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SUFFERING FROM THE CHURCH?

ASPECTS OF UNEASINESS AT THE CHURCH BASIS

by Peter Maser

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When surveying all the information available to us here in the West concerning churches in the German Democratic Republic [East Germany], one feels that somehow even the total volume of information does not yield a truly accurate picture. There are grey areas of church activity and Christian life in the GDR which cannot be recorded by the analyses of outside observers. However, these are particularly important for the persons involved, since large parts of church life occur on levels which are difficult to describe or define.

It is probably correct to state that the situation of the Protestant churches in the GDR has never been as complicated and as difficult for the Western observer to understand as today. The most obvious symptoms of this situation are periodic appeals by church leaders and church publicists in the West not to "interfere" with policies pursued by churches in the GDR. They are reacting to requests from within GDR churches which have become more and more pronounced in the recent past. At the same time, however, this restraint on the part of the church also signifies an insecurity whose roots go much deeper than the difficulties of analyzing church policies in the present situation. The latter problem could be solved by more precise...
information and by the clarifying effect of time. The actual insecurity, however, is due to the fact that Protestant churches in the GDR have themselves come under suspicion. This made it difficult to believe any longer (though there are still attempts to do so) that it is caused solely by "cold warriors" who are only interested in the deterioration of East-West relations and in increasing the instability of the interior situation of Eastern bloc countries.

A process is occurring within the GDR churches which is particularly difficult to understand and express in the West, mainly because it takes place on the level of congregations and among ministers who do not have access to the public media. In all probability, the church leaders in the GDR and those in the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) interested in church-related developments would know even less about these matters, had it not been for an isolated act by one individual. The minister of Drossdorf-Rippicha, who burned himself publicly on August 18, 1976, on the marketplace of Zeitz, had been totally unknown up to that time. Since then, interestingly enough, the name of Oskar Brüsewitz had become a symbol--less for a church harassed by a consistently atheistic state, but rather for a church whose courage to say the truth and to defend the human rights vis-à-vis the government of its own country had been questioned.

For those who witnessed these events in the GDR, it soon became obvious that the self-immolation of Oskar Brüsewitz would become merely one passing problem among many created by the state's policies towards the churches. The international public would soon be convinced that the relationship between churches and state authorities was then by no means critical enough to spark dramatic actions such as the one which had occurred. The problems of Christian youth in the GDR emphasized by Brüsewitz were not at all new, and there were even certain indications of gradual solutions.

Therefore the realization sprang up that those who were actually being reproved, radically admonished, were the churches themselves. An initial wave of alarm spread through the congregations and among the clergy of the church province of Saxony when it became known that Bishop Krusche, who was in Africa on official business, had not immediately
embarked on his flight home in order to be close to his congregation and the church authorities in this highly critical situation, and that he would not be home in time to utter words of clarification and reason over Oskar Brüsewitz' grave. The strong sense of bewilderment, however, was shown in the obituary of the permanent deputy of the Magdeburg bishop, Probst Bäumer: "We cannot expect to find ready answers to the questions which our brother has raised for us with his personal decision. Our religious, ecclesiastical, political, and human form of existence is challenged by these questions."¹

It is not the purpose of this paper to investigate in detail whether and to what degree the responsible personalities of GDR churches managed to formulate the questions which Probst Bäumer at first merely referred to as "existing," or even to attempt to answer them. An entire chapter of a church history of the recent past could be filled with the way the church "came to terms with" the "Brüsewitz case"! Among the congregations and the ministers, a surprisingly short time was needed for the formulation of these questions. Therefore it can be assumed that a concrete case gave rise to the formulation of problems whose beginnings date far back in the history of the GDR churches. This discussion, which was "domesticated" relatively soon by church authorities, is virtually unknown in the West in its severity and significance.

Even so, the fragmented reports by the church administration, the minutes of the Magdeburg Synod of October 1976 and those of the Federal Synod of Züssow (September 1976), which had, for the first time, met behind closed doors, show that crucial and embarrassing questions had been asked. The tendency of these questions (one can hardly speak of "answers") can be recognized as well.²

As far as can be ascertained, these "questions" were discussed rigorously and openly only on the level of congregations and among ministers. There was widespread feeling that a serious opening, continuation, and evaluation of this discussion on the various levels of ecclesiastical activities had been firmly and effectively blocked. This has reinforced the prevailing view that the distance between the practicing church and the church administration in the GDR continues to widen.³ Furthermore this has led to a situation in which significant
parts of the church, on the level of the congregations (ministers, deacons, church musicians), maintain a stony silence towards the church administration; the result is often a paralyzing effect on the church community as a whole. In order to be able to assess adequately the significance of the questions being asked within the churches of the GDR, it is necessary first to give a brief sketch of the various groups among ministers and theologians of the GDR.

