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The pilgrimage to the so-called 'Holy Coat' of Trier in the year 1844 is one of the events of the German Vormärz\(^1\) the negative relevance of which to the German revolution has so far scarcely been adequately recognised. The only historians really to have paid attention to it have been Catholic ecclesiastical scholars, since pilgrimages, like other forms of veneration of relics, belong on the margins of Catholic worship. It is worth asking, however, whether pilgrimages, and the great Trier pilgrimage of 1844 in particular, may not deserve a much more wide-ranging kind of attention from historians than is offered in denominationally based ecclesiastical history. The Trier pilgrimage has a social-historical dimension that bears interestingly on the central question of the Vormärz, namely the relation between social and religious activity. If it is seen as more than simply an expression of old or revived popular religious custom, questions can be raised as to the relative importance of spontaneity and organisation. What set the hosts of travelling pilgrims on their way? What political strategy of the church's underlay the whole pilgrimage movement? Finally: was the pilgrimage, for the church leadership, merely an instrument of internal church revival, or should it be seen, pre-eminently, as a thoroughly concerted display of political power on the church's part?

I

The occasion for the pilgrimage of 1844 was the putting on public display of a relic that was normally kept under lock and key: a piece of clothing purportedly worn at His death by the historical figure of Christ. The Trier affair — the processions of the pilgrims and the events in the city itself — was described many times by contemporary supporters of the pilgrimage, most memorably by the old Joseph Görres,\(^2\) in his publication *The Pilgrimage to Trier*, though this was admittedly a product of 'Romantic science poetry' and not of direct testimony. Despite conflicting assessments of the affair,
contemporary observers proved to be in accord in being impressed by the
great number of pilgrims. It was clear, above all, that the pilgrimage was a
mass phenomenon. Since mass movements were no everyday occurrence in
the German Vormärz police state, the Trier pilgrimage was seen as sensa-
tional in virtue of the high level of participation alone. Seen from today's
perspective, it can be called the largest organised mass movement of the
Vormärz period as a whole.

In 1832, in Hambach and elsewhere, the liberal democratic middle class
of south-west Germany organised large public demonstrations for the first
time. Tens of thousands took part. In 1844 the Catholic Church mobilised,
not tens, but hundreds of thousands. In a detailed advance estimate, the
church authorities in Trier arrived at a total of 152,875 pilgrims, with those,
indeed, coming from external dioceses reckoned at only 8,850. In May
1844 the Lord Mayor and Chief Administrator of Trier calculated that
300,000 people would come to the city. In fact, many more came.

The church leadership had the results of a 'Special Demonstration'
circulated, according to which a total of 1,050,835 pilgrims had seen the
relic exposed in Trier Cathedral. This figure came from counts made in the
cathedral by the voluntary security force of the Trier citizenry, the so-called
'Guard of Honour'. Jakob Marx, the pilgrimage propagandist, regarded the
figure as the most reliable. The Triersche Zeitung of 8 October 1844 also
mentioned a total of 1,100,000 visitors to the cathedral. The figure of a
million was taken over into the contemporary literature from these Trier
sources and transmitted down to the present day. It is, however, pitched far
too high. For one thing, the cathedral counts were quite inexact. Further-
more, on 19 out of a total of 50 days no counts were made in the cathedral
and figures were estimated afterwards. Despite all security measures, too, a
considerable proportion of pilgrims seems to have gained admittance into
the cathedral on more than one occasion. On the basis of contemporary
statistics, we arrive at about half the number of pilgrims calculated by the
over-eager assessors in the cathedral. These statistics give the following
picture (see Table 3.1).

The figures of Marx and Delahaye shown here indicate a round total of
450,000 pilgrims; Bechttold's incomplete data point in the same general
direction. Both Marx and Delahaye, for different reasons, added in a further
100,000 not included in church or police lists respectively. Even if these
unconfirmable additions are thought over-generous, a total estimate of
about 500,000 pilgrims does not seem to be set too high.

This is, in any event, a quite remarkable figure, on two counts: first,
these half a million people flocked to Trier in the space of only 50 days
(from 18 August to 6 October); secondly, according to the census of late
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Place of origin</th>
<th>Number of Pilgrims</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trier diocese, by deaneries, 20.8 – 14.9</td>
<td>M. Bechtold</td>
<td>Jakob Marx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Bernkastel</td>
<td>16,776</td>
<td>17,776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bitburg</td>
<td>24,144</td>
<td>27,344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Daun</td>
<td>10,400</td>
<td>11,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ehrang</td>
<td>26,739</td>
<td>29,239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Hermeskeil</td>
<td>28,500</td>
<td>19,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Merzig</td>
<td>22,286</td>
<td>22,286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ottweiler</td>
<td>11,000</td>
<td>11,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Prüm</td>
<td>9,485</td>
<td>11,265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Saarbrücken</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td>3,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Saarburg</td>
<td>26,164</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Saarlouis</td>
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<td>18,670</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>St Wendel</td>
<td>5,600</td>
<td>6,800</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Wittlich</td>
<td>26,455</td>
<td>27,005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Adenau</td>
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<td>7,100</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Ahrweiler</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
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<td>14,558</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Engers</td>
<td>5,250</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Koblenz</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Kreuznach</td>
<td>2,317</td>
<td>1,810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Mayen</td>
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<td>21</td>
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<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Meisenheim</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>110</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>297,447</strong></td>
<td><strong>309,729</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Sources:

M. Bechtold, a priest, had responsibility within the cathedral provosty for registering processions. A manuscript (probably Bechtold's), containing incomplete statistical data, is in the Trier Diocesan Archive.


Note: Typographical errors in the original table have been corrected.
1843, the city had only 24,554 inhabitants, of whom, moreover, 7,798 lived in 16 suburbs and villages on the outskirts, some of them quite far from the centre. Thus, for seven weeks an average of 10,000 people a day came into a city of which the main buildings, within the medieval walls, housed only 15,064 inhabitants. It is not surprising that contemporary descriptions speak of the 'almost daily over-crowding' of the city.

It is obvious that the vast majority of pilgrims came from the diocese of Trier, within the administrative boundaries of which lay the two Prussian government districts of Trier and Koblenz as well as the Oldenburg enclave of Birkenfeld and the Hesse-Homburg rural district of Meisenheim on the left bank of the Rhine. As Table 3.1 shows (line 28), they constituted over 350,000 of the 450,000 recorded pilgrims. If we assume that the government districts of Trier and Koblenz together had at least 663,182 Catholic inhabitants (line 26), then, ignoring the tiny Catholic minorities in Birkenfeld and Meisenheim, over half of the Catholics in the diocese of Trier would have responded to Bishop Arnoldi's appeal. Admittedly, multiple pilgrimages per person are included in that figure. They should in the main be assigned to the local districts and deaneries immediately surrounding Trier. Let us compare Catholic population figures in the table for the deaneries of Bitburg, Ehrang and Hermeskeil, Merzig, Saarburg and Wittlich with their respective numbers of pilgrims (lines 2, 4 and 5, 6, 10 and 13). Assuming only single pilgrimages per person, between 60 and 95 per cent of the Catholic populations in these deaneries would have had to come to Trier. Since, however, effectively only adults travelled to Trier, these percentages must be rejected, even if we include non-Catholics, negligibly few in these particular districts. Noticeably fewer pilgrims came from the more distant deaneries of the Hunsrück and the Eifel, and in the Koblenz government district only Mayen and Cochem exceeded 10,000 at all. In other words, the frequency of pilgrimages declines significantly with increasing distance from Trier.

The Trier pilgrimage would presumably have created much less of a stir if it had been merely a local event arranged by the Trier diocese. The exposition of the cathedral relic, however, also exerted considerable drawing-power outside the narrow confines of the diocese. Fairly large groups of pilgrims came, in particular, from the historical areas of the former Trier archbishopric, from the diocese of Limburg in one direction and the dioceses of Luxemburg, Nancy and Metz in the other (cf. lines 30, 31, 33 and 35 in the table). The high number from the Cologne archbishopric is also worthy of note (line 29). Smaller groups came from the dioceses of Mainz and Speyer (not Prussian), bordering Trier on the south (lines 32 and 36). The Trier exposition, then, kindled a popular movement that not only was incomparably large but also extended widely across regions. It constituted,
in fact, a ‘pilgrimage of the peoples of the Rhine’, in Görres’ celebratory words — words, it is true, of poetic licence and exaggeration. Both in numbers of participants and in size of catchment area, the Trier pilgrimage outstripped all comparable ecclesiastical ventures in Germany in the first half of the nineteenth century.

