

**Major Cultural Commemorations  
and the Construction of National Identity in the GDR, 1959-1983**

David Joseph Zell

A thesis submitted to the University of Birmingham  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Modern Languages  
The University of Birmingham  
October 2017

UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM

**University of Birmingham Research Archive**

**e-theses repository**

This unpublished thesis/dissertation is copyright of the author and/or third parties. The intellectual property rights of the author or third parties in respect of this work are as defined by The Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988 or as modified by any successor legislation.

Any use made of information contained in this thesis/dissertation must be in accordance with that legislation and must be properly acknowledged. Further distribution or reproduction in any format is prohibited without the permission of the copyright holder.

**Major Cultural Commemorations**  
**and the Construction of National Identity in the GDR**  
**1959-1983**

**Abstract**

My thesis asks whether cultural commemorations helped the GDR to build a distinct national identity, and examines the role of political and cultural actors involved in them. Covering different strands of German cultural heritage, the aims, implementations and outcomes of anniversary commemorations are investigated as a longitudinal series of case-studies: Schiller (1959); Kollwitz (1967); Beethoven (1970); and Luther (1983).

Substantial evidence from largely unpublished sources exposes recurring gaps between the theory and practice of these commemorations, essentially attributable to manifest examples of agency by commemoration stakeholders. Each commemoration produced some positive legacies. But driven mainly by demarcation motives versus West Germany, the appropriation of these German cultural icons as socialist role-models to promote national identity was mostly unsuccessful in three commemorations. Kollwitz was the exception as the GDR's claimed linkage to her political life was already undisputed in both German states.

These research results are new and important. They address a gap in both memory studies and GDR history scholarship regarding the relationship between commemorations and national identity. Furthermore, the findings of agency offer an original contribution to historiographical debates, by enhancing a 'consensus' or 'participatory' dictatorship model of the GDR in preference to a top-down totalitarian system.

## **Dedication**

This thesis is dedicated to the loving memory of my late parents, Dr Leo and Judith Zelmanovits and my late brother, Oscar Zelmanovits. As survivors of the most tragic episode of the twentieth century, their keen interest in the complex history and cultures of Europe has inspired me to undertake this research.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisors, Dr Joanne Sayner and Dr Sara Jones, for their patient guidance, encouragement and advice throughout my time as their postgraduate research student. I have been extremely lucky to have a close-knit team of supervisors who cared so much about my work and my welfare, and who responded to my questions so promptly.

A special thanks go to everyone at the Institute for German Studies at the University of Birmingham, led by Dr Nick Martin for their warm support and collegial interest in my work.

I must express my gratitude to my wife Noemi, my daughter Linda, son Daniel and son-in-law Christian for their unflagging love, support and patience as I experienced all the challenges of my research and writing. A particular thanks and admiration for Daniel's masterful proofreading and formatting skills.

Completing this work would have been all the more difficult were it not for the encouragement and friendship of several individuals who have accompanied me during my project: first and foremost, Professor John Davis, my MA supervisor at Kingston University, for inspiring me to pursue my ultimate academic ambition after a 39 year sabbatical; my oldest school friend, Dr Dieter Schumann (with thanks for his German proofreading and many suggestions), Professor Sir Lawrence Freedman and Professor Judith Freedman (my academic motivators-in-chief), Roger Lockwood, Dr Leonard Magrill, Dr. Kevin Cheeseman, and Rob Nathan for their valuable roles as scholarly sounding boards, and Jutta Hoffmann-Zobel for her accommodation assistance during my Berlin fieldwork.

Finally, I would like to thank three institutions for their support: the Arts and Humanities Research Council, for providing the funding which allowed me to undertake this research, the Association for German Studies who gave me a travel grant for additional research, and to the library staff at the German Historical Institute in London for their assistance, and provision of excellent working space and research facilities.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AdK</b>	Deutsche Akademie der Künste (1950–1972); Akademie der Künste der DDR (1972–1990)
<b>BArch-SAPMO</b>	Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv (SAPMO)
<b>BStU</b>	Bundesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik
<b>DEFA</b>	Deutscher Film AG
<b>DFP</b>	Deutscher Fernsehfunk
<b>DKB</b>	Deutscher Kulturbund
<b>DRA</b>	Deutsches Rundfunkarchiv Babelsberg
<b>FDGB</b>	Freier Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund
<b>FDJ</b>	Freie Deutsche Jugend
<b>GDR</b>	German Democratic Republic
<b>MfK</b>	Ministerium für Kultur
<b>MfV</b>	Ministerium für Volksbildung
<b>MLK</b>	Martin-Luther-Komitee der DDR
<b>ND</b>	<i>Neues Deutschland</i>
<b>SED</b>	Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands
<b>Stasi</b>	Staatssicherheit
<b>ZK</b>	Zentralkomitee der SED
<b>ZKM</b>	Zentrale Kommission Musik

# CONTENTS

<b>1: INTRODUCTION</b>	9
<b>1.1. Selected concepts in memory studies</b>	10
1.1.1 The many dimensions of national identity	10
1.1.2 National identity and commemoration	15
1.1.3 National identity and collective memory	20
<b>1.2. The conceptualisation of the GDR</b>	25
1.2.1. A ‘totalitarian’ state?	25
1.2.2. A ‘dictatorship’?	27
<b>1.3. Conclusion – overview of chapters</b>	31
<b>2: THE SCHILLER BICENTENARY, 1959</b>	36
<b>2.1. Introduction</b>	36
2.1.1. The political context: the GDR in the grip of the Cold War in 1958/59	37
2.1.2. The SED tightens cultural policy in the late 1950s	39
<b>2.2. Aims</b>	41
2.2.1. <i>Abgrenzung</i> and <i>Aneignung</i> : key political themes of cultural policy	41
2.2.2. Planning the bicentenary: off to a late start	42
2.2.3. Schiller redefined: humanist, proto-socialist, ‘of the GDR’?	42
<b>2.3. Implementation</b>	49
2.3.1. Summary of events and activities: unrealistically ambitious?	49
2.3.2. Schiller committee stakeholders: coordination issues and variable commitment from ‘unreliable’ intellectuals	49
2.3.3. The Schiller <i>Festwoche</i> : A predictable format with no surprises	51
2.3.4. Repeated SED interventions seek to close gaps between aims and implementation	53
<b>2.4. Outcomes</b>	57
2.4.1. The reality of attempting to position Schiller as a working-class hero	57
2.4.2. The <i>Festwoche</i> and general reception: little to show for all the efforts?	60
2.4.3. Official assessments: frank insights into implementation issues and their potential origins?	62
<b>2.5. Conclusion</b>	66
<b>3: THE KOLLWITZ CENTENARY, 1967</b>	70
<b>3.1. Introduction</b>	70
<b>3.2. Aims</b>	72
3.2.1. Planning the commemoration: brief and simple	72
3.2.2. Aims and ideological Framework: Socialist Realism, social progress, solidarity with the Soviet Union	75
<b>3.3. Implementation</b>	79
3.3.1. Framing the implementation and reception of formal events: Was the GDR media in agreement?	79
3.3.2. The public events: repeating the reactive, unoriginal approach of the Schiller bicentenary?	85
3.3.3. The film: reinforcing a portrayal that balances competing narratives	86
3.3.4. ‘Käthe Kollwitz und ihre Zeitgenossen’: exhibiting the international proletariat	90
3.3.5. The official Kollwitz pamphlet: cementing the political narratives	93
<b>3.4. Outcomes</b>	97
3.4.1. Post-event media coverage in East and West: political themes dominate but not exclusively	97
3.4.2. The legacy of Kollwitz’s centenary in the GDR: more of the same?	102
<b>3.5. Conclusion</b>	104

<b>4: THE BEETHOVEN BICENTENARY, 1970</b>	105
<b>4.1 Introduction</b>	105
4.1.1. Music and German nationalism: facing a complex cultural and political tradition	107
<b>4.2. Aims</b>	108
4.2.1. Summary of planning process: timing lessons learned from the Schiller commemoration	108
4.2.2. <i>Abgrenzung</i> and GDR cultural policy move on since the Schiller bicentenary	108
4.2.3. The DKB's task: determining a Marxist ideological framework for Beethoven	110
4.2.4. Bicentenary aims: the appearance of public consensus from all stakeholders	114
4.2.5. Internal tensions emerge between party and government	118
<b>4.3 Implementation</b>	121
4.3.1. Summary of activities: adhering to a tried and tested format?	122
4.3.2. The DKB's role in the bicentenary: not consistently committed and engaged?	122
4.3.3. <i>Eigensinn</i> threatens the national identity objective: the role of intellectuals	125
4.3.4. Implementing the bicentenary and self-censorship: did the GDR press and broadcast media communicate differently?	129
<b>4.4 Outcomes</b>	133
4.4.1. The call for more <i>Musikpropaganda</i> : evidence of a missed outcome?	134
4.4.2. International recognition of the commemorations: another important objective unfulfilled?	135
4.4.3. Audience research: a meaningful indicator of the effect of TV reception on national identity	136
4.4.4. The recording project's likely impact: long-term identity or short-term pride?	138
<b>4.5. Conclusion</b>	140
<b>5: THE LUTHERJAHR QUINCENTENARY, 1983</b>	144
<b>5.1. Introduction</b>	144
<b>5.2. Aims</b>	145
5.2.1. The planning timeline summarised	146
5.2.2. The GDR's historical approach and the 1981 <i>Thesen</i> : a Marxist rehabilitation of Luther?	149
5.2.3. Reconciling different images of Luther within state and church: Progressive humanist and reformer of church and faith	155
5.2.4. An increasingly nervous SED makes its presence felt	158
5.2.5. The Stasi reacts to SED and government anxieties: security becomes a top priority	163
<b>5.3. Implementation</b>	167
5.3.1. The main events: partly formulaic, partly original	167
5.3.2. Film and television at the LJ: reporting, educating and entertaining in equal measure?	170
5.3.3. Luther film: a contentious gestation exposes differing approaches to the ideological agenda	171
5.3.4. Luther film: well crafted and ideologically within the LJ's official aims	176
<b>5.4. Outcomes</b>	180
5.4.1. A positive reception of the film in East and West, but a differing emphasis on ideology and artistic values	180
5.4.2. Mixed messages in government assessments	182
5.4.3. West German press coverage as complementary source of the LJ's reception in the GDR	184
5.4.4. Conclusion: Was the LJ's overall impact more important for church policy in the GDR than for national identity?	186

<b>6: CONCLUSION</b>	189
6.1. Initial limitations to assessing the reception of commemorations	189
6.2. Case studies compared: theory versus practice	190
6.3. <i>Abgrenzung &amp; Aneignung</i> : two sides of the same coin?	192
6.4. National identity and commemorations: a convincing instrument of cultural memory?	193
6.5. Agency and conceptualisation of the GDR	194
<b>7: BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	196

# 1: INTRODUCTION

Since the unification of Germany in 1990, the GDR has become an intensively researched period of contemporary European history. A quantitative analysis of GDR historiography produced in 2010 notes some 16,000 books, articles and other research output to-date, peaking in the late 1990s at more than one thousand new items per year (Jessen, 2010). Ralph Jessen adds that over 350 PhD projects on GDR history had been submitted since 2001 in Germany alone (Jessen, 2010, p.1056); the relative quantities of publications by sometimes arbitrary distinctions of history disciplines vary over the years, with a growing trend in social-, cultural- and public-history works.

Within this wide-ranging arena of research, a fundamental historiographical debate has continued to develop about the most appropriate model to describe the GDR. Superficially the debate seems to be polarised between bad and good. On the one side of the debate is a negative, arguably simplistic concentration on the repressive and authoritarian facets of the GDR, influenced by the Cold War. This perspective can be attributed to earlier scholars such as Childs (1983) and Krisch (1985). In contrast, more recent scholars such as Fulbrook, (1995; 2005), Bessel (1996), Kocka (1994; 1999), Jarausch (1999), Sabrow (1999; 2000), and Bollinger and Vilmar (2002), adopt a differentiated and more positive focus on GDR achievements, despite coming from different perspectives.

As will be seen, one approach that merits further research is the construction of national identity in the GDR. The research presented in this thesis addresses a notable gap in scholarship on the phenomenon of commemorations generally as well as with specific reference to the GDR. The thesis investigates and compares how anniversaries of four major cultural figures, Friedrich Schiller, Käthe Kollwitz, Ludwig van Beethoven and Martin Luther, commemorated individually over a period of more than twenty years, were planned and implemented. The primary research question asks whether, and if so how, the commemorations may have contributed to the construction of national identity within GDR society. Evidence will show recurring gaps between the theory and practice of these commemorations, essentially attributable to manifest examples of agency by commemoration stakeholders. Driven mainly by demarcation motives versus West Germany, the appropriation of these German cultural icons as socialist role-models to promote national identity was mostly unsuccessful in three commemorations. Kollwitz was the exception as the GDR's

claimed linkage to her political life was already undisputed in both German states. These research results are both new and important. They address a gap in both memory studies and GDR history scholarship regarding the relationship between commemorations and national identity. Furthermore, the findings of agency offer an original contribution to historiographical debates, by enhancing a ‘consensus’ or ‘participatory’ dictatorship model of the GDR in preference to a top-down totalitarian system.

This first chapter introduces the two main strands and related literature forming the overall theoretical framework of the thesis and will illustrate the contextual importance of the study. Firstly, selected theories within the overarching field of memory studies – foremost national identity together with nationalism and patriotism – are recognised and compared, before considering national identity in the context of collective memory and cultural memory. Against this theoretical background, the nature and role of public commemorations within collective constructions of the past and their significance for the construction of national identity will be examined. The chapter then asks what the study of national identity and commemoration can contribute to conceptualisation of the GDR as the second main strand of the framework. The chapter closes with a synopsis of the four case studies.

## **1.1. SELECTED CONCEPTS IN MEMORY STUDIES**

### **1.1.1. The many dimensions of national identity**

The research seeks to explore if and how commemorations assisted in the construction of a specific GDR national identity. The terms nationalism, national identity and patriotism are often treated interchangeably in everyday usage. The definition and distinctiveness of these ‘social-psychological dimensions’ (Kelman, 1997) should be explored both in a general sense as well as in relation to pre-1945 Germany, and post-1949 GDR.

Anthony Smith gives a lucid introduction to the multi-dimensional complexities of identity and roles, including national identity (Smith, 1991, pp.4-5). Tailoring a definition of identity, in other words ‘self’, to the characteristics of GDR society creates a helpful pointer to the significance of individuals’ identity in the context of that state’s national identity. As a construct which underpins the state, Smith notes that national identity builds on individual identities. As will be seen, his observations that ‘...the [political] appeal to national identity has become the main legitimation for social order and solidarity’ and that ‘[...] today the nation is also called upon to provide a social bond between individuals and classes by

providing repertoires of shared values, symbols and traditions' is certainly applicable to the GDR. Smith mentions various symbols, including monuments and ceremonies, by which citizens are 'reminded of their common heritage and cultural kinship' (ibid., pp.16-17). In so doing he confirms the pertinent connection between commemorations and national identity which is central to the research question in this thesis.

Eric Hobsbawm's concept of 'invented tradition' is especially relevant in this regard. Hobsbawm refers to two types of 'invented tradition' since the industrial revolution that suggest a link to national identity, particularly in the case of new nation-states such as the GDR: '...those establishing or legitimising institutions, status or relations of authority and those whose main purpose was socialisation, the inculcation of beliefs and values systems and conventions of behaviour' (Hobsbawm, 1997, pp.1-9). He describes 'inventing traditions' as a 'process of formalisation and rich utilisation, characterised by reference to the past, if only by imposing repetition'. The three functions of invented traditions listed by Hobsbawm provide reference points all of which will be shown to be relevant for this thesis as identifiable motives for the authorities when designing commemorations: (1) 'establishing or symbolising social cohesion'; (2) 'establishing or legitimising institutions, status or relations of authority'; and (3) 'the inculcation of beliefs, values systems and conventions of behaviour' (ibid., p.50). At the same time Hobsbawm concedes that the process of *creating* [my italics] such traditions has not been properly studied by historians. It is one of the purposes of this thesis to explore four examples of such processes of creation with reference to the GDR.

Important in this context is Hobsbawm's assertion that the link between invented tradition and national identity rests on 'exercises in social engineering that are often deliberate' (Hobsbawm, 1997, p.13). Similarly positing deliberate intent, Benedict Anderson proposes the concept of a more proactive 'official nationalism', characterised as a 'conscious, self-protective policy', intimately linked in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to the preservation of imperial-domestic interests (Anderson, 2006, p.159). In contrast to Smith, Anderson highlights mass media, the educational system and administrative regulations as ways in which states 'instil nationalist ideology' instead of symbols such as memorials, museums and commemorations. Anderson's focus on these instruments, reinforced by adjectives such as 'systematic, even Machiavellian' therefore defines national identity as being imposed by the state in a deliberate, top-down strategy (Anderson, 2006, p.163). Later chapters will offer new evidence that calls into doubt an intentionalist interpretation of

nationalism as being a relevant theoretical background for cultural commemorations in the GDR. This thesis considers whether cultural commemorations may be regarded as an analogous example of ‘cultural engineering’ that is a type of transmission inherent in marking repetitive cultural anniversaries. As I will argue, close analysis of the ‘process of creation’ in the GDR indicates that ‘invented tradition’, in the sense of a pro-active practice, may be seen not always to apply – all the more so when consistent and deliberate intent fails to manifest itself in the subsequent planning and execution of major cultural commemorations.

The use of the term ‘national identity’ (as opposed to nationalism) preferred in this thesis takes into account that the underlying concept of the ‘nation’ can be both ethnic as well as territorial. This is a useful distinction with reference to the two German states between 1949 and 1989, separated geographically but sharing a common language and cultural heritage. A further important distinction within national identity needs to be drawn between a cultural and a political identity. In the case of Germany, this was already noted by Friedrich Meinecke in 1908, when it was a single (relatively new) political entity. He differentiated the *Kulturnation*, the largely passive cultural community from the *Staatsnation*, the active, self-determining political nation (Smith, 1991, pp.8, 99). As will be seen in the Luther quincentenary chapter of this thesis, this important distinction formed the basis of GDR cultural policy under Honecker emphasising a corresponding terminology of ‘*Erbe*’ and ‘*Tradition*’.

Turning to look specifically at national identity in the GDR, this has been shown to be centred on the idea of a ‘socialist Germany’. This conceptualisation of the GDR, articulated as early as 1949, was not new: ‘...many specifically German traditions went into the reinvention of Socialist Germany, especially traditions of the German labour movement and of the interwar Communist Party’ (Berger, 2004, pp.206-207). In this context, Berger divides the development of GDR national identity into two phases; initially, this constituted a unified socialist Germany which excluded National Socialism as part of its own history. Berger notes that this omission is all the more telling considering that conformity to authoritarianism, supported by a heavily bureaucratic system, emphasizing control and mobilisation – through propaganda – had a long tradition in Germany, including Imperial Germany before the First World War (ibid., pp.209-210). Berger’s first phase, 1949-1965, marking the height of the Cold War, has also been described as the ‘war of the magnets’; each of the two German states expected their economic and moral model of society to draw in the other side as a magnet.

The unified Germany would be ‘...liberal and Western or, "socialist", depending on which magnet proved stronger’ (Orlow, 2006, p.544).

This ‘socialist nation’ was officially founded on the twin pillars of antifascism and friendship with the Soviet Union. Antifascism was ‘one of the most important building blocks of official GDR identity’ (ibid., pp.200-202). Reaching beyond this ideological contribution to the GDR’s foundation, Joanne Sayner positions antifascism as a ‘cornerstone of SED ideology’ that dominates and permeates GDR society throughout its lifetime (Sayner, 2013, pp.18-19). This observation justifies including an analysis of antifascism as a core component of GDR national identity, although explicit reference to it may be seen to have diminished in later years as an ‘aversion to GDR history’ began to emerge amongst young people in the GDR (Saunders, 2007).

In the second phase identified by Berger, after the mid-1960s, and the advent of *Ostpolitik*, the national identity of two separate German nations emerged, promoted in all areas of GDR society through a distinct official policy of *Abgrenzung* (Berger, 2004).<sup>1</sup> The common, all-German national identity was abandoned in favour of a two-nation model (Dennis, 2000, pp.172-174). This was confirmed in the 1971 SED Congress, ‘which decreed that the socio-economic system of the country was the determining aspect of its national identity’ (Orlow, 2006).

The changing nature of GDR national identity was reflected in shifting outlooks on German history. The official SED line was predominantly negative in the early years in the sense that German history was characterised as a chain of major calamities. This followed an influential publication by Alexander Abusch, later to become Minister of Culture (‘Der Irrweg der Nation’, Berger, 2004, p.217). But in 1952, Albert Norden, a leading member of the *Politbüro*, effectively repealed this ‘*Miseretheorie*’. He proposed a binary model contrasting the ‘progressive’ and the ‘reactionary’ in German history (‘Kampf um die Nation’, cited in Berger, 2004, p.217). The ‘progressive’ theme went from Thomas Müntzer and the Peasants War of 1524-25 which he led, through to the 1848 revolutionaries, Marx, the KPD and eventually the foundation of the GDR. The ‘reactionary’ theme incorporated (at that time) Luther, feudalism, Prussian militarism, capitalism, the Nazis and finally the foundations of West Germany.

At this time, the SED instructed the GDR’s historians to ‘administer the past’ in order to legitimise the GDR’s approach to national identity (‘Die Verbesserung der Forschung und

Lehre in der DDR', cited in Orlow, p.545). The party directed historians to provide evidence that would support the concept that GDR national identity was following Marxist-Leninist laws of history. By the mid-1970s, the historians Walter Schmidt and Alfred Kosing proposed a model that became the theoretical and historiographic basis for socialist national identity (Orlow, 2006, p.548). German history was divided into two overlapping categories: *Erbe* and *Tradition*. *Erbe* was history in its entirety; its importance could be neutral or negative depending on how it related to the tenets of Marxist-Leninist principles. *Tradition* on the other hand was positive. Historical elements, based on socio-economic factors and thus classified as *Tradition*, became in turn the building blocks of a socialist national identity.

Given its prevalence in GDR propaganda, Anna Saunders proposes adding a further significant dimension to the concept of national identity in the GDR by highlighting 'patriotism' as a central theme (Saunders, 2007, p.26). By appealing to the 'loyalty of citizens to the civic institutions of the state', [...], 'it [patriotism] does not demand the unity of the state and nation' (ibid., p.28). The perspective of patriotism therefore adds the vital emotion of a personal response, that is to say pride, to the more abstract notion of national identity. As evidence of the GDR citizens' reception of various aspects of the commemorations will reveal in the case studies below, 'patriotism' thus provides an additional, conceptual dimension when evaluating the relevance of the research conclusions to ongoing debates on the most appropriate conceptualisation of the GDR.

Orlow generalises that the approach taken by the GDR authorities as outlined above was the fatal flaw of the whole concept of a GDR national identity. He contends that the theory had always depended on the GDR's population agreeing to the political, economic, and moral superiority of the socialist system, which in turn was supposed to create a 'socialist patriotism' (Orlow, 2006, p.551). Orlow concludes that as the GDR's population envied the societal system of the West Germans, they were never convinced of the superiority of their socialist system; any efforts to form such an identity were therefore inherently doomed. Elements of Orlow's hypothesis may be valid as regards an ambivalence within all ages and sectors of GDR society towards apparent pros and cons of the two German societal systems. However, given the development of GDR national identity discussed above, it seems highly unlikely that this ambivalence was static, and as binary as implied by Orlow. Instead I argue that it is more plausible that national pride, and ultimately national identity, evolved and fluctuated over the forty year duration of the GDR, in response to both negative and positive socio-economic, cultural and external political developments. It follows that the GDR

authorities adapted their efforts over much of this period, in order to continue trying to influence a positive formation of national identity.