The group of ministers over fifty years of age is the most important, both in terms of numerical superiority and of the management of "everyday" business. Their influence on the development of the churches in the GDR is evidently very small. These ministers have completed their studies at theology schools or seminaries. The curricula and the course offerings of these institutions were still determined by traditional German theology. Upon completion of their studies, these men were immediately absorbed by practical church activities and their strength was worn down in the struggle for the reestablishment of church life; it had been disrupted by the consequences of the war and the social changes that had taken place in the GDR (preservation of buildings, administration of church-owned lands, confirmation and Jugendweihe,* collectivization of agriculture, youth services, etc.). Among this group of ministers, the feeling of frustration is particularly strong: the abandonment of German ecclesiastical unity and the loss of the fight for confirmation has caused painful and deep-seated discontent. Therefore, these ministers focus on the work in their own parishes, and generally refrain from working, or even associating, with higher church officials.

The group of ministers whose average age is below 50 years still does not quite equal the first group numerically, but increases continuously. These ministers "learned" during their student days to deal with representatives of a variety of social bodies of the GDR (state authorities and administration, National Front, FDJ--Free German Socialist state initiation ceremony in which young people dedicate their lives to socialist principles, attempts to replace the (church) confirmation in present-day GDR. (translator's note)
Youth, CDU--Christian Democratic Union,* etc.), and they are willing to continue these contacts as ecclesiastical officeholders on a realistic basis and free of constraint. The relaxation of the overall situation of the church has often made it possible for ministers of this group to gain a higher scientific qualification (doctorate, sabbatical for scientific research). Vacancies in the administrative bodies of the church are filled by ministers of this group, and they articulate their positions on all levels of church life. They are heard by church and society alike, and have long since "overtaken" the above-mentioned group of older pastors.

The theologians working in the theological sections of GDR universities form a group whose significance increases steadily, even though there are fewer of them. In this group as well, a succession of generations has taken place within the last ten years. After the war, professorships in theology were mainly filled by members of the Confessional Church (Bekenntniskirche), along with university theologians who were not connected with the Hitler régime. In the period after 1965, more or less the whole group reached retirement age and a reorganization of the theological faculties and/or university "sections" became possible. Ordinarily, their successors were theologians with academic credentials (habilitation). Unlike their predecessors, however, they had close relations to the CDU and to the "Christian circles" active within the National Front. Following a period of uncertainty and changes in the strategies pursued by church and state, this group was solidly integrated into church administration, with the express approval of the state. Today, this group has significant influence in the church. This is shown, for example, in the synods or the examination offices of the church.

The fourth and last group comprises those leading personalities in the church who are also best known by the public in the West. They cannot be adequately described in general terms. Differences in their

*State-tolerated and controlled political party comprising Christians. Cooperates with the ruling SED in the "National Front." (translator's note)
particular characters, theological abilities, and diplomatic skills determine these individuals, whose public image in East and West is often vastly different. Oftentimes people overlook the fact that the common goals demand increasingly conforming expression of opinions and conforming activities, especially since the formation of the Bundes Evangelischer Kirchen in der DDR (Federation of Protestant Churches in the GDR). This stands in sharp contrast to the strong personalities of the old generation of bishops.

With which questions was the church leadership increasingly confronted following the death of Oskar Brüsewitz? The most important one, of course, is that of the form of the relationship between churches and state in the GDR. It soon becomes apparent that it can only be understood in its full significance if one considers all aspects of the questions.

The essential question is: From where do church leaders derive the right to acknowledge unconditionally the socialist organization of society, in varying and ever-new formulations? The declarations of the 3rd session of the First Synod of the Federation of Protestant Churches in the GDR in 1971 must be taken here as basic formulation: "We do not want to be a church apart from or against socialism, we want to be a church in a socialist country." It soon became apparent what difficulties this ambiguous mode of expression entailed. "Progressive" forces considered it to be a carte blanche for full-fledged political commitment, while the silent majority reacted even then with obvious mistrust. This (ill) feeling increased in the following years, to a degree where Günther Krusche spoke of "critical disillusionment," "disappointing experiences" and a "retraction of elbow-room" as early as 1974, in a semi-official contribution to the Lutherische Rundschau.

