

JAROSLAV KUDRNA

STATE AND SOCIETY IN PRESENT-DAY  
WEST GERMANY HISTORIOGRAPHY

Unlike French and English historians, German bourgeois historians have almost ignored the topical problems of bourgeois society and concentrated all their efforts on granting intellectual support to the political aims of the state.

This fact is obviously due to the special conditions which gave birth to the methodological foundations of German bourgeois historiography in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, especially to that variety known as the Rankean school which had got the upper hand in German historical thought in the period of the rise of the German imperialism (after 1890, albeit Ranke died in 1886).

It is impossible here to examine the interesting political background which gave rise to the historical thought of the Rankean school. Only a few characteristic features, as, for instance, the mutual relation of the state, on the one hand, and of the society on the other may be emphasized.

First of all, it must be noted that Rankean historiography was closely connected with the counter-revolutionary policy of feudal and semi-feudal circles after the Napoleonic wars.<sup>1</sup> This resulted necessarily in avoiding all revolutionary movements in history; hence the substance of Rankean quietism to which even his own disciples objected in the period of the reunification of Germany.

Secondly, this historiography related to a type of society based on feudal principles. The due consequence of it was the complete ignorance of the main problems of the civil society. German historians really only knew how to appreciate the state power. The state itself was regarded as an "entelechia" of the whole of society pervading all the interspaces of civil life. This provides reasons for the explanation of a very strange fact, namely, why the problems of civil society, if concerned, were handled really as juridical problems, and that, first of all, in the field of juridical historical literature itself.

The whole of historical life was then interpreted as a result of juridical activity.

Such insufficient comprehension of the institutions of civil life caused many inadequacies in historical terminology itself. Ranke himself lacked comprehension of many of those terms, whose significance was conditioned by the development of bourgeois society, such as for instance the terms "Volk" and "Nation".<sup>2</sup> It is not devoid of interest that Ranke attributed, for instance, to the term "fatherland" a significance used in the feudal epoch (conceiving the fatherland as a region and not as an organized social body). In addition to this, he regarded the classes of society as mere estates, and assimilated their economic basis to strictly juridical relations.

It is understandable why in this kind of historiography there was no place for real economic history. Therefore, only under the influence of new tendencies of positivistic historiography the latter sort of historiography could develop in Germany. But the prejudice against positivistic historiography was never removed, it served only as a second-rate branch of historiography or perhaps an appendage to genuine universal political historiography.

Moreover it must be noted that many attempts to merge the principles of Rankean historiography with those of economic historiography enabled the leading German historians to formulate their thesis of the superiority of the state power over the "whole" of the economic processes.

The main traits of Rankean historiography were therefore in full accordance with the anti-democratic spirit of the Prussian bureaucracy. That can be proved, first of all, from the conception of the state, which is symptomatic for it.

It is a well known fact that the bourgeois-liberal conception regarded the state as the result of a social contract. But German conservative romanticism and Rankean historiography, strongly influenced by the ideas of the former, attributed to it a perpetual character, identifying the state with an idea and seeing in the state a product of God's activity. A similar opposition to the principles of Enlightenment appears in the Rankean conception of the nation.

According to the opinion of the Rankean school, the theory of Enlightenment had violated essential rights of the individual. That was also the reason why the historians of the Rankean school were opposed to Hegel's views of the state despite the fact that Hegel had been for a long time regarded as a chief theoretician of the Prussian state. They condemned the all-embracing spirit of his philosophy as being too much pervaded by egalitarian principles.<sup>3</sup>

These anti-democratic and anti-liberal views on the essence of the state have not only been reiterated hitherto by German historians, but nowadays are also repeated by German existentialist thinkers. This conception has influenced mostly, for instance, the existentialist view on the historical role of the masses.

The more interesting fact remains that even the Rankean historians at the turn of the century and in the time before the First World War were compelled to make concessions to the role of the masses, in the attempt to win the masses for the ends of German imperialism, since aggressive war against other imperialist states could not be launched without the strong support of a mass movement. German historians tried to exploit the revisionist ideas and reformist policy which arose in the German Social Democratic Party. Hence the efforts to embellish the state form with a cultural and ethical element. All this pursued the aim of subordinating the masses to the bourgeois state on behalf of its aggressive aims and imperialistic policy.