From this perspective, Berger points the way to the research topic in this thesis: the GDR started creating its own ‘...pantheon of national heroes [...] The official reading of national history, which was supposed to contribute to the construction of a positive socialist national identity was put on display in a dense network of commemorations’ (Berger, 2004, p.218). As the historian Dan Healy comments with regard to researching certain Russian and Polish anniversaries: ‘[...] against the grain readings and oblique archival strategies are required to illuminate many issues not directly addressed. By engaging in these scoping and evaluation exercises, piggy-backed on anniversary celebrations, scholars can identify new themes and methods, and agendas, for further study’ (cited in Brady, 2014b). This approach is fundamentally relevant for my thesis; it informs my empirical research methodology and its original approach of analysing the organisational detail and chronology of commemorations, in order to illuminate their potential impact on the central issue of national identity in the GDR.

### **1.1.2. National Identity and Commemoration**

Given this focus, it is necessary to explore in more detail what the extant literature has to say about the relationship between national identity and commemoration. The research question posed in this thesis focuses particularly on the commemoration of famous German cultural personalities. These commemorations all share a connection to how national German heritage may be approached and understood. How then has this connection been understood and described by other scholars?

Viewed from an American perspective, the historian William Johnston offers a succinct introduction to anniversaries and why they are commemorated:

In Europe anniversaries have become one of the chief means by which officials mobilise intellectuals to address matters of national and regional concern. [...] whereas in America past creators command minimal allegiance, in Europe all educated people acknowledge that certain figures encapsulate national tradition in such a way as to illuminate the present. Anniversaries provide a device by which this roster of canonical figures gets repackaged [...] (Johnston, 1991, p.23).

A number of scholars have connected commemorations to mass societal upheavals necessitating a reconstruction of identities, a link that certainly applies to post-1945 Germany. John Gillis points to an early appearance of ‘invented tradition’: the precedent of the French and American revolutions. These two cases illustrate an ‘ideologically driven desire to break with the past, to construct as great a distance as possible between the new age and the old’ (Gillis, 1994, p.8). This is relevant for the case of the GDR which shared the same motivation to create an entirely new Germanness, distinct from that which was emerging in post-War West Germany. In this context, Peter Burke points the way to the origins of German identity creation and discusses the ‘social history of remembering’, and asks why some cultures seem more concerned with recording their past than others. He links Hobsbawm’s ‘invention of tradition’ to examples of new nation states that were formed in the nineteenth century, such as Germany and Italy, which discovered a need to legitimate their existence through multiple and repetitive public commemorations (Burke, 2011, pp.188-192). Finally, Yael Zerubavel proposes the example of the modern state of Israel: ‘When a society undergoes rapid developments that shatter its social and political order, its need to restructure the past is as great as its desire to set its future agenda’. While newly constructed commemorations may succeed when they ‘manage to project a cultural representation of the past’, there is a risk that such ‘invented traditions’ might only succeed partially or fail ‘when members of the society become aware of their fabricated character’ (Zerubavel, 1994, p.105). The case studies in the following chapters address this central issue and how the formation of national identity may have been impacted by the ways in which the ‘invented tradition’ was communicated and received by GDR citizens. However, I suggest that Zerubavel’s term, ‘fabricated’, is too blunt, even exaggerated, as it could imply a deliberate, hard to prove untruth, as far as GDR commemorations are concerned. Instead, the detailed analysis in the case studies of how commemoration aims were developed and articulated will demonstrate that ‘ideological interpretation’ instead of ‘fabrication’ was a common feature of how these cultural anniversaries were celebrated.

Connerton draws attention to a further important aspect of commemorations which is especially relevant to the research question, namely performativity. He distinguishes ‘incorporating memory’ from ‘inscribed memory’. The first involves messages imparted bodily, for example, handshakes or smiles; but the second is more relevant in the analysis of cultural remembrances. He points to the ‘memorisation of culturally specific postures, appropriate for ceremonial occasions, particularly acts of remembrance’ (Connerton, 2011,

p.339). Restated, commemorations can be thus linked to national identity as a ‘performative identity-building process’ (Gudewitz, 2008, p.587). Performativity also has a political rationale: ‘Commemorative ceremonies are preserved through their performance [...] they are not easily susceptible to critical scrutiny and evaluation by those habituated to their performance. Both commemorative ceremonies and bodily practices therefore contain a measure of insurance against the process of cumulative questioning entailed in all discursive practices’ (Connerton, 2011, p.342). Connerton uses the term ‘habituation’ here from the perspective of reception. In contrast, the case studies will use the related term ‘repetitiveness’ to single out a common feature of all four commemorations that was arguably counter-productive in its impact on national identity.

The tradition of the German *Festakt* which existed before and after Germany was split into two states is an excellent example of the often repetitive characteristics of commemorations. The performativity of commemorations that can be observed in ritualistic acts of remembrances such as the *Festakt* will be seen to be a core component of all commemorations in this thesis. This typically high-profile ceremony underscores the public ritual characteristic of most major commemorations in the GDR. The Austrian sociologist, Elfie Miklautz, examines the concept of the *Fest* as umbrella term for the *Festakt* ceremony and similar activities commemorating an anniversary. Building on Jan Assmann’s assertion that ‘the collective identity needs ceremony’ (Assmann, 2011, p.38), she contends that the central purpose of the *Fest* is to objectivise collective identity through *rituelle Inszenierungen* (Miklautz, 1999, p.193). Miklautz goes on to refer to a useful angle which, in the case studies, may suggest an additional impact of commemorating cultural anniversaries in the GDR: ‘Nahezu alle Theorien des Festes basieren auf der Annahme, daß Feste den Sinnhorizont des Alltags transzendieren und sein anderes - das in modernisierten Abläufen ausgeblendete - veranschaulichen’ (ibid., p.194). She explains this by highlighting the contrast between *Alltag* and *Fest* and explicitly emphasises a one-dimensional aspect of *Alltag*. If *Alltag* in the GDR is therefore interpreted in the English sense of a grey, monotonous ‘daily grind’ rather than ‘everyday life’, then Miklautz’s theory as a rationale for the relative frequency and scale of GDR cultural commemorations may arguably have some justification.

The usage of the term ‘performative acts’ appears in recent gender studies, notably the works of Judith Butler. She contends that ‘gender is in no way a stable identity’ [...] ‘rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time – an identity instituted through a *stylised repetition of*

*acts.*' As such 'gender identity is a performative accomplishment compelled by social sanction' (Butler, 1988, pp.519-520). The analogous relationship of performative acts to gender identity and commemorations to national identity becomes even clearer when considering Butler's description of the theatricality of the repeated acts: 'As a given temporal duration within the entire performance "acts" are a shared experience and collective action' (ibid., p.525). The repetitive nature of these acts as 'ritual social drama', explained by Butler when citing the anthropologist Victor Turner, further enhances the analogy to commemorations and national identity: 'this repetition is at once a re-enactment and re-experiencing of a set of meanings already socially established; it is the mundane and ritualised form of legitimation' (ibid., p.526). Sule Toktas, however, correctly points out – as will be seen in subsequent case-study chapters – that 'the transformation of the national identity as performativity into theatricality is executed by nationalism subject to politics and political manoeuvre' (Toktas, 2002, pp.29-30). Without referring to commemorations, Toktas provides a useful confirmation of the potential to link the way that gender and national identities are established:

Nationalism, with which the nation articulates itself, enables the political imagination of the past, appropriated for the project of the future that privileges certain groups. [...] Identities are to be considered not as pre-given but as described and recognised through performance. In this sense it is clear that there are many similarities in the construction of national and gender identities (ibid., pp.39-40).

This comparative approach by gender studies to performativity and national identity adds a noteworthy contribution to the multi-disciplinary approach with which this thesis aims to respond to the research question.

The link between the predictability and repetitiveness of commemorations on the one hand and the occurrence of anniversaries on the other is a final facet worth registering. The calendar-driven certainty of anniversaries becomes a bonus for all the stakeholders involved in initiating and planning commemorations, in terms of preparation time and opportunity. As Johnston argues, 'the cult of anniversaries introduces an element of the foreseeable into cultural programming' (Johnston, 1991, p.25). In the environment of an authoritarian state such as the GDR the same predictability presents a political and logistical advantage for a regime needing to instigate, plan and coordinate commemoration preparations on a comprehensive scale. However, Johnston also correctly notes the challenges of calendar-

driven programming; the arbitrariness of anniversaries can result in prioritisation issues (ibid., p.26). This will be seen in the 1967 Kollwitz centenary that clashed with the fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution, the 1970 Beethoven bicentenary that occurred in the same year as Lenin's birth centenary, and the 1983 Luther quincentenary that clashed with the centenary of the death of Karl Marx. Aleida Assmann argues for a further dimension to be added to the usual linear measurement of history and to the cyclical dimension of nature or myth. She points to the repetitive nature of commemorative anniversaries as amplifying and cementing the inherent unreliability of collective memory (Assmann, 2005, pp.305-314). Also in the German perspective this 'repetitive nature' began in the century-old rituals of commemorating church and university anniversaries with a notable expansion over the past 120 years in public and private commemorations of cultural and business anniversaries. How the GDR authorities reacted to anniversary opportunities in the sense of inconsistent approaches to timelines, that is allowing sufficient time for planning, will be revealed as another of the original research findings in the four case studies.

A few cultural and political commemorations in the GDR have been researched individually, and a larger number briefly referenced within existing literature. Matthias Tischer (2008), Julia Roßberg (2009), Peter Maser (2013) and Yvonne Schymura (2014) have each written more specifically but within a wider context about the Beethoven bicentenary in 1970, the Schiller bicentenary in 1959, the Martin Luther quincentenary in 1983, and the Kollwitz centenary in 1967 respectively. Among the more important scholars who have also touched on these anniversaries are: Maximilian Nutz (1992), Nicholas Martin (2006), and Joerg Bernhard Bilke (2007), on Schiller; David Dennis (1996) and Elaine Kelly (2014), on Beethoven; Catherine Kraemer (1981) and Ulrike Goeschen (2001), on Kollwitz; and Horst Dähn (1986), Martin Roy (2000), Raina Zimmering (2000) and Jon Berndt Olsen (2015) on Luther. Their contributions will be positioned more closely in the respective case studies.

What is missing in the existing scholarship to date is a detailed analysis of the aims, implementation and outcomes of these major commemorations, together with an assessment of the resulting impact on the formation of national identity. The originality of my approach may also be derived from the longitudinal selection of its case studies examined against the background of a theoretical framework, and using empirical research methodology. A sample of four major commemorations has been selected to represent different strands of culture, namely literature, music, fine art and religion/philosophy. The events span a twenty-four-year time-frame, chosen to better reflect the changing political, economic and social environment

in GDR history. These factors in turn will be seen to have influenced the evolving nature of how commemorations were proposed, developed and negotiated as an instrument of cultural memory.

### **1.1.3. National Identity and Collective Memory**

In a wider and contemporary environment, ‘round figure’ anniversaries, and their commemorations, continue to form part of what several commentators call a ‘memory boom’ (Olick et al., 2011, pp.3-4), which includes memorials, museums and exhibitions (Healy, cited in Brady, 2014b, p.99). Most recently, particularly high profile anniversaries such as the 2014-2018 centenary of the First World War and the 2017 quincentenary of the Reformation have been attracting widespread attention in the media and with the general public. The associated academic field of memory studies thus provides a crucial theoretical framework for this thesis. Within this field and thus of particular relevance to the German context of my research question is the concept of collective memory which is closely associated with questions of identity and identity-politics (Olick et al., 2011, p.43). What do memory studies – in particular concerning collective and/or cultural memory – have to say about the formation of national identity and what is the connection to commemorations?

Astrid Erll presents a comprehensive overview and introduction to the discipline of memory studies, particularly in relation to historical and social memory. Memories are described as ‘subjective, highly selective reconstructions, depending on the situation in which they are recalled’ (Erll, 2011, p.8). Erll expands this definition by arguing that memory is less a reflection of the past than evidence of the interests of those doing the remembering in the present. She refers to Lewis (1976), who outlines a threefold relationship between history and memory: ‘(1) remembered history; (2) recovered history, historiographical reconstruction of elements of the past suppressed by the collective memory; and (3) invented history, the version of history which pursues a (novel) ideological aim’ (ibid., p.43). This third distinction leads on to the central concept of the ‘invention of tradition’ as discussed above.

Erll positions the action of ‘remembering’ in relation to the underlying, much used term of ‘cultural memory’: ‘cultural memory provides the mental, material and social structures within which experience is embedded, constructed, interpreted and passed on [...] but it is only retrospectively, through cultural remembering, that we create experience as an interpretation of events to guide further action’ (ibid., pp.111-112). From the perspective of sociology, a recent scholar, (Welzer, 2010, pp.286-287), refers to a number of ‘cultural

products', such as literature, music and images, that, citing Koch, "can transport historical constructions or versions of the past" (Koch, 1997). The ideological frameworks and popular representations of these 'high culture' objects of remembering form a core component of all the case studies in this thesis; Schiller's and Luther's texts, Beethoven's music and Kollwitz's art will be shown to be integral to how they were commemorated.

In an introduction to *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies* (Erlil and Nünning, 2010), Erlil refers to one of the fundamental aspects of cultural memory: the twin levels of individual and collective memory. She suggests that collective memory be best used metaphorically, the most influential scholarly concepts being Pierre Nora's '*Lieux de Memoire*' and Jan and Aleida Assmann's '*Kulturelles Gedächtnis*'. In practice, she argues, the two levels remain continuously intact. In the same edited book, Jan Assmann builds on the work of Halbwachs, one of the founders of memory studies, who first introduced the concept of collective memory (Halbwachs and Coser, 1992). He distinguishes three types of memory: individual, communicative, and cultural; the latter is a form of collective memory in that it 'conveys to the people in question a collective, that is a cultural, identity' (Assmann, 2010, pp.109-118). Agreeing with Erlil's theory of active remembering, he asserts that cultural memory is disembodied and therefore requires preservation and re-embodiment. 'Participation' is such a re-embodiment, but in relation to cultural memory, he notes an 'inherent tendency to elitism; it is never strictly egalitarian' (Assmann, 2010, p.116). This observation offers a further useful theoretical connection to the above-mentioned 'invention of tradition' as link between cultural memory and history.

In an earlier seminal book, Jan Assmann positions 'myth', 'commemoration', and 'ceremony' under the heading of cultural memory, thus providing a number of key theoretical terms relevant to this project's research question: '[...] through memory, history becomes a myth. This does not make it unrevealed – on the contrary, this is what makes it real, in the sense that it becomes a lasting normative and formative power'. He goes on to explain that: 'commemoration often takes the form of a festival [...] the collective identity needs ceremony' (Assmann, 2011, p.38). He expands on this reference, embedded in ancient times, noting that the commemorations in which cultural memory is circulated were historically part of rituals and festivals: 'as long as these rites were predominant, the knowledge that was all important for identity was handed down through repetition.' (ibid., p.72).

Aleida Assmann has produced amongst the most influential scholarship to date on cultural memory in the German context. In the preface to the English translation of *Erinnerungsräume* (Assmann 1999), Assmann defines her chosen topic as ‘the social and political dimensions of cultural memory, focussing on constructions of collective identity from social generations to whole nations within their historical contexts’ (Assmann, 2011, p.xii). Her paper ‘Soziales und kollektives Gedächtnis’ encapsulates her concept of the three steps of social-, collective-, and cultural memory, and connects it to the identity component of my research question (Assmann, 2006). Selected memories that are combined to form the collective memory of a group of persons strengthen the identity of that group, and that identity in turn strengthens the collective memory: ‘das Verhältnis zwischen Erinnerungen und Identität ist zirkular’ (ibid., p.2). According to Assmann, cultural memory is similar to collective memory as a long-term manifestation, in contrast to the more personal, short-term characteristics of social memory. Cultural memory itself is distinct from, and a step beyond collective memory in being additionally dependent on scholarly memory, institutionally stabilised and developed in libraries, museums and archives (ibid., p.3).

Questioning why we adopt cultural memory, Assmann points to identity as a key reason, positing: ‘vom allgemeinen oder spezialisierten Wissen unterscheiden sich die Inhalte des kulturellen Gedächtnisses jedoch dadurch, daß wir sie uns aneignen, nicht um sie zu “beherrschen” oder für bestimmte Ziele einzusetzen, sondern um uns mit ihnen auseinanderzusetzen, und sie zu einem Element unserer Identität zu machen’ (ibid., p.4). Aleida Assmann finally defines ‘political memory’ as arguably the form of memory most relevant to the topic of my thesis, as it produces ‘strong bonds of loyalty’ and a ‘strong unifying we-identity’ (cited in Jones and Pinfold, 2014, p.12). Citing Assmann, Jones and Pinfold articulate here a fundamental question that underlies the concept of political memory and also paraphrases the essence of my research question: ‘The question to be asked of elite appropriations of the past is not, therefore, if they are “true” or “false”, but why they resonate (or not) with the wider population and the political consequences of their use’ (Jones and Pinfold, 2014, p.13).

Building on the work of Jan and Aleida Assmann, Rigney describes the growth in research on commemorations and similar acts of remembrance as a ‘dynamic turn in memory studies’, a shift within cultural memory away from ‘focusing on products to focusing on processes in which the products play a role’. She defines ‘dynamic’ as meaning that commemorations (amongst other forms of remembrance), need to incorporate a ‘narrativising act of

remembrance'; cultural memory needs to be performed, that is it needs to be constantly 'in the works' (Rigney, 2010, pp.345-353). Jan and Aleida Assmann's overall theoretical approach to the impact of cultural memory thus creates an important explanation for why political actors mount major celebrations and ceremonies in order to commemorate anniversaries, such as those selected for the research project's case studies.

Olick adds here a concept of an 'instrumentalist' approach to collective memory, 'emphasising not what memory does but what we do with it'. He goes on to argue that collective memory is 'also an extraordinarily useful tool of politics and is also continually subject to it' (Olick et al., 2011, pp.249-251). As a core feature of this thesis, it remains to be seen whether empirical evidence can demonstrate the existence of an 'instrumentalist' concept behind the design and implementation of cultural commemorations in an authoritarian state such as the GDR. Furthermore, such 'instrumentalist' evidence of the regime's proactive, deliberate policy might support an 'intentionalist' rather than a 'functionalist' or 'structuralist' interpretation of the official handling of these events – that is one which argues that every aspect of the events was rigorously planned from the outset rather than partly developed and adapted as the events unfolded by all involved in the events' implementation. In this way the research outcome here may ultimately provide a new historiographical contribution when assessing whether a better understanding of cultural commemorations adds greater weight to a 'top-down' or 'participatory dictatorship' model of the GDR, as discussed below.

Turning specifically to look at these issues in the context of (East) Germany, Koshar lays out a German perspective on the framework of collective memory. He argues that in Germany four aspects of collective memory have emerged since the late 19th century: the national monument, the ruin, the reconstruction, and the trace. All of these can be evaluated in relation to the changing political agendas that have driven them during this period (Koshar, 2000). Koshar explores a number of angles which together comprise a distinctively German association between national memory, culture and society. However, by equating this approach with the German notion of '*Kultur*nation' with its 'emphasis on ancestry and shared history', Koshar sees a potential contradiction to the concept of 'invented tradition'. He contends that German national identity may be anchored in a 'core of identity' which cannot be reduced to what constructionists have called the 'invention of the nation'. Koshar is in line here with Anthony Smith's concept (Smith, 2000, pp.17, 21) of a German 'ethnic community', based on substantial material objects which were the precondition for the

emergence of some sense of a common national history'. This latent controversy is a valuable starting point for more detailed research on how the GDR approached and commemorated *Erbe*, German heritage, given its own particular ideological agenda.

A rather different approach is taken by Jan Palmowski, whose study *Inventing a Socialist Nation: Heimat and the Politics of Everyday Life in the GDR 1945-1990* claims to be 'the first book to show how "national identity" was invented in the GDR, and how citizens engaged with it' (Palmowski, 2009, pp.1-3). His methodology is heavily based on localised, empirical evidence, including oral history testimony. Palmowski singles out the language and images of 'Heimat' as central to the internal representation of the GDR. This, at times intensely propagated cultural quasi-mantra, was maintained alongside the political themes of antifascism and socialism and implemented through the 'ideal of the GDR as a "workers and peasants" state' (Palmowski, 2009, p.106). He contends that the population, and its willingness to adopt a new national identity, suffered from the real and perceived threat of Stasi informers and the growing economic as well as environmental issues of the last two decades of the GDR's existence. Palmowski goes on to argue that the high culture heritage of major German figures in literature, art and music was not mythologised until the early 1970s. This conclusion differs markedly from my analysis in the first three case studies, which all take place before that time. Although pointing in general terms to the 'failure of successive cultural initiatives to realise socialism', Palmowski does not examine the documented process of appropriating (*Aneignung*) these German figures, which – as will be seen – forms a principal part of my research. In particular, Palmowski pays no attention to the major commemorations of some of these same figures that, in my original analysis, determine whether, and to what extent, *Aneignung* achieved official political aims relating to 'nationhood' and (GDR) identity.

In sum, what is missing from these accounts of collective memory in the GDR is a detailed analysis of the processes by which cultural commemorations came about, that is, a detailed documentary analysis of behind-the-scenes debates on the mode and purpose of celebrating cultural figures. Previous works also focus only very infrequently on the *impact* of such myth-building – that is, the question of whether the outcomes reflected, even partially a deliberate, top-down, intentionalist approach or whether they should be interpreted as the consequence of a functionalist set of events.

## 1.2. THE CONCEPTUALISATION OF THE GDR

### 1.2.1. A 'totalitarian' state?

An analysis of the potential impact of commemorations through exploration of the process of their creation leads to the question of the extent to which the GDR regime was able to impose its concept of national identity from above. Answering this question can in turn make a significant contribution to a more refined conceptualisation of the GDR as a political entity – positioning it beyond the top-down versus bottom-up models described in the opening sections of this chapter.

The first challenge in this regard relates to the GDR's forty-year duration. Spread over more than a generation, the political, social and economic characteristics of the GDR evolved in response to major internal milestones and external developments. These include the uprising of June 1953, the erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961, as well as Willy Brandt's '*Ostpolitik*'-driven 1972 Basic Treaty, and Gorbachev's *Perestroika* leading to the ultimate break-up of the Soviet empire. Such periodisation raises the question whether the GDR can be conceptualised as a static system. Mary Fulbrook argues for a dynamic, socio-cultural model that divides the forty year GDR history into three phases: post war/pre-Berlin Wall (1949-61); stabilisation and normalisation (1961-79); and a transition to an increasingly consumer-focused society and its ultimate demise (1979-89) (Fulbrook, 2005, pp.24-28). Although this periodisation is very broad, it offers a helpful approach to distinguishing some of the major political milestones and phases of GDR history, including the erection of the Wall and the distinct political eras dominated by Ulbricht and Honecker.

The above diachronic challenge is only one of several facing all GDR historians. Konrad Jarausch crystallises another basic obstacle confronting all GDR researchers: 'penetrating beneath the uniform surface of dictatorship constitutes the abiding challenge of historicising the GDR' (Jarausch, 1999, p.11). More recently, Andrew Beattie notes a dichotomy between the historicisation and politicisation of GDR memory that has evolved since 1989. This appears in the relationship between 'collective' (using Beattie's, rather than Assmann's terminology – who would tend to use the term 'communicative'), and 'official' memories. The former reflects an authentic, grass-roots memory grown from below, and focussing mostly on everyday life, *Alltag*. In its nostalgic guise it is often referred to colloquially as

*Ostalgie*. In contrast, ‘official’ memories, developed – even in some cases imposed from above – concentrate on SED domination and repression (Beattie, 2011, pp.11-12). Official GDR institutions such as government and mass organisations were inherently secretive. This meant that before 1989, historians, particularly in the West, had very limited access to recent, that is, post-war archive material. They were thus forced to draw mainly on official speeches and tightly-controlled media output as primary sources for their research. As long as the GDR existed it is perhaps understandable that contemporary historians of all Western nationalities frequently applied vague labels of ‘totalitarian’ and ‘dictatorship’ as part of a Cold War terminology or ‘*Kampfbegriff*’ (Klessmann, 2013, pp.8-10), thus effectively pigeonholing the GDR. Whether it is correct to ascribe them to the GDR has been much debated since 1989.