At the synod of the Federation in 1972 in Dresden, Horst Falcke had made the following controversial observations:

We are free to believe that socialist society, too, is a domain of the liberating Christ. . . . Christ frees us from the paralyzing alternative between straight negativism and uncritical acceptance, and leads us to constructive cooperation which differentiates between individual cases. It
is not an ideology of trying to remain aloof, or an ideology arguing for a 'third possibility.' Rather, it is the way of mature cooperation through faith, born out of a better prophecy than that given by socialism. Its orders are more binding than those that can be issued by men. Hence, cooperation through faith is more committed in a very concrete sense.

These observations were taken up by Krusche and used in his well-known synodal definition of 1973: "The church in socialism must be the church which assists Christian citizens and individual Christian communities to find their way in socialist society, while living in freedom and community of belief, and who attempt to seek the best for all and for the society as a whole."\(^7\)

Obviously the vast majority of the churches as well as conscientious Christians in the GDR can agree with this definition. Nevertheless, the questions continue to be raised whether the church and its leading personalities might not be obliged to accentuate the irreconcilable antagonisms between the Christian foundations of faith on the one hand, and a socialism based on the ideology of Marxism-Leninism on the other. Furthermore, the question arises whether it might not be the duty of the churches to expose the concrete manifestation of socialist reality to unequivocal criticism. The statement below was made in a \textit{votum} of the theological commission of the EKU/GDR:

\begin{quote}
It cannot be denied: that the leadership of our tightly-organized society wants to serve humanity's well-being, that they do not want to be opportunistic. Not only do they work toward social security for all, but they have actually achieved it to a great degree. They want to protect our youth with strong measures against some dangers (drugs, pornography, juvenile delinquency), more than they are protected in other forms of society. They have significantly improved the opportunities for education and continuing education, and decreased the unjust distribution of income. Not only do they aim at social improvements, but they also actively realize them time and again. They have established a system of health care which has widely come to be regarded as a model, and want to secure a financially
\end{quote}
better life for the members of the agricultural producers' cooperatives (LPG). Many of these farmers have enjoyed an annual vacation for the first time in their lives. Our family laws and our marital laws attempt to ensure, to an impressive degree, that the weaker partners can claim their rights.

To those who are familiar with the actual situation, this statement can only be judged to be an abstruse distortion of real conditions, and as unjustified acclamation for an "ideal theory" which has little in common with "miserable reality." There are plenty of topics for justified criticism in areas of human concern. Let us merely point to those problem areas which the theological commission of the EKU judged positively (albeit with later qualifications) in order to illustrate the explosiveness of the situation:

a) constant coercion to opportunistic behavior in professions and school; schizophrenic ways of behavior which have become accepted over the years ("life in socialism but with capitalist [i.e. West German] T.V.");

b) youth policies of the state, which still do not want to acknowledge steadily increasing juvenile delinquency in the GDR, abuse of alcohol and drugs among young people, and the increasing number of suicides caused by a whole range of motives;

c) educational policies of the state, which reward opportunistic accommodation rather than professional achievements. Its preferential treatment of so-called "children of workers and farmers" must be called irrational, in view of the social conditions in the GDR;

d) social policies of the state, which are totally subordinated to defense policies and to strengthening of the socialist bloc, especially the Soviet Union;

e) health care policies of the state, which do not guarantee availability of special medicines, technical equipment of the hospitals, or highly qualified medical services;

f) faulty organization of socialist agriculture, which leads to a situation where the GDR, as well as the other socialist countries, are still largely dependent on the "aid" of capitalism and can only survive by means of enormous state subsidies.
This list might be extended by a number of other, much more spectacular examples, such as defense policies, citizens' legal insecurity in the face of state institutions on all levels, total regimentation of intellectual and cultural life, denial of any sort of liberality, as well as the disregard for any of the human rights ceremoniously recognized by the GDR. However, it might be useful to mention only those problems with which the average citizen of the GDR is confronted in his or her everyday life.