This conception which was maintained, for instance, by Meinecke, led to a definition of liberty as of a "life in close accordance with the law of the state".<sup>4</sup>

This anti-democratic conception offered at that time a strong support to German militarism, above all, in the glorification of war. The watchwords used by German historians at the beginning of the First World War were closely linked with the glorification of wars, which, according to the opinion of those historians, guaranteed a sound national development.

But this conception of the role of the state and nation, embodied in the watchword state-nation, influenced all political convictions, albeit the Rankean historians did not disregard the role of the political parties as Treitschke did in the

period of Bismarck. Nevertheless they subordinated parties to the frame of the state power. Meinecke himself expressed the opinion that discipline must be considered a decisive factor in the parties along with the feeling of duty, ambition and will to power. In other words, the parties must be incorporated into the state itself.

Neither the defeat of German militarism, nor the democratization of the national life during the period of Weimar could shatter the validity of those categories. It is also true that new significance has been attributed to those categories in order to suit the new situation.

Not to be abstract, the previous preceding opinion that the German aristocracy played an outstanding part in the whole of society was replaced by another conception of the leading role of an intellectual aristocracy in society.

This accommodation of the basic views of Rankean historiography to the necessities of the new reality was due to the effort of securing the dominant position of the early Prussian bureaucracy. The same aim is pursued when during the period of Weimar German historians especially emphasize the principle of continuity.

But none of these historians carried on any attempt at analysing the inward situation of society, independently of the state power, nor did they devote any attention to the motive forces of society. Only Troeltsch, who can scarcely be placed among the Rankean historians, tried to analyse the internal situation of society, but this was evidently only with regard to the requirements of the ruling stratum.<sup>5</sup> Even if the Rankean historians could not neglect the real motive economic power, they nevertheless pursued one aim, that of subordinating the economy to the state. One of the most eminent Rankean historians, Hintze, whose views differed from those of committed neo-Rankeans like E. Marcks and E. Brandenburg, shared — as regards the state — the opinion about the decisive role of the national states held by these neo-Rankeans, and outlined in his studies of 1923—1933 a conception of a world state, which could replace for the future the idea of a national state form. But for the present, the national state was considered by him as a decisive factor in history.

On the other hand, there are several resemblances between the Rankean historians of the period of Weimar and the existentialist philosophers (in the conception of hazard, fate etc.).

All these characteristic features of historical thinking also appear after the defeat of 1945. The German bourgeois historians could not, of course, proceed now in the same way as they did before. The connection between the previous fascist regime and the political and ideological views of latter German bourgeois historians is too obvious.

Hence the attempt after the defeat of 1945 to revalue German historiography by means of the principles of Burckhardt's world outlook.<sup>6</sup> The German historians substituted for the traditional scheme of German historiography, based on Prussian state theory, the idea of a thinker who shared the conservative standpoint, although not one identical with the Prussian type. This acceptance of Burckhardt's views was then followed by the acceptance of the basic ideas of French conservatism from Tocqueville and Taine.<sup>7</sup> This does not signify, however, a change in attitude towards the processes of civil society, but only that all the values of bourgeois conservatism are now to be emphasized and even they have to serve as a presupposition for the reconstruction of a militarist state.

The new conservative liberalism of German historians was in direct opposition to all the ideals of liberalism of French and English origin and to the Burckhardtian point of view which served, in the first place, as a corrective to the heritage of several elements of liberalism, which was widespread in American presentism between the two World Wars. This is the true reason why German historians protested against the reception of those tendencies of American presentism although they shared the opinion that history must undoubtedly be interested in present-day affairs.

According to Ritter, the leading historian of Western Germany, historiography conceived as pure science without any interest in present-day affairs can be considered a branch of scholastics.<sup>8</sup>

The German historians whose basic views originated in the Rankean school, concentrated all their efforts on the defense of the tradition of the West German state.

But after the years of total collapse there appeared another stream of historical thought in Western Germany which attempted to provide arguments for motivating the internal policy of the West German state. Those historians related their ideas either to a certain tradition of German liberalism or to the sociological ideas of the Weimar Republic.

They also made use of several attempts at the analysis of capitalistic society carried out by the sociology of Weimar and reappearing above all, under the influence of American sociology, in the contemporary West German sociological school. Even the contemporary West German sociology asserts to the utmost the classless character of the contemporary structure of the capitalistic society of today.

And this sociological view of history has now to be reaffirmed by historical tradition, and by the character of the tradition of German history itself.