Of the two, it may be easier to qualify ‘totalitarian’ and even partly question it as an accurate description of the GDR, by referring to fundamental theoretical texts on totalitarian theories, notably those by Hannah Arendt as well as Karl Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski. Arendt focuses on how anti-Semitism and racism were used to develop imperialism and nationalism in the nineteenth century. She argues that modern totalitarian states, aware that these methods were efficient, use them to achieve their objectives of absolute power and domination of the population in their state. Referring in particular to Nazi Germany and 1930's Stalinism, Arendt examines how classes become masses. She also emphasises the use of terror and propaganda, both of which are critically important features of totalitarianism. Within the modern masses Arendt identifies the phenomenon of ‘isolated individuals’ who are provided by totalitarian regimes with a new perception of identity in exchange for their total loyalty to the state (Arendt, 1951/2017, p.623). Friedrich and Brzezinski describe totalitarianism in a way that appears more relevant to the GDR than Arendt’s model. Based on a ‘single binding ideology’, the totalitarian state relies on a combination of control mechanisms regarding the economy and the media, all supported by absolute police control and a single political party. However, at the same time the model ‘allows for the continued existence of "islands of separateness", such as the church or family’ – another facet of the model which fits well with GDR society (Friedrich and Brzezinski, 1966, p.279).

As we will note in the following discussion of the term ‘dictatorship’, the ‘totalitarian’ adjective has therefore provoked a considerable debate about how it might apply to the GDR. Jeffrey Herf cites the chairman of the official Enquete-Kommission’s usage in 1994 of ‘totalitarian’ for the GDR approvingly (Herf, 2008, p.175). Six years earlier, Ross had argued that despite the term ‘totalitarian’ having been regularly revived since 1989, the key

theoretical criterion of 'total control' was missing in many aspects of the GDR's political and social configuration (Ross, 2002, pp.21-25). More recently, Andrew Port has described the major scholarly debate centring on a 'deceptively simple question: was the GDR a totalitarian regime in fact as well as in theory?' At its heart is the variance in approach between a top-down conceptualisation of the regime focusing on repression, or an emphasis on the GDR population's *Eigensinn* or agency, and therefore the socio-cultural aspects of the entire GDR state (Port, 2013). This apparently polarised choice of applicable models of the GDR is thus reflected in the binary choice of whether the 'totalitarian' tag is relevant or not.

### 1.2.2. A 'dictatorship'?

The term 'dictatorship' has persisted as a component of many conceptualisations of the GDR (Ross, 2010, pp.19-43). One key problem is the absence of an identifiable GDR 'dictator'. So as an alternative, the pervasive authority of the political structure has encouraged the concept of a one-party, 'SED dictatorship' (Faulenbach, 2013). Following the collapse of the East-West Cold War divide, some historians have proposed other variations of a dictatorship model. These seek to adjust the term to a GDR phenomenon of 'participatory dictatorship' (Fulbrook, 2005, p.12) or '(socialist) party dictatorship' (Ross, 2002) which is then empirically validated. An alternative analysis that the GDR is an evolution of the dictatorship paradigm, puts forward 'modern' as a label (Kocka, 1999, pp.47-69). However, 'modern' should not be confused with 'modernising', particularly in relation to the conservative aspects of the Honecker era.

Ross points out a further concept used to describe the GDR that can be derived from a perspective of ideology (Ross, 2002, pp.179-182). Given the realities of ever-present military, political and economic dependency on the Soviet Union, this approach positions the GDR as a Stalinist dictatorship alongside other Soviet bloc states. Ross goes on to note that a variation proposed after 1989 dilutes the 'Stalinist' adjective into 'post-Stalinist' so as to better reflect the transition to a comparatively less radical ideology. In a similar ideological vein, the GDR's self-identification as an 'antifascist' state is frequently both cited and explored by many pre- as well as post-1989 scholars, including Lindeman (1974), Childs (1983), Saunders (2007), Palmowski (2009) and Sayner (2013). A common denominator in this scholarship is the recognition that the GDR regime's widespread usage of the term *Antifaschismus* was primarily needed to legitimise the history of the GDR's foundation by solidifying a separate political, social and cultural identity towards West Germany

(Lindemann, 1974). As indicated above, this core discourse of demarcation towards West Germany, referred to officially and in GDR media as *Abgrenzung*, will appear to varying degrees in all of the case-studies in this thesis.

Comparing the work of German to non-German historians, one may note differences in conceptualising the GDR. Since 1989, Anglo-American historians such as Fulbrook, Allinson, Ross, Betts, and Dennis have historicised the GDR. In contrast, many German historians found themselves researching the GDR against a widely prevalent domestic climate of *Aufarbeitung*, of working through the legacy of German unification – that is of the GDR's past (Klessmann, 2013, pp.8-10). This quasi-moral burden resembles a similar process much thematised in post-1949 West Germany. Models of the GDR proposed by some German historians display a preoccupation perhaps less common among their non-German peers. Jürgen Kocka and Martin Sabrow ask whether the GDR, as a 'second German Dictatorship', was a German phenomenon; did the GDR mirror the *Sonderweg* debate on the origins of the Nazi era as representing a particularly German phenomenon, or was the GDR just another milestone in the twentieth century history of Communism? (Kocka and Sabrow, 1994, pp.200-201).

Since the mid-1990s, many German and non-German historians have thus come together in a more balanced approach to a GDR model. The opening of this chapter introduced the initial debate after 1989, which was essentially driven by a binary, bad versus good argument. The key controversial terms were the adjectives that should apply: 'totalitarian', combined with 'dictatorship' or 'failed' combined with 'state'? However, as seen above the term 'dictatorship' itself was to become an acceptable alternative to the arguably too nondescript term 'state'. 'One-party' and 'authoritarian' emerged as viable, defining adjectives although both contain an element of tautology when combined with 'dictatorship'. And so several scholars continued to propose alternatives on how best to qualify the basic model of the GDR. The following brief summary indicates the wide range of approaches to find an compromise, acceptable to historians.

Jarausch was an initiator of this evolving debate, and uses the polarisation described above as a starting point. Whilst maintaining the narrative of a 'Second German Dictatorship', he asks whether the GDR was only an 'illegitimate, totally politicised totalitarian state' or a 'legend of good beginning', a 'failed egalitarian experiment' (Jarausch, 1999, pp.3-4, 8-9). He substantiates this dichotomy by referring to the above-mentioned traditional, top-down

‘totalitarian approach’ versus ‘nostalgic memory’ of some post-1989 historians (1999, p.4). Sabrow, in his volume co-edited with Kocka, argues that a socio-cultural GDR history provides an ideal empiric foundation for a model of ‘consensus dictatorship’ (Kocka and Sabrow, 1994, pp.197-198, 208). This approach was subsequently reinforced by (amongst others) Fulbrook (1995, p.276 and 2005, p.12) and Rehberg (2009) in the above-mentioned ‘participatory dictatorship’ model. Rejecting the totalitarianism paradigms as a Cold War relic, Mike Dennis supports Fulbrook’s methodology of periodisation. He also endorses the contributions of Jarausch, Kocka and Sabrow in ‘creating a conceptual umbrella of modern dictatorship’ through a process of ‘critical historicisation’ (Dennis, 2000, pp. x-xvii).

Mark Allinson also advocates characterising the GDR as a failed experiment rather than as an abnormal state. Based on a regional case study of the state of Thuringia, he further refines Sabrow’s and Fulbrook’s definition of normalcy as the regime’s inability to win the argument, producing a situation of stable instability (2001, pp.204-224). Sabrow has developed this theme by reflecting that participating in society produces a paradox of apparent stability in the GDR. Rather than labelling the GDR as a repressive leviathan, he advocates a balanced view of the GDR with an implied legitimacy based on tacit consensus. Normalcy for him is represented by a multi-layered pattern of social relationships (Sabrow, 1999, pp. 197-198). More recently, Sara Jones emphasises another approach to a bottom-up interpretation of the GDR. Manifest examples of agency (*Eigensinn*) in the relationships of GDR intellectuals with the power structure of the regime are identified in a number of case studies; in so doing, a clear pattern of ambiguity emerges in these ‘interactions between rulers and ruled in a social structure’ (Jones, 2011, p.6). This ‘ambiguity’ may be extrapolated from intellectuals, as a specific sector, to characterizing wider GDR society, thus setting a clear limit on the extent to which the GDR can be viewed as a top-down, ‘*durchherrschte*’ (Kocka, 1994), pervasively ruled dictatorship.

The Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, a German government sponsored institution, has published a summary on the growing German debate regarding the use of the term *Unrechtsstaat* to define the GDR (Holtman, 2010). The term itself is inherently vague. In the sense of ‘unjust’, the term could reflect the political illegitimacy of an externally imposed and enforced regime. On the other hand, it may equally apply to the ‘injustice’ to be found in the state’s consistent denial of the universal rule of law, and violations of its citizens’ basic human rights, despite having a functioning legal system. As a potential contribution to a construct of the GDR, *Unrechtsstaat* shares a common weakness with the related ideological

model, since both lack features that are distinctively East German; both apply just as easily to both the Soviet Union and its satellite states in pre-1989/90 Central Europe, indeed to most dictatorships; their usage as concepts to describe the GDR deserve therefore to be criticised as being only simplistic categorisation (Klessmann, 2013).

A further, post-1989 feature of German conceptualisation of the GDR can be noted when distinguishing former West German from former East German historians. Jessen points out that GDR research over the past two decades has been ‘asymmetric’ in being essentially driven by West German historians. As a reaction, several previously discredited East German historians have begun to stress the relative importance of first-hand memory over remote research (Jessen, 2010, p.1055). Stefan Berger examines the post-1989 fate of East German historians and suggests that GDR historiography was ‘colonised’ by West German historians, as the scholarly credibility of East German historians had supposedly been destroyed during their previous tenure (2011, pp.63-66). As an example of a former East German historian reasserting his perspective, Bollinger endorses Jarausch’s suggested designation of the GDR as a welfare dictatorship. He highlights the accomplishments of the state in the areas of social welfare and education as worthwhile ends justifying the unpalatable means of a repressive political and social structure (Bollinger and Vilmar, 2002).

Summarising the range and complexity of labels and terminology, it can be held that some twenty-eight years of post-1989 research, both in Germany and elsewhere, have produced a range of sometimes contradictory, yet not mutually exclusive concepts to describe the GDR. The reasons behind the evolution of these models might be linked to the still incomplete research into a widening range of diverse primary sources. These include several large official archives and other, still to be fully researched sources such as cultural output, social and oral history. The empirical research conducted in my thesis can contribute to these debates with analysis of valuable new evidence of a consistent pattern of agency, enjoyed by certain sections of GDR society, notably intellectuals, in the context of high profile cultural commemorations. In the early years of post-1989 GDR research, binary alternatives of a GDR model were represented by top-down versus bottom-up perspectives; ongoing and future socio-cultural history research should increasingly substantiate a multi-perspectival concept of what the GDR actually was. That outcome would effectively devalue any model that merely classifies the GDR through ‘a post-war approach of totalitarianism that focuses on offering repression from above rather than cooperation from below’ (Jarausch, 2013).

The research question is therefore both important and topical in evaluating how best to describe the GDR. By exploring how state-sponsored commemorations shaped national identity, the central research problem is linked to ongoing historiographical debates on the nature of the GDR and how it should be defined in historical and political terms. These arguments provide starting points for consideration of how cultural policy worked under state socialism; however, they do not consider in detail the specific role played by an evolving practice of cultural commemorations in authoritarian states and their impact on national identity. The thesis fills this research gap by combining a detailed historiographical study of how such commemorations were proposed and negotiated with recent studies in national identity. Based for the first time on a series of comparable case studies, my thesis develops a novel longitudinal approach to understanding how commemorations, as a politically designated instrument of cultural policy, are developed over time in a state dominated by a single political party and ideological structure.

### **1.3. CONCLUSION – OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS**

All of the secondary literature evaluated so far in this introductory chapter represents many of the significant contributions to the two main theoretical frameworks underpinning the thesis. This detailed review has shown how seminal theories in memory studies provide initial insights into the generic features of commemorations including the inter-linked concepts of collective memory and cultural memory, invented tradition, national identity, nationalism, patriotism and myth. However, it does not necessarily follow that these models support an interpretation of the design, execution and legacy features of major cultural commemorations that might confirm a certain historiographical model of the GDR. Without an analysis of the evidence presented in the case studies that follow, the theoretical scholarship leaves an ongoing, often binary debate unresolved: does prima facie evidence of deliberately ‘invented tradition’, identified as then having an impact on national identity in the GDR, inevitably support a ‘top-down’ model of that state? Or does evidence of agency (*Eigensinn*) instead enhance a ‘participatory’ or ‘consensus’ dictatorship, ‘bottom-up’ model?

The next chapters concentrate on four cultural commemorations in GDR history. The timeframe spans the central part of the state’s existence from the late 1950s to the early 1980s. Against the background of concurrent political, economic and social conditions both within the GDR and abroad, each anniversary represents a snapshot of that year and the two to three-year period before it. Each chapter is structured in a broadly similar manner to enable

the case-studies to be comparable and thus demonstrate the originality of the thesis. In each case the timeline of the commemoration is investigated in three relatively distinct stages. Firstly, the chapter explores the aims – that is the planning of the design and content of the commemoration events and activities. These include not only formal ceremonies but cultural output relating to the cultural personality being commemorated, including academic conferences, media content and coverage, and educational activity. Set against the prevailing cultural policy, the aims of these commemorations can be seen to be developed within an explicitly articulated ideological framework. The basis for this new framework is shown to have either been inherited from earlier, albeit smaller scale anniversaries of the same person and/or from official GDR constructs and narratives concerning that person that existed before the new anniversary.

Each case study considers how the previous framework or perceived construct for that personality was adopted or revised for the commemoration. It then investigates the second chronological stage, the actual implementation of the commemoration year and all its events and activities. The goal here is to test and interpret any tensions and discernible gaps between theory and practice; between the commemoration aims on the one hand and the reality of how the plans were negotiated on the other. In a closing ‘outcomes’ section all features of the commemoration are assessed in the light of their subsequent reception, longer-term outcomes and relevance to the concept of national identity.

Commemorations in the GDR were not only concentrated on cultural personalities; as in many other countries, anniversaries of scientific and political personalities as well as political and historical events were also commemorated.<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, as Smith (1991, p.92) has noted, nationalists, intent on celebrating the nation, are drawn to the cultural genres, such as fine arts, music and literature. This observation is reflected in my specific selection of cultural commemorations in this thesis to best explore the impact on national identity.

The bicentenary of Friedrich von Schiller’s birth in 1959 is the first and earliest GDR commemoration selected as case study. An analysis of hitherto largely unresearched primary sources exposes an early example of the gap between the theory and practice of cultural commemorations in the GDR. External factors play an important role in the design and execution of the events. In this case the domestic repercussions of the Cold War reinforce the interlinked cultural policies of demarcation to West Germany and appropriation of German cultural heritage – *Abgrenzung* and *Aneignung*. A second contributing factor for the

divergence between what was intended and what transpired in practice emerges in several significant organisational issues surrounding the implementation of events and activities. This was caused mainly by late planning by the authorities responsible for the events as well as by a key stakeholder in the commemoration, the mass organisation, *Deutscher Kulturbund* (DKB). These shortcomings in turn present early pointers to the extent, that cultural commemorations contributed to the formation of national identity, based on major cultural icons of the past. The new evidence investigated here also suggests initial clues to the relevance of such commemorations in supporting the participatory dictatorship model of the GDR.

The centenary of Käthe Kollwitz's birth in 1967, eight years after the Schiller bicentenary, is the smallest in scale of the case studies. Uniquely amongst the four historical personalities, primary sources on both sides of the prevailing Cold War divide appear to accept the artistic work and political life of Kollwitz as essentially linked to the GDR. This factor lessens the overt need for the authorities to adopt *Abgrenzung* and *Aneignung* discourses when planning the commemoration. Yet a detailed analysis of how she was portrayed in commemoration activities, namely a specially commissioned documentary film, exhibition events and the GDR media coverage confirms yet again a pattern of discrepancies between the theory and practice of this commemoration. Various narratives proposing a more explicitly politicised construct of Kollwitz as an anti-fascist, communist and pacifist appear at times to conflict with a domesticated paradigm of Kollwitz as 'grieving mother' in the way her life and work is commemorated. In terms of the research question, selected evidence presented in this case study suggests that her status as an existing socialist role model contributing to the formation of national identity was reconfirmed by the commemoration rather than noticeably amplified.

The third case study investigates the bicentenary of Ludwig van Beethoven's birth that was celebrated in many countries in 1970. The GDR's commemoration is shown to represent a continuation of certain features that characterise the Schiller bicentenary, eleven years earlier. The twin themes of appropriation and demarcation continue to dominate the ideological framework, set against the enduring Cold War. Once again, previously unresearched primary sources point conclusively to organisational challenges and a resulting divergence between the original plans and the execution of the commemoration. A key factor in this case was the difficulty experienced by the regime in communicating an updated, Marxist approach to Beethoven. Compared to the Schiller bicentenary, the overall organisational gap is less evident. The success of a major recording project presents a more tangible legacy than

cultural output during the Schiller bicentenary, and this justifies assessing the outcome of the Beethoven commemoration as having a potential, if limited, impact on GDR national identity. As chief protagonist in this commemoration, the DKB and its associated musical community once again provides primary evidence of agency, which was arguably more visible than eleven years earlier.

The final case study chapter is devoted to the *Lutherjahr* in 1983, the exceptionally large-scale commemoration of Martin Luther's birth quincentenary in the GDR. The uniqueness of these events is explored in terms of scope, preparation time, and the involvement of two key stakeholders – the Protestant church and the Stasi (Ministerium für Staatssicherheit). The latter, in particular, does not appear in any primary sources and secondary literature relating to the other case studies. Several reactive interventions by the SED throughout the planning and implementation of the *Lutherjahr* are analysed to reveal how the commemoration and its outcomes was affected in practice by unresolved challenges in the church-state relationship in the GDR. As one of the most important 'events' of the *Lutherjahr*, the major GDR television dramatisation, 'Martin Luther', provides significant evidence of this phenomenon, both in its gestation, content and reception. In common with the other case studies this chapter illustrates how the reality and outcome of the commemoration differed from the initial aims and ideological framework. The largely ineffective aim to communicate a Marxist Luther, whose life story is coincidentally closely linked to GDR locations, is revealed to be driven by a number of political motives. The relatively less important one of reinforcing a GDR-specific national identity, based on this particular icon of German culture, is more hidden than in the comparable Schiller and Beethoven case studies; in the final analysis it appears to have been similarly unsuccessful.

The principal, empirical research method employed in the four case studies is textual analysis of official material from several archives. These include the 'Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv' (BArch-SAPMO) the Stasi Records Agency, 'Der Bundesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik' (BStU), the 'Akademie der Künste' (AdK), and the 'Deutsches Rundfunkarchiv' (DRA). The material selected, alongside other primary sources including media texts, broadcast output, and literature published at the time, is largely unpublished so far.

The concluding chapter compares and contrasts the distinguishing characteristics of the four case studies, identifies common features and draws overall conclusions as to the likely impact on national identity in a wider sense. Lastly, and as an original contribution to the historiographical debates on the GDR, the overall research outcome is positioned against the main theoretical frameworks presented in this introductory chapter and poses the following questions: do the case studies shed further light on the ritualised, repetitive facets of commemorations conducted in an authoritarian society? What is the implication of that evaluation on the value and potential ability of commemorations to form national identity? Does a recurrent pattern of disparity between theory and practice suggest an insuperable obstacle to commemorations fulfilling their aims in an authoritarian society? Finally, does the relative ineffectiveness of ideological frameworks and many examples of agency in all four case studies add new empirical weight to defining what sort of society the GDR was – and thereby support or supersede any existing historiographical model? This thesis aims to put forward answers to all these interlinked questions.

## **2: THE SCHILLER BICENTENARY, 1959**

### **2.1. INTRODUCTION**

The public commemoration of Schiller's birth in 1959 was one of several anniversaries of his birth and death, celebrated in Germany since the commemoration of his birth centenary in 1859. In this chapter I will review to what extent the appropriation of Schiller, one of the most venerated figures of German high culture, successfully positioned him as a socialist role model and whether the implementation largely met the aims set at the outset. If so, did this produce an observable contribution to the construction of GDR national identity? Evidence will be considered to understand whether the commemoration events may be seen to have been designed to achieve a clear distinctiveness to concurrent events in West Germany and whether such a policy of demarcation was the overriding concern of the authorities. Any such evidence should also provide clues to explicit or implicit motives closely related to this policy. Was one such motive an inherent need felt by the SED to legitimise the regime domestically? Furthermore, did the SED also aim to promote the state's stature abroad in response to West German economic and political successes at the time? Finally, the chapter will also review meaningful evidence of negotiation and compromise to be found amongst all those involved in the commemorations and draw conclusions concerning the theory and practice of political power and cultural policy at that point in time in GDR history.

The research method applied in reviewing the Schiller bicentenary in the GDR, as in all the subsequent case study chapters, relies primarily on analysis of official files identified and researched at the BArch-SAPMO archive. Further primary sources include GDR radio broadcasts of the main Weimar events at the DRA and East German publications of that period. It should be noted that the amount of data in all the appropriate archives available for research on the Schiller bicentenary is more limited than for later case studies in this thesis. Even though this may not be unusual for archives going back to the early years of the GDR, the relative scarceness of primary sources here is somewhat surprising, given the scale of the commemoration and Schiller's status, alongside Goethe, at the pinnacle of German literature. Previous scholarly research (Nutz, 1992; Bilke, 2007, Gudewitz, 2008 and Roßberg, 2009) has focused mainly on a comparative analysis of the diverging cultural and political approaches in the two German states at that time and comparison to the 1859 Schiller centenary. There is little work of a multidisciplinary nature covering the 1959 bicentenary in

any significant detail; monographs and edited volumes on Schiller and his works, such as those by Oellers (1970); Dann (2003); Hofmann (2003); Luserke-Jaqui (2005) and High, Martin and Oellers (2011) refer only in passing to the bicentenary. This literature is therefore only marginally relevant for the purposes of this chapter, as it invariably focuses on evaluating reception by contemporary Germanists. This first case study thus fills a gap in scholarship by analysing the 1959 commemorations from the perspectives of political and cultural history as well as memory studies.

### **2.1.1. The political context: the GDR in the grip of the Cold War in 1958/59**

Several developments in the year leading up to the Schiller bicentenary in 1959 provide an important political context for how the commemoration events and activities were to be designed and executed. 1 January 1958 marked the date that the Treaty of Rome came into effect and the European Economic Community became a reality. This historical milestone crystallised West Germany's integration into a larger European economic, social and political community. Any thoughts that the GDR leaders may have articulated earlier in the decade of forming a separate confederation of the two German states were finally put to bed. From a GDR perspective, a perceived threat inherent in the military potential of West Germany's NATO membership was further amplified in March 1958, when the Bundestag formally approved government plans enabling the Bundeswehr to acquire nuclear warheads.<sup>3</sup> A subsequent initiative by the newly elected French President, Charles de Gaulle, to accelerate European NATO integration by strengthening bilateral ties with West Germany may again have been seen by the GDR as anchoring West Germany further within the capitalist bloc.

Two events in 1958 can be interpreted partly as reactions to these developments in West Germany: internally, the fifth SED *Parteitag* in July recognised that the then current five-year plan, 1956-1960, was failing and replaced it with a new, seven-year plan. Highly unrealistically as it was to turn out, the *Parteitag* set an economic target of year-end 1961. By that time the GDR was supposed to overtake West Germany's standard of living, measured by per capita consumption of basic consumer goods. By mid-1959, Otto Grotewohl, as head of Government, and Wilhelm Pieck, the State President, were publicly asserting the GDR's *Alleinvertretungsanspruch* (claim to be the sole legitimate representative) of all Germans (Roßberg, 2009, p.143). Externally, 10 November 1958 marked the beginning of a three-year crisis over the future of Berlin, culminating in the erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961. The Soviet Premier Khrushchev demanded that the Allied Powers, the USA, Great Britain and

France should withdraw their forces from West Berlin within six months and that East Berlin should fall within the territory of the GDR.