II

Pro-church journalism was unanimous in hailing the Trier pilgrimage as a festival of unity that breached all political barriers and class divisions. It has rightly been said that ‘unity’ was the ‘great watchword of the supporters of the pilgrimage’. At the foundation of this cult of unity was the ecclesiastico-religious symbolism of the supposed seamless garment, the tunic of the dead Jesus of Nazareth, regarded from earliest times as a symbol of the unity of the church. Thus Görres, invoking Augustine, called the pilgrimage a ‘symbol of the infrangible unity’ of the church. This traditional justification, however, ideologised by Görres in a Romantic sense, was overlaid, in apologies for the pilgrimage, by socio-political argument. Jakob Marx spoke of the ‘brotherly union and equality of people of all stations’. He saw the pilgrimage as abolishing the ‘differences among men in civil society’ and their splintering into ‘particular classes’. With a characteristic blending of the socio-political dimension and ecclesiastical dogmatism, he dissociated himself from a class-based concept of the common people according to which ‘simple town and country folk are to be regarded as antitheses of the respected, the rich, the polite, the so-called educated’. ‘The church’, he noted, ‘knows only clergy and people, and the latter contains, in an ecclesiastical sense, all of the faithful, be they rich or poor, polite or humble, governors or governed, learned or unlearned, nobility or commoners.’ In his view, and in the view of other propagandists for the pilgrimage, the Catholic Church had thus, via the route of an active unity of belief, founded a new unity of the people. And this was by no means intended in a merely spiritual and symbolic sense. A Würzburg pilgrimage pamphlet said: ‘The edifice that fraudulent freedom seeks to achieve, as its greatest object, by means of smoking ruins and corpses — that, religion has attained; fraternal equality held sway among the thousands.’ Here, then, is an appeal on the pilgrimage’s behalf for revolutionary égalité, conjoined with fraternité and liberté — but all to be taken in a counter-revolutionary sense. The class harmony claimed for the pilgrimage proves to be less a social reality than a socio-political programme. The social physiognomy of the Trier pilgrimage movement must therefore be examined more closely.

In contradiction to the church’s notion that it had mobilised all levels of society for the pilgrimage, contemporary opponents of the pilgrimage
complained that only members of the lower social strata had taken part. Those critics of the pilgrimage venture whose views are recorded said, for example, that the pilgrims belonged ‘almost exclusively to the lower classes’, that they looked ‘truly poor and wretched’, that the ‘majority of pilgrims’ consisted of ‘destitute, uneducated people, who brought their last farthings with them to Trier’. An anonymous writer points out that the pilgrims should be reckoned among the ‘poor classes’, classes ‘whose need and misery grow from day to day and threaten to bring us to the edge of that abyss which has already begun to manifest itself in the instances of English pauperism and the French proletariat’. The same charge is made in the open letter to Bishop Arnoldi of Trier by the Silesian ex-priest Johannes Ronge, first published in the Sächsische Vaterlandsblätter in Leipzig on 15 October. In this powerfully worded pamphlet Ronge provided the first impetus for the religious and political ‘German Catholicism’ movement, which, dogmatically and ideologically, and in virtue of its initially mass character, constituted the most noteworthy reply to the Trier pilgrimage movement. Ronge’s attack, however, also caused the attention of a wider public to be directed to the question of the social origins and composition of the hosts of Trier pilgrims. The crucial sentences in Ronge’s proclamation run: ‘Five times one hundred thousand people, five times one hundred thousand Germans of good sense have already hastened to a piece of clothing in Trier, to venerate it or merely to see it! Most of these thousands of people are from the lower classes, very poor in any event, oppressed, ignorant, dull-witted, superstitious and, some of them, degenerate.’ Thus did Ronge inaugurate the debate concerning the social character of the Trier pilgrimage.

What is particularly striking about this controversy is the fact that many of the pro-church writers on the subject of the pilgrimage, having been driven onto the defensive, fully confirmed the pilgrimage’s class character. ‘To be sure, most were from the lower classes’, a Breslau pamphlet says, for example, ‘simply because in the region of the Rhine, as everywhere, such people are by far the most numerous.’ A Rheingau priest, in an ‘open letter’ to Ronge, explicitly defends the ‘hundreds of thousands of pilgrims’ on the grounds that they come from the ‘healthy core of the German nation: from the common people’. Others conceded that the bulk of the pilgrims were peasants and small artisans, but sought to defend them against the reproach of poverty and ignorance. The pilgrims were ‘poor country folk’, but not ‘rabble’. Even though Jakob Marx and others stood fast by the unification ideology of the pilgrimage, contemporary polemics made it clear that the great mass of the pilgrims were members of the lower social strata, i.e. peasants (especially winegrowers), small artisans and tradespeople. It was also repeatedly reported that a large number were women.
It must be borne in mind that the economic position of this lower stratum was severely threatened. At the beginning of the 1840s the Mosel area was, with Silesia, the poorest region of the whole Prussian state. As in Silesia, the above-average level of pauperisation of the Mosel population was quite recent in origin. Back in the first decade of Prussian rule, the Mosel region had experienced a perceptible economic upturn. That this upturn veered immediately into a crisis had to do with the special economic structure of the area, which was largely based on a monoculture of wine. After incorporation into the Prussian state, the Mosel winegrowers had won themselves a quasi-monopolistic preference arrangement, which gave them cause to extend their vineyards and undertake corresponding capital investment. The signing of the Prussia-Hesse customs treaty in 1828 put paid at a stroke to this preference arrangement, since the Prussian government took no account of the customs policy’s immediate social consequences for its subjects. The accession of Nassau to the German Customs Union in 1835 intensified the wine-trade crisis in the Prussian Rhineland. By 1836 about 49,000 winegrowers had been affected by it. The misguided taxation policy of the undiscerning financial authorities in Berlin further exacerbated the hardship of the winegrowers. Since the 1830s the plight of the Mosel had been regularly discussed in the Rhenish provincial parliaments, along with all its side-effects, such as the wood-stealing which moved Karl Marx to publish his first social critiques, in the Rheinische Zeitung, in 1842. These impoverished winegrowers, and the tradespeople dependent on them, made up the central core of the Trier pilgrims.

The lower-class pilgrims were not, certainly, left to themselves. In line with previous church plans, numerous clergy were to be found among them, as procession leaders. In the notes made by Bechtold, the bishop’s representative, there are names of 283 priests for the period up to 14 September. One Mainz procession alone was accompanied by 15 priests. But the higher clergy came too, including no fewer than ten bishops. It was no coincidence that among them were the heads of the church in the dioceses from which most of the pilgrims came: the bishops of Limburg (Blum), Luxemburg (Vicar Apostolic Laurent), Nancy (von Menjaud), Verdun (Rossat), Cologne (Coadjutor von Geissel) and Speyer (Weis). Conversely, the bishop of Mainz, Kaiser, from whose diocese relatively few pilgrims went, did not attend. Kaiser, indeed, is said to have instructed his priests not to make propaganda on behalf of the Trier exposition. In his stead, however, Arnoldi was able to welcome to Trier a Belgian bishop (Vicar Apostolic von Wykersloot from Leyden) and three bishops from Westphalia: the bishop of Münster (Maximilian von Droste-Vischering), his suffragan bishop (Vicar Apostolic Lüpke) and the bishop of Osnabrück
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(Melchers). The rare appearance of so many high church officials shows how much importance the Rhenish church leadership placed on the pilgrimage. In addition, their presence in Trier was heavily emphasised. Arnoldi shared with the bishop of Verdun, for example, the duties at the closing ceremony of the exposition. He informed the Metropolitan of Cologne, Geissel, of his plans for the pilgrimage as early as the end of May, and kept him up to date, in further letters, with the progress of the enterprise right up to Geissel’s arrival in Trier on 28 September. He worked particularly closely with the head of the Luxemburg church, Laurent. The latter not only had publicised the pilgrimage in one of his own pastoral letters but also crossed the frontier on foot himself, with a procession from Luxemburg. Arnoldi travelled out from Trier to meet him.

The Westphalian bishops brought no mass processions with them. Their presence in Trier, however, produced another social-historical conjuncture. In the radical Mannheimer Abendzeitung during November 1844 there were arguments whether only the ‘mob, polite and common’ had taken part in the pilgrimage or whether other social ranks had also attended. The class here described in unspecific, polemical language as the ‘polite mob’ — a phrase which at once aroused fierce criticism and counter-criticism — was the aristocracy. It is known, in fact, that the Westphalian Catholic nobility, in particular, travelled to Trier during the period when the ‘Holy Coat’ was exhibited. The most sensational case of an alleged miracle cure brought about by the relic was that of a Countess von Droste-Vischering. Baron von Andlaw of Baden, who wrote to the Mannheimer Abendzeitung on 14 November, was also a pilgrim in Trier. On the other hand, the educated and prosperous middle class was almost entirely absent: that is to say, academics, civil servants and members of the Rhenish bourgeoisie or, in the parlance of the time, the Mittelstand (middle class) or the gebildete Klassen (educated classes). The Trier pilgrimage can thus be seen, from the viewpoint of social history, as a mass movement of the lower social strata, with staging and accompaniment provided by the Catholic clergy and nobility. Contrary to the ideology of unity promulgated by church propagandists, the middle class played practically no role. Rather, it rejected and stood apart from the ‘close alliance’ between ‘ultramontane priesthood’ and ‘high nobility’ that emerged in the pilgrimage. Consistently with this position, many middle-class spokesmen at first ranged themselves with the German Catholic counter-movement, and against the pilgrimage.