As to the model of contemporary capitalist society as it appears in the works of West German historians of today, an obvious attempt is made to set up this model, elaborated in current sociology, as a counterweight to the scientific analysis of capitalist society presented by Marxism.<sup>9</sup> This is accomplished either by means of some categories of the pre-war German sociology, which are now based on empirical foundations, or by many concepts of the so called American social science. Instead of emphasizing the community (*Gemeinschaft*) as an ideal as was done during the period of Weimar, the mediated relations of society are more emphasized nowadays. The model for this mediation is obviously derived from Hegel's legal philosophy. Freyer, for instance, stresses that today the whole of civil society, regarded as a product of the industrial revolution, is realised through the interests of several individuals. It is therefore not surprising that Freyer sees the hero of this society in the capitalist entrepreneur. Similarly a new form of the early conception of alienation is linked closely with this conception. It is well known that the classic Marxist conception was based in Marx's view on the class antagonisms of bourgeois society itself. Marx also shared the opinion that this form of alienation will be abolished in communist society after the definitive collapse of bourgeois society. Contrary to this classic Marxist analysis, Freyer, in full accordance with other bourgeois sociologists, draws attention to the concomitant phenomena of alienation, but only to those which have appeared in the sphere of organization of modern society, without examining its real content. According to Freyer, alienation in modern society is due, first of all, to the setting

up of impersonal institutions. But there must be, according to him, eliminated from this conception the notion of the impoverishment of the working classes caused by the capitalist system itself.

Another characteristic trait of this trend of German contemporary historiography is the exploitation of many opinions of recent revisionism, or of the revisionism which appeared in the period between the two World Wars, and further an exploitation of many conceptions of contemporary empirical sociology. It is highly interesting that many ideologists who appear as almost official ideologists of the Social Democrat Party merge those tendencies into an undistinguishable whole. Dahrendorf,<sup>10</sup> for example, who considers himself an adherent of social democracy, elaborated a specific theory of social transformation, in opposition to the theory elaborated by Parson and Merton. Although many contradictions in capitalist society are admitted, nevertheless the chief antagonism must, according to the latter, be eliminated through the structural transformation, which is effected without any alteration of the foundations of bourgeois society itself. From this standpoint the class conflicts may be mentioned, but their revolutionary results are strongly denied.

According to these theories, institutions may help to eliminate the class antagonism. This is the real content of the new model of society which is to be applied to the past.

It would be quite superfluous to give here a criticism of these theories. We may only examine them here with regard to the pivotal points which create the basis for contemporary bourgeois historiography. There are undoubtedly undeniable common trends between West German historiography and sociology in this field. The West German historians try to substantiate the sociological scheme by means of many historical facts. On the other hand, the historical point of view will do away with the liberalistic point of view contained in many sociological theories. By way of example the ideas of Schieder may be quoted. In the first place, Schieder<sup>11</sup> essentially refuses any solution of the idea of progress in history which regards industrial society as a higher stage in the development of humanity. The analysis of industrial society can be executed without any element of the constructivism known from the age of Enlightenment. According to Schieder it is necessary to deprive this analysis of any hue of liberalism. The industrial revolution might be conceived as on the same level with whatever stage in human history. This tendency reflects the works of Schieder and Conze. So for instance in his study "State and the Politics of Power in the Epoch of Industrial Society", Schieder is trying to find out mutual relations which connect the state and industrial society, assuming many ideas of Kjellen and Weber.<sup>12</sup> Hence results Schieder's concept of the state as a power machinery. This assertion offers to some extent new arguments for the apology for the German crimes in the Second World War. Schieder maintains literally that the subordination of warfare to the political power appears nowadays increasingly more difficult. The state apparatus gradually appears quite independent of the war requirements and the laws of war.

All these assertions are strongly directed against the Marxist views on politics, above all, against the assertion of the importance of the economic basis in history and result in the opinion that political development is realised without any strict dependence upon the productive forces. On the other hand, political ideals, for example 19<sup>th</sup>-century nationalism, are regarded as a motive power. Schieder reconsiders and reasserts the thesis that nationalism was opposed to the economic

development of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The exploitation of the ideas of nationalism for this epoch is, with Schieder, directed against the Marxist conception of history. It is by no means devoid of interest that Schieder presents his own specific "conception" of Marxism which enables him to reject Marxist ideas without any special difficulties and without any sign of deep comprehension.