How do these major geopolitical developments relate to cultural commemorations at the time, such as the Schiller bicentenary? The link to the deepening Cold War may be seen in ‘the SED’s self-image leading it to consider the use of aggressive rhetoric at the commemorations’ (Nutz, 1992, p.75). A detailed analysis of selected primary sources will reveal how these geopolitical events contributed to the ideological framework that influenced evolving cultural policy in the GDR, and thus the work of political and cultural functionaries involved with the commemorations. The external political environment meant that the authorities had to establish a clear demarcation line vis a vis concurrent West German scholarly approaches to the anniversary of Schiller and his works. Brockmann offers a logical explanation for the unique reality of how this environment affected cultural policy in a divided Germany at the time: ‘neither of the two German states wanted to imagine itself as implicated in a larger cultural unity with the enemy that it continued to reject and revile. Precisely because of the essential similarity between the German states, each state had to conceive of itself as fundamentally different from its counterpart’ (Brockmann, 1999, p.8).

In the month immediately preceding the bicentenary, another event took place affecting one of the two most visible symbols of national identity next to the national anthem – which had been already adopted in 1949. On 1 October 1959, the ‘Volkskammer der DDR’ approved a new national flag. This differentiated itself from the original German flag by incorporating the coat of arms of the GDR, consisting of a compass and a hammer encircled with rye. Karl Maron, Interior Minister, confirmed the political rationale for this change as a clear break from any previous self-identification of a single German nation:

[...]die Änderung [war] erforderlich, als der einzige rechtmäßige deutsche Staat auch in der Flaggenführung sichtbar von dem Westnationalen Separatstaat unterscheidet. Die Einführung der neuen Staatsflagge nach zehnjährigem Bestehen unserer Republik war notwendig geworden, weil die alte schwarz-rot-goldene Fahne von den reaktionären Kreisen der Westzone immer offener für ihre aggressiven Absichten missbraucht und so bei allen Völkern in Misskredit gebracht wurde. Angesichts dieser Entwicklung genügt es nicht mehr, dass sich die beiden deutschen Staaten äußerlich nur durch ihre Hymne unterscheiden (Roßberg, 2009, pp.143-144)

But even the official approach to culture, instrumentalised increasingly to crystallise a GDR national identity, had already changed in the five years preceding the Schiller bicentenary; a brief review illustrates Brockmann's thesis of similarity-driven demarcation.

### **2.1.2. The SED tightens cultural policy in the late 1950s**

Following the unsuccessful June 1953 rebellion, a number of bureaucratic structures were replaced in January 1954 by the creation of the Ministry for Culture (*Ministerium für Kultur*, hereafter referred to as 'MfK'). At the time there was a temporary thaw and consequent reduction in political intervention in cultural affairs (Herbst, 1994, pp.553-566).

However, in reaction to the 1956 uprising in Hungary, SED hardliners reasserted their influence, and in October 1957 the *Zentralkomitee der SED* (hereafter referred to as the 'ZK') created a commission for cultural affairs within the Politburo under Alfred Kurella; 'Im ideologischen Kampf für eine sozialistische Kultur' became its *Leitmotif* (Herbst, 1994). According to Herbst this second period in the chronology of GDR cultural policy lasted from 1954 until the rise of popular culture in the West and the emergence of Wolf Biermann in the East in the early 1960s (ibid., pp.557, 561). The first Bitterfeld conference of April 1959 marked the most prominent political milestone at that time. The so-called *Bitterfelder Weg* ('Bitterfeld Path') became a core strategy of GDR cultural policy until 1971. It was designed to promote the penetration of socialist culture within all sectors of GDR society, effectively uniting intellectuals and the working class through cultural events for workers and local participatory structures (ibid., p.557).

Towards the end of the GDR's existence a team of contributors within the ZK produced a major 550-page volume under the editorial leadership of the Germanist, Professor Horst Haase. This publication – *Die SED und das Kulturelle Erbe – Orientierungen, Errungenschaften, Probleme* – provides a valuable primary source on how the Party retrospectively viewed cultural heritage in a political context during the 1950s and beyond. Reacting to the 'Einbeziehung der BRD in das imperialistische NATO-Pakt-System', the GDR was seen to be undergoing an 'Aufschwung der sozialistischen Kulturrevolution und verstärkte Bemühungen um das sozialistische Kultur und Kunsterbe in der zweiten Hälfte der fünfziger Jahre'. The competition of societal systems between East and West Germany is noted as providing the SED with a major rationale to exercise the lead role in developing cultural policy in the GDR. Haase's explanation of how the creation of a separate GDR national identity became a strategic priority for the SED supports Brockmann's analysis,

cited above: ‘Es kam also darauf an, den Menschen die sozialistische Perspektive der DDR eindeutig bewusst zu machen’ (Haase, 1988, pp.223-261).

In language reflecting both the point in time and official publication background in which it was written, Haase suggests that the GDR’s cultural community was seen as a hindrance in achieving these ambitions:

Aber besonders in der Intelligenz und unter den Kulturschaffenden vollzog sich der Prozess des Umdenkens sehr zögernd. [...] Unter ihnen war, wie der Bericht des Zentralkomitees der SED an den V. Parteitag 1958 feststellte, die Auffassung vorhanden, dass die Wiedervereinigung Deutschlands ohne Klassenkampf und ohne Verlangsamung oder gar Preisgabe des weiteren sozialistischen Aufbaus zustande kommen könnte. Es dauerte geraume Zeit, bis diese Ansichten durch die schrittweise Klärung der damit zusammenhängenden theoretischen Fragen und die offensive politisch-weltanschauliche Arbeit der Partei überwunden werden konnten. Das alles wirkte sich auch nachdrücklich auf das Verhältnis zum Kulturerbe aus (Haase, 1988, p.224).

In practice the SED concluded that it needed to contemporise cultural heritage as a major tool in developing a separate GDR cultural identity:

Einer der Wege, um zu einer höheren Kultur aller Werktätigen zu gelangen, um die sozialistische Nationalkultur zu entwickeln, sah die Partei darin, Brücken zu schlagen, Zugänge zu schaffen zu den überlieferten Formen großer Kunst (ibid., p.256).

Haase goes on to cite the bicentenary commemoration of Handel’s death in 1959 as an example of that form of memory-work employed by the SED to assert its role in cultural policy: ‘Die Partei nutzt auch im Kunstbereich weiterhin wichtige Jubiläen zur Positionsbestimmung’. Although these Handel commemoration events were far less visible than the coincidental Schiller celebrations in the same year, Haase’s narrative provides some evidence of the SED’s explicit intent to appropriate cultural heritage in its decision to declare the 1959 anniversary as *Handel-Gedenkjahr*:

Mit ihrem Beschluss setzte die Partei nicht nur die kontinuierliche Orientierung auf das Werk Handels fort, sondern sie machte besonders die Künstler der DDR darauf aufmerksam, wie jener Komponist des 18. Jahrhunderts mitreißend und volksverbunden das Neue seiner Epoche in kühnen Werken zu gestalten wusste.

Außerdem war die Aneignung dieses Werkes für die Partei ein erneutes Beispiel, das lehrte, durch eine historische Betrachtungsweise, im zeitbezogenen und manchmal sogar religiösen Gewande das Humanistische, Zukunftsträchtige, ja Revolutionäre dieser großen Kunstschöpfungen zu erkennen' (ibid., p.257).

The SED's strategy of appropriating cultural heritage for its own purposes is thus made explicit in the phrasing: 'Aneignung dieses Werkes für die Partei'. Bearing in mind its official authorship, it is understandable that even twenty-nine years after the 1959 Handel commemorations this publication lacks any reference to or objective analysis of the actual events and to what extent the SED was able to persuade the artistic community to cooperate in their approach to this prominent example of cultural heritage. Curiously, the concurrent Schiller bicentenary goes unmentioned, despite enjoying a far higher public profile at the time than the Handel events in that same year. It is therefore essential to research the official records in order to assess how the concepts and events surrounding the Schiller anniversary related in theory and practice to prevailing cultural policy aims.

## **2.2. AIMS**

### **2.2.1. *Abgrenzung* and *Aneignung*: key political themes of cultural policy**

On 9 May 1955, the anniversary of Schiller's death in 1805, the then GDR Minister for Culture, Johannes R. Becher, appropriated a tribute by Goethe: 'Denn er **war** unser! Mag das stolze Wort den lauten Schmerz gewaltig übertönen!' (my emphasis). The original quotation became the title of Becher's festive address at the Weimar National Theatre: 'Denn er **ist** unser: Friedrich Schiller. Der Dichter der Freiheit' (Bilke, 2007, p.473). This sentence was to convey the central political message within the above mentioned cultural policy of *Aneignung* – that is, cultural appropriation – that characterises the 1955 and subsequent Schiller commemorations in the GDR. At every step, the planning of Schiller's bicentenary in 1959 demonstrates how the politically controlled cultural system in the GDR sought to contemporise Schiller in the light of an evolving socialist nation. In doing so, the authorities intended to distance the GDR's approach from the prevalent West German academic attitude of using 'objective' analysis (as they saw it) to free Schiller from the "Klischeevorstellungen und Etiketten" typical of earlier Schillerian reception history' (Nutz, 1992, p.65). This policy of distancing or demarcation to West Germany is referred to hereafter as *Abgrenzung* and was the dominant and often explicit political motive for cultural appropriation; it represents the

second political theme that will be shown to permeate both this commemoration in 1959, and to varying degrees, the later case studies in this thesis.

### **2.2.2. Planning the bicentenary: off to a late start**

The first documented evidence of planning activity for the Schiller bicentenary commemoration was recorded only four months before the beginning of 1959. The actual formal preparations did not start until early in the anniversary year itself. This late start indicates that the bicentenary was never intended to be a whole ‘Schiller Year’, with various events and cultural activity spread from the beginning of 1959. In this respect the Schiller bicentenary will be seen to differ somewhat from the Beethoven and Luther anniversaries researched in this thesis.

A common feature of all major cultural commemorations in the GDR was the establishment of an official planning committee representing the significant political and cultural stakeholders concerned. In this case it was known as the ‘Schiller Komitee der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik’, hereafter referred to as the ‘Schiller Committee’. The Committee met four times during 1959, in January, March, July and finally in late October. The size of the Schiller Committee meant that it acted effectively as the senior oversight body. The principal working group delegated to operate as a steering committee met for the first time in February 1959. An important task of the Schiller Committee, discussed in more detail below, was to issue an official and widely-publicised declaration in July 1959, proclaiming the purpose, scope and content of the anniversary celebrations (hereafter referred to as the ‘Schiller Declaration’). This core aspect of the Schiller Committee’s remit articulated the ideological framework for commemoration; it will be seen to be replicated by similar committees in the later case studies. Finally, under the immediate supervision of the Schiller Committee and ultimately the SED, two major government ministries (Culture and Education) and a number of mass organisations assumed responsibility for the detailed plans and subsequent implementation.

### **2.2.3. Schiller redefined: humanist, proto-socialist, ‘of the GDR’?**

What image of Schiller did those planning the events intend to transmit? How might this relate to the key themes of *Aneignung* and *Abgrenzung* and the construction of a separate GDR national identity? The earliest available evidence of initiatives and plans for the 1959 Schiller commemoration events is a letter from Otto Lang, General Director of the Deutsches Nationaltheater Weimar, to Alfred Kurella, Chairman of the Cultural Commission of the ZK,

on 20 August 1958.<sup>4</sup> Referring to earlier discussions between him and the Weimar city council, Lang proposes that his theatre stage a Schiller-based festival of performances over a three-day period in August 1959, with a strong focus on youth participation. In his reply three weeks later Kurella agrees in principle but defers to the outcome of future discussions involving two of the largest mass organisations: the official youth movement, Free German Youth (*Freie Deutsche Jugend*, hereafter referred to as 'FDJ'), and the Free German Trade Union Movement (*Freier Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund*, hereafter referred to as 'FDGB').<sup>5</sup>

The core planning process for the Schiller commemorations emerged five months later in the formal inauguration ('Konstituierung') of the Schiller Committee. This body comprised fifty-three members chaired by the Minister for Culture, Alexander Abusch, himself coincidentally an expert on Schiller. The stakeholders included representatives from a wide range of political, academic and intellectual sections of the GDR such as MfK, Ministry for Education (*Ministerium für Volksbildung*, hereafter referred to as 'MfV'), and the GDR media. Major regional centres including Erfurt, Leipzig, Halle, Gera and Rostock were also represented on this large body.<sup>6</sup> The main purpose of the first meeting was to appoint four *Kommissionen*. The individual remits of these working groups were: '1. 'Konzeptionskommission'; 2. 'Programmkommission'; 3. 'Kommission zur Vorbereitung der wissenschaftlichen Konferenz', (9 to 12 November 1959); 4. 'Publikationskommission'.<sup>7</sup> The *Konzeptionskommission* meeting on 23 February 1959, reveals its status as the major steering group of only five members, chaired by Abusch himself. Echoing similar SED pronouncements from the 1955 commemorations, four main principles are noted in the minutes of this first Committee meeting.<sup>8</sup> Firstly, the commemoration events need to demonstrate a connection between the national and social issues raised by Schiller's works at the time as a pointer to contemporary issues in the GDR and beyond. Secondly, the working class and the GDR are the sole legitimate heirs of Schiller. Thirdly, the GDR fulfils demands set out by Schiller in his vision of a better human society and lastly, Schiller's approach to national issues is to serve as model for contemporary GDR writers.

Without going into further detail the commission also notes at the same meeting apparent contradictions within Schiller's works that cannot be overlooked. Signalling its hegemonic claim to Schiller's cultural heritage, the commission nevertheless states that it is prepared to collaborate with both West German institutions and individuals interested in the 'Herausarbeitung des wahren humanistischen Gehalts an Schiller'.<sup>9</sup> The external and internal political climate had changed in the four years since commemorations in 1955 surrounding

the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Schiller's death. However this statement may be seen as an attempt to replicate the 'overlap and cooperation' that were previously observed in collections of speeches and essays in East and West Germany in 1955 (Martin 2006, p.12). If this spirit of cooperation with West Germany was a serious declaration of intent then it suggests a certain, if limited, continuity in the approach to the 1959 commemorations that would seem, at the same time, to contradict the new emphasis on rigid demarcation.

By 20 March 1959 a second comprehensive meeting of the main Schiller Committee<sup>10</sup> was able to agree an outline series of events and initiatives for the bicentenary year, based on a proposal by the *Konzeptkommission* working group back to the Schiller Committee.<sup>11</sup> These events were to culminate in the main festivities in Weimar, scheduled to take place over eight days in November around Schiller's birth date. The overall programme, described more fully in the next section, was recorded as a preliminary plan of the Schiller Committee.<sup>12</sup> The role of the working class may be seen here to have been a particular political priority. The *Konzeptkommission* had previously noted the preeminent position of workers in relation to Schiller, set out already during the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Schiller's death:

Die Stellungnahme des ZK der SED aus dem Jahr 1955 wird auch für die Arbeit des Schiller Komitees im Jahr 1959 die wichtigste Grundlage sein. Es sollen einige wichtige Stellen aus diesem Dokument in der Konzeption zitiert werden. [...] 'Die Arbeiterklasse und die Deutsche Demokratische Republik als einzig rechtmäßige Erben Schillers. Die Bedeutung des Schillerschen Werkes für die Entwicklung der sozialistischen Weltkultur'.<sup>13</sup>

Therefore in order to highlight the primacy of the working class and its relationship with creative artists the Schiller Committee's plan calls for the FDGB to play its part:

Der Freie Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund wird Veranstaltungen mit Werken von Schiller in das Programm der Arbeiterfestspiele aufnehmen. In den Betrieben werden die Schillerehrungen auf die Brigaden und Gemeinschaften der sozialistischen Arbeit orientiert und sollen Anlass sein, die Beziehung zwischen den Kulturschaffenden und der Arbeiterklasse noch enger zu gestalten.

The MfV was urged to emphasise the use of existing material from the 1955 commemorations but at the same time increase the involvement of students in new commemoration events. The meeting also agreed that a conference of German literature teachers across the GDR should be arranged. Other items discussed include: the *Deutscher*

*Kulturbund* (hereafter referred to as DKB) to focus on initiating events at regional and communal levels within its comprehensive network; new and existing films to be screened, and the state broadcasters to be encouraged to provide a wide variety of performances of Schiller's plays and other cultural programming. This Schiller Committee session was the first to agree to review a proposal from the Bremen theatre to arrange the exchange of three productions between West and East Germany. A decision to go ahead would depend on agreement on the selection of plays as well as the production approach and interpretations.

The final, and arguably most important, item in the context of the thesis's research question, debated at this planning session, was the draft of an official Schiller Declaration on the bicentenary by the Schiller Committee for widespread publication within the GDR. In it, the basic principles from the *Konzeptkommission* are further elaborated upon.<sup>14</sup> The inclusion here of cultural-political messages as ideological framework may be seen as the most important opportunity for the authorities to project their official ideological aims relating to the personality and work of Schiller.

In the Schiller Declaration, the 1959 commemorations are explicitly linked back to the 1955 commemoration, suggesting an emphasis on an evolutionary approach to how the bicentenary should be celebrated, rather than a rejection of those earlier events:

Bereits vor vier Jahren, als die 150. Wiederkehr des Todestages von Friedrich Schiller Anlass zur Besinnung auf sein Werk gab, sprach die deutsche Arbeiterklasse durch das Zentralkomitee ihrer Partei, der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands, zum deutschen Volk über die Größe und Bedeutung des Dichters und über die Aufgabe der echten Aneignung seines unverfälschten Erbes. Dieser grundlegende Beschluss vom Jahre 1955 hat noch immer seine volle Bedeutung.

The Schiller Declaration positions the celebrations in a contemporary context of progress achieved by the 'Verwirklichung der humanistischen Ideale' throughout the GDR state and society. In its appeal to all GDR creative artists to maximise their immersion in Schiller's works the whole cultural community of the GDR is called on to adopt a 'lebendige Interpretation, die den kämpferisch-humanistischen Geist der deutschen klassischen Literatur für unser Zeit weiterentwickelt', rather than to interpret Schiller narrowly within the historical context of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Above all, the Schiller Declaration notes the moral and cultural supremacy of the GDR in contrast to West Germany, thus justifying a clearer

display of *Abgrenzung* in the GDR's approach to the bicentenary than was the case in the 1955 anniversary:

Schärfer noch als 1955 ist im Schillerjahr 1959 unser deutsches Volk vor die nationale und humanistische Aufgabe gestellt, den alten Verderber unserer Nation, den deutschen Militarismus zu bändigen, um unser Volk auf die Bahn der demokratischen Wiedervereinigung zu führen und ihm eine friedliche Zukunft zu sichern. Wir grenzen uns jedoch klar ab von der geplanten verfälschenden Schillerehrung der Machthaber von Bonn, die im Zeichen der antinationalen, für unser Volk verhängnisvollen NATO-Politik stehen.

The Declaration goes on to create a clear link between the appropriation of cultural heritage and national identity in the sense of that heritage becoming 'Nationalkultur':

Im Zeichen dieser grundverschiedenen Entwicklungswege in den beiden deutschen Staaten und der sozialistischen Umwälzung in unseren Deutschen Demokratischen Republik wird das Schillerjahr 1959 beweisen, daß das Wachsen und Werden unserer nationalen sozialistischen Nationalkultur auf das Engste verknüpft ist mit der Aneignung und Weiterentwicklung unseres humanistischen Erbes. Dieses Erbe stellt einen unlösbaren Bestandteil der sozialistischen Nationalkultur dar.

The ideological construct thus positions Schiller as a contemporised, socialist role model. The portrayal demonstrably aims to promote national identity in the sense of identification with an appropriated major literary icon of German culture. In this regard, the construction is also in line with the principle of *Abgrenzung* by encouraging a discourse on Schiller that stands in clear contrast to that of the perceived historicisation of Schiller by West German Germanists. This draft Schiller Declaration was sent back to the working groups, to be finally adopted and published after the third Schiller Committee meeting of 7 July 1959.

At the next organisational level within the state apparatus below the Schiller Committee, the MfK and MfV proceeded to put the ideological aims of the Schiller commemoration into effect. In an undated directive, the Minister for Culture, Alexander Abusch, issued instructions to the respective culture departments within local GDR councils across the country.<sup>15</sup> Referring to the Schiller Declaration, and citing specific examples, the Schiller commemorations are directed to become an integral, omnipresent component of all cultural activities particularly in the context of socialist work practices and worker participation:

Die Ehrungen Friedrich Schillers sollen, den Charakter unserer sozialistischen Kulturarbeit entsprechend, einen organischen Bestandteil der kulturellen und künstlerischen Tätigkeit, insbesondere der kulturellen Massenarbeit, bilden. Sie sollen mit der Bewegung 'der lesende Arbeiter', mit der 'Woche des Buches', der kulturellen Entwicklung der Brigaden der sozialistischen Arbeit verbunden werden und in den Programmen der Kulturinstitutionen enthalten sein.

An undated directive from the MfV to all schools as well as institutions involved in teacher training refers directly to the Schiller Declaration and indirectly to the *Bitterfelder Weg*. The comprehensive directions covering all relevant taught subjects and syllabi stress the special role of the German working class as true heir of the classical national poet Schiller. Only the working class can properly recognise his contribution and put his ideas into practice in the present: 'Insbesondere muss deutlich werden, daß die deutsche Arbeiterklasse die wahre Erbin des Werkes unseres klassischen Nationaldichters Friedrich Schiller ist, daß sie erst seine Leistung wahrhaft zu würdigen und seine Ideen für unsere Zeit zu verwirklichen vermag'. All classrooms across the country are therefore instructed to arrange a commemorative ceremony on Schiller's birth anniversary, 10 November 1959.<sup>16</sup> In a further order, the Ministry issued detailed methodical notes to all teacher training establishments with instructions on Schiller interpretations to be used in the core subjects of German literature, history and music teaching. Where possible, material centrally collated by the *Deutsche Pädagogische Zentralinstitut* is to be used. Examples of such interpretations include: an emphasis for German literature lessons on linking Schiller's poetry to the literature of the Romantic period, interpreting the dramas *Wilhelm Tell* with reference to the 1813-1815 wars of liberation, and of positioning *Kabale und Liebe* within the context of Schiller's difficult experiences in his youth. In music lessons important poetry such as *An den Frühling* and *An die Freude* are to be cross-referenced respectively with Schubert's song setting and Beethoven's usage in the last movement of his ninth symphony. Lastly, in history lessons, Schiller's national and liberal thinking is to be contextualised within specific historical events including the first popular revolution in the Netherlands, the 30 Years War, German culture before the French Revolution and the independence wars of the British colonies in North America.<sup>17</sup> The prescriptive tone: 'für alle Schulen und Einrichtungen der Lehrer-und Erzieher-Ausbildung wird angewiesen,[...] alle Schüler der allgemeinbildenden Schulen von der neunten Klasse ab, sollen den Film *Kabale und Liebe* als Schulveranstaltung besuchen', and the itemised content of this communication is significant as it represents a

strict official framework rather than a set of guidelines. In this respect the school may be seen to represent a key site for the formation of national identity in the GDR – a phenomenon that was to become more visible in the last two decades of GDR history with respect to teaching materials (Saunders, 2007, pp.12, 34). The directive thus fulfils the closing paragraph of the Schiller Declaration:

Vor allem aber sollte Schillers Wort in den Schulen vor der Jugend erklingen. Die kraftvollen Ideen, die der Schillerschen Dichtung innewohnen, sind stets von der Jugend mit Begeisterung aufgenommen worden [...] Auch die Jugend unserer Zeit, der die Aufgabe gestellt ist, mitzubauen an der friedlichen Zukunft ihres Vaterlandes und in der ersten Reihe der Bahnbrecher einer neuen, sozialistischen Welt zu stehen, wird das flammende Pathos und die fortschrittlichen Gedanken der dichterischen Werke Schillers in sich aufnehmen und sich auch davon zur heutigen Tat begeistern lassen.<sup>18</sup>

There is little archival evidence of how and to what extent Abusch's school directive was actually complied with. However a letter of 15 September 1959 from the MfV's head of extramural studies to all German subject tutors identifies 'wissenschaftliche Mängel' in some of the material used in a Schiller extramural circular to students. The letter deplors 'ideologische Schwächen' in the circular's criticism of Minister Abusch's book on Schiller and an over-emphasis on religion when interpreting Schiller's works. The communication closes in pointing out that all extramural students are to receive a written revision of the correct scholarly approach to Schiller and his works.<sup>19</sup>

The key ideological aims for how Schiller and his bicentenary commemorations were intended to be positioned may be summarised as focussing on three themes: firstly, Schiller's *Humanism* – a term which had become an often-repeated core ingredient of GDR official rhetoric relating to the appropriation of German cultural heritage (*Kulturerbe*); secondly, the incorporation of Schiller within a socialist national culture, stressing particularly the active involvement of the working class and youth within the framework of the *Bitterfelder Weg*; and finally, the overarching theme of *Abgrenzung* to West Germany, of creating a manifestly socialist approach to Schiller's life and work in order to reinforce the GDR's claim to be the true and only representative of German culture. This political dimension can arguably be interpreted as a top-down intention to ultimately legitimise the regime by promoting a distinctive national identity with regard to German literature.