Of course, churches do not disregard all these problems in their varying forms at all times. Examples of such critical contributions can be easily documented, especially in the recent past. Here too, however, critics suspect tactical proceedings from within the churches, and miss the unequivocal testimony of the church. They complain that any declaration also implies a guilty silence on the part of the church. Lately the opinion is freely given that critical observations in synod reports only function as an alibi, both in relation to those carrying out services within the church, and vis-à-vis critical world opinion. Therefore such criticisms can be accepted by the party authorities without alarm, since they have meanwhile learned that there will be no criticisms which might affect the domestic situation (pastoral letters; conscious refusal to participate in governmental and social ceremonies on the part of the bishops, etc.). These complaints definitely reflect the fact that in the public opinion and the parishes of the GDR, the extent and significance of church criticism is not general knowledge. More and more often, ministers and members of a congregation must endure being told by outsiders such as representatives of state and party, that their criticisms are not backed by the prominent personalities and force of the church and theology.

The lack of a fundamental critique of "existing socialism" in the GDR is deplored especially by those for whom the expatriation of Wolf Biermann and the publication of Rudolf Bahro's Alternative had become one of the triggering factors of a profound crisis. While the Biermann affair had its greatest effect on the atmosphere and emotions, Bahro's book provided for the first time an extensive and devastating criticism of the GDR. This material was compiled by an original thinker who uses
Marxist categories. Since Bähr's theses have become known, the view has gained ground that something must be wrong with the GDR model of socialism (and those of other socialist countries).

The more such a radical view gains credence, especially among the ministers, the more problematic becomes the "basic affirmation of the state" (Krusche, 1969) or a statement like "the eight churches of the Federation view the GDR as their state, and they mean it!" (Schönherr, 1971). The time seems to have arrived where the churches are being asked from the outside whether their commitment to truth is realized by such a policy: Who [will defend the truth] if not you? One suspects that the churches have permitted themselves to be infiltrated by views and values originally not their own. In the course of 30 years this development, which can be likened to osmosis, has led to a point where they are no longer able to determine which positions they took when defending the unity of the EKD (Protestant Church of [all of] Germany), or when criticizing the socialist development in the GDR. Anthologies of pertinent declarations by the church make for difficult reading indeed, as there were quotations from the Bible and theological arguments readily at hand at each stage of this protracted process!

In this connection, it is interesting to reconsider the struggle of the Confessional Church (Bekennende Kirche) in Hitler-Germany. Was the church (merely) preoccupied with its own concerns, and therefore dealing with partial problems, or was its struggle the expression of a rejection of an ideologically totalitarian state, whose violation of human rights, by its very nature, went as far as genocide? This parallel exists, even though the historical situation was completely different and resistance was much more broadly-based. The fact that the Confessional Church in Hitler-Germany is viewed as a "model case" shows how far-reaching the basic insecurity has become in the GDR. This deep-seated insecurity alone can explain the concern that the churches, through their words and deeds, should not become pillars of support for a régime which is already on the downgrade and obsolete in historical terms. The question has been raised whether the GDR churches might not once again, albeit in a totally different historical situation, expose themselves to the dangers of a "throne-and-altar-theology."
Of course, the everyday lives, activities, and thinking of clergy and Christians in the GDR are not determined by such basic and radical questions. In most cases, there must be a concrete occasion. Gravamina of everyday life occur in different areas of church activity, and depend specifically on the situation of the individual involved.

One of the most common complaints is that a wide gap exists between church administration on the one hand and congregations and ministers on the other. In October 1976, Gerhard Thomas, editor of the Mecklenburgische Kirchenzeitung, wrote a contribution to the Deutsche Allgemeine Sonntagsblatt: "One became accustomed to a policy formulated and carried out by the leading administrative bodies of the church, and it was not always clear how far this policy served the interests and needs of the congregations."¹² In the synodal report before the Synod of the church province of Saxony, Christoph Hinz spoke at the same time of the distrust of congregations and ministers vis-à-vis church leadership,¹³ while Krusche, in the Federal Synod in Züssow, September 28, 1976, detected a feeling of "discomfort" on the part of the congregations relating to church administration.¹⁴

The reasons for this negative feeling are manifold and can be mentioned only selectively here: The internal and external distance of the "regular" minister to his church or even to the administrative bodies of the Federation cannot be bridged. Generally he is informed of the intentions and activities of the administration by official bulletins, by consistorial briefings written in a harsh German officialese no longer employed elsewhere in the GDR, or through the newspaper. Personal contacts are unusual.