According to Schieder the death sentence of imperialism against little nations must be condemned along with Marx's main thesis that little enterprises are swallowed by great ones. It is quite evident that Schieder has no idea of what Lenin really affirmed. But on the whole, these arguments have special importance for the setting up and reinforcement of the function of the state organs in Western Germany. All views derived from the present state are reflected into the past. According to Schieder, there was an independent state power in Germany in the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. But at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the state merged into the economy. Schieder alludes to the well-known fact of the beginning of imperialism. But it is absurd to assert that this fact has not been analysed in Marxist history by means of scientific methods.

Schieder shares also a pluralistic conception of the state power. Various groups of the population should take part in it and the state power might be divided among sections of society. The fact that Schieder admits the role played by various political parties evokes a resemblance to many views of the German liberals. But this liberalism has a very conservative hue. Above all, Schieder emphasizes the liberals' hatred of the people, for fear of the masses has been a concomitant phenomenon of liberalism since its birth and was directed against the real democratic movement whose foundation were rooted in the French revolution. The main aim elaborated in liberalism was the attempt to reaffirm individual liberty against society in the role of the oppressor. The similarity to the views of Tocqueville and M. Weber is beyond all doubt. Needless to say, that it minimizes the part of the individual in society. Schieder attempts to explain that it depended on the personal attitude towards facing reality.

Schieder tries also to show the new and specific traits of German liberalism, which resulted in the policy of Bismarck. Schieder on the other hand holds that liberalism is overcome by the mass movement. The fault of liberalism was the impossibility of solving the labour question.

This scheme is projected by Schieder over the whole of modern German history. It is based on a certain type of relativism, laying emphasis, for instance, on the dependence of the state power on economics in the period of absolutism and denying this dependence for the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the state began to play an independent role in economy. Schieder maintains that the main fault of modern Marxist thought consists in not having acknowledged the greatness and efficaciousness of modern political will as regards that will itself. According to Schieder it is power that must be recognised as the foundation of historical development. The economy must then be subordinated to it.

The modern state is conceived as a new machinery of power where various groups make valid their interests. It is worthy of remark that Schieder sees a certain kind of resemblance between these views and those of German liberals, above all, of those who adhered to the ideological circle of Naumann's movement. We can see in that a conservative form of neo-liberalism, rejecting any revolution and any initiative of the broad masses. It is also not without importance that Schieder accentuates in the liberal movement the hatred against any kind

of people's government. He tries to show that the liberal movement since its beginning was terrified by the role of the common people who entered on the scene of world development in the epoch after the French Revolution. That is why he argues against direct radical democracy as it has been conceived, for instance, by Rousseau and tries to set up a free sphere enabling the movement of various individuals, while eulogizing individual liberty in a sharp contradiction to the "serfdom" on the part of society. When he appreciated Tocqueville and M. Weber, because of Tocqueville's hatred of the masses and Max Weber's rationalist conception of capitalist society, he did so because of his minimizing the part played by the individual but not because of a surrender the matter of fact.

According to Schieder even Weber tried to show where possibilities of individual freedom are to be found.

As far as German history is concerned he does not conceal his sympathies for those liberals who created a link between liberalism and the old-fashioned Prussian patriarchalism, excluding the broad masses from participation in the government.

This positive appreciation of liberalism is accompanied by further elements demonstrating in German liberalism those elements which differentiated it from Anglo-Saxon and French liberalism and which resulted finally in Bismarck's policy.

As to the problem of the universal Schieder sees in it a means which should enable the co-operation of the classes. He has a high opinion of such politicians as was, for instance, Löwe Calbe, who stood for the unity of capital and labour and submitted all political decisions to the elimination of the class struggle.

It is entirely without doubt that these views of Schieder's are directed explicitly against the policies of the democratic powers, against Marxism and Communism. Contrary to the historical facts Schieder attempts to shift the responsibility for the wreckage of the idea of parliamentarianism in Germany on to the Communist Party.

On the other hand he follows satisfactorily and with comprehension the process leading to minimizing the efficaciousness of committees in the labour movement and qualifies it as a means which enabled in the past the salvation of bourgeois democracy. He then considers the politics of the parties of the Centre as more appropriate for fulfilling this task. It is not without interest that Schieder sees even in those parties a counterweight against socialism. He maintains nevertheless that those parties must involve some elements of liberalism.