## **2.3. IMPLEMENTATION**

With the ideological framework for how a humanist and socialist Schiller was to be incorporated into a programme of commemoration events and cultural activities in place, how closely did the actual execution of the programme follow the stated aims? Did the authorities need to get involved in response to issues emerging once those charged with the implementation began their work? The following section summarises and investigates the main events, identifies these issues and analyses how the SED, in particular, reacted.

### **2.3.1. Summary of events and activities: unrealistically ambitious?**

The Schiller bicentenary commemorations took place over a six-month period from early May until mid-November 1959. The events began with an official wreath-laying ceremony at Schiller's monument, the opening of an exhibition on 'Schiller and the stage' and special theatre performances, all in Weimar on 9 May. The next six months featured a multitude of minor and larger theatrical and literary events organised across the GDR by the various mass organisations mentioned earlier. A highlight of this period was a Schiller youth festival ('Schiller-Festspiele der Jugend'), hosted by the FDJ in Weimar from 19 to 30 August and a new film production of Schiller's play, *Kabale und Liebe*. New publications included a revised edition of all Schiller's works and a 32-page biography of Schiller aimed at young readers. The commemoration events ended with a week (*Festwoche*) of major official and cultural events in Weimar and Jena from 6 to 14 November, scheduled around Schiller's birth anniversary on 10 November.

### **2.3.2. Schiller Committee stakeholders: coordination issues and variable commitment from 'unreliable' intellectuals**

By March 1959, two months before the official start, there appears superficially to be significant momentum amongst stakeholders in the planning of these commemorations. Yet at the same second meeting of the Schiller Committee that month, the scope and complexity of the commemoration programme was beginning to prove unrealistically ambitious given the limited time available to plan, coordinate and implement all the events and cultural activity. Underlining the particular importance of the Academic Conference (explored more fully in the next section) the Committee records considerable impatience at the slow progress of the preparations. This may be interpreted at best as evidence of an unrealistic timeline accompanied by poor coordination amongst the stakeholders. More revealingly, it could also

indicate a reluctance of two of the Conference's joint organisers to accept unquestioningly instructions from the Schiller Committee as carrying the full weight of SED authority and therefore to handle the events as a daily priority.<sup>20</sup>

Charting the overall progress of the Schiller Committee over the ten months of its existence reveals that what should have been a straightforward handover from overall planning by the Committee to execution by other commemoration stakeholders was not always orderly and effective. A closer look at examples of mass organisation contributions to the implementation illustrates how these issues may have negatively affected the desired aim of creating a socialist Schiller in the wider context of GDR national identity.

An FDGB file note records high-level discussions between senior FDGB officials and the ZK even before the first meeting of the Schiller Committee at the end of January 1959. The initial plan specifies a National Theatre event in Weimar on 9 May 1959, targeting the 'Arbeiterklasse' in Weimar, with all local workplaces to participate. This cultural event could then be replicated in other towns across the country and also at the annual national worker festival. In terms of resources the FDGB would need both educational material and scholarly lecturers, 'um die Popularisierung eines richtigen Schillerbildes bei Gewerkschaftsveranstaltungen durchführen zu können'. The principal publishing initiative is to be entitled *Schiller und die Arbeiterklasse*, due for publication in April 1959, and designed to provide orientation on the Schiller commemorations to all FDGB affiliated trade unions.<sup>21</sup> But six months later an internal FDGB memo refers to the decision taken at the third session of the Schiller Committee in early July, designating specific events to be organised in Dresden, Erfurt, Stralsund, Leipzig and Berlin under the title *Arbeiter ehren Schiller*. Organisational inconsistencies appear here between the lines: each of the five events is to be organised locally either by the FDGB, the local DKB or a local coordinating Schiller Committee. Nine further towns are named for similar events but are yet to be scheduled in detail. The memo states that the national Schiller Committee has taken charge of the 'organisatorische Festlegung' of these events, suggesting that the FDGB may not have properly taken on board its original organisational responsibilities up to that point in time.<sup>22</sup>

Under the overall control of the SED, the DKB played a central role in providing resources for the Schiller commemorations, both in terms of material such as brochures, slides and tape recordings of *Wilhelm Tell*, supplying lecture venues as well as personnel to lead the local cultural events.<sup>23</sup> A memo from the DKB's Central Secretariat to the four main regional

offices of the DKB provided the concept for parallel conferences in May and June 1959 in Erfurt, Leipzig, Berlin and Rostock. The objective of these internal DKB events was to instil an ‘ideologische Konzeption’ in some 200 participants, who would subsequently be deployed at commemoration events across the GDR. These speakers were to be primarily Germanists, as well as drama experts, librarians and other intellectuals whose work involved Schiller.<sup>24</sup> An undated communiqué goes on to report on the Berlin conference of 24 June 1959. Dr. Werner Thalheim, Director of the Germanistisches Institute at Berlin’s Humboldt University, focuses in his lecture on ‘Schillers ideologischer Kampf um die Herstellung der nationalen Einheit Deutschlands in Zusammenhang mit der Lösung der sozialen Frage’. Thalheim (unrelated to the secretary of the Schiller Committee) also reinforces a core political message on the ‘Schiller Verfälschung in Westdeutschland, wo versucht wird, Schiller vollständig zu entpolitisieren, und ihn für die Ideologie der NATO nutzbar zu machen’. The final paragraph of his speech, as cited in the communiqué, reveals an unmistakable objective of the Schiller commemorations; identification with the GDR nation’s (appropriated) cultural heritage is behind the core theme of worker involvement with the Schiller bicentenary commemoration. This objective can only be attained by establishing a link between the nation’s workers and farmers – thus, by implication, not only the highly educated, cultural GDR elite – and German cultural heritage:

Für alle verantwortlichen Institutionen und Organisationen muß es das hauptsächlichste Anliegen sein, vor allem die Arbeiter der sozialistischen Brigaden und die Bauern der Landwirtschaftlichen Produktionsgenossenschaften mit dem fortschrittlichen Werk Schillers vertraut zu machen, um das klassische Kulturerbe unserer Nation zu einem echten Bestandteil aller Menschen in der DDR werden zu lassen.<sup>25</sup>

The full weight of this appeal is contained in the expression ‘echter Bestandteil’. This phrasing converts a potential sense of national identity, gained by citizens identifying with their cultural heritage, into the cultural heritage itself becoming a permanent, integral element within all citizens. The use of this term evokes the Schiller Declaration’s allusion, cited earlier, of *Kulturerbe* needing to become a component (*Bestandteil*) of *Nationalkultur*.

### **2.3.3. The Schiller *Festwoche*: a predictable format with no surprises**

The *Festwoche* in Weimar comprised a full programme of varied daily events, titled collectively as ‘Schiller Ehrung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik: Festtage in

Weimar und Jena'.<sup>26</sup> These included theatrical performances, concerts, exhibitions and public lectures throughout the entire week. The culmination of this *Festwoche* was the 'Wissenschaftliche Konferenz über das Schaffen Friedrich Schillers', referred to hereafter as the 'Academic Conference', from 6 to 9 November and the official wreath-laying and *Festakt* ceremonies on 10 November, both described below in more detail. The conference and official ceremonies were the main components of a formulaic approach to major cultural commemorations in the GDR that we will see replicated in the other three case studies.

The concept and format of the Academic Conference followed an existing template for academic conferences at major cultural commemorations. The purpose and targeted participants were formally confirmed at the March meeting of the Schiller Committee.<sup>27</sup> The Conference is to be jointly organised by the Schiller Committee, the 'Nationale Forschungs- und Gedenkstätten der klassischen deutschen Literatur in Weimar' and the Friedrich-Schiller University in Jena. The *Leitmotif* of the Conference is aimed to contrast new, Marxist approaches to Schiller, based on the historical-materialistic method, with West German 'bourgeois' interpretations: 'Die Konferenz soll Wert und Bedeutung des Werkes Friedrich Schillers für die sozialistische Kultur fixieren, indem sie die Marxistische Schillerforschung durch neue Erkenntnisse bereichert und sich mit der bürgerlichen Forschung der Gegenwart auseinandersetzt'. The six main lectures are confirmed as: 'Volk und Held in den Dramen Schillers' (Hans-Günther Thalheim); 'Der Begriff der Bürger-Freiheit und der nationalen Unabhängigkeit in Schillers historischen Schriften' (Karl-Heinz Hahn); 'Theorie und Praxis in Schillers Schaffen, dargestellt an Wallenstein' (Hans-Jürgen Geerts); 'Schiller und die Bühnenpraxis' (Armin-Gerd Kuckhoff); 'Schillers Gedichte in der Tradition deutscher Lyrik' (Hans Mayer); and 'Schiller und der Begriff der Popularität' (Edith Braemer). All GDR intellectuals involved with Schiller are thus specifically targeted: 'Mit der Konferenz strebt der Veranstalter die Zusammenfassung aller literaturwissenschaftlich arbeitenden Menschen in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik an, deren Bemühungen besonders in diesem Jahr auf die Lösung von Problemen der Schillerforschung gerichtet sind'. Guests are listed as Germanists, philosophers, writers, teachers and individuals associated with the theatre as well as with literary publications.<sup>28</sup> Nutz puts forward a plausible secondary objective, proposing that the Conference's stated inclusivity was also aimed at converting those intellectuals within the GDR, whose outlook was known to be 'liberal' and 'revisionist' (Nutz 1992, p.75). This target group may be seen to have included one of the main speakers, the literary scholar, critic and author Hans Mayer, who was to commit *Republikflucht*, i.e. not return to the GDR

from an authorised trip to West Germany, four years later. In a separate speech after the Schiller bicentenary, Mayer criticised the GDR commemorations as 'etwas eintönig und allzu stark aufeinander abgestimmt' and 'dem Gegenstand nicht immer angemessen' (cited in Roßberg, 2009, p.156).

Closing the chronological narrative of the GDR Schiller bicentenary, the final *Festakt* ceremony in Weimar was held on the evening of 10 November 1959, the anniversary of Schiller's birthday. Preceded by an official wreath-laying ceremony at Schiller's monument outside the *Nationaltheater*, the programme consisted of a festive speech ('Festansprache') by Alexander Abusch, framed with music by Handel and Beethoven and the spoken Prologue from Schiller's play, *Wallenstein*. The reception of this ceremony is discussed in the later 'Outcomes' section.

#### **2.3.4. Repeated SED interventions seek to close gaps between aims and implementation**

Several documents expose the manifest influence exercised by the SED on the implementation of the 1959 bicentenary, both within the Schiller Committee and at other national and local organisational levels. As will also be noted in the subsequent case studies, it is important to consider in some detail the nature and extent of SED interventions in major cultural commemorations. Firstly, by identifying the otherwise hidden implementation issues resulting from non- or poor compliance with the aims of the commemorations, the analysis exposes why the SED needed to intervene in the first place. Moreover, these illuminating interferences serve to question the reality of a power structure that a 'top-down' historiographical model of the GDR might otherwise suggest.

Shortly before the third session of the committee in July 1959, a group of leading SED members within the committee issued a critical status assessment together with an agreed list of action initiatives. Overall criticism is levelled at the lack of publicity within the GDR, singling out the fact that not even *Neues Deutschland* (hereafter referred to as 'ND') had published the Schiller Declaration. These 'Schwächen in der gesamtdeutschen Arbeit und in der Vorbereitung der Festtage im November' are attributed to an unsatisfactory response to the Committee's efforts by other bodies:

Die zusammenfassende, populär basierende vorbereitende Tätigkeit des Büros des Schiller-Komitees ist darum besonders gehemmt, weil als Einwand gegen die Notwendigkeit konkreter Festlegungen von den verschiedensten Stellen immer wieder

gesagt wird: ‘Es ist ja noch viel Zeit. Ihr seid in diesem Jahre die letzten. Im Moment haben wir Vordringliches zu tun.’<sup>29</sup>

The term ‘Gesamtdeutsch’ here may be understood as a reference to the perceived competition represented by concurrent West German commemoration activity surrounding the Schiller bicentenary.

An internal memo within the MfV reports on a meeting of the *Parteiaktiv* of the Schiller Committee on 12 June 1959 which had heavily criticised the Weimar representatives on the main Schiller Committee for overreaching their independence and thus challenging the overall authority of the Committee. This had required the SED having to intervene and, as remedial action, direct that prior approval of the Schiller Committee was mandatory for the production concept of all performances of Schiller plays throughout.

Diskussion zur Einheit der Parteigruppe des Schiller-Komitees und im Zusammenhang damit zur Stärkung der Autorität des Komitees: es scheint zwischen den Genossen des Schiller-Komitees Widersprüche und verschiedene Auffassungen zu geben, die sich dahingehend auswirken, daß sich die Gruppe aus Weimar als selbstständige Gruppe betrachtet und die Autorität des gesamten Schiller-Komitees für alle Veranstaltungen im Schillerjahr nicht genügend anerkennt. Es wurde für notwendig gehalten, und auch beschlossen, daß die Konzeption aller in diesem Jahr zur Aufführung gelangenden Schiller-Dramen in der Republik durch Mitglieder des Schiller-Komitees geprüft und durch Diskussionen und Aussprachen an Ort und Stelle – wo das notwendig ist – korrigiert wird.<sup>30</sup>

There is no record in the files to what extent this directive was complied with. The SED members on the Committee also appear to be particularly concerned about a perceived scant awareness of the GDR’s Schiller commemorations outside of the GDR, all the more unacceptable as similar events in West Germany were getting far more publicity. Therefore in order to reinforce the GDR’s claim to be the main German representative for the bicentenary it is agreed to appoint a five person SED working group (*Parteiaktiv*) within the main Schiller Committee consisting of senior representatives of the ZK, MfK and the Schiller Committee secretary. This group is charged with several initiatives to tighten up bicentenary planning and implementation, with an overriding aim of reinforcing the authority and unity of the committee in its leading control role.<sup>31</sup>

As became frequently apparent throughout the bicentenary in the GDR, this preoccupation with demarcation to West Germany ties in with the ZK's undated proclamation on the Schiller year. Quoting Friedrich Engels that Schiller's 'Jugendwerke atmen einen Geist der Herausforderung gegen die ganze deutsche Gesellschaft, wie sie damals bestand', the public statement is almost entirely devoted to attacking supposed distortions of Schiller's heritage in West Germany. By claiming that nations and their national cultures had 'survived' Schiller, West Germans and their 'volksfeindliche Politik' are accused of falsely historicising Schiller, the 'volkstümlichste Freiheitsdichter'.<sup>32</sup>

In this context, evidence of apparently nervous SED *Vorgaben*, ostensibly in the sense of specific instructions rather than guidelines, appear in minuted decisions of the Schiller Committee on the preparations for the Academic Conference:

Die Referate sollen - entgegen der Empfehlung der Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena - ausschließlich von Hochschulgermanisten der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik gehalten werden. Gäste aus dem Ausland sollen zur Teilnahme eingeladen werden, etwaige Diskussionsbeiträge von ihrer Seite sollen im Einzelnen abgesprochen werden. Einladungen an Philosophen, Historiker und Schriftsteller der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik erfolgen namentlich (Roßberg, 2009, p.154).

A possible repercussion of the University stepping out of political line here may be seen in its subsequent omission as organiser listed in the official programme of the Conference.<sup>33</sup>

A letter of 13 August 1959 from Willie Lewin, ZK member within the Schiller Committee, to Helmut Holtzhauer, head of the 'Nationale Forschungs- und Gedenkstätten der klassischen deutschen Literatur in Weimar', who had overall responsibility for the November *Festwoche*, provides further evidence of overt SED interference in the implementation process. A strongly worded reprimand to Holtzhauer who had missed an earlier meeting with SED members, and even failed to send a substitute, sets the tone for a general criticism of the quality and quantity of ongoing bicentenary preparations. Referring to the *Bitterfelder Weg*, Lewin highlights the predominant purpose of the Academic Conference: '[...] wie das kulturelle Erbe, in diesem Falle das Erbe Schillers, für die Entwicklung der sozialistischen Nationalkultur nutzbar wird'. Mirroring the creation of a discrete SED action group within the main Schiller Committee, Lewin confirms a unilateral SED decision to establish a Weimar based SED *Parteiaktiv*, representing both the MfK and other local institutions, to assume responsibility for a preparation of the Conference that would conform to the

expectations of the Party.<sup>34</sup> Although this initiative may be seen as a reactive, even knee-jerk intervention, it demonstrates how the SED through its representatives on the Schiller Committee, did not lose sight of its primary aim of ensuring that both cultural and political policy objectives were met at that time. Subsequent assessments discussed below illustrate shortcomings in achieving those objectives, which ultimately diminished the intended impact of the commemorations on national identity.

When analysing the SED's interference in the bicentenary, an internal report by Werner Thalheim, secretary to the main Schiller Committee, offers further insights into the entire implementation process. An interim report, dated 24 July 1959, describes a remedial action trip to Dresden, Karl Marx Stadt, Erfurt, Weimar and Leipzig. The visits seem to have been triggered by a perceived lack of progress in the ongoing planning and execution of events. Various shortcomings are described in frank detail. These range from the absence of a regional or local Schiller committee in the Dresden area, logistical issues around suitable event venues in Erfurt, and unsatisfactory premises in Weimar for the local Schiller committee. The situation at the time in Leipzig needed a larger scale intervention as the first local Schiller committee meeting had only taken place in early July. The meeting had been very poorly attended and as a result it was agreed that several senior Schiller Committee members from Berlin were to be drafted in as future support in Leipzig.<sup>35</sup> The common theme behind all these interventions was a perceived flaw in communication and cooperation between local branches of the DKB and their counterpart branches in the FDGB mass organisation, suggesting a lack of local leadership.

The interim report seems to point to the problematic calibre and commitment of many individuals; event preparations and performance overall appears to have been most advanced where the local DKB in particular had the 'right' people on the ground taking appropriate initiatives. The FDGB is criticised for not having meaningfully used their branch network – indeed, Thalheim found evidence that little or no information had been passed down from FDGB headquarters. In addition, there was a clear lack of positive cooperation between the local Schiller committees (where established), and the mass organisations on the one hand and the local theatre and artistic community on the other. The report therefore recommends that the ZK should issue specific instructions to regional SED offices to increase their involvement in the process, and that a status discussion with the MfK would be crucial to ensure improvements. This follow-up action agreed on the spot shows that Thalheim had full

authority to instigate concrete solutions and – by re-asserting the official seniority of the SED in the implementation process – ultimately restoring the power structure referred to above.

## **2.4. OUTCOMES**

This section explores results, as far as they may be identified, of how the Schiller bicentenary commemorations were implemented. These findings are evaluated as they relate to the research question, namely whether and, if so, the Schiller commemorations can be said to have contributed to the formation of national identity in the GDR. The specific focus is on identifying any clear disparity that appeared between these outcomes and the original aims of the commemorations. The analysis is based primarily on documented interim and evaluation evidence from the stakeholders, as well as media reception.

### **2.4.1. The reality of attempting to position Schiller as a working-class hero**

An overall slowdown and weakness in the implementation process surfaced by the third meeting of the Schiller Committee in July. Whereas the second meeting had not registered attendance and apologies, the session four months later records names of 22 attending and 31 absent, of which several were without apologies.<sup>36</sup> A status report submitted to the meeting lists a number of additional events organised for subsequent months both in Weimar and across the DKB network.<sup>37</sup> Although most mass organisation activity including DKB, FDGB and FDJ is reported to the meeting as being on track, several negative comments are minuted. On behalf of the FDJ an official requests additional resources for their future events, even though no FDJ representative attended the meeting. The third meeting of the Committee criticises the low number of theatres actually performing Schiller plays across the GDR's stages that year, comparing the actual number of 44 separate productions to the total number of 70 theatres available. In a wider context, but without citing any specific examples, the Committee also points to patchy resonance within the population to the Schiller commemorations, suggesting this may be due to insufficient communication in general:

Es ist den Mitgliedern des Komitees vielleicht nicht immer klar, mit welchem Interesse unsere Äußerungen in der Öffentlichkeit verfolgt und aufgenommen werden. Auch diesmal sollte die Sitzung mit einem Kommuniqué abgeschlossen werden. In der Diskussion sollte der Gedanke der unmittelbaren Mitarbeit weiter zu Wort kommen.

Similar dissatisfaction had already surfaced in May 1959 when unnamed members of the Schiller Committee lodged a file note (*Aktennotiz*) in the archives of the Friedrich-Schiller-University in Jena. The note criticises the lack of public awareness in the GDR compared to far more visible events in West Germany; it states that the opening events in May 1959 had received ‘ ‘eine ungenügende Beachtung in der Öffentlichkeit’’ und daß ‘ ‘die Ausstrahlung des Schiller-Komitees [...] noch außerordentlich gering sei’’[...] ‘ ‘demgegenüber wirken die Organe der Bundesrepublik jedoch sehr aktiv in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik’’’ (cited in Roßberg, 2009, pp.159-160).

Minuted discussions at the meeting also reveal some of the practical issues that arise in fulfilling the objective of achieving non-professional – that is, especially worker – participation in artistic productions. A Schiller Festival week in the Thüringen village of Bauerbach, (associated historically with Schiller as providing him with a place of refuge in early 1783), is initially cited as an example of a positive response to an appeal from the regional Schiller Committee. 120 out of 350 inhabitants are reported to have been involved in assembling the relevant stage and facilities and the first four performances had attracted some 11,000 visitors from nearby communities. As Bauerbach is located within the five kilometre restricted area (‘Sperrzone’) adjacent to the West German border, the Committee is asked to intervene with the Ministry of the Interior (*Ministerium des Inneren*) to relax access to the area during forthcoming productions in August and September. The meeting notes that local amateur actors are also involved in these productions and that an ‘Arbeiter-und Bauerntheater Friedrich Schiller der Gemeinde Bauerbach’ had been formed, offering basic acting lessons (schauspielerische Grundausbildung). The somewhat lofty introductory remarks point to the Bauerbacher Schiller-Festwoche as demonstrating: ‘[...] die Richtigkeit und Bewährung der in der Erklärung des Schiller-Komitees zum Ausdruck kommenden Forderung nach Besitzergreifung der Kunst’. However, no detail on the number of individuals actually involved in the artistic rather than logistical aspects of this festival is provided to the meeting. This may suggest that the actual number was too small to be meaningful, which would indicate a divergence between the theory of involving the working class and reality. The potential existence of such a gap is borne out by Herr Kühne, (first name unknown), representative of the DKB, reporting that some professional actors were unhappy with the involvement of amateurs in their productions because of their dialect and regional accents:

Auf der Leipziger Referenten-Konferenz hatten Künstler Vorbehalte. Sie wollten Schiller davor bewahren, im Dialekt gesprochen zu werden. Damit bremsen sie, wenn

auch nicht immer absichtlich, die Volksinitiative. Das Komitee sollte solchen Tendenzen entgegenwirken und den Künstlern helfen, ihre Vorurteile zu überwinden.