This stance had already become evident from the fact that Ronge first published his celebrated letter to Arnoldi in the Sächsische Vaterlandsblätter, edited by Robert Blum: the most influential anti-pilgrimage declaration was thus issued, by the former priest, in an organ of the middle-class liberal
left. The *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* reported soon afterwards that Ronge’s article was being read and discussed in Silesia ‘in most public gatherings of middle-class citizens’. The *Mannheimer Zeitung* reported from Baden that it was the ‘middle classes’ that had been ‘especially electrified by this essay’. In Saxony, too, Ronge’s appeal won the sympathy of the middle-class opposition. Apart from the *Sächsische Vaterlandsblätter*, Karl Biedermann’s *Herold* and other journals also took Ronge’s side. The most influential vote for German Catholicism, however, probably came from the liberal historian Gervinus, in his publication ‘Die Mission der Deutschkatholiken’ [‘The Mission of the German Catholics’]. Gervinus saw the German Catholic movement as arising from the ‘heart of the middle classes’. He interpreted it, in accordance with his liberal philosophy of history, as a political movement of the historically educated middle class. He contraposed a programme of rallying of middle-class opinion, on a supra-denominational religious basis, to the alliance of Catholic Church and preindustrial proletariat that had come to the fore in the Trier pilgrimage.

By contrast, middle-class radicals admired German Catholicism precisely for its mass character: as a ‘movement of the people in the mass’ that was taking seriously the ‘social idealism of Christianity’. And in 1849, in a critical retrospect, Bruno Bauer still spoke of Ronge as the ‘hero of the middle class’. He had articulated the middle class’s ‘horror’ at the ‘spectacle in Trier’. True, the social reality of the German Catholicism movement, to the best of our present knowledge, lived up to the wishful thinking of neither the liberal nor the radical middle-class intelligentsia. German Catholicism did not remain a middle-class movement, nor did it build a political bridge between the middle class and the emergent proletariat. What is certain, however, is that Ronge’s attack created a national awareness that the middle class had been excluded from the Trier pilgrimage.

**III**

Despite its mass character, the Trier pilgrimage would doubtless not have been thought sensational if it had been merely one pilgrimage within a regular cycle — like, for example, the Aachen cathedral pilgrimages that took place every seven years. The exposition of the cathedral relic, however, was a far from normal occurrence. The tradition of exhibiting the relic certainly goes back into the early modern period, but the rhythm of pilgrimages seems at first sight to have no inner logic.

Even in the Middle Ages numerous legends had formed concerning the whereabouts of the alleged Holy Coat, legends which increasingly, but by no means exclusively, came to centre on Trier. The first report of an actual, tangible object comes at the end of the twelfth century. The relic was not
put on public display, however, until the initiative was taken by the Emperor Maximilian I at the Trier Imperial Diet of 1512. The 'Holy Coat' was exposed for 23 days in May of that year, together with a range of other cathedral relics. On the basis of the great public success of the exposition the Elector of Trier, Archbishop Richard von Greiffenklau, applied for papal recognition of the pilgrimage. As a result Pope Leo X, in his bull of 1514, *Salvator Noster Dominus*, and in executive instructions that followed in 1515, granted plenary indulgence for a pilgrimage that would take place every seven years. Thereafter, beginning in 1517, four expositions took place at this interval until 1538, with one display outside the sequence in 1539 or 1540. Although the circumstances and course of these pilgrimages have not yet been examined in detail, there can be no doubt that this organised series belongs in the context of the sixteenth-century crisis in the church. In this instance, as in others, the attempt was made to exploit the proliferation of pilgrimages and other late-fifteenth-century popular religious customs in order to strengthen, both ideologically and materially, the institutionalised Catholic Church. Significantly, the Trier pilgrimage was a particular thorn in the flesh of the Reformers. Luther, in his appeal 'To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation' of 1520, reckoned it among the newly established pilgrimages that should be abolished again. In 1531 he asked, in his familiar, earthy fashion: 'What in the World is this new Pox of a Fraud in Trier, this Coat of Christ? What Manner of Annual Fair hath the Devil held here, and what thousands of false Miracles hath he sold?' The victory of the Reformation in Germany seems, in turn, finally to have disrupted the pattern of pilgrimages in Trier. Only in 1585 was there another brief exposition of the Coat. Its immediate occasion was the restoration of Catholicism in the Trier Electorate. It was the first time the pilgrimage was used for the only purpose for which it continued to be staged, at irregular intervals, in the following centuries: to summon the faithful and to demonstrate regained strength during or after fundamental crises in the church's existence.

The only exposition in the seventeenth century, in 1655, marked the church's revival after the convulsions of the Thirty Years' War. To all appearances it was also connected with the formation of the Rhenish Alliance of Catholic territorial states (Electoral Cologne, Electoral Trier, Münster, Palatine Neuburg and Electoral Mainz). The next occasion, in September 1810, was intended to demonstrate the reconstruction of church organisation after the old nobility church had crumbled under the blows of revolution and secularisation. Napoleon himself backed the efforts of the French bishop, Mannay, to retrieve the relic from Augsburg, where it had been transported. The 1844 pilgrimage fell between this one and that of
1891. The latter is clearly connected with the end of the *Kulturkampf* and the repeal of the anti-socialist law. The Bishop of Trier, Korum, depicted it unambiguously as an instrument of aggressive Catholic social policy aimed against the labour movement. It is not surprising that, on 30 August 1891, socialist workers distributed political propaganda to a pilgrimage procession of Saar miners. The next exposition, in 1933, had been decided on before Hitler’s seizure of power. The original spur for it was probably the ending of the Allied occupation of Trier province in 1929. The separation of the Saar from the German Reich also played a part. As the heavy influx of pilgrims from the Saar showed, the pilgrimage strengthened the national cohesiveness of the Mosel Catholics with the Saar Catholics of the Trier diocese. The course of the pilgrimage further demonstrated that it, too, not only had internal religious causes but also contained heavily political implications. All the evidence indicates that it was conducted with the full agreement of the new National Socialist authorities. Mention need be made here, even if individual details require clarification, only of the fact that Storm Trooper personnel in uniform were responsible for security in the cathedral precincts. The circumstances of the latest pilgrimage, in 1959, still await full description. It can be presumed, however, that it refers back to the high point of Christian Democratic political strength in the Federal Republic, in 1957. The visit of Chancellor Adenauer to Trier points clearly to this. All told, a clear line extends over the three hundred years between 1655 and 1959: throughout, admittedly in varying circumstances, the institutionalised Catholic Church is evidently striving to make certain of the visible support of its faithful, during or after times of threat to its existence. This, then, is the wider context in which the 1844 pilgrimage must also be seen.

It is true that in 1844 the only link, for contemporaries, was to the pilgrimage of 1810. The link arose, in particular, from the way the earlier pilgrimage had been staged. The French bishop Mannay showed in 1810 how masses of people could be set into motion on the church’s behalf without jeopardy to the sovereign authority of the state. The same happened in 1844, and the recourse to Mannay’s Pilgrimage Statute on that occasion was not fortuitous. It was pilgrimage from above that was here being freshly developed at the start of the nineteenth century. This opened up the possibility for the Roman Catholic Church of influencing and directing the masses towards a definite purpose.