The situation is less disturbing to the ministers, who do not expect any other treatment, than to the active laity (council members of the congregations). Here they encounter the last remnants of the unpleasant smell of the old Prussian office rooms, which have been thoroughly eliminated elsewhere in the GDR. Imagine an engineer, who is used to directly addressing any state authority or public individual, being told to act through official channels only. A short question is answered by a tedious legalistic treatise. This type of behavior must prove fatal!
Pastoral and social aid for the ministers is frequently inadequate and often enough incidental. To a large degree, the destructive feeling of resignation and weariness (of office) among the ministers must be attributed to a feeling of "being left alone." The Biblical citation "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given" or the quotation from Brecht, "Those who are in the light can be seen, those in the dark are invisible" are understood as bitter truth. These maxims allude to several circumstances at once.

First of all, they allude to a privileged group of theologians, by no means small in number, who have direct contacts to church leadership and the theological world as a whole through membership in synods, study groups, committees, etc., and who can "get out" and experience a feeling of community. Secondly, they focus on very material aspects. If somebody gets to know the official in charge of a given task personally, it will be much easier to procure, say, zinc sheet needed for the roof of the church, or a car, or a washing machine for the Diakonische Werk. Obviously, such problems are inevitable in every large community. However, Christians in the GDR believe that, given their specific situation, things could be organized in a more humane and fraternal way.

In order to be able to explain this negative feeling towards church administration, one must consider a development whose consequences were recognized much too late by the church leadership. Ever since the formation of the Federation of Protestant Churches in the GDR and the consolidation of state-church relations connected thereto, the activities of bishops and churches increased to an incredible degree. Today, bishops from the GDR can be met in the whole world, fulfilling ecumenical tasks. In earlier times, time and efforts expended in these tasks used to be invested in the domestic field. The close relations between churches and state and social institutions also take up much time, energy and financial resources which formerly used to be employed differently. Finally, necessary but also expensive internal church projects were introduced by the Federation. In this form, such projects would have been unthinkable in earlier times.

Significant numbers of the ministers and the congregations cannot identify with the words and deeds of the church leadership in the GDR.

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Pastor Gerhard Thomas (see above) has described the situation very clearly: "Christians who experience tensions and conflicts in everyday life, who have to worry about the educational opportunities of their children who were raised as Christians, and who have to answer for their Christian faith, often feel left alone by the administrative leadership of their churches. They do not always feel that their church, in its relationship with the state, actually represents their best interests." Bishop Krusche admitted that the churches at times may have been overly cautious in "formulations and actions" vis-à-vis the state. In all probability, however, these formulations, which can easily be recognized as part of the church strategy by those familiar with the situation, are less harmful. Rather, the annoyance is caused by a type of theological arrogance which overlooks the everyday problems encountered by Christians.

What is referred to here can be demonstrated by the most delicate problem with which the GDR churches have been faced in the last years. A relatively small number of ordained ministers petitioned their churches to release them from church service and agree to their removal to the Federal Republic of Germany. These petitions were made for different reasons, and the churches considered each case individually and made different decisions in different cases. They were able to help some of the petitioners. Some ordained ministers emigrated without the permission of the church. Following their arrival in the Federal Republic of Germany, they could not find employment—as the result of an agreement between the EKD (Protestant Church in Germany) in the Federal Republic and the churches in the GDR.

It cannot be decided here whether or not the churches and those ministers who wanted to emigrate did everything in order to reach an acceptable result. But especially those who never considered emigration to the Federal Republic of Germany as a viable possibility for themselves, criticize the high-spirited tone, not the factual content, of declarations such as Krusche's (made in July 1978): "Jesus Christ is the Lord over everything and under his rule there is no situation in which a Christian cannot live. Those who follow him cannot shake off their cross, but they have to accept it willingly. This is especially
true for those who should be 'good examples to the flock'.

These critics point to the fact that there are degrees of desperation and resignation and forms of distress and destruction in one's life, for which words spoken in this tone no longer are testimony to Christ's rule. They believe that the "shepherd" who has grown weak should experience that kind of mercy which prevents the bent reed from breaking, the flickering flame from dying. Such mercy, however, is denied by the theological mercilessness of such declarations. In addition to the hardships in their personal lives, such individuals are publicly branded as "mercenaries."