The Theatre Studies expert, Professor Armin-Gerd Kuckhoff, replies with an admonition couched in socio-political terms, reinforcing a Marxist approach:

Die Frage des Dialekts ist eine Frage der sozialen Zuordnung. Aneignung Schillers heißt auch Kampf gegen die Kleinbürgerlichkeit. Die Künstler sollen sich nicht über das, was nicht klappt, beschweren, sondern hingehen und ihre Erfahrungen vermitteln. Der Kampf um die Sprache gehört zur Erstürmung der Höhen der Kultur.

The minutes of the meeting furthermore record complaints about a lack of ideologically consistent artistic interpretations of Schiller across the GDR and a small working group is immediately set up within the Schiller Committee to investigate further. In their defence, MfK representatives explain that they cannot interfere in the creative process and can only make cautious suggestions and follow up if these are not adopted. This defence is particularly noteworthy as it reveals the reality of constraints and even limitations in authority facing officials trying to communicate a new, socialist Schiller. Finally, the minutes of the session expose political pressure to step back from the original intention of exchanging theatre performances across the intra-German border. Indeed, one of the focal aspects of the Cold War competition between the two German states was the location of significant places of memory in both countries (Dann, 2003, p.119). The Committee instructs that the Weimar events are to be promoted as the only true Schiller commemorations; any significant GDR involvement in West Germany's commemorations might create the impression that the events in Schiller's West German birthplace, Marbach, were an all-German commemoration; 'keinen unnötigen Glanz' should be given to those specific events.<sup>38</sup>

A comparatively sparse report on the fourth and apparently final session of the Schiller Committee on 27 October 1959 registers brief updates from various mass organisations, but does not provide further details or critical comments on the actual status at that time. The only indication of ongoing problems is a recorded urgent need to support major industrial companies with more resources, so as to enable their workforce to become more involved in various commemoration events. This would seem to confirm that four months on from the July meeting and with only two months to go in 1959, the involvement of workers in the commemoration was still not meeting the desired level. The report closes with a consensus

for a subsequent review in early 1960, which should also discuss how to popularise German classical literature in future years.<sup>39</sup>

The DKB files reveal more examples of self-criticism of shortcomings in their main contributions to the Schiller bicentenary than most other primary sources researched here. An undated communiqué on the Berlin conference does not shy away from registering that various speakers at the conference had criticised the lack of uniformity across the country in setting up local Schiller committees; this was clearly hindering overall preparations for the Schiller commemoration events. In a similar vein, an internal unsigned DKB report looks critically at its four speaker conferences. Although deemed to have been successful, both organisationally and in terms of overall attendance (some 260 scholars and artists), the assessment criticises the content of certain presentations. Speakers are named as having been too superficial in their analysis of Schiller's works or having concentrated narrowly on his dramas rather than also covering his poetry. Other presenters are censured for lack of reference to the *Bitterfelder Weg* or failing to emphasise the prevailing policy of preserving and appropriating cultural heritage. However, there is no criticism of the fact that only one of the four conferences appears to have discussed the differing approaches to Schiller between the two German states across the Iron Curtain. This omission seems inconsistent with the usual explicit demarcation rhetoric, mentioned elsewhere as being a ubiquitous political approach to the Schiller bicentenary as such.<sup>40</sup>

#### **2.4.2. The *Festwoche* and general reception: little to show for all the efforts?**

An emphasis on *Abgrenzung* to West Germany as the key message may, in contrast, be detected in the transcript of a report on the Academic Conference by GDR radio. The highly polemical commentary concentrates on contrasting 'distorted' West German approaches to Schiller with those of the GDR. The broadcast highlights in some detail various major differences in scholarly analysis as well as in the interpretations underlying productions of the same Schiller dramas in both countries.<sup>41</sup> There is no record of any major problems in how the conference was executed, nor whether it was judged to have met all original purposes. The broadcast mentions only West Germany and Austria as non-socialist countries providing delegates to the Schiller conference. The Schiller Declaration had stated clearly: 'Die Wirkung von Schillers Werk geht jedoch weit über die nationalen Grenzen hinaus. Sein Werk ist der ganzen Menschheit zugehörig'.<sup>42</sup> The missed opportunity represented by an apparently meagre international participation in this major event suggests that any underlying

political wish that the commemoration would significantly contribute to the GDR's international recognition and related legitimacy may not have been achieved in this respect.

By way of contrast, the postscript to a commemorative Schiller compilation at the time is a noteworthy example of a non-confrontational approach that lacks the aggressive tone of official cultural rhetoric at the time. In this afterword, Dr. Ursula Wertheim, editor and prominent literary scholar, appears to acknowledge that prevailing West German interpretations of Schiller in a historical context may exist side by side with an East German contemporisation (Wertheim, 1959, p.240):

Es ist, bei Förderung des Ministeriums für Kultur, das Verdienst des Verlages Neues Leben, dass wir dieses Schillerbuch, ein Lesebuch mit Bildern und zeitgenössischen Dokumenten, jetzt zum 200. Geburtstag des Dichters vorlegen können. [...] Es kam darauf an, Schiller als Teilnehmenden an einer großen nationalen und literarischen Bewegung zu zeigen, als deren bedeutendste Repräsentant er neben Goethe in jeder Epoche anzusehen ist. Nur aus der vollen Berücksichtigung auch der objektiv-historischen Faktoren im Zusammenhang mit den subjektiv-biografischen ist das künstlerische Werk in seiner Zeit gebundenen und zugleich aktuellen Bedeutung, in seiner nationalen und zugleich internationalen Wirkung zu begreifen

The *Festakt* attracted full GDR media coverage, as might be expected for the official state tribute of the bicentenary, attended by many of the most senior SED members, led by Walter Ulbricht. After he had stated at the Fifth Party Conference of the SED in July 1958 that the workers must strive for 'die Höhen der Kultur', the ND newspaper described the Weimar events as 'wahrhaft nationale Ehrung', through which Schiller had reached 'bis in die Betriebe und selbst in kleinste Dörfer' (Nutz, 1992). Setting the rhetoric of the main SED media organ aside there is otherwise no evidence to suggest that this event received any particular attention within the GDR or abroad. Despite its designation as a major event within the overall GDR commemorations, the *Festakt* can best be characterised as a 'performative ritual', (in the sense of Butler et al., as described in the Introduction chapter), rather than adding anything substantially new to the political discourse of other major commemoration events such as the Academic Conference. An extract from the keynote speech, entitled 'Schillers Menschenbild', in which Abusch justifies the appropriation of Schiller in terms of the ongoing socialist cultural revolution, illustrates this:

So ist es heute unsere neue sozialistische Gesellschaft, geführt von der Arbeiterklasse, die diese Kluft zwischen Ideal und Wirklichkeit, zwischen Kunst und Leben immer schließt und die in ihrem weiteren Übergang zur kommunistischen Gesellschaft auch Schillers Traum einer harmonischen Gesellschaft ohne Klassenspaltung verwirklichen wird (cited in Roßberg, 2009, pp.156-157).

The repetitive, predictable format and content of these formal ceremonies, involving largely the elite of GDR society rather than a cross-section of the population at large, is therefore at best only likely to have been received as underscoring the importance attached by the state to the commemoration. It appears unlikely that the *Festakt* in itself may have otherwise contributed meaningfully to the overall objective of promoting national identity amongst the citizens of the GDR.

But formal elements of the *Festwoche*, such as the *Festakt*, were not the only aspect of the commemoration to reveal potential reception issues. A further primary source confirms the perception of an unsatisfactory public resonance to the commemoration as a whole. The early signs of poor reception, noted above in May and July by the Schiller Committee, are corroborated by the *Märkische Volksstimme* after the *Festwoche* in November 1959. The newspaper condemns low levels of participation at various bicentenary events by officials from cultural, educational and industrial institutions across the town of Brandenburg:

Vertreter der Abteilung Volksbildung beim Rat der Stadt und beim Rat des Kreises glänzten ebenso durch Abwesenheit wie die der Abteilung Kultur, der demokratische Block war ebenso wenig vertreten wie der Kreis Friedensfahrt. Von etwa 800 Lehrern in Brandenburg waren bestenfalls acht anwesend. Die Werksleiter der VEB hätte man ebenso sehen mögen wie die sozialistischen Brigaden und viele andere (cited in Roßberg, 2009, p.160).

#### **2.4.3. Official assessments: offering frank insights into implementation issues and their potential origins?**

Four months after the end of the commemoration events, Siegfried Seidel, Leiter der Abteilung Literatur und Buchwesen, MfK, wrote to Bodo Uhse, Sekretär der Sektion Dichtkunst und Sprachpflege, *Deutsche Akademie der Künste* (hereafter referred to as 'AdK'). Written on behalf of Abusch as Chairman of the Schiller Committee, the letter thanks Uhse for his work as member of the Schiller Committee without mentioning any specific contributions. The communication does however set out a succinct, retrospective

synopsis on how the authorities, in particular the MfK, wanted to describe and record the outcome of the Schiller commemorations in its immediate aftermath.

Mit Genugtuung, ja mit Stolz dürfen wir auf die politischen, wirtschaftlichen und kulturellen Erfolge des Jahres 1959, einschließlich der nationalen Schillerehrung zurückblicken. Überall in Betrieben, Schulen und Dörfern unserer Deutschen Demokratischen Republik haben sich zahlreiche Menschen in den vielfältigsten Formen mit dem Dichter und seinem Werk beschäftigt und somit dazu beigetragen, dass klassische Kulturerbe unlösbar mit der werdenden sozialistischen Nationalkultur zu verbinden. Hierbei war, was wir mit Freude registrieren, besonders stark unsere Jugend vertreten.

Die Nationale Schillerehrung der DDR war eine Angelegenheit des ganzen Volkes. Sie hat die ungeteilte Bewunderung aller Teilnehmer und Gäste hervorgerufen und bewies der Welt erneut, dass nur in einem friedlichen Deutschland die großen Werte der Klassik bewahrt werden können.<sup>43</sup>

The overall outcome as presented would seem to satisfy, in general terms, all the official aims in the Schiller Declaration and subsequent official rhetoric. However the most remarkable feature of this testimonial in the context of the research question, is the specific recognition of the link between the GDR's cultural heritage and its socialist *Nationalkultur* as a feature of the commemorations deserving special mention. The noteworthy implication is, as in the corresponding section of the Schiller Declaration, that national identity in the sense of national culture is nascent ('werdend'), in other words it is still in the process of being formed.

In contrast to the positive tone and content of Seidel's letter, a final assessment by Werner Thalheim, Secretary to the Schiller Committee, following on from his interim report reviewed above, presents a rather different assessment of the outcomes of the commemorations. A day-to-day fragmentation of operational authority and competence throughout the Schiller commemorations shows up clearly in his eight-page final evaluation, addressed to Siegfried Wagner, head of the ZK's *Kulturabteilung*.<sup>44</sup> Notwithstanding an overall assessment that the national commemorations in Weimar, Jena and across the GDR had been successful, Thalheim warns about a tendency of public officials to say 'Ende gut, Alles gut'. He also justifies the report by pointing to an apparent unwillingness of the MfK to conduct its own critical post mortem of the bicentenary process. Thalheim begins by pronouncing blandly on

the political and cultural success of the commemorations for the ‘Junge Arbeiter und Bauern Nation’. Echoing official pronouncements on the Schiller year he describes the events as a major step: ‘das klassische Erbe unlösbar mit der sozialistischen Nationalkultur zu verbinden(ibid.). Referring to strengthening of external political legitimacy as one of the crucial objectives of the year, he claims that representatives of sixteen countries (but without mentioning from which side of the Iron Curtain) as well as a large number of West German visitors can only have been impressed by the artistic and scholarly excellence of events. This in turn, according to Thalheim, must finally have removed any doubt as to which German state is now the true custodian of German cultural heritage.

Whereas the positive outcomes from cultural output and activities is summarised in one page, under the heading ‘Kritische Wertung’, Thalheim then devotes five pages to the considerable organisational weaknesses, and characterises them as being largely invisible:

[...] es wäre jedoch falsch, sich an diesen Erfolgen zu berauschen und aufgrund der positiven Ergebnisse des Schillerjahres die großen Fehler, Schwächen und Mängel zu übersehen, die der Arbeit des Schiller-Komitees anhafteten und die nach außen wahrscheinlich kaum in Erscheinung getreten sind (ibid.).

However, in pointing to the apparent success of a widespread renaissance of local Schiller-related initiatives in 1959 ‘ohne besondere staatliche Lenkung und Planung’, Thalheim appears to gloss over his own and SED-led interventions. This distortion can be understood as Thalheim preferring to mask the full extent of the weaknesses and personal failings (including his own), rather than exaggerate the strength of cultural awareness and bicentenary-led promotion of national identity across the GDR.

The main section of Thalheim’s assessment does however contain a noteworthy ‘mea culpa’ confession that he may not have been sufficiently assertive in chasing up operational delays:

Ich will mit der Kritik an mir selbst beginnen. Meine eigene Arbeit schätze ich so ein, daß ich der Aufgabe nicht immer voll gerecht wurde, was politische Notwendigkeit und Entschiedenheit in der Durchsetzung bestimmter Forderungen anbelangt. Allzu oft habe ich mich von allgemeinen Redensarten und leeren Versprechungen leitender Stellen abspeisen lassen, ohne mit Nachdruck Entscheidungen und Termine zu verlangen (ibid.).

The report goes on to highlight the overall structure of the MfK and its bureaucratic silo structure of departments as the common denominator behind most of the issues in the implementation of the Schiller commemorations. The MfK had lacked a central liaison person to coordinate the various departments, the office of the Schiller Committee and the 'politische Kommandostelle des Ministeriums'. In practice, this resulted in having to reconcile different opinions between the various departments such as theatre, literature, cultural relations and the office of the Minister himself. A good example was the difficulty in reaching internal consensus on the guest list for foreign visitors to the major events. Although over a hundred potentially influential intellectuals from West Germany had been on an initial list, many were unable to attend as they received their invitations either too late or were held up by unnecessary delays in the processing of their visitor visas. Similarly, an initiative agreed in detail by a senior ministry official and the head of the *Schiller Gesellschaft* to promote student exchanges between Weimar and Stuttgart was subsequently vetoed by the Minister and his Secretary of State. More embarrassingly, all these delays are claimed to have created an impression in the West that hardly any Schiller related events were being planned in the GDR. The Germanist, Professor Müller at the Friedrich-Schiller University in Jena is singled out in the report for severe reprimand for having implicitly supported West German reactionary elements rather than promoting the national image of the GDR: when asked at a Schiller conference in Munich he had attended during the summer of 1959 what was going on in the GDR, Professor Müller is quoted by Thalheim (but without citing his source), as replying: 'Das machen dieses Jahr die Marxisten unter sich!' (ibid.). Another major problem, in contrast to similar commemorations such as those organised by the Handel committee in 1959, was the absence of a properly functioning *Parteiaktiv*. A named SED member of the Schiller Committee, charged with coordinating this group, comes under heavy criticism for lack of engagement and commitment. As a result, the leadership role of the party in the whole commemoration project had not sufficiently come to the fore.

Thalheim identifies as 'gemeinsame Ursache der hier aufgezeigten Mängel, die Hauptschwäche bei der Arbeit des Ministeriums für Kultur in der noch stark verbreiteten, routinemäßigen und bürokratischen Arbeitsweisen' (ibid.). However, other than stating blandly that 'Wir brauchen jedoch, um zur gebildeten Nation zu werden, planmäßiges Arbeiten und Beständigkeit auf allen Gebieten' (ibid.), Thalheim stops short of articulating any specific lessons learned (ibid.). This might be interpreted as illustrating a politically institutionalised unwillingness in the GDR to go beyond criticising the status quo to

recommending particular changes for the future. Yet despite expressing a need for closure in his covering letter to the report, Thalheim seems to leave open a door for future follow-up when he recommends that the party should conduct a collective evaluation of the commemorations with all those involved:

Ich erlaube mir darum, Dir als Anlage eine kurze kritische Einschätzung der Arbeit des Schiller-Komitees zu übersenden, und spreche die Hoffnung aus, daß Du die Zeit findest, sie zu lesen und mir Deine Meinung dazu zu sagen. Besser wäre es natürlich noch, wenn, zumindest auf parteilicher Ebene, eine kollektive Auswertung mit den Beteiligten vorgenommen werden könnte, damit die Arbeit nicht nur aktenmäßig, sondern auch gedanklich abgeschlossen werden könnte (ibid.).

In the context of the research question, Thalheim reminds the reader to begin with of the fundamental link between the commemorations, cultural heritage and 'national culture'. But as to how the latter may have been influenced by the commemorations is not referred to directly in what follows. Instead, Thalheim's above-mentioned interpretation of the missed opportunity, caused by avoidable bureaucracy, to attract more foreign visitors offers a potential clue to his thoughts on the underlying links: '[...] so zeigt das deutlich, welche Möglichkeiten wir besaßen, um kulturpolitisch offensiver wirksam zu werden'. Having pronounced earlier on the 'sozialistische Nationalkultur' objective, his use of the general term, 'kulturpolitisch' and the plural form of 'Möglichkeit' may be read as insinuating wider, missed opportunities to promote national culture, and thus arguably national identity.

## **2.5. CONCLUSION**

Primary sources on the aims, design and implementation of the 1959 Schiller bicentenary commemorations discussed in this chapter expose a clear gap between theory and practice – between the initial aims of the Schiller Committee, associated SED rhetoric, and the reality of late, reactive and inconsistent implementation on the part of GDR stakeholders, resulting in mixed outcomes. Initial attempts at the beginning of the bicentenary process to create a central message, namely the much touted Schiller Declaration, were only partly successful as a basis for a coordinated approach by all official participants in the commemorations.

Weaknesses in communication, even with regard to effective publicity via state-controlled media, raise the question as to whether the preparations would have been more successful had they begun rather earlier than the primary sources state. Even repeated interventions by SED

officials could only provide sticking-plaster solutions to what appears to have been an uncoordinated and narrow-minded bureaucratic implementation at local level.

Several public pronouncements linked the official humanist interpretation of Schiller to the ideal of a new, socialist personality as an ideological framework, an approach that will be seen to be repeated in subsequent case study chapters. At first sight, primary data supports the conclusion that building national identity was an explicit rather than incidental aim of the Schiller bicentenary commemorations; as mentioned above, it does reappear in official communications after the commemorations were over. Nevertheless there is more significant evidence that a reactive and, at the time, highly visible policy of demarcation to Schiller's perceived treatment in West Germany was the more dominant driver for both the original design of the commemorations and the subsequent SED-led interference; this policy was apparent throughout the entire period leading up to and including the actual commemorations. Although it may be argued that national identity is almost always formed with reference to the 'other', the negative look over the shoulder to West Germany as a defensive discourse thus dictated the Schiller bicentenary rather than positive aspects of a new national identity emerging ten years after the founding of the GDR. As will be seen in later chapters a changing approach to *Abgrenzung* did in fact serve to partly promote a more positive national identity in the GDR when commemorating other icons of German high culture. As regards cultural heritage itself, one specifically contrasting legacy between the two German states emerged from the Schiller bicentenary that arguably supports the lasting impact of the GDR's more intensive and politicised approach to *Kulturerbe*. After 1972, Schiller was no longer a mandatory module of German language and literature studies in West German schools. In contrast, Schiller was retained in syllabuses at GDR schools until the state's demise (Roßberg, 2009, p.121).

Recent scholarship proposes that the SED used commemorations, alongside museums, monuments and memorials, as part of a long-standing plan deliberately to manipulate popular memory, whilst conceding that 'memory work rarely has immediate, measurable effects on collective memory' (Olsen, 2015, p.4). Commemorations are correctly identified as providing 'the opportunity for rituals to reinforce specific memories of historical figures and events' (Olsen, 2015, p.216). On the other hand, detailed research of official files demonstrates that the SED leadership, senior government and mass organisation functionaries were handling the Schiller bicentenary commemoration as a short-term opportunistic reaction to an ad-hoc calendar event, rather than as part of a deliberate, long-term strategy, labelled, rather vaguely,

by Olsen in a general commemoration context as ‘memory-work’. Any existing longer-term commemoration strategy would be expected to produce distinct signs of continuity in the records of that time. Some of the detailed planning documents cited here mention resources used four years earlier, and the Schiller Declaration does restate the ideological framework of the 1955 anniversary. The inclusion of the Academic Conference and a *Festakt* indicates a continuing basic format for this commemoration. But otherwise there is little data covering event planning and execution as such that refers to either the preceding Schiller anniversary or to the concurrent Handel celebrations. This apparent omission suggests that the 1959 commemorations were treated operationally by the authorities as an important but stand-alone occurrence, rather than one amongst an ongoing series of major anniversary commemorations designated for comparable and consistent management. An apparent reluctance to document any lessons learned for similar events in the future further supports this explanation.

In her assessment of the SED’s core strategy for implementing its policies, Fulbrook observes:

The party aimed at total penetration and control of social processes, total persuasion of all the people, total conformity and outward support.[...] Functionaries and mass organisations, in other words “institutional carriers” of the system, such as teachers, were of course crucial to the maintenance and reproduction of the system of domination (Fulbrook 1995, p.62).

But the effectiveness of relying on other institutions within the overall state apparatus to implement policy changed over time: ‘In the 1950s, the state’s penetration of society by functionaries was precarious, tentative, and often unreliable’ (ibid.,p.63). Fulbrook offers a plausible social history explanation for this which ties in to the dates of the Schiller bicentenary: ‘Many SED members and functionaries were simply not willing to engage in local confrontations which might endanger good neighbourly relationships’ (ibid., p.67). Relating Fulbrook’s conclusion to several aspects of the Schiller bicentenary encourages support for her ‘participatory dictatorship’ model of the GDR system. At the outset, there was a clear intention to impose a top-down approach to how the commemorations were to be executed. However, these aims proved to be limited in their effectiveness, thus creating a gap between aims and outcomes. This was partly due to late timing, but also to a manifest multiplicity of poorly co-ordinated participants exhibiting varying degrees of agency in their

response to the presumed control by the Schiller Committee and the SED behind it. This initial observation needs to include the caveat that the research in this chapter targets a snapshot of GDR history (1958-1959). It is therefore all the more important to investigate and compare other similar commemorations over an extended period of GDR history before drawing general conclusions on the relevance of cultural commemorations to historiographical models of the GDR.

### 3: THE KOLLWITZ CENTENARY, 1967

#### 3.1. INTRODUCTION

In the context of the four case studies selected for this thesis, the Kollwitz centenary commemoration is unique, as the cultural personality commemorated may be categorised as ‘modern’ rather than ‘classical’. Many of Kollwitz’s contemporaries in the German art world were still alive at the time of the anniversary in 1967 and their perspective on her life and times can also be interpreted as contemporary testimony. Compared to the first case study selected for this thesis, the Kollwitz commemoration in the GDR provides evidence of a different ideological framing of her work and personality as the basis for promoting a particular national identity in the GDR, combining twentieth-century art and politics.

An analysis of various primary sources will show that several narratives were used in depicting Kollwitz. At times, these contradict rather than complement each other. Three sometimes interwoven perspectives of Kollwitz will be shown to have been employed throughout the commemorations: culturally, as an artist; socio-politically, as an engaged socialist and pacifist; and personally, as a mother and widow. As artist, the construct of ‘Wegbereiterin des Sozialistischen Realismus’, referring to the dominant art movement in the GDR, was in itself challenged at times; socio-political narratives of Kollwitz as ‘Kämpferin für das Proletariat’, ‘friend of the USSR’, ‘antifascist and communist’, and ‘pacifist’ are often combined and identified within her work and personal diaries. At the same time, all these same sources were often characterised as linked to the theme of ‘grieving mother’. This chapter will position the elements of this framework, forming part of the aims of the commemoration, against her biographical background as selectively interpreted by the stakeholders of the commemorations. The chapter will identify whether any – and if so, which – narratives became dominant, and whether this was by design or because of a gap between theory and reality appearing in the implementation of events. As in the other case studies in this thesis, the chapter will seek to identify the outcomes of the Kollwitz centenary, and will conclude by attempting to assess the potential impact on national identity within the GDR relating to this role-model of German art and socio-political engagement.