Under the pretence of liberating the state power from the aspects of terrorism he shares the basic political views of the West German CDU and is further inclined to the two-party system according to the American pattern. The demands of the masses should be fitted into the policy of two parties which would stand outside the antagonism of class policy. The masses should be beguiled with the illusion of political participation in the government.

It is beyond all doubt that even this emphasis laid on the political parties leads Schieder towards critical remarks about the Prussian political system. It has been a deep error of German historiography to have subordinated the state to society itself. This hindered the recognition of the role of political parties up to the beginning of the First World War. This had many disagreeable consequences,

since the participation of the Social Democratic Party in the government was rejected and so the growth of social reformism has been made impossible.

Besides this, Schieder subordinates to the present needs of West German imperialism the concepts of the former German nationalism. Criticizing the familiar form of German nationalism he attempts, above all, to disburden German nationalism of unacceptable aspects, seeing in nationalism an indispensable stage in the history of Germany. But, for the present, he accentuates the ideas of universalism and federalism and justified in this way the federalism of Westgerman state.<sup>13</sup>

Almost the same view is shared by Conze.<sup>14</sup> Conze starts with an apologetic for contemporary industrial society and projects its image into the past of German history. He attributes the blame for the misery of German history, above all that of the German proletariat, to the pre-industrial social conditions which procreated in Germany masses of proletarians who could not be absorbed by industry. Conze's apology for modern capitalist society is very simple and must be rated below the level of normal capitalist apologetics, as for instance that of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. But the tendency of this apology is the same as it was in the last century. The proletariat should leave behind even the notion of the proletarian.

Besides the tradition of ancient German liberalism, the tradition of the Weimar Republic is re-estimated too.<sup>15</sup> The German bourgeois historiography of today is not interested in the precise interpretation of the history of the Weimar period. It attaches attention rather to the mechanism which conditioned the activity of political parties in this period. That is why German historians of today reject the presentation of the Republic of Weimar as a result of revolutionary changes, attributing the guilt for the bankruptcy of this republic to the policy of the Communist Party.

They even combat many conceptions of the older German historiography stemming from the period between two world wars, for instance the idea that the Republic of Weimar was from the beginning condemned to bankruptcy because of the lack of a revolutionary solution of political circumstances, or because of a continuity of patriarchal elements in its inner structure.

On the other hand the history of the Weimar Republic should be presented as a history of institutions and political parties. A historian such as Erdmann maintains the principle of the historiography of Ranke according to which the purpose of the effort of the historian consists in the diagnosis of individual facts in history.

Other historians, as for instance Bracher,<sup>16</sup> who inclines to Social Democracy renews many arguments known from the store of international revisionism, involving them in the sociological scheme of bourgeois ideology. He repeats again the assertion that the proletarianisation of the middle classes remains unproved in history and shifts, on the other hand, the responsibility for fascism on to their shoulders. Furthermore, he adduces the following causes for the bankruptcy of the Weimar Republic, namely economic crisis, deficiencies in state apparatus and so on.

So we encounter in these works even the theory of German Social Democracy of today. Bracher inquires into the problems of power, division of power, various levers of power among parties and institutions, depriving the question of power of its class foundations. Nevertheless Bracher brings many important notions into the new history of German imperialism, adducing, for instance, many proofs of

the links between the German bourgeoisie and the fascist movement, of the continuity of the policy of the German ruling class.

As far as the background of the conceptual groundwork of contemporaneous West German historiography is concerned, we cannot encounter new traits in its historical thinking.

In this article we have not tried to exhaust all the characteristic features of the present-day bourgeois West German historiography. We have nearly omitted the old form of nationalist neo-Rankean historiography, which had reappeared after the Second World War in the German Federal Republic, a sort of historiography which can be regarded as a prototype of revanchist historiography in general. The kind of historiography upon which we have concentrated our attention is only that sort of historiography which has identified itself with the so-called miracle of the West German economy, reflecting this miracle in sociological categories. But that notwithstanding, it appears evident that there is no originality here, that all categories used in it are drawn from the works of forerunners from the epoch before the Second World War. But there exists a certain degree of originality with regard to adopting these categories to new conditions and on behalf of the exigencies of West German politics of today.