The last, eighteenth-century Trier Electors had not perceived the opportunities for advancing church policy that were provided by the manipulation of pilgrimages. It was not merely owing to external causes such as wars that no Holy Coat pilgrimage took place in Trier throughout the eighteenth century. The enlightened church hierarchy of the time was opposed to
pilgrimages on theological grounds. As I see it, however, the suspicion of pilgrimages on the part of the ruling landed Trier archbishops is more to be explained in terms of the way pilgrimages were organised. Since the late Middle Ages, or at least since the Reformation, they had been run first and foremost by religious brotherhoods, i.e. corporations of lay Christians, and not by the church and priesthood proper. Originally the church assumed close control over the corporation pilgrimages. The brotherhoods, however, had always tended to develop a devotional dynamic of their own. In the eighteenth century, pilgrimages in the Rhineland had reached such a pitch that, in the Trier district at Whitsun, for example, 'the whole diocese' was said to have been 'on the move'. The last Elector of Trier, Bishop Clemens Wenzeslaus, tried in the 1770s to curb this proliferating growth by means of strict prohibitions. Thus the episcopal Vicariate-General proceeded, for example, against the so-called 'apostles' who accompanied all processions in Limburg. They were enjoined to remove their misshapen headgear, to desist from 'bellowing' while praying and to 'abstain in future from all clapping of the hands, waving of the fingers, and kissing' during the solemn arrival of the Good Friday procession. These measures sprang not merely from the revulsion of enlightened theologians at the carnival atmosphere of most pilgrimages and places of pilgrimage but from freely avowed, if ill-defined, political anxiety at uncontrolled popular activity: unease at the sight of the pilgrims 'idling and swarming around', concern at the 'enthusiasm of the common people'. The prince's measures were so wide-ranging that large pilgrimage centres suffered severe economic setbacks. This was particularly true of the city of Trier, which had in any case been pushed into a marginal economic position since the seventeenth century. Significantly, the revolutionary disturbances in Trier in 1789 can also be attributed to the Electoral prohibitions on processions. In 1790 the City Magistrate of Trier, impressed by these disturbances, prevailed upon Clemens Wenzeslaus to have the 'Holy Coat' returned to Trier from the fortress of Ehrenbreitstein, where it had been evacuated. Owing to further revolutionary events, however, there was no public exposition.

Although the Bishop of Trier, Mannay, organised a pilgrimage to the 'Holy Coat' in 1810, with Napoleon's support, this was not the signal for a free resumption of pilgrimages. The French also tried to restrict processions in the areas of the old Reich that they had occupied. The religious corporations in the Rhenish departments were dissolved by consular decree on 9 June 1802. All processions, regarded as 'arlequinades sacerdotales et rassemblements fanatiques', were met with hostility. It was only during the transition period between French and Prussian rule that the wild pilgrimage spirit flared up again in the areas on the left bank of the Rhine in the former
religious Electorates of Cologne and Trier. The suppressed brotherhoods re-formed. It would be jumping to conclusions, though, to connect the organised Holy Coat pilgrimage of 1844 with the general upsurge of pilgrimages in the second and third decades of the century. This upsurge was, in fact, a passing phase. The Restoration Prussian state insisted, as is known, on the late-absolutist conception of an established state church. The Catholic Church in Prussia, its economic and social base critically affected during the French revolutionary period by the secularisation measures, was at first hardly in a position to keep free of the leading-strings of an authoritarian state. Rebuilding church organisation, and procuring and providing long-term security for church finances, were the main priorities. In addition, the Archbishop of Cologne, Count August Spiegel, and his Trier colleague, Joseph von Hommer — both latter-day representatives of the old aristocratic imperial church — were favourably disposed towards the Prussian practice of a restored established state church. It is not surprising, therefore, that the actions of the Rhenish church leaders and of the Prussian state government during the 1820s and early 1830s coincided to hold down the pilgrimage movement in Rhine Province.

On the state side this policy was pursued systematically, after it had become clear in the early 1820s that the first Prussian pilgrimage regulations of 1816-17 had remained largely ineffective. In August 1825 the Prussian Minister of Public Worship and Education, von Altenstein, ordered a detailed survey of all pilgrimages in Rhine Province. All district presidents in the province were asked to provide 'as exact a list as possible of public pilgrimages occurring in their district, with accounts of distances travelled, approximate numbers of participants, the time customarily spent on pilgrimages and the time of year in which such pilgrimages are held'. From the research of the district presidents — which was painstaking, though mainly a matter of estimates — it emerged that in Rhine Province in the mid-1820s about 150,000 people per year made journeys of pilgrimage, out of a total population (in 1828) of 2,203,000. The correspondence of the authorities shows that the government regarded pilgrimages less from the viewpoint of church policy than from those of state security and the economy. It was laboriously calculated that subjects going on pilgrimage spent 75,000 thalers a year, leaving out of account losses caused by the 'suspension of commercial activity'. It was feared above all, however, that the uncontrolled activity of the 'lower classes' might endanger the security of the state. The interest of an 'intelligent state officialdom' (Altenstein) lay, ultimately, in defeating pilgrimages by indirect means. An ordinance of Altenstein's to the Düsseldorf government on 7 February 1839 says explicitly:
Inasmuch as pilgrimages are indeed an evil, they must be combatted from within, by the promotion of newer thinking. Outward hostility may easily make the evil worse, and there would be a danger of provoking the fanaticism of the lowest classes against the state government by a direct assault on its religious interests, a result which is now, particularly, to be avoided.

Only the Catholic clergy was capable of carrying out the task of enlightening the potential masses of pilgrims in the way that Altenstein wished. In point of fact, Spiegel and Hommer had always been ready to fulfil the task the state required of them. In a pastoral letter of May 1826, Spiegel had already attempted to dissuade members of his diocese from taking part in pilgrimages, using the enlightenment theological argument that ‘God and His Saints’ were not bound to any single place. Fully in accord with the government, he warned as much against ‘neglect of the obligations of occupation and rank’ as against ‘coarsest excesses’. In similar fashion, if more restrainedly, Hommer sought in 1827 to deter his flock from pilgrimages on the ground that they opened the door ‘immodestis et excessibus scandalosiss’. He attempted to get a picture, by means of questionnaires sent out to his priests, of the existence and activities of brotherhoods and of the prevalence of processions, in order to have criteria for assessing pilgrimages and placing them under stricter surveillance. In a letter Spiegel summarised the goal of the joint efforts of the Prussian government and the Catholic hierarchy in the Rhineland: ‘Devotion and piety are nourished, order, diligence and work in the domestic realm are not interrupted, expense is spared, and there is less cause for moral transgression.’

IV

The united hostility of the Prussian government and the Rhenish church hierarchy towards the phenomenon of mass pilgrimages prevailed until 1836, the year of the deaths of both Spiegel and Hommer. Eight years later, the mass pilgrimage to Trier took place, at the church’s instigation and with state approval. At first sight, then, a totally new situation in church policy seems to have emerged. Nevertheless, a striking degree of continuity with regard to pilgrimages can also be perceived during the years 1836-42.

It is well known that the Catholic Church in the Rhineland and the Prussian police and bureaucratic state came into conflict over fundamentals of church policy during these years and that the church seemed to be being driven into the camp of the state’s enemies. The so-called ‘Cologne Disturbances’ stand out in this conflict: in the course of them, the Archbishop of Cologne, Droste-Vischering, was imprisoned by the Prussian
authorities. It is less well known that during exactly the same period there occurred what contemporaries themselves called the 'Trier Disturbances'. In Trier, it took six years for a new bishop to be selected and approved after the death of Hommer; in Cologne, the question of so-called 'mixed marriages' took equally long; and in both cases what was at stake was the state's right to intervene in official church business — i.e. in matters which the Rhenish Catholic Church leadership claimed to be internal questions.

This collision of claims to authority between church and state did not come from out of the blue. It must, it is agreed, be seen in the context of the controversy within the church between a traditionalist, strict-ecclesiastical tendency and a late-absolutist, state-church trend — in hierarchical terms, between 'ultramontanism' (i.e. centralist loyalty to Rome) and 'state episcopality'. With the ultramontanists' victory within the Rhenish church leadership, the Catholic Church acquired a spirit of independence vis-à-vis the Prussian government which the Prussian bureaucracy, accustomed to the subordination of a state church, at first misconstrued as provocative and threatening. Some elements in the Rhenish middle class felt the time was at hand when an alliance between liberalism and the church might be formed in Germany, following the French and, especially, the Belgian precedents. In reality, neither option was available to the Catholic Church. Rather, the Catholic leadership and the Prussian state government continued to be allied on a conservative basis against the forces of revolution that threatened them. The Cologne and Trier conflicts merely altered the modalities of their collaboration. Henceforward it was a question, not of the subordination of church to state, but of their equality and co-operation. Here was the origin of the theory of the alliance between throne and altar. Certainly, the vehemence of the conflict at first concealed from contemporaries the fact that its most important product was precisely the continuation, through change, of the relationship between state and Catholic Church. Nevertheless, the Trier pilgrimage of 1844 was already a first indication of the new disposition of forces in the field of revolution and conservative tenacity.