As before, the main research method in this chapter will be textual analysis of archival sources in the BArch-SAPMO and AdK archives, as well as press coverage in East and West

Germany at the time. Primary sources also include a short documentary film; a detailed viewing provides valuable insights into how Kollwitz was portrayed in line with the above mentioned narratives. Extensive extracts from Kollwitz's diaries and letters are quoted heavily within the commemoration's main official speeches, press and documentary film coverage, all of which will be also be discussed. A caveat on the value of diaries as a primary source should be noted here. Diaries and letters provide factual information and also record emotions, both through the subjective prism of the diarist. The Kollwitz letters and diaries add value to my research primarily by revealing clues as to how the extracts were edited in the GDR in order to support the intended narrative; that is, what was left out by the editors becomes as relevant as what was included. The question also arises as to why these personal records became so important in the context of this particular commemoration and to what extent they were cited as a construction of truth and authenticity to support the framing of certain (gendered) narratives.

Secondary literature on Kollwitz is almost entirely devoted to her artistic work. Scholarship on her reception in the GDR is very limited and until recently mainly confined to the wider topic of the GDR's approach to modern art (Goeschen 2001, pp.45-46, 68-77). A new, comprehensive biography of Kollwitz includes a short section on her centenary commemoration in the GDR. It describes the main events, concluding that Kollwitz's status in the GDR remained unchanged by the commemoration (Schymura, 2014, pp.361-369). My research will look in more analytical depth at the aims, implementation and outcomes of the events, based on a wider selection of primary sources – all in the context of the research question concerning the formation of national identity.

*Kunstpoltik* played a central role in the GDR's official cultural policies. In the years up until 1953 it was predominantly formed by normative cultural policies and corresponding organisational structures prevailing in the Soviet Union. From the beginning of the GDR, however, there were clear signs of a persistent policy of cultural *Abgrenzung*, a demarcation to West Germany, contributing to the promotion of a separate national identity for the GDR (Lippke, 2000, pp.476-478, 552).<sup>45</sup> The German tradition of Proletarian Art, stretching back to the first two decades of the twentieth century, remained popular after the Second World War. In the early years of GDR cultural politics it was publicly resisted by prominent SED officials such as Wilhelm Girnus, head of the section Fine Arts and Literature in the ZK (Goeschen, 2001, pp.46-47). The ZK thus proclaimed a core policy in May 1951: 'Der Kampf gegen den Formalismus in der Kunst und Literatur, für eine fortschrittliche Deutsche

Kultur.’ Kollwitz was initially a target in this official campaign, despite her prestigious status of having been a highly visible opponent and victim of Nazism. Although her works had already been widely exhibited in the first years of the GDR, she began to attract criticism from several hardline artists and intellectuals for her almost-exclusive artistic focus on the poor and deprived sections of society. Her hitherto widely-accepted status as a trailblazer for Socialist Realism was questioned by an anonymous critic, using the fictitious name ‘N.Orlow’.<sup>46</sup> Orlow’s identity attracted considerable speculation at the time and later, and is now thought to have been Kurt Magritz, a well-known, influential editor (Schymura, 2014, p.335). His published criticisms of Proletarian Art also extended to the theatre. Orlow’s charge stated: ‘Die Fürsprecher des Häßlichen in der Malerei suchen zuweilen Käthe Kollwitz als ihre Vorläuferin und als Stammutter der proletarischen Kunst in Deutschland darzustellen’. Orlow went on to assert that Kollwitz could not be that role model as she had grown up in a bourgeois, social background and had only viewed workers as the suffering class (Schymura, 2014, pp.336-341).

By late 1953, Kollwitz was fully rehabilitated (Goeschen 2001, p.66). The negative portrayal of Kollwitz as a bourgeois philanthropist was abandoned, thanks to wide support from certain artists and intellectuals within the AdK. By the time of her birth centenary, as will be seen in this case study, it was above all the artist and contemporary of Kollwitz, Lea Grundig, and the art historian, Heinz Lüdecke, who emerged during the planning and implementation phases of her centenary commemorations as long-term proponents of the above-mentioned competing narratives on Kollwitz.

## **3.2. AIMS**

In the following I will consider what the available primary sources can tell us about the planning process of the Kollwitz centenary commemoration in the GDR; was it fit for purpose in terms of timing and scope, and is there any evidence of lessons learned from previous commemorations? Was a consistent ideological framework developed and communicated? Is there an indication of SED interventions and, if so, what were the reasons?

### **3.2.1. Planning the commemoration: brief and simple**

The process for designing the format and content of the centenary activities was short in duration and more straightforward than for the other three commemorations researched in this thesis. This is a reflection of both the relatively modest scale of the commemorations as well

as the undisputed lead role of the institution taking primary responsibility for almost all of the activities. As in the other case studies, an official committee was formed which needed to meet only twice, in late April and mid-June 1967, to agree the overall plans and oversee a smaller working group. The size of the committee was almost half that of equivalent committees in the other case studies, another indication of the dimension of the Kollwitz commemoration. Behind the scenes, the SED can be seen to have taken an observer role in the process. Unlike the DKB's lead role in the preceding Schiller commemorations, the AdK was the GDR organisation responsible for coordinating the Kollwitz centenary. As will be seen, the AdK's quasi-ownership of the centenary commemoration, through its Fachgruppe Bildende Kunst, is documented as being logical, especially as Kollwitz had been a long-time, prominent member of the AdK's predecessor institution, the Preußische Akademie der Künste (referred to hereafter as the 'Akademie') before the Second World War. Although this particular cultural commemoration was publicly led by the AdK, the SED's ultimate influence and notional control can be found in a formal ZK resolution: 'Bei der Vorbereitung und Durchführung der Käthe Kollwitz Ehrung arbeitet die AdK zusammen mit dem Ministerium für Kultur und der Partei und dem Staatssekretariat für das Hoch- und Fachschulwesen.'<sup>47</sup>

Compared to the late starting preparations for the Schiller bicentenary, the first plans for this commemoration emerged rather earlier, before the centenary year began. As early as 1962, Otto Nagel, the AdK's most senior representative at the time, tried to set the preparations in motion but was turned down without any reason other than timing by the MfK's (then) Minister, Alexander Abusch:

Sehr verehrter Genosse Präsident, ich danke Ihnen sehr für Ihr Schreiben vom 18.5.1962, mit dem sie auf den 100. Geburtstag von Käthe Kollwitz im Jahr 67 verweisen. Ich erachte es für notwendig daß zur Vorbereitung des 100. Geburtstages der großen Künstlerin ein Komitee gebildet wird, halte es jedoch für verfrüht, dies jetzt zu tun.<sup>48</sup>

The AdK member Heinz Lüdecke subsequently recommended in May 1966 that a commemoration should take place, comprising a relatively small number of events and projects focussing on Kollwitz's birthday on 8 July 1967, in order to make best use of available cultural resources (Schymura, 2014, p.361). There is no record of a specific immediate response to the AdK's renewed initiative but the AdK archive contains a

noteworthy letter to Dr Karl Hossinger, Director of the AdK, later to be appointed Secretary to the centenary's organising Kollwitz Committee. An individual named Lüebbecke, who appears to have been previously closely associated with the fine arts section of the AdK, is highly critical of the MfK and its ability to work with the AdK. The letter echoes the earlier correspondence between Abusch and Nagel, and the subsequent evaluation report of the Schiller Committee. It confirms a repeated pattern of tension and dysfunctionality between the MfK and cultural officials outside government which cannot have been beneficial for the smooth execution of the commemorations:

Bitte, verzeih, daß ich mich als der Privatmann, der ich nun bin, in Sachen hineindränge, die mich nichts mehr angehen! Aber ich möchte doch sagen: die Zusammenarbeit mit dem Ministerium für Kultur erweist sich wieder einmal, wie schon so oft, als unmöglich, jedenfalls auf dem Gebiet der bildenden Kunst. Ich würde an deiner Stelle keine Zeit und Nervenkraft darauf verschwenden, das Ministerium zu irgendwas zu bekehren, daß es nicht will. Die AdK ist vom Ministerium für Kultur unabhängig und braucht sich nicht darum zu kümmern, was man dort möchte oder nicht möchte [...]. Die AdK sollte sich aus dieser Bürokraten-Hysterie heraushalten, sich klar und zielbewusst etwas vornehmen, was sie selber durchführen kann, und nicht mehr fragen oder verhandeln. Bei der Behandlung der Käthe-Kollwitz Angelegenheit durch die Regierungsstellen, soweit ich sie miterlebt habe, besteht nun ernstlich die Gefahr, daß zum 100. Geburtstag der großen Künstlerin in der DDR überhaupt nichts mehr geschieht, weil keiner zuständig sein will. Das wäre eine Schande.<sup>49</sup>

Whether or not it was related to perceived late timing issues surrounding the Schiller bicentenary, the AdK seemed very keen to assume responsibility for ensuring that preparations for the Kollwitz commemorations got under way. In October 1966, the AdK once again took an early initiative by offering assistance to the Ministerium für Post-und Fernmeldewesen in designing a special commemorative postage stamp for the upcoming Kollwitz centenary.

Despite the scope of the commemoration being more limited than for the Schiller bicentenary in 1959, the events as such were similarly important in terms of those involved. As for past major commemorations, an official coordinating committee, the 'Käthe-Kollwitz-Komitee' (hereafter referred to as the 'Kollwitz Committee') was formed, comprising the relevant political, government and cultural organisations. Within this committee, four representatives

of the AdK, the MfK, the major Berlin museums and the Humboldt University, respectively, took on the role of ‘Arbeitssekretariat’ (hereafter referred to as working group). A formal meeting of this working group met on 14 March 1967 to agree recommendations for the membership of the Kollwitz Committee, as well as a four-page draft resolution outlining the purpose and content of the commemoration events.<sup>50</sup>

This subsequent ‘Beschuß über die Käthe-Kollwitz-Ehrung 1967’, adopted by the Kollwitz Committee at its first meeting on 28th April, became the key planning document for the centenary.<sup>51</sup> The final composition of the twenty-eight member committee, contained in an appendix to the resolution, mostly followed the working group’s recommendations. The SED party and government were represented at a senior level through the Minister of Culture, Klaus Gysi, as a Kollwitz Committee member, and his predecessor, Alexander Abusch, as its chairman. The FDGB mass organisation, which was to be actively involved in publicising the centenary, was included as on other similar major commemoration committees. The FDJ was missing, although the inclusion of the head of a Berlin school on the Kollwitz Committee may be interpreted as ostensibly addressing youth interests.

### **3.2.2. Aims and Ideological Framework: Socialist Realism, social progress, solidarity with the Soviet Union**

The resolution adopted by the Kollwitz Committee is significant when it comes to identifying the aims of this particular commemoration and the way in which Kollwitz was to be framed. The opening section of the resolution sets out briefly the objectives of the commemoration. Crucial aspects of Kollwitz’s life and work are picked out: her artistic contribution to the post-1945 art form of Social Realism, her political activism on behalf of the working class and her connection with the Soviet Union:

Käthe Kollwitz gehört zu den Begründern der sozialistisch-realistischen Kunst in Deutschland. Die Skala ihres Schaffens reicht von der Darstellung des Großen Deutschen Bauernkrieges und des kämpfenden Proletariats bis zu ihren eindrucksvollen Grafiken und Plastiken für den Frieden, gegen den Krieg. Die meisterhafte künstlerische Kraft ihrer Werke und ihre innerparteiliche Stellungnahme für den gesellschaftlichen Fortschritt hatte große nationale und internationale Wirkung. Die Solidarität von Käthe Kollwitz mit der Sowjetunion und die erste Ausstellung ihrer Werke in der Sowjetunion 1924 ließen sie auch einen deutlichen Einfluss auf die sowjetische Kunst ausüben (ibid.).

In contrast to the other commemorations researched in this thesis, there is a remarkable absence of any explicit reference to Kollwitz's status and reception in the West, and West Germany in particular. However, the lack of an accompanying hostile message towards West Germany, widely employed in the Schiller bicentenary and (later) Beethoven commemoration, does not imply any lesser claim to GDR exclusivity than those commemorations. Kollwitz's work and legacy is linked to the realism of contemporary GDR artists, with an implied contrast to the widely differing styles, including abstract, of contemporary West German artists: 'Ihr Schaffen ist ein lebendiges Erbe für die Künstler der DDR, in deren realistische Werke das künstlerische Vermächtnis von Käthe Kollwitz eingeflossen ist (ibid.).'

A Marxist-Leninist framework, such as was set out at the time of the Schiller bicentenary, is less openly referenced in the resolution. Nonetheless, many aspects of her centenary in the GDR portray Kollwitz as an exemplary humanist and politically engaged artist, thus serving as a role model for a socialist GDR society. An incident relating to one aspect of the commemoration project demonstrates this. Shortly before the main commemoration events of July 1967, the Kollwitz Committee secretary, Dr. Hossinger, complained formally to the Committee's chairman, Alexander Abusch, that the Deutsche Post der DDR was about to issue the commemorative postage stamp without prior consultation with either the AdK or the Committee regarding the design.<sup>52</sup> The main gist of the complaint was that the stamp was based on a third-party portrait. Instead, according to Hossinger, the Deutsche Post should have used one of Kollwitz's more politically appropriate self-portraits in order to comply with the ideological aims of the commemoration:

Die Qualität des Stiches selbst ist sehr gut. Die Darstellung der Käthe Kollwitz aber weicht wesentlich von der Vorstellung aufgrund ihres eigenen Selbstbildnisses ab. Insbesondere wird sie alt, sentimental und leidend dargestellt und nicht als die große Künstlerin und Kämpferin als die sie für uns weiterlebt (ibid.).

A later West German biographer amplifies Kollwitz's unsentimental approach to her self-portraits: 'Auffallend ist die Tatsache, daß gerade ihre Selbstbildnisse meist kühler, distanzierter, verhaltener im Ausdruck sind als ihre anderen, so betont emotionalen Werke.' (Krahmer, 1981, p.13) The postage stamp incident illustrates how, in their efforts to comply with the ideological aims of the commemoration, the authorities attempted to project a different self-image to the one that the artist herself may arguably have intended.

The resolution also refers to Kollwitz's interventions on behalf of the Soviet Union in the 1920's and 1930's in the context of the coincidental fiftieth anniversary of the Russian revolution in the Kollwitz centenary year. The key official resolution ('Beschuß über die Käthe-Kollwitz-Ehrung 1967') states: 'Die Ehrung ist so konzipiert, daß sie gleichzeitig ein Beitrag zum 50. Jahrestag der Großen Sozialistischen Oktoberrevolution wird.'

The remainder of the resolution is devoted to listing the key components of the commemoration events described in more detail in the next section of this chapter: Neither the resolution nor the preceding working group meeting record any official plans to publicise the Kollwitz centenary through an official statement and through harnessing the media, as was the case for the Schiller commemoration. In the same context, there is also no mention of specific educational activities for the centenary, whether at school or in the workplace. The absence of similar explicit and proactive policies to that of other commemorations suggests an official approach that was relatively relaxed and comparatively low-key. It points to a consensus among the organisers of viewing Kollwitz as a personality already well-established in the GDR. Being already 'one of us' meant therefore being able to dispense with communication and educational initiatives otherwise needed to deliver a politically-inspired appropriation of a major cultural personality.

Heinz Lüdecke emerges from this and several other primary sources cited later in this chapter as the central and most influential contributor to the Kollwitz centenary commemorations. But although his approach mainly conforms to the official ideological framework, there are indications of considerable independence of thought and action. This in turn illustrates weaknesses in the AdK as coordinator fully imposing its concept and execution of the events. In a lengthy letter to Eduard Claudius, Vizepräsident der AdK, Lüdecke distances himself from a key component of the Kollwitz Committee's formal resolution and the overall ideological framework as such in terms of Kollwitz's political and artistic portrayal. Referring firstly to her alleged expulsion by the Nazis in 1933 from the AdK's predecessor institution, he clarifies that she and the author, Heinrich Mann, resigned voluntarily. This was after Kollwitz had been persuaded by fellow members that because the whole academy was threatened with dissolution by the new regime she and Mann should consider resigning. More importantly he takes issue with the exaggerated, as he sees it, positioning of Kollwitz in the resolution as a 'Begründer der sozialistischen-realistischen Kunst in Deutschland'. He warns that most readers will take this as referring to the later art movement as a method rather than stating, more accurately, that her works were realistic in style and socialist in message. So he

pleads in remarkably strong language for honesty and precision, particularly in terms of the GDR's external credibility and reputation:

Ich bin der Meinung, daß es von Käthe Kollwitz so viel Großes und Gutes zu berichten gibt, daß wir sämtliche Verzerrungen oder Übertreibungen, die Kompliziertheit der Vorgänge und des Wesens der Künstlerin verleugnen, nicht nötig haben. Wir machen uns mit solchen Phrasen vor der Weltöffentlichkeit ungläubwürdig. [...] Haben wir derartige Taschenspielerkunststücke nötig? Ich glaube daran, daß die stärkste Waffe der Kommunisten im Kampf der Meinungen und Ideologien die unbedingte Sauberkeit, Ehrlichkeit und Exaktheit ist.<sup>53</sup>

Lüdecke was thus able to put forward his corrected version of Kollwitz's resignation in his official AdK pamphlet, discussed later. However, the Kollwitz Committee retained their reference to Kollwitz and Socialist Realism in their invitation letter for the academic conference organised as part of the centenary in November 1967: 'Die Konferenz soll Beiträge zu einem vertieften Marxistischen Bild von der Kunstgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts, insbesondere vom Lebenswerk der Begründerin des sozialistischen Realismus in der deutschen bildenden Kunst.' If anything the tension between Lüdecke and the AdK is more visible here, as Kollwitz appears to have been promoted in the space of three months from one of the founders of Socialist Realism to *the* founder of the movement.<sup>54</sup>

A lack of consistent, ongoing political involvement in the planning of the centenary is evidenced by the record of the only other formal meeting of the Kollwitz Committee, on 14 June 1967, less than four weeks before the main events.<sup>55</sup> The twelve (out of the original twenty-eight) members who attended were all representatives of cultural and academic institutions. There was a complete absence of government or senior party individuals, including the Kollwitz Committee's chair and deputy chair. Even Lüdecke chose to absent himself, claiming in a postcard to the Kollwitz Committee: 'An der organisatorischen Arbeit, deren Wichtigkeit ich nicht unterschätze, kann ich mich nicht beteiligen, und demzufolge wäre es nutzlos, wenn ich zu Ihrer Arbeitstagung erschiene. MfG.' To which an unknown recipient of the postcard noted in handwriting, 'Unverschämtheit!' – suggesting perhaps that Lüdecke was arrogant.<sup>56</sup> Despite these examples of agency exercised by Lüdecke, the most influential intellectual amongst others in the AdK involved in the commemorations, there is no evidence in the files to indicate that the SED interfered in this or the subsequent implementation phase of the commemoration. This may be interpreted as senior officials,

such as those within the ZK, Abteilung Kultur, not sensing any threat to their authority or party discipline – all the more plausible in a relatively low-profile, domestically-focused commemoration, in contrast to the Schiller bicentenary, for example, and its external, demarcation aspects.

### **3.3. IMPLEMENTATION**

This section examines the main components of the Kollwitz centenary commemoration, how they were implemented and to what extent they consistently reflected the aims described above. The five key groups of activity were firstly, media representations (as a commemorative activity in and of themselves); secondly, formal events, including wreath-laying ceremonies and a *Festakt* on Kollwitz's birthday, 8 July 1967; thirdly, a short documentary, produced by DEFA, on the life and works of Kollwitz; fourthly, July exhibitions in Berlin and Moscow entitled 'Käthe Kollwitz und ihre Zeitgenossen'; and lastly, scholarly output, led by the AdK, including a keynote pamphlet by Heinz Lüdecke and an academic conference in November 1967 on developments in socialist art.

#### **3.3.1. Framing the implementation and reception of formal events: was the GDR media in agreement?**

Although the AdK took the lead in planning and executing the Kollwitz centenary commemorations, there are relatively few documents in the AdK, nor in the MfK and SED files, that provide meaningful evidence on how the formal events were carried out. In this case study I will therefore look primarily at media coverage at the time and how they, the media, framed the events. A media analysis that will continue in the Outcomes section will allow appropriate data to be identified on how the formal events tied in with the initial official ideological framework and how that conclusion may affect the overarching research question of national identity and the related historiography debate.

A general system of delegated press self-censorship had evolved by the late 1960s, based on expected standards of behaviour that were understood by journalists and editors (Barck, 1999, pp.213-214). Comprehensive censorship was therefore for the most part unnecessary in order to control content. However, when it came to the design of the commemoration, a multi-level planning structure existed to ensure that the agreed ideological framework could be easily disseminated (ibid., p.217). Anniversaries were 'an obvious example of how the SED, through its ZK, Abteilung Agitation und Propaganda, could effectively plan many of its

papers' headlines' (Childs, 1983, pp.229-30). This system applies to each of the four case studies in this thesis.

Shortly before the centenary year, a regional newspaper published a two-column homage to Kollwitz.<sup>57</sup> The author, Monika Säglitz, outlines three connected themes that were to feature in the centenary's subsequent media treatment. In contrast to the official narratives set out as described above, she opens with motherhood, and its repeated use crystallises the tone for the entire tribute:

Eine Mutter, die sich schmerzerfüllt abwendet, weil sie das Leid ihrer hungernden Kinder nicht mehr ertragen kann; die Kleinen, sich an den Rock der Mutter klemmend, mit flehenden Augen um Nahrung bittend und darunter mit einfacher klarer Schrift nur das eine Wort: 'Brot'! Dieses Bild, daß Mitleid, Mütterlichkeit, Anklage und leidenschaftlichen Protest ausdrückt, charakterisiert das Schaffen von Käthe Kollwitz. (ibid.).

Kollwitz's gender is also linked to the second theme – her bourgeois background:

Die Künstlerin wurde am 8. Juli 1867 in einer bürgerlichen Familie geboren [...]. Später nahm sie, da die Akademie ihr als Frau nicht zugänglich war, privaten Malunterricht in Berlin und München. Bei ihren Streifzügen nach interessanten und lobenswerten Motiven entdeckte sie das harte und freudlose Leben der unteren Volksschichten, ein Leben, das dem ihren so völlig fremd war. (ibid.).

A third, evidently socio-political theme provides the conclusion to this assessment of Kollwitz; the tension between her residual bourgeois attachment and her identification with socialism:

Wenn Käthe Kollwitz auch die Fesseln der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft nie ganz sprengen konnte, so stand sie doch mit ihrer großen Kunst immer auf der Seite der unterdrückten und erkannte ihr großes Ziel, den Sozialismus, an: 'Darum bin ich mit ganzem Herzen für einen radikalen Schluss des Irrsinns und erwarte nur vom Weltsozialismus etwas.' (ibid.).

At the end, Säglitz qualifies a reference in Kollwitz's diary to global, rather than German socialism. She leaves the GDR reader with a connection between the timing of Kollwitz's death and the subsequent transition from fascism to the 'new beginnings' of socialism: 'Sie starb am 22. April 1945 in Moritzburg bei Dresden, ohne den Untergang des Faschismus und

ohne den Neubeginn erlebt zu haben.’ This approach was echoed by subsequent reporting in the year of the centenary (ibid.).

