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 18 (1992), 51-69.
 - *Evangelische Kirche und Entnazifizierung, 1945-1949: Der Last der Nationalsozialistischen Vergangenheit* (Munich, 1989).
 - 'Im Schatten der Stuttgarter Schulderklärung. Die Erblast des Nationalprotestantismus', in Manfred Gailus/Hartmut Lehmann (ed.), *Nationalprotestantische Mentalitäten. Konturen, Entwicklungslinien und Umbrüche eines Weltbildes* (Göttingen, 2005), 379-431.
- Walter, Michael, *Die Freie Deutsche Jugend. Ihre Funktion im politischen System der DDR* (Freiburg, 1997).
- Wappler, Kristin, *Klassenzimmer ohne Gott: Schulen im katholischen Eichsfeld und dem protestantischen Erzgebirge unter SED-Herrschaft* (Duderstadt, 2007)
- 'The Limits of Politicization of the Schools in the GDR: the Catholic Church in the Eichsfeld Region and the Protestant Erzgebirge – A Comparison', in Esther

Peperkamp/Malgorzata Rajtar (ed.), *Religion and the Secular in Eastern Germany, 1945 to the Present* (Leiden, 2010), 61-86.

Weber, Petra, *Justiz und Diktatur. Justizverwaltung und politische Strafjustiz in Thüringen 1945-1961* (Munich, 2000).

Weichlein, Sigrid, *Sozialmilieus und politische Kultur in der Weimarer Republik, Lebenswelt, Vereinskultur, Politik in Hessen* (Göttingen, 1996).

Weiß, Konrad, *Lothar Kreyssig. Prophet der Versöhnung* (Gerlingen, 1998).

Welsh, Helga A., “‘Antifaschistisch-demokratische Umwälzung’ und politische Säuberung in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands’, in Klaus-Dieter Henke/Hans Woller (ed.), *Politische Säuberung in Europa, die Abrechnung mit Faschismus und Kollaboration nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Munich, 1996), 87-107.

- ‘Thüringen’, in Martin Broszat et al (ed.), *SBZ-Handbuch. Staatlich Verwaltungen, Parteien, gesellschaftliche Organisationen und ihre Führungskräfte in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands 1945-1949* (Munich, 1990), 167-189.
- *Revolutionärer Wandel auf Befehl? Entnazifizierungs- und Personalpolitik in Thüringen und Sachsen* (Munich, 1989).

Welzer, Harald, “Familiengedächtnis. Über die Weitergabe der deutschen Vergangenheit im intergenerationalen Gespräch”, *Werkstatt*, 30 (2001), 61-4.

Wengst, Udo, ‘Zwischen Aufrechterhaltung der Einheit und Teilung der Nation: Das Jahr 1948 in der deutschen Geschichte’, in Dierk Hoffmann/Hermann Wentker (ed.), *Das letzte Jahr der SBZ* (Munich, 2000), 25-38.

Wentker, Hermann, ‘Die Einführung der Jugendweihe in der DDR: Hintergründe, Motive und Probleme’, in Hartmut Mehringer (ed.), *Von der SBZ zur DDR* (Munich, 1995), 139-65.

- ‘Das Jahr 1948 als Auftakt zu Zentralisierung, Politisierung und Sowjetisierung des Justizwesens’, in Dierk Hoffmann/Hermann Wentker (ed.), *Das letzte Jahr der SBZ* (Munich, 2000), 149-168.
- ‘Jugendarbeit oder Jugendopposition? Die junge Gemeinde im Urteil von SED und Ost-CDU und in ihrem Selbstverständnis 1950-1953’, in Ulrich Hermann (ed.), *Protestierende Jugend. Jugend Opposition und politischer Protest in der deutschen Nachkriegsgeschichte* (Weinheim, 2002), 177-212.
- *Justiz in der SBZ/DDR, 1945-1953. Transformation und Rolle ihrer zentralen Institutionen* (Munich, 2001).
- “‘Kirchenkampf’ in der DDR. Der Konflikt um die Junge Gemeinde 1950-1953’, *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 42/1 (1994), 95-127.

Wiegand, Dietmar, ‘Volkskirche und Sozialarbeit. Soziales Denken und Handeln in der Thüringer evangelischen Kirche in den Jahren ihres Auf- und Ausbaus’, *Herbergen der Christheit*, 21/22, (1997/8), 135-153.

Wierling, Dorothee, *Geboren im Jahr Eins. Der Geburtsjahrgang 1949 – Versuch einer Kollektivbiographie* (Berlin, 2002).

- 'Generations as Narrative Communities. Some Private Sources of Public Memory in Postwar Germany', in Frank Biess/Robert G. Moeller (ed.), *Histories of the Aftermath. The Legacies of the Second World War in European Perspective* (New York, 2010), 102-20.
- 'A German Generation of Reconstruction. The Children of the Weimar Republic in the GDR', in Passerini, Luisa (ed.), *Memory and Totalitarianism*, Vol. 1 (Oxford, 1992), 71-88.
- 'The Hitler Youth Generation in the GDR: Insecurities, Ambitions and Dilemmas', in Konrad Jarausch (ed.), *Dictatorship as Experience: Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR* (Oxford, 1999), 307-24.

Wildt, Michael, *Generation des Unbedingten* (Hamburg, 2002)

Wille, Manfred, 'Compelling the Assimilation of Expellees in the Soviet Zone of Occupation and the GDR', in Philip Ther/Ana Siljak (ed.), *Redrawing Nations: Ethnic Cleansing in East-Central Europe, 1944-1948* (Oxford, 2001), 264-70.

- *Entnazifizierung in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands 1945-1948* (Magdeburg, 1993).
- 'SED und "Umsiedler" – Vertriebenenpolitik der Einheitspartei im ersten Nachkriegsjahrzehnt', in Dierk Hoffmann/Michael Schwartz (ed.), *Geglückte Integration? Spezifika und Vergleichbarkeiten der Vertriebenen-Eingliederung in der SBZ/DDR* (Munich, 1999), 91-104.

Wilson, Bryan, *Religion in Sociological Perspective* (Oxford, 1982).

Windschild, Günther, *Der Pfarrer von St. Jakob. Porträt eines Aufrechten* (Dessau, 1996).

Ziemke, Earl, *The U.S. Army in the Occupation of Germany 1944-1946* (Washington D.C., 1975).

Zilch, Dorle, *Millionen unter der blauen Fahne. Die FDJ. Zahlen – Fakten – Tendenzen* (Rostock, 1994).

Unpublished theses:

Brennan, Sean, *The Politics of Religion in Soviet-Occupied Germany: the Case of Berlin-Brandenburg 1945-1949*, (Notre Dame Univ. revised Ph.D. thesis, 2010).

Fenwick, Luke, *Catholic and Protestant Faith Communities in Thuringia after the Second World War, 1945-1948* (Canterbury Univ. M.A. thesis, 2007).