The pilgrimage to the cathedral relic in Trier was launched in 1844 by Bishop Wilhelm Arnoldi. Hagiographical church histories have painted a stylised picture of Arnoldi as a non-political anima candida. He was no such thing, however. The care with which he prepared and publicised the pilgrimage venture contradicts this in the first place. Pamphlets, tracts, newspaper articles and, especially, sermons boosted the pilgrimage, inside and outside the Trier diocese, from the spring of 1844 onwards. Arnoldi devoted special efforts to influencing the press. He put pressure on the middle-class, radical Tiersche Zeitung, of the critical attitude of which
towards the church's pilgrimage policy he was well aware, by inducing the clergy and Catholic dignitaries in the city of Trier to impose a boycott. The threatened loss of Catholic subscribers caused the newspaper so to restrain itself during the pilgrimage affair that it was rebuked by the fellow-radical *Sächsische Vaterlandsblätter* for glossing over the issue and approving of the pilgrimage, as well as for using 'hypocritical and ambiguous language'. Earlier, in 1843, the Koblenz *Rhein- und Moselzeitung* had been forced by a similar boycott to accede to the influence of the strict-ecclesiastical circle of Koblenz intellectuals centred round Joseph Dietz. Significantly, however, the decisive shift in this paper's editorial policy took place only in June 1844. The new ultramontane line therefore first came fully into view during the Trier pilgrimage. It is as good as certain that this publicity backing was synchronised with Arnoldi's project, although the relationship between the Koblenz activists and their bishop was not without its tensions. The Bishop of Trier clearly also had a hand in the petition of Trier citizens of late 1844 which demanded (to no avail) the lifting of the ban on the *Historisch-Politische Blätter* that was in force in Prussia. There are a striking number of clerics among the signatories, with the canon, Müller, at their head.

Arnoldi's most important publicity manoeuvre, however, was in Luxemburg. Here, from 1 July 1844, at his initiative and at that of the Luxemburg Vicar Apostolic, Johann Theodor Laurent; the *Luxemburger Zeitung* began publication. Arnoldi seems not only to have had a financial role in this undertaking, but also to have recruited August Reichensperger, who had been transferred from Cologne to Trier as recently as February 1844, as a contributor to the new paper. Further, he no doubt hoped, by founding this newspaper, to bypass the restrictive Prussian press laws. At any rate, an application to move the editorial offices of the *Luxemburger Zeitung* to Trier was rejected in November 1844 by the Prussian Minister of the Interior, Count von Arnim. Apostrophised by the *Triersche Zeitung* as the most 'splendid oddity of the nineteenth century', the *Luxemburger Zeitung* was none the less the most important publicity organ of the Trier church leadership during the Holy Coat pilgrimage.

Arnoldi's political temper was revealed — more clearly than in his press policies, where he mainly stayed in the background — in his sermons and pastoral letters. He possessed pronounced gifts as an agitator: it was said in 1842 that he had preached his way to the bishopric. His sermons were in no way confined to pious edification; he took decisive stands on political questions. His Lent sermons of 1839, in particular, reveal a clear anti-revolutionary, conservative, traditionalist standpoint. In them he broadcast polemics against the 'abominable spectre of revolution', attacked the 'enemies of religion' with their 'hollow phrases of popular happiness and
freedom’ and condemned the ‘fanatical, irreligious or tyrannical adherents of party’. In his pastoral letter of 6 January 1845 critics of the pilgrimage, especially Ronge’s German Catholic counter-movement, were sent packing as ‘abetters of unbelief and revolution’. From this counter-revolutionary position, he was able to commend the church as the guarantor of the monarchic state:

The sacred authority of the church is the greatest bulwark of the sovereign’s throne; and as long as the Catholic shall be a faithful child of his church, so long shall he also be a faithful subject. For our Mother Church warns ceaselessly against the irreligious and seditious principles that, sometimes covertly, sometimes openly, penetrate society in manifold forms and throw it into ferment.

It must remain an open question whether or not Arnoldi acted on his own initiative when he switched from being a propagandist to being an activist on behalf of counter-revolutionary church politics. He told his own cathedral chapter, the members of the diocese and the Prussian government authorities in 1844 that ‘pious requests’ for a pilgrimage had repeatedly been conveyed to him. There is no doubt, certainly, that memories of the 1810 pilgrimage remained vivid in the Trier region during the Prussian period. Bishop von Hommer seems to have aired earlier the question of a new staging of the pilgrimage — at any rate, he was deeply enough taken up with the matter of the ‘Holy Coat’ for a brief written account to have been produced. In it, he posed the question whether ‘the thing is indeed genuine’. His answer was: ‘Complete certainty as regards the genuineness of the Holy Coat cannot, therefore, be demanded.’ This carefully neutral verdict chimes exactly with his attitude towards the idea of pilgrimages altogether. It seems likely, then, that he would consistently have refused to organise a new exposition of the Coat in Trier.

Hommer’s recognition, however, that pilgrimages were ‘never entirely to be done away with’ was also borne out in the case of the Trier Coat. After his death, discussions about a new cathedral pilgrimage began afresh. They can, at any rate, be traced back to 1841, the period of interregnum between bishops. In July of that year, the Triersche Zeitung got going a vigorous controversy over the religious meaning of pilgrimages. Peter Alois Licht, a priest from the little Mosel village of Leiwen, north of Trier, who had already come to the fore in 1831 as one of the so-called Trier ‘reform’ priests, criticised pilgrimages as ‘religious nonsense’ and as ‘a mockery of thoughtful Catholicism’. A terse rejoinder was followed by several contributions, mainly polemical, from opponents of pilgrimages. By contrast,
the newspaper declined to print an extended reply by Jakob Marx, the Trier professor of ecclesiastical history and an adept propagandist, in which a pro-pilgrimage position was adopted. Marx was obliged to publish the rejected article as a pamphlet. His argument was certainly tactically appropriate, while still unambiguously spelling out the basic position: it did not amount to an unconditional defence of the Catholic cult of pilgrimages. He ranked pilgrimages lower than parish services, and described them as 'not essential for spiritual welfare'. Provided, however, that they were overseen by priests and protected from abuses, he had no objection to them. Indeed, he regarded them, if conducted well, as beneficial. Neither in Marx nor in his adversary Licht is there any overt reference to the 'Holy Coat' as an object of pilgrimage. It is striking, however, that they had already adopted, in 1841, the rival ideological postures that defined the internal church discussion of the Trier pilgrimage in 1844: in Licht's case, the hostility of a theologically and philosophically trained priestly caste towards the devotional practices of the broad lay masses; in Marx's, the notion of control and exploitation of these lay customs for purposes of church policy. Strikingly, too, both men at once proceeded to immerse themselves more deeply in the subject of pilgrimages. In 1842 each produced a further pamphlet. In the same year, too, Licht reacted to a public call by the Triersche Zeitung for a new Holy Coat pilgrimage, in which a 'speedier circulation of money' and 'material advantages' for the city were invoked: this time, however, his contribution seems not to have been accepted. In 1842 the Piesport priest Philipp Lichter also came out in print against Licht for the first time; in 1844 he was one of the more banal defenders of the Holy Coat pilgrimage. Licht's 1845 pamphlet, finally, 'Katholische Stimmen gegen die Triersche Ausstellung im Jahre 1844' ['Catholic Voices against the Trier Exposition of 1844'], contains the only regional reaction of any weight against the Trier pilgrimage. Marx's book of 1844 [Geschichte des heil. Rockes in der Domkirche zu Trier] constituted the most important piece of advance political publicity for the pilgrimage, and his 1845 work [Die Ausstellung des h. Rockes in der Domkirche zu Trier im Herbste des Jahres 1844] was its semi-official summary and evaluation.

On the basis of this propagandist activity, Marx should be seen as the source of ideological inspiration, and the true strategist, of the pilgrimage of 1844. Various factors indicate that he, more than anyone else, influenced Bishop Arnoldi over the pilgrimage question, or at least enjoyed his special confidence. Supporting this assumption is the fact that Marx was a chaplain in Wittlich during the same period (1831-4) that Arnoldi was town parish priest there. Arnoldi had read Marx's pilgrimage pamphlet of 1842, as his extant personal copy shows. It is only through Marx, too, that we know
that Arnoldi, shortly before his consecration as bishop, had conferred with Metternich in Koblenz in 1842 about activating the cult of the Trier relic. Indeed, the fact that it was precisely he who knew of this otherwise unknown conversation (and of its content) implies that he took part in it — as it also again proves, incidentally, Arnoldi’s systematic political preparations for the pilgrimage. Finally, Marx claims to have written the document of consent to the 1844 pilgrimage ‘at the request of His Lordship the Bishop of Trier’, a claim which none of the other numerous pilgrimage publicists was able to make.