Furthermore, it may be found that many sociological categories hitherto unknown appear nowadays in this historiography. It is quite impossible for West German historians to adhere to the old maxims of Ranke, regarding the determination of the scope of history. According to Ranke the aim of history consists in describing that which really happened. The estimation of facts must according to him be excluded from history. What interests West German historians today most, are those experiences of German history which can be utilised from the standpoint of the policy of Bonn. That is the real meaning of Ritter's statement that the task of the historian consists in inquiring into what form the political element appeared in history. It is apparent that the present West German historiography serves as a means for the total mobilization of all forces available against the Communist and democratic movement. Anti-Communism involves repugnance to all democratic movements in the past and a strong support for neo-colonialism. West German historians are only modifying in new forms the clean-cut views about the superiority of Europe over the whole of the World.

West German bourgeois historiography developed in a clear antithesis to the historical thought of the German Democratic Republic. It is not without significance that the real sense of German history could be revealed only by the historians of the first socialist state which arose on German soil, of such a state as incorporates the political will of the German revolutionary movement of the past.

#### Remarks

<sup>1</sup> This is now acknowledged by many West German historians. See for instance R. Vierhaus, *Ranke und die soziale Welt*, Munich 1959.

<sup>2</sup> See W. Mommsen, *Stein, Ranke, Bismarck. Ein Beitrag zur politischen und sozialen Bewegung des 19. Jhr.*, Munich, p. 19—175.

<sup>3</sup> E. Simon, *Ranke und Hegel*, Munich 1928.

<sup>4</sup> Characteristic, for instance, for Fr. Meinecke; see R. W. Sterling, *Ethics in a World of Power, The Political Ideas of Friedrich Meinecke*, New Jersey 1957.

<sup>5</sup> E. Troeltsch, *Spektatorbriefe, Aufsätze über die deutsche Revolution 1918—1922*, Tübingen 1924.

<sup>6</sup> See Fr. Meinecke, *Die deutsche Katastrophe*, Wiesbaden 1946, G. Ritter, *Geschichte als Bildungsmacht*, Stuttgart 1946.

<sup>7</sup> R. Stadelmann, *Deutschland und Westeuropa*, Schloss Leupheim, Württemberg 1948.

<sup>8</sup> G. Ritter, *Gegenwärtige Lage und Zukunftsaufgaben der deutschen Geschichtswissenschaft*, *Hist. Zeitschrift* 1949, p. 2–5.

<sup>9</sup> H. Freyer, *Das soziale Ganze und die Freiheit des Einzelnen unter den Bedingungen des industriellen Zeitalters*, *Historische Zeitschrift* 1957, p. 97–115.

<sup>10</sup> R. Dahrendorf, *Gesellschaft und Freiheit*, Munich 1961.

<sup>11</sup> Th. Schieder, *Staat und Politik im Wandel unserer Zeit*, Munich 1960.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* 89–107.

<sup>13</sup> Th. Schieder, *Idee und Gestalt des übernationalen Staates seit dem 19. Jhr.*, *Historische Zeitschrift* 1957, p. 336.

<sup>14</sup> W. Conze, *Staat und Gesellschaft in der frührevolutionären Epoche*, *Historische Zeitschrift* 1956.

<sup>15</sup> K. D. Erdmann, *Die Geschichte der Weimarer Republik als Problem der Wissenschaft*, *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 1955, p. 1–19.

<sup>16</sup> D. Bracher, *Die Auflösung der Weimarer Republik, Eine Studie zum Machtverfall in der Demokratie*, Düsseldorf 1955.

### STÁT A SPOLEČNOST V SOUČASNÉ ZÁPADONĚMECKÉ HISTORIOGRAFII

V článku zkoumám nové tendence západoněmecké historiografie, jež je možno zaregistrovat poté, co v ní dochází k použití obecných sociologických metod. Ukazuje se, že alespoň jedno křídlo západoněmecké historiografie není již tak lhostejné k problematice marxismu, jako byla dříve klasická rankovská historiografie. Na druhé straně nelze ovšem opominout skutečnost, že dochází k četným pokusům znehodnotit marxistickou problematiku prostřednictvím teorie průmyslové společnosti a obecně politických kategorií, čerpaných z americké political science. Cílem těchto snah je ukázat, že marxismus nepatří do 20. stol., že se základní společenská problematika natolik změnila, že je marxistickými kategoriemi vcelku nepostžitelná. Vše to vede k likvidaci myšlenky třídního boje a k vyvolání iluze o sociální harmonii v NSR.