Finally, the ministers and congregational members in the GDR observe with much concern the ecumenical activities of the churches and the Federation of Protestant Churches. The motivations for this scepticism are manifold, but they reflect once more the fact that ministers and congregational members view the policies of their churches as risky. One has to start out by saying that there is very little ecumenical thinking in the congregations of the GDR.

The churches of the GDR do contribute significant amounts of money to the "Bread for the World" project. Nevertheless, the intention of the donors is still determined by thought patterns typical of the (classical) mission and Caritas. Ever since the antiracist program of the Ecumenical Council of Churches (ORK) has become visible in its practical consequences, quite a few members of congregations have withdrawn their support of "Bread for the World." The idea that churches, too, now support in their way the global strategic goals of the socialist bloc has certainly played a significant role in this decision.

As was to be expected, congregations developed genuine ecumenical interests only on the basis of their own experience. In relation to the Catholic communities, an ecumenical behavior developed which may not always be unproblematic, at least for the Catholic bishops. Also, true sympathy is shown towards congregations in socialist countries of Eastern Europe. This sympathy is well documented by the support of the construction of the Warsaw "Children's Center" or by the positive reaction to a request for Bibles for German-speaking Christians in the USSR.
On the other hand, Christians in the GDR feel very little responsibility for the problems of Christianity in, say, Latin America or South Africa. The political and social conditions in the countries of the Third World can only be understood with difficulty, if at all. The theoretical theological discussions concerning revolution, use of force, etc., hotly debated in the West, hardly reach the congregations in the GDR, since these topics and their discussion are obviously not encouraged by state authorities. Certain declarations by the churches, which point in this direction, are therefore frequently met by a lack of comprehension. The identity of certain terms (for instance, solidarity, socialism), which carry very different meanings in East and West, often suggests opportunistic accommodation to the Christian in the GDR.

In connection with declarations of ecumenical solidarity on the part of GDR churches, which denounce human rights violations in, for example, the dictatorships of South America, the critics charge that the protests of the church increase with the political and geographical distance from the regions concerned. Are there not innumerable people in the Eastern countries, especially the Soviet Union, whose suffering the Christians in the GDR should consider in their prayers—given the fact that other forms of aid are impossible? GDR churches have not been able to answer this question, at least not publicly. Given the urgency and fundamental nature of this question, misgivings concerning the financial strains caused by ecumenical activities of the church (travel expenses, ecumenical study groups, task forces, etc.) are of secondary importance. They do show, however, that congregations are highly critical of any unnecessary representation by their churches.

Of course all the criticism mentioned here does not describe the overall situation of churches in the GDR. Especially those who suffer within their church, and who raise critical questions, can also tell of much joy which they find in their church. This would require a special report. In this report, the Biblical instruction was followed to “Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction” (Proverbs 31:8). All voices from the GDR churches must be heard. Not in order to confirm one’s own preconceptions (which, in the end, would be irrelevant), but in order to understand better those to

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whom we are related by "special bonds," so we can be their truly helpful partners.

The churches and Christians in the GDR are on their way. With self-assurance, they present themselves as believers who have found or defended their place in an outspokenly atheistic society. In speaking of their successes as well as their failures, we have to show a kind of responsibility born out of our knowledge of the special situation of these Christians. Neither should their hopes and fears be denounced as opportunism, nor belittled as inherently necessary consequences of social changes.

Translated by W. F. Karl, Graz, Austria
FOOTNOTES

1 Quoted from epd Dokumentation 41a/1976, p. 5.


3 By the time of the publication of this lecture, this should still be a valid statement. Cf. for example K.-A. Odin's editorial on the Frankfurter Allgemeine, 21 August 1981 (No. 192/34F), p. 1.

4 Exact data concerning the age composition of GDR ministers were not available. This report is merely based on a personal "impression" which may need correction.

5 The theologians at the Theological Universities of the GDR have in many ways a special position, which cannot be explained here.


7 Cf. epd Dokumentation 30/1972.

8 Report of the conference of church administration to the 5th session of the First Synod of the Federation of Protestant Churches in the GDR, Schwerin, 26 to 29 May 1973.


12 Deutsches Allgemeines Sonntagsblatt, Nr. 43/76.


14 epd Zentralausgabe, 29 September 1976.
15 epd Zentralausgabe, 29 September 1976.

16 No exact figures are available to the public. Sometimes a figure of 2% for ministers is quoted.

17 In the report of the council chairman for the EKU-Synode in Berlin-Weißensee (unpublished).