Marx declared quite openly that the Trier pilgrimage was a ‘festival of the Church militant, yet also of the Church victorious and triumphant’. He extolled it without concealment as a festivity in which the ‘attractive force of the Christian faith’ had been revealed. At the same time, however, he rejected the accusation that the Trier events were conceivably therefore a ‘demonstration’ directed against public order. The pilgrimage’s intention was not to ‘intimidate, or deflect from its path, one party by proclaiming the opinions, the strength and the influence of another’. It had been ‘aimed against no-one’ and its ‘motive and purpose’ had lain ‘within itself’. Here Marx attacked the attempt by the opponents of the pilgrimage to cast the church in the role of an enemy of the state: in the language of the ideology of the authoritarian Restoration state, it would thus have become a political ‘party’, contributing, by its propagation of certain ‘opinions’ or ‘tendencies’, to the break-up of the monarchic order. In Marx’s view, however, this was quite impossible, ‘for the Church is not a party, any more than the State is a party in regard to a tiny band of revolutionary subjects who would seek to overturn its Constitution and even to seize the governing power for themselves’. This was not mere rhetoric. Marx had already demonstrated his loyalty to the Restoration Prussian monarchy at the height of the church crisis in Cologne and Trier. Indeed, in 1838 he took an active part in the events surrounding the selection of the bishop of Trier, as an observer for the Rhenish Chief Land (Provincial) Administrator von Bodelschwingh. There can be no doubt, therefore, that the political stance of the church instigators of the relic exposition in Trier in 1844 was basically conservative. The point, for them, was not independence from the state, in the sense of ‘church freedom’ — a phrase often quoted, and often misinterpreted in a liberal sense — let alone the separation of church and state; it was, first and foremost, the demonstration of the powerful contribution the Catholic Church made towards sustaining the authority of the state in Vormärz society.

If this basic point is recognised, it is easier to see why the Prussian governmental authorities viewed the Trier pilgrimage with benevolent
neutrality; indeed, with partial sympathy. Contemporary critics could not grasp how 'so enormous a concession on the part of the state' could be made to a church leadership which shortly beforehand had been suspected of rebellion and high subversion. The Trier pilgrimage, however, displayed to the Prussian state a church that represented the continuation of traditional co-operation over the control of pilgrimages, even if the methods were new. Indeed, no suspicion that the Trier pilgrimage might be an organised mass movement, with the church seeking an extension of its authority at the expense of that of the state, occurred to the government.

Arnoldi, in his communication with the Chief Land Administrator of the Prussian Rhine Province, von Schaper, on 19 April 1844, disclosing his plans for the pilgrimage, had immediately found the right words. His decision to stage a new pilgrimage, in accordance with the 'ancient tradition' of Trier, was in no way based on ecclesiastical and religious arguments. Instead, he made it his business to highlight the effect of the pilgrimage in sustaining state authority: 'The religious sentiment which prevails in pilgrimages', he wrote, 'is the best surety against all disorder.' To lend weight to this claim, he pointed out that there had 'not been the least disorder either' at the Trier pilgrimage of 1810 and that the septennial Aachen pilgrimage always took place 'without the slightest disturbance of public peace and safety'. He asked the Chief Land Administrator, in conclusion, for 'his kind co-operation' in neglecting no measures that 'might in any way serve to prevent disorder'. He made no fewer than four references to the point that the pilgrimage would pass off in 'peace' and 'order' or would contribute to their maintenance. 'Peace and Order' [Ruhe und Ordnung] was, indeed, the key political expression, cropping up in stereotypical fashion, of both church and state pronouncements on the Trier pilgrimage. This shared usage indicates a harmonising of political thinking, even though Prussian civil servants and Trier church leaders did not come to any explicit understanding. The formula 'Peace and Order' must, in fact, rank as one of the standard formulae of Restoration ruling-class ideology in the nineteenth century; indeed, it can be called the direct counter-formula of the revolutionary triad 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity'. It was thus a matter of far-reaching significance when the Rhenish Chief Land Administrator, in his answer to Arnoldi, declared that he did not doubt that the 'celebration [would] take place without any disturbance of peace and order'. Although he by no means explicitly saluted Arnoldi's pilgrimage project, these words signalled to the bishop that he spoke the same political language. His attitude was matched by that of the subordinate Trier governmental officials whom the Chief Land Administrator had previously consulted. The Lord Mayor and Chief Administrator of Trier, Göritz, referring back to the 1810 pilgrimage,
believed that 'peace and order' would be fully guaranteed if, once again, the pilgrims did not come individually but were brought to Trier in organised groups (processions). This message was passed on in turn by the District President. Certain reservations concerning Arnoldi's plan for the pilgrimage were, it is true, registered internally, by the Minister of Public Worship and Education, Eichhorn, and the Minister of the Interior, Adolf Heinrich Count von Arnim. They felt that the revival of 'ecclesiastical ceremonies' in Trier, 'in view of the conspicuous shortcomings that the identity of the said relic displays from the point of view of historical criticism, would, in the interests of the Catholic Church, have perhaps been best left undone'. Nevertheless, they authorised the Rhenish Chief Land Administrator to permit the pilgrimage, since 'doubts concerning general affairs of state' did not arise. This authorisation was granted on condition that there would be 'prompt communication with His Lordship the Bishop in order to ensure 'appropriate dispersion of the processions and the maintenance of order by the police'. Despite acknowledging modern scientific and historical criticism, then, they were prepared to grant the Bishop of Trier one mass mobilisation in the Rhineland, provided that 'order' was not disrupted. The fact that order, in the ministers' statement, features as order maintained 'by the police' should not be interpreted to mean that they saw the pilgrimage as basically a mere police problem. The Restoration Prussian state was the 'state as order' (E.R. Huber): 'order' was thus, quite simply, the highest principle of state and the police the means of realising it. Reliance on police regulation was entailed in this general concept of the state.

The state government authorities could be certain that the Trier church leaders wished, by means of the pilgrimage, to support the principle of order in the Prussian monarchy, and not at all to call it in question. Not only was the same political language spoken on both sides, but actions followed suit. The church leadership and the government agreed from the start that the pilgrims should not be simply left to their own devices and that their processions should be closely planned beforehand. At the government's suggestion, the Trier church leaders worked out a detailed procession scheme on the lines of Bishop Mannay's pilgrimage regulation of 1810. The processions of pilgrims from the Trier diocese were thus worked out in advance, general-staff fashion. The parochial congregations of each deanery were allocated two 'suitably separated days' for the pilgrimage to Trier. Half of the parish members were to set out on each of the two dates. The first two days of September and the second half of the month (from 15 September onwards) were reserved for external processions. This division was meant to produce a relatively even flow of pilgrims to Trier, and the aim was achieved, if the opening days are left out of account. The individual
processions were each assigned precise points of assembly in Trier. Routes through the city to the cathedral, inside the cathedral and out of the city again were all exactly laid down, with bureaucratic reporting procedures to ensure their observance. But the critical and fundamental point is that the organisation of the processions was not left to religious brotherhoods, say, or even to chance, but was strictly placed in the hands of the parish priests. Pilgrims from every three parishes had to unite into one procession, each of which was led by at least one priest. Before arriving in Trier, the processions from the sub-districts ('definitions') of each deanery had likewise to merge into single processions, again headed by a priest as 'principal leader'. Parish priests were required to ask for 'the fullest acquiescence in the relevant regulations' on the part of the participants, with the result that the clergy was assured of a role of leadership and authority in the pilgrimage. A contemporary opponent of the pilgrimage noted:

It was not a voluntary, organic popular movement, taking its own shape: it was fabricated, stirred up from outside with all available means — a plain matter of agitation. The cathedral chapters put themselves at the head, they issued instructions to the deans, the deans commissioned the parish priests with making appeals and arousing enthusiasm, the priests worked upon the people. Meeting-points were determined; days were set when the solemn processions would depart, with flags flying, drums beating and cannons firing; stops for refreshment were arranged: in short, a complicated strategic plan was drawn up, in which everything was already disposed and decided upon before the people, whose part was to play the puppet in the hands of the puppet-master, had heard a single word about it.

The Trier pilgrimage was thus fundamentally different from the numerous processions of pilgrims in the Rhineland that had been jointly opposed by the Rhenish bishops and the Prussian government in the 1820s and 1830s. The question, in the Trier case, was not whether the diffuse pilgrimage activity of the lower social strata might pose a revolutionary threat to the Restoration state system; rather, it should be seen as a successful attempt by the Rhenish clergy to secure, from above, pro-state influence over broad masses of people in an ecclesiastical sense. Jakob Marx's subsequent assessment was not unfounded: by means of the pilgrimage, 'the peace, order and edifying spirit of a temple — of a House of God — had come to pass everywhere'. For him, the revitalisation of the church, and its firm anchorage in the people, also had a pro-state significance. Prussian officials, too, saw in the pilgrimage a 'gratifying sign of the growing influence of the priesthood
and of the obedience of the faithful towards their spiritual pastors’. On both sides, then, independently of their differing religious standpoints, the planning, direction and assessment of the Trier pilgrimage indicated an anti-revolutionary concern for security that was to form the basis in the future for a long-lasting conservative rapprochement between the Catholic Church and the Prusso-German state.

This interpretation is abundantly confirmed by the behaviour of Arnoldi and Jakob Marx in the 1848 revolution. In Trier on 14 April both men, along with other dignitaries, signed the election manifesto of the advocate Friedrich Zell, which came out against violent subversion and the republic, called for a constitutional monarchy on a pan-German, federalist basis and appealed, in the hackneyed phrase, for ‘Peace and Order’. In the crisis of 1848, then, the leaders of the Trier pilgrimage of 1844 redeemed their anti-revolutionary pledges. It is no surprise that the Trier democrats, with Ludwig Simon, Karl Grün and Victor Schily at their head, publicly burned Zell’s election manifesto.

V

Now that the intentions of the organisers of the pilgrimage have been made clear, we must still discuss whether and to what extent their political calculations worked out. We must ask how the mass of pilgrims drawn by the spectacle in Trier were induced to embark and what sort of consciousness they developed during the pilgrimage. This takes us into the difficult methodological territory of the social history of ideas and the problem of inquiring into the mentality of predominantly illiterate people. Because of the rigid pilgrimage regulation, the Trier pilgrims did not in general feature as individuals: they set out in groups, and were likewise led in groups past the supposed Holy Coat. The horizon of their experience was the procession of hundreds, sometimes thousands, of participants. They were thus held, from the outset, to a form of ritualised group behaviour that took its cue from the familiar range of experiences connected with normal church ritual (parish processions on Good Friday, Whitsun or Corpus Christi). Individual pilgrims made their pilgrimage collectively, not after deep and careful reflection. To that extent we can assume that the pilgrims’ consciousness bore the uniform stamp of a group-specific mentality. There was, let us say, the mentality of a pilgrims’ collective.

Only the inhabitants of the city of Trier were something of an exception in this respect. Supporters of the pilgrimage described their behaviour as an effusion of collective religious emotion. The statistician Delahaye, for example, gave the following account:
The prevalent mood in Trier was therefore, necessarily, the best and most gratifying, and it was as though the exposition of the Holy Coat had caused a new spirit to enter among us: the spirit of piety, friendship and love. Never before had greater charity and fellow-feeling been seen. Indeed, each citizen of Trier, in accordance with the teachings of our religion, regarded other men as his brothers, and it seemed as though all in Trier were members of one family.

Edifying idylls of this sort, however, were disputed by militant opponents of the pilgrimage. Their most powerful charge was that the people of Trier were only interested in money. The ‘monetary speculation of the tradesmen and innkeepers of Trier, and the covetousness of the cathedral clergy’ were particularly pilloried. In fact, according to the carefully kept accounts of the cathedral bursar, the cathedral’s receipts from donations were quite considerable. They amounted to 16,952 thalers, 14 silver groschen, 4 pfennigs, as against merely 2,273 thalers, 4 silver groschen, 8 pfennigs in expenditure. Arnoldi passed on half (7,327 thalers) of the net receipts to the president of the church committee that was responsible for the rebuilding of the episcopal seminary. The Cologne cathedral building fund received 211 thalers, 5 silver groschen, 9 pfennigs, expressly collected for this purpose. The outcome of the pilgrimage, however, was a source of satisfaction to the higher Trier clergy not so much because of the filling of the collection boxes as because of the opportunity they had gained for influencing unexpectedly large masses of pilgrims. Arnoldi, on his own admission, was in a state of ‘continuous joyful excitement’ owing to the daily influxes of tens of thousands of pilgrims.

The case of the Trier citizenry was rather different. There can be no doubt that a large number of people in Trier welcomed the influx of pilgrims mainly because it promised extra profits. In addition to the regular commercial supply of places of accommodation, beds for 1,787 people and straw mattresses for 10,396 were made available in private houses. At least 197 people obtained restaurant and liquor concessions from the City Magistrate for the duration of the display. Specially large market booths and stalls were set up in two central squares in the inner city. Resident traders and shopkeepers were at pains to ensure that outsiders did not obtain sales concessions for these stalls from the city authorities. None the less, business did not at first go as well as had been expected. Petitions to the Lord Mayor and to the District President were the result. In the end, however, at least the traders in devotional articles seem to have recovered their costs. In particular, pictures and medallions of the ‘Holy Coat’, and rosaries made out of all conceivable manner of materials, were disposed of
in 'incredible quantities'. An impartial witness reported that a single woman trader, even in the week before the relic went on display, was selling for 400 thalers apiece 'little Coats of the Lord' which she had made out of old remnants of ribbon. Two other traders are reported to have sold, respectively, 80,000 and 52,000 medallions of the Virgin Mary in three weeks.

Trier's interest in the pilgrimage, then, certainly had a lot to do with the profits of small traders, landlords and craftsmen. But even they were not motivated only by business considerations during the pilgrimage. Significantly, in fact, the Trier lower middle class rushed to join the so-called 'Guard of Honour' that organised security in the cathedral during the pilgrimage. Nine guild 'unions' combined to set up this Guard of Honour (building artisans, tailors, firebrigadesmen, Trier master boatmen, Barbeln master boatmen, butchers, coopers, joiners and bakers). They mobilised no fewer than 1,062 citizens of Trier, very largely from within their own ranks, to perform guard duty in the cathedral over the 50 days of the exposition. Even if the profit motive at first took precedence in many cases, the lower middle class in Trier was thus gradually sucked into the pilgrimage collective — this quite apart from the fact, indeed, that at the outset of the pilgrimage (on 18 and 19 August) the Trier parishes processed to the cathedral in serried ranks. What was taking place here was a process which may, in the terminology of modern sociology, be called one of 'socialisation'. Individuals within the pilgrimage milieu developed expectations of integration and subordination that compelled conformity of behaviour. The extent to which this process of socialisation went is shown particularly strikingly in the behaviour of Jenny von Westphalen, the Protestant official's daughter who had been married to Karl Marx since June 1843. Only a temporary visitor in Trier, she was an outsider in the pilgrimage city in more than a denominational sense. None the less, her mother made a room available for visiting pilgrims, and Jenny herself acquired 'a little medallion' for her child and 'a little rosary'. Even though the growing hubbub over the pilgrimage seemed to her to be going 'to extremes', hers was clearly a case of the conformation of someone on the social margin to the behaviour-pattern of the Trier pilgrimage collective. We may exclude the possibility, incidentally, that Jenny Marx, specifically, was a unique instance. We simply know more about her than we do about other, anonymous, individuals. In any event, Protestants occasionally came out publicly in favour of the pilgrimage. It is probable, even, that individual Protestants came to Trier as pilgrims, especially from the Saar, at that time half-Protestant.

If we try to characterise more precisely the mentality-structure of the Trier pilgrimage collective, the question at once arises how it was actually transmitted. We can certainly at once rule out the idea that simple pilgrims
got hold of the polemical scholarly publications that went into the historical traditions and archaeological authenticity of the Trier relic. The great mass of pilgrims would never have seen anything, either, of the flood of less scholarly pamphlets generated by the pilgrimage. It is probably true that only a minority of pilgrims were completely illiterate. None the less, few of them had much to do with books. Rudolf Schenda has shown convincingly that the reading-matter of the literate members of all social classes in Germany in the early nineteenth century was confined, basically, to primers, the Catechism and the Bible. At most, devotional books were also bought. This thesis is confirmed by the Trier pilgrimage. Within the Trier diocese, no fewer than twelve cheap, small devotional books were put onto the market for the simple pilgrims, with episcopal approval, perhaps even at episcopal instigation. These booklets are all very alike in format and intellectual level. We can assume that they all performed the same function, even if each individual pilgrim bought only one of them for himself. The popular devotional books thus undoubtedly formed the intellectual reservoir from which the mentality of the pilgrimage collective was supplied. For when ‘speech’ proved inadequate, the pilgrims ‘gave vent to their feelings in song’.

For the most part, these devotional booklets contain religious songs, liturgical directions and popular accounts of the tradition of the ‘Holy Coat’. What is interesting about them is not the material stemming from the traditional stock of Roman Catholic liturgy (the Mass, particularly): the important things are the texts that were produced expressly for the pilgrimage. Three points seem to me to arise from consideration of them.

In the first place, the suggestion is implanted that the Trier Holy Coat relic is genuine. It is said, flatly, that the ‘unbroken tradition of the church in Trier, acknowledged by the church’s highest leaders’, testifies to the relic’s authenticity. If the books do not simply suppress the fact that the tradition is not securely established further back than the twelfth century, they try to account for this gap with the argument that the church had to keep the existence of the precious relic a secret during periods of war. Finally, there is a particularly noteworthy juxtaposition of the ‘Holy Coat’ story with a sort of supplementary legend:

The seamless Holy Coat of Christ was, according to the evidence adduced here, skilfully woven for Her Son Jesus Christ by the Blessed Virgin Mary. For womenfolk in the East were wont to manufacture their own clothes, as we learn from the Holy Bible.

Quite evidently, this manipulation of legends was meant to link the veneration of the Trier relic to the well-tried cult of the Virgin. The familiar figure
of Mary gave the ‘Holy Coat’ the final seal of approval, on top of the backing it received from the Trier pilgrimage collective in any case by way of the materials in the devotional books. The pilgrims undoubtedly believed, without reservation, that the fabric on display was the last item of clothing worn by the historical figure of Jesus. The dogmatic ruling of the Roman Catholic Church that had prevailed since the Council of Trent, that relics were to be exposed for veneration and not for worship, was virtually powerless in the face of this conviction, even though many propagandists for the pilgrimage emphasised the distinction. It is quite probable, therefore, that many people were heard to pray, ‘O Holy Coat, intercede for us’, and that the addition to the Ave Maria, ‘Thou Who didst wear the Holy Coat for us’, was ‘so widespread among the processions’ that it was ‘as though the Bishop had prescribed it’.

The second mentality-component arises directly from the first: the devotional booklets fed the pilgrims’ naïve faith in miracles. There was, for example, a ‘Litany of the Holy Coat’, which in fact amounted to a litany of the miracles Jesus of Nazareth was supposed to have performed ‘in his Holy Coat’. Numerous songs celebrated ‘the Coat in which Our Saviour/His miracles performed’. And in the pilgrimage catechism the implied physical survival of the Holy Coat throughout the life of Jesus was also, quite supererogatorily, characterised as a miracle. One miracle is thus ‘explained’ in terms of another. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the Trier pilgrimage collective was almost limitlessly predisposed towards the finding of miracles. Reports of supposed miracle cures accumulated and were assiduously circulated by the church. The case of the Westphalian Countess Johanna von Droste-Vischering caused a particular stir. After a week, the bishop was forced to accede to what were called the pilgrims’ ‘urgent requests’ and permit general touching of the relic. This ritual touching also drew in the numerous devotional objects which the pilgrims acquired in Trier. The mentality of the pilgrims’ collective thus revealed pronounced symptoms of magical religion.

The effects can be memorably exemplified from the diary of a woman pilgrim from Koblenz that has fortunately been preserved. The painstaking reports of this simple woman show that the pilgrims were exposed to considerable physical deprivation on their journeys. Marching for days on end, the woman was able to pay only for damp straw bedding, weak coffee and a little food. Nevertheless, she walked from one place to the next, and one church service to the next, in a state of positively chiliastic expectancy, before finally arriving at Trier Cathedral in her procession. Here she witnessed how ‘everyone wept’ when a lame priest was carried into the cathedral for the procuring of a miracle. She herself pinned all her hopes on getting into
the cathedral a second time, after her initial attendance in the procession, so that she could 'get touched' 'several religious things' that she had bought in the interval. And she did indeed have 'the good fortune to be able to kneel down before the Holy Coat for a moment'. When she returned home, she recorded relief from chills as her own private Holy Coat miracle.

A third element, finally, in the mentality-structure of the pilgrimage was that of compensation. The pilgrims sang a song about 'The Coat of Poverty', part of which runs:

He too was always poor and needy
When He dwelt with us here on earth.
Do not complain, then, humble people,
If life is hard and full of woe:
For Jesus bore far greater sorrows
Because He loved His children so.

The pauperised pilgrims thus found consolation even in their sorry social condition. They accepted, in place of a present-day solution of social problems, the promise of redemption in an imagined hereafter.

This was the very point on which the critics of the pilgrimage fastened. An anonymous writer from Wesel was particularly reproachful:

Our time is a hard one: it weighs upon our German land like an oppressive nightmare. Public penury is in a condition of dreadful increase; distress mounts; hunger cries out for a scrap of dry bread; despair has awakened and cast aside the terrors of authority; crime bestirs itself and stalks abroad; the bells of insurrection have sounded in this Germany of peace and toleration, and the red torch of strife glowed in the hands of once calm and industrious men. These are the signs of hard times in our country, who will gainsay them? And while the public weal thus languishes, while nagging cares and sorrows cause alarm, and misery cries woe and weeps — now is it that the false, provoked religious sentiment of our time applies its salvations to the human heart.

Here, the Trier pilgrimage is being unambiguously linked to the Silesian weavers' rising of the same year: alarm at the sensational hunger rising leads to criticism of a church that seeks to compensate for the 'languishing public weal' by appeal to salvation in the next world.

Significantly, a whole string of ultramontanist writers did not dispute the diversionary character of the religious events in Trier. It was admitted that the Trier pilgrims were predominantly poor and intellectually and
politically immature. Thus, the pilgrimage was a time of 'happy relaxation' for these people, enabling them to overcome for a while the 'monotony of daily circumstances', to forget 'for a short time all distinctions in life's fortunes'. An anonymous writer asked:

Shall the poor man, then, merely because he is poor, never look out beyond the confines of his lowly estate? Shall he always remain immured in his pitiful cottage, beneath his needy thatch? False friends of the people, who sit before your groaning boards and sparkling wines, and offer your counsel on the means of preventing the misery of the poor — continue, then, continue to imprison the poor, imprison them day and night in factories, imprison them on Sundays and holidays in their home!

It is noteworthy that this writer, too, connects the Trier pilgrimage with the Silesian weavers' rising (he describes it as the 'disturbances among the Silesian workers'). His conclusions, however, were derived from traditional Christian sentiments of devotion and charity: religion was, for him, 'quite peculiarly consolatory for the poor here on earth'. Most of the poor who had been to Trier, he said, had 'henceforth borne their misery and hardship more patiently and more joyfully'.

Other apologists for the pilgrimage put it even more clearly:

The Gospels, however, convey to all men without distinction the consolatory teaching of God's love, by pointing, from amidst the inequality of wealth on earth, towards the Kingdom of Heaven. The man who keeps this teaching in his heart is contented with his portion in the present unequal division of wealth, even if he must earn his bread by the sweat of his brow.

And:

Those, however, who seek to introduce Communism by stealth, and, moreover, in the manner displayed by the Breslauer Zeitung and Ronge's letter — they are greatly in error: they arouse the dissatisfaction of the proletarians with God and the world; they make them covet the property of others, and they prepare the way for such disturbances as we have seen in our mountains; they cause the innocent and guilty alike to become victims of the mob.

Here, the Christian doctrine activated by the Trier pilgrimage is being propagated as an immunisation device against the spread of communism.
Another pro-pilgrimage writer, arguing similarly, showed realism and foresight: 'I say to you that, until you find means of satisfying, more effectively than the church does, the needs which the church is so well able to satisfy, all your efforts will be in vain.' He concluded with an appeal 'to work for an improvement of actual conditions'. For the time being, the church was far superior in influence among the common people upon whom we presume to make an impression.

Without a doubt, this perception showed a thorough recognition of the results of the Trier pilgrimage. Even during the pilgrimage, many observers were struck by the astonishing submissiveness of the pilgrims towards the priests who accompanied them. In his unofficial summing-up Jakob Marx asserted with satisfaction that, thanks to the pilgrimage, the links between parishioners and priests, and between parishes and the bishop, had been significantly improved. The radical Mainz ultramontanist Caspar Riffel wrote in similar vein: 'And, with the people in procession trustfully following the leadership of their priests, an even firmer and more lasting bond was forged between them.' Even Prussian civil servants regarded the pilgrims' submissiveness towards the priesthood's authoritarian leadership as a gratifying result of the Trier pilgrimage.

The fact that the Catholic Church leadership was able, by means of an enterprise like the Trier pilgrimage, to secure its conservative influence over the masses was a pointer to the braking role it was to play in the middle-class revolution of 1848-9. The Catholic Church was successful at the first attempt where the middle-class movement of 1848 foundered and where the labour movement was still unprepared — namely, in securing a long-term, broad, mass foundation. Having thus tested in advance its understanding with Restoration state power, the church hierarchy was able, after 1849, to act as an element in the reactionary stabilisation of the system, despite all the later attempts by a Catholic emancipation movement to urge the clerical leadership into an alliance with middle-class (and, indeed, reluctant) liberalism. By 1852, a Catholic professor of theology had already summed up his church's policy in the revolution:

Every aspect of supreme state authority tottered this way and that, in the upheaval; only the church's organic framework stood firm, just as it did during the decline of Roman authority in the West — and, as then, so now the church again proved to be the most conservative force in society, and one which, as events showed, is more indispensable to it than ever.
Notes

1. *Vormärz*: literally, 'pre-March'. The period of German and Austrian history between the Congress of Vienna in 1815 and the March revolution of 1848.

2. Joseph Görres (1776-1848), writer and journalist, one of the German Romantics. After 1827 he was the leader of a Catholic academic circle in Munich and perhaps the most important intellectual influence on Catholic thought in Germany.

3. *Kulturkampf*: the conflict between the state and the Catholic Church in Bismarck's Imperial Germany (especially Prussia) after 1871.