The GDR newspaper coverage in 1967 concentrated on the three-day events centred around Kollwitz’s birthday in July, including the *Festakt*, and two wreath laying ceremonies in Berlin. The preceding months of 1967 had seen only a brief newspaper report of a Kollwitz exhibition in Belgium<sup>58</sup> and a short account of an AdK plenary session, confirming approval of key factual aspects of the centenary events by Alexander Abusch, as Chairman of the Kollwitz Committee.<sup>59</sup>

The *Festakt* on Kollwitz’s birthday, 8 July 1967, appears to have been a relatively modest replication of similar ceremonies at other cultural commemorations.<sup>60</sup> The printed invitation only lists the main hosts, Klaus Gysi, Minister of Culture, as senior representative of government and party; Alexander Abusch, his predecessor as Minister, and now the Chairman of the Kollwitz Committee, and Eduard Claudius, President of the AdK. On the day of the *Festakt*, ND provided the defining GDR media reporting and commentary on Kollwitz for her centenary commemoration. The newspaper devoted its entire culture section to articles by representatives of the AdK and the GDR Fine Arts community. The full page spread also included extracts from Kollwitz’s published diaries and letters.<sup>61</sup> Lea Grundig begins her lead article with a political reference. She equates the highly prominent position of Kollwitz in German art to that of Gorky in Russian literature in his equally iconic depiction of the oppressed proletariat possessing the means to liberate itself:

Wir feiern heute den 100. Geburtstag von Käthe Kollwitz, der großen Meisterin, die für die deutsche bildende Kunst so viel bedeutet wie Gorki für die russische Literatur. In ihrem Werk wird zum ersten Mal das Proletariat nicht nur unterdrückt und leidend dargestellt, sondern als die Klasse, die als einzige die Kraft hat, sich zu befreien und damit alle Unterdrückung aufzuheben (ibid.).

The representation of Kollwitz in this tribute becomes more complex, as Grundig point outs in the next sentence that Kollwitz was engaged with wider human issues: ‘...und doch ist ihr Hauptthema Leiden, Unterdrückung und auch Kampf.’ Grundig does not hide the political ambivalence of Kollwitz’s refusal to identify formally with any specific organised socialist or communist party, despite her professed political leanings: ‘Sie spricht abweisend von Parteiwesen, und doch sind es wenige, ganz wenige Künstler, die so absolut und unbedingt wie sie Partei ergriffen haben’ (ibid.). The political positioning in Kollwitz’s biography

becomes further complicated by Grundig's repeated mention of her bourgeois origins: 'Käthe Kollwitz kam aus einem bürgerlichen Hause. Ihr Weg zur Arbeiterklasse war kein einfacher Entscheid. In ihren Tagebuchaufzeichnungen spiegeln sich ihr Kämpfe im Schwanken zwischen Idee und Wirklichkeit wieder. Die idealistische Auffassung hat es ihr schwer gemacht' (ibid.). It is Kollwitz's personal qualities as protective woman and mother that then visibly dominate the tribute: 'Mutter und Kind – sie sind das Zentrum ihres gesamten Werkes. Die Mutter im weitesten, größten Sinne als die Bewahrerin des Lebens, als die Beschützerin der Kinder. In ihrem großen Frühwerk, im Weberzyklus, ist da die Frau an der Wiege (ibid.).'

For Grundig, these qualities are as relevant to understanding Kollwitz's persona as the headline that dominates the entire page: 'Kühne Verfechterin revolutionärer Künste'. This epithet suggests a one-dimensionally bold advocate, whereas Grundig transmits a contradictory image of Kollwitz as a politically hesitant artist. She quotes Kollwitz:

[...] die Loslösung vom Reformismus der SPD war für Käthe Kollwitz ein schmerzhafter Prozess. Es drängt sie, den Arbeitern die Erinnerung an den 15. Januar 1919 zum Geschenk zu machen. Verwirrungen und Unsicherheit machen sie schwankend. Sie schreibt noch am 2. Oktober 1920 in ihr Tagebuch 'Man hätte mich eben ganz in aller Stille lassen sollen. Man kann ja auch von einem Künstler, der noch dazu Frau ist, nicht erwarten, dass er sich in diesem wahnsinnig komplizierten Verhältnissen zurechtfindet' (ibid.).

Grundig does not speculate whether Kollwitz's phrasing of '...noch dazu Frau...' may have been intended to be ironic. However, in describing her death with repeated references to Kollwitz's gender, Grundig might herself be understood to have taken Kollwitz's earlier quote at face value: 'In Moritzburg bei Dresden, wenige Tage vor Kriegsende, ist sie gestorben. Die alte Frau, die in dem kleinen Ort Still erlosch, hatte ihre Werte in der ganzen Welt. [...] Für die Heimbürgerin in Moritzburg war die alte Frau nicht mehr als die anderen Toten des 22. April 1945: Eine alte Frau, die von außerhalb gekommen war' (ibid.).

A quarter of the whole page is taken up by a reproduction of Kollwitz's drawing, 'Empor zum Licht', one of the items selected for the centenary exhibition. Hans Fehsel, a graphic artist in the GDR, provides a short commentary on the background to this work. In line with Grundig, Fehsel emphasises Kollwitz as woman and mother as explanation for her legacy, both in Germany and beyond: 'Sie wollte "wirken in ihrer Zeit" diese geniale,

unvergleichliche Frau mit dem großen, mitfühlenden, mütterlichen, gütigen Herzen, voller Liebe den Bedrängten und Liebenswerten zugewandt und voller Hass den Peinigern, Menschenverderbern abgeneigt' (ibid.). Fehsel closes his article by summarising Kollwitz's legacy: 'Sie wirkte mit ihrer großen Kunst als Erzieherin der Gefühle nicht nur in ihrer Zeit. Sie wirkt weiter, stärker denn je, auf deutschem Boden wie in Griechenland, Vietnam wie in Nahost.' (ibid.). Fehsel chooses notably to say 'deutschem Boden' rather than 'DDR Boden', thus inferring a contemporary and universal pertinence to her political legacy, even in West Germany.

As a third contributor to the ND section, Heinrich Scheel, historian and Vice-President of the AdK, also prefers to refer to Kollwitz by gender rather than as an artist in an account of his correspondence with Kollwitz during the Second World War: 'Die grossherzige Frau, von den Faschisten aus der Akademie der Künste entfernt und in ihrer künstlerischen Tätigkeit gewaltsam eingeschränkt' (ibid.). In 1938 Kollwitz had corresponded with a friend of Scheel. Responding to the friend's request for a signed print, Kollwitz had sent him a copy of an earlier drawing of the same subject. After Scheel's friend was killed as soldier in 1941, Scheel inherited the drawing and the friend's correspondence with Kollwitz. Scheel contacted her to ask whether he could keep these items. Scheel cites extracts from his subsequent exchange of letters with Kollwitz, focussing on her pacifist denunciation of the ongoing war: 'Diese Zeit ist so schwer zu tragen! Damals im Weltkrieg schrieb Stefan George: "es geht ein Krachen durch den jungen Wald"' – und jetzt geht wieder ein Krachen durch den jungen Wald [...]. Wir brauchen doch die Jugend, wir brauchen das Leben der Jugend.' (ibid.). Scheel praises Kollwitz's courage in writing to him explicitly as a complete stranger. Above all he stresses the motivational value of her letter to him and his fellow resistance fighters:

Zweierlei mag dem Leser heute bei der Lektüre dieses Briefes auffallen. Zum ersten antwortete Kollwitz einem ihr bis dahin völlig Unbekannten, zum anderen schrieb sie unter den Bedingungen des faschistischen Terrors, der jede Spur einer Kritik des verbrecherischen Krieges blutig verfolgte. Beide Gesichtspunkte mussten die ja nicht unbekanntes Beschreibungen veranlassen, ihre Worte mit einiger Vorsicht zu setzen. Und dennoch! Wer ihrer künstlerischen Arbeiten kannte, dem offenbarte sie sich auch in diesen Zeilen ganz unmittelbar. Am Kreise der Widerstandskämpfer, die ich angehörte und dem ich den Brief bekannt machte, wurden die Worte von Kollwitz, als Bestätigung und Ansporn aufgefasst, im Kampf gegen den imperialistischen Krieg des deutschen Faschismus das letzte zu wagen (ibid.).

The reader will have noted that this account encourages identification with the official construction of the GDR in terms of its formation in the late 1940s. Scheel draws a direct line between Kollwitz and the antifascist heritage of the GDR, which was integral to official constructions of national identity.

Finally, the extracts from her diaries and letters in this edition of ND seem to have been selected to draw out additional political aspects of Kollwitz's life, including her pacifism:

Ich habe immer wieder versucht, den Krieg zu gestalten. Ich konnte es nie fassen. Jetzt endlich habe ich eine Folge von Holzschnitten fertig gebracht, die einigermaßen das sagen, was ich sagen wollte. Es sind sechs Blätter: das Opfer – die freiwilligen – die Eltern – die Mütter – die Witwen – das Volk. Diese Blätter sollen in alle Welt wandern und sollen allen Menschen zusammenfassend sagen: so war es – das haben wir alle getragen durch diese unaussprechlich schweren Jahre. (letter to Romain Rolland, 23 October 1922):

Her humane commitment to publicise the victims of hunger is displayed in her diary of 5 January 1920, reprinted in ND:

Ich habe wieder ein Plakat zu machen übernommen, eine große Hilfsaktion für Wien. Ich will den Tod machen. Wie er die Hungerpeitsche schwingt und tief gebückt, schreiend und stöhnend die Menschen, Frauen, Kinder, Männer an ihm vorbeiziehen. (ibid.).

Lastly, the image of Kollwitz embracing, in the words of her diary of 31 December 1917, the new force for the good in the Russian revolution, provides the ND editors with an arguably fortuitous allusion to the fiftieth anniversary of the revolution in the same year as Kollwitz's centenary:

Was hat dieses Jahr gebracht, was hat es genommen? Es war schwer und ernst wie die beiden anderen Kriegsjahre [...] Gegeben hat es neue Ausblicke durch Russland. Und da ist etwas Neues in die Welt gekommen, was mir entschieden vom Guten zu sein scheint (ibid.).

These extracts are placed in a separate box of only half a column out of the total six columns of text within the page. Although visually understated, the extracts are important in suggesting an authentic image of Kollwitz that both reinforces and expands on Grundig's lengthier tribute and Scheel's anecdotal contribution.

In short, the key narratives on Kollwitz in this ND coverage on the main anniversary date are of a politically-engaged fighter for pacifist and working-class causes and of an antifascist with links to the USSR. All these elements can be clearly linked to a specific vision of GDR national identity. It is these elements rather than the lesser, intertwined narratives of ‘Wegbereiterin des Sozialistischen Realismus’ and grieving mother that dominate here.

### **3.3.2. The public events: repeating the reactive, unoriginal approach of the Schiller bicentenary?**

As with the 1959 Schiller celebrations, the minutes of the final planning meeting reveal problems that may be attributed to an inconsistent handling of the planning process over preceding months.<sup>62</sup> Several action points thus pre-empt a low turnout in the official July events. The Kollwitz Committee itself is called upon to publicise the *Festakt* and other public events surrounding 8 July 1967: ‘Um einen guten Besuch der Festveranstaltung in Berlin zu sichern, wurden die Mitglieder des Kollwitz Komitees gebeten, die Werbung zu unterstützen’ (ibid.). But there is not only an issue with public awareness of the main events; a perceived lack of public involvement is addressed by adding, late in the day, a new event to the commemoration ceremonies: ‘8. Auf Vorschlag von Professor Kremer und Herrn Flick wurde beschlossen, auf dem Käthe-Kollwitz-Platz in Berlin ebenfalls eine Kranzniederlegung und eventuell eine Großveranstaltung durchzuführen, um auch die Bevölkerung an der Ehrung zu beteiligen’ (ibid.). [...] ‘9. Herr Flick erklärte sich bereit, sich schriftlich an alle Käthe-Kollwitz-Schulen zu wenden, um einen guten Besuch auf dem Käthe-Kollwitz-Platz zu gewährleisten (ibid.).’ As a result, the Kollwitz Committee aimed to use the opportunity of this new, public event to display belatedly the participation of youth and the workplace in the commemoration: ‘11. ‘An der Kranzniederlegung nehmen teil: zwei Mitglieder der Sektion bildende Kunst, zwei Schüler der Käthe-Kollwitz-Oberschule Mühlenbeck, die auch den Kranz tragen werden, sowie Mitglieder der Käthe-Kollwitz-Brigaden des Kabelwerkes Oberspree und des Glühlampenwerkes’ (ibid.). The emphasis on the workplace here is particularly important; it exposes a perceived gap between the official portrayal of Kollwitz at the forefront of the working class and the potential, embarrassing reality of the working class being comparatively invisible at the events. An internal local authority memo provides an amusing example of the nervousness at all official levels about avoiding any embarrassing publicity relating to this important occasion:

Betrifft Feierstunde auf dem Kollwitzplatz: am 22. Juni fand eine Beratung über die Feierstunde auf dem Käthe-Kollwitz-Platz im Rat des Stadtbezirks Prenzlauer Berg statt [...] Die HO-Gaststätte Kollwitz-Klausen hat sich nach Ortsbesichtigung als eine Pferdefleisch-Gaststätte herausgestellt. Die Abteilung Kultur übernimmt es, eine Änderung des Namens schnellstens herbeizuführen).<sup>63</sup>

The final programme for the official ceremonies was subsequently published only ten days before the events. They consisted of a wreath-laying ceremony (*Feierstunde*) at the Käthe-Kollwitz-Platz on 6 July; launch of the exhibition, ‘Käthe Kollwitz und ihre Zeitgenossen’, and the premiere screening of the Kollwitz documentary, ‘Saatfrüchte sollen nicht vermahlen werden’, both on 7 July; and finally, on 8 July, a further wreath-laying at Käthe-Kollwitz’s grave and the main *Festakt*. In order to ensure a good turnout, the closing sentences of the published programme emphasise that the key events are open to all: ‘Alle Veranstaltungen zur Käthe-Kollwitz-Ehrung sind öffentlich. Die Bevölkerung der Hauptstadt der DDR ist hierzu – besonders zum Festakt im Apollo Saal der Deutschen Staatsoper – herzlich eingeladen’.<sup>64</sup>

### **3.3.3. The film: reinforcing a portrayal that balances competing narratives**

The officially commissioned documentary, ‘Saatfrüchte sollen nicht vermahlen werden’ was another main item in the ‘Beschuß über die Käthe-Kollwitz-Ehrung 1967’ and has a running time of some nineteen minutes (Tetzlaff, 1967). The title is based on a quotation by Goethe<sup>65</sup> and was also the title of Kollwitz’s final graphic work in 1945. The quotation helped to establish her public profile as a pacifist when she used it in 1918 in a published anti-war appeal: ‘“Es ist genug gestorben! Keiner darf mehr fallen! Ich berufe mich gegen Richard Dehmel auf einen größeren, welcher sagte: “Saatfrüchte sollen nicht vermahlen werden”.’ (Schymura, 2014, pp.185-186). The use of this quotation as title may, at first, seem unusual, as it may have been received by viewers as highlighting the pacifist aspect of Kollwitz’s political activity. In contrast, ‘Kämpfende Kunst’ had been the title of a shorter, 1959 DEFA documentary on three closely linked pre and post-war artists, Käthe Kollwitz, Otto Dix and Otto Nagel. This earlier title would have been superficially more in tune with the ongoing official emphasis in 1967 on Kollwitz’s socialist credentials regarding her political activism for the ‘ausgebeutete, entrechtete, doch kämpfende Deutsche Arbeiterklasse’.<sup>66</sup> But the new title also positions Kollwitz alongside Goethe as one of Germany’s foremost national icons, thus adding even more weight to her cultural stature.

The film selects historical snapshots of milestones in the life of Kollwitz, beginning with the period at the end of the nineteenth century when she was already an established artist, and ending with her death in 1945. The screenplay concentrates on selected extracts from Kollwitz's comprehensive diaries, set against photographs of her works including many self-portraits, together with film material from the First World War and the interwar periods. The diary excerpts are read by an actress. This use of a first-person, dramatised voice heightens the emotional impact of the diary texts in combination with the images chosen – for example of soldiers marching off to war, and Nazi storm troopers in trucks. As contrast, the occasional voice-over commentary is provided by a speaker whose emotionless tone is more in line with the style of a documentary film.

The short opening sequence in the first seven-minute section is set against a self-portrait of Kollwitz as a young woman and the early works that gained her fame: the graphic series based on Gerhart Hauptmann's play, 'Die Weber'. The commentary strikes an immediate political note that broadens the political scope of the film's title: 'Inmitten der Wilhelminischen Ära offenbart eine große Künstlerin ihr Herz für die Ausgebeuteten und Unterdrückten'. Her life story moves on to the first milestone, the early death of Kollwitz's older son, Peter, on the Western Front. Her family tragedy is overlaid in the commentary with a further political message about the rationale for the Great War and its long term repercussions: '1914 zieht ihr Sohn als Freiwilliger in den Krieg und auch sie selbst kann noch nicht durchschauen, daß Deutschlands Söhne für eine schlechte Sache missbraucht werden. Durch Leid und Irrtum beginnt für die 47 jährige noch einmal ein langer Weg zu neuen Erkenntnissen.' Her personal tragedy, however, remains the main content of the diary extracts, with the grieving mother *Leitmotif* of her work dominating the imagery, thus seemingly suggesting that this aspect of Kollwitz's life is the key to understanding her development as a politically committed artist.

The second, three-minute section of the film is devoted to Kollwitz's pacifist public stance and her reaction to the assassinations of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg in the immediate post-1918 period. A quote and a still image from one of Liebknecht's last speeches connect to Kollwitz's pacifism: 'Genug und übergenug der Metzelei! Nieder mit den Kriegshetzern diesseits und jenseits der Grenze! Ein Ende mit dem Völkermord. Der Hauptfeind steht im eignen Land.' The choice of diary extracts citing her reactions to Liebknecht's murder is significant in mentioning the political background and bourgeois roots of Kollwitz, by then already fifty-three years old: 'Ich war politischer Gegner, aber sein

Tod gab mir den ersten Ruck zu ihm hin. Später las ich dann seine Briefe, was zur Folge hatte, daß seine Persönlichkeit mir im reinsten Licht erscheint.’ The inclusion at this point of Kollwitz’s refusal to be identified as a fully committed socialist at that time may seem more surprising, although arguably weakened by the rhetorical question ending this quotation: ‘Ich habe als Künstler das Recht aus allem das Gefühlsgehalt herauszuziehen, auf mich wirksam zu lassen und nach außen zu stellen. So habe ich auch das Recht den Abschied der Arbeiterschaft von Liebknecht darzustellen ohne dabei Liebknecht politisch zu folgen, oder nicht?’

Although this seemingly tortuous personal pathway to socialism may not have been unusual, any risk that this quote may be received by the film’s viewer as a distancing statement is mitigated by the subsequent explanation. The first half of the film closes with a commentary, suggesting a resolution of Kollwitz’s dilemma: ‘[...]und Käthe Kollwitz stellt ihre Kunst in den Dienst des Proletariats.’ Yet the careful process of diary selection becomes clear from Kollwitz’s words, that *precede* the diary extract used in the film: ‘Ich schäme mich, daß ich immer noch nicht Partei nehme und vermute fast, wenn ich erkläre, keine Partei anzugehören, daß der eigentliche Grund dazu Feigheit ist. Eigentlich bin ich nämlich gar nicht Revolutionär, sondern Evolutionär. Weil man mich aber als Künstlerin des Proletariats und der Revolution preist und mich immer fester in die Rolle schiebt, so scheue ich mich, diese Rolle nicht weiter zu spielen.’ (diary extract, dated October 1920, cited in Kraemer 1981, p.94) These words had been left out by the scriptwriter, thus hiding the extent of Kollwitz’s wrestling with her perceived political identity.

Six of the remaining ten minutes are centred on the long-lasting artistic aftermath of the loss of Kollwitz’s son. This was the work closest to her heart, (ibid., pp.76-80), the *Totenmahl* at the German military cemetery in Flanders where her son is buried. The twin sculptures of grieving parents were modelled on Käthe Kollwitz and her husband, Karl. They were completed after many years of planning and financial issues, described in some detail in the film’s diary extracts. The section closes with various images of the intermediate models for the sculptures and a commentary, delivered this time with noticeable pathos: ‘Das Werk, um das sie seit 1915 ringt, ist vollendet.1932.’ This section of the film was regarded as relatively innovative and specifically encouraged by the Kollwitz Committee: ‘Das Arbeitssekretariat begrüßt dieses Vorhaben auch deshalb, weil es mit einer bisher wenig bekannten Seite im Schaffen von Käthe Kollwitz bekannt macht und es bisher in der DDR keine Filmaufnahmen des Totenmahles gibt.’<sup>67</sup>

The last four minutes of the film begin with a film clip of dozens of Nazi brown-shirts jumping out of trucks. Quotes from her diaries, accompanied by political commentary, are reintroduced to position brief milestones in the last twelve years of Kollwitz's life, that coincided with the height of the Nazi period: 'Das dritte Reich bricht an. Ich hoffe, daß bei einer kriegerischen Bedrohung der UdSSR, die Arbeiterschaft wenigstens der führenden Staaten Europas sich endlich zur geschlossenen Abwehr zusammen findet.' A further setback is then noted: 'Am 15. Februar 1933 müssen Heinrich Mann und ich aus der Akademie austreten, weil wir den Aufruf zur Einigung der Linksparteien unterschrieben haben. Wenn nur die Steine dort in Belgien bleiben an der Stelle für die sie gemacht sind.' While bringing out her political allegiance, this extract is the only reference in the entire film to her membership of the AdK; the fact that she had been the first woman to be admitted as member is not even mentioned.

The diary reference to the 'Belgian stones', that is the Flanders *Totenmahl*, introduces the remaining two minutes of the film. This final section contains short diary extracts covering her last, increasingly unhappy war years. These culminated in the death in 1940 of her husband, the death in 1942 of her soldier grandson Peter, and banishment from Berlin to Moritzburg in 1943 where she died just before the Soviet troops reached nearby Dresden in 1945. The film ends with two images: a still photograph of the last work forming the title of the film and a still of her 1932 poster, 'Wir schützen die Sowjetunion'. The accompanying diary extract from 1942 reunites all three key ingredients as a consolidated, framing narrative of Kollwitz: a mother/grandmother, a pacifist and a political thinker: 'Unterdes war Hans [Kollwitz's surviving younger son] hier. Er kam ganz spät zu mir herein. Da wusste ich, daß Peter tot ist. Am 22. September ist er gefallen. Darum bin ich mit ganzem Herzen für einen radikalen Schluss dieses Irrsinns und erwarte nur von dem Weltsozialismus etwas.'

So by the end of her life Kollwitz has, according to the film's storyline, fought her way to accepting an arguably utopian vision of socialism as the only 'true path'. She goes on:

Ich beschließe noch einmal zum dritten Mal dasselbe Thema aufzunehmen. Diesmal kucken die Saatfrüchte der Mutter überall aus dem Mantel heraus und wollen ausbrechen. Aber die alte zusammenhaltende Mutter sagt 'Nein! Ihr bleibt hier. Einstweilen dürft ihr euch raufen. Aber wenn Ihr groß sein werdet, habt ihr euch auf das Leben einzustellen und nicht wieder auf den Krieg.' Das ist nun einmal mein Testament. Saatfrüchte sollen nicht vermahlen werden.

The film thus creates an overall impression well matched to the selected diary extracts, images of Kollwitz, her works, and historical film clips. The choice of images achieves a balance that suggests Kollwitz's life was interwoven between her personal tragedy and the causes she espoused. The intermittent commentary in the film's screenplay feels more contrived. As is the case with the press coverage and official speeches, the film reinforces an established interpretation of Kollwitz's specific legacy and its contribution to national identity in the GDR rather than promoting a new one.

### **3.3.4. 'Käthe Kollwitz und ihre Zeitgenossen': exhibiting the international proletariat**

Another major cultural event of the commemoration year, an exhibition hosted by the AdK and opened on 8 July 1967, demonstrates that one of the competing narratives of Kollwitz, that of 'Kämpferin für das Proletariat' was possibly the most important one for the AdK in their central role as organiser of this particular event. Despite being dedicated explicitly to Kollwitz's centenary in the official catalogue (Ludwig et al., 1967, p.3), the exhibition included only six works by Kollwitz herself, alongside 210 works by 100 artists from nine countries. One reason suggested for exhibiting other artists was the fear that comparatively recent Kollwitz exhibitions in 1960, 1962 and 1965 would have lessened public interest in this event (Schymura, 2014, p.364). In consequence, Schymura proposes persuasively that the overriding rationale for the academic establishment to choose a different concept was the opportunity to display the wider international applications of Socialist Realism. The AdK's vice-president, Eduard Claudius, however, explains the curation concept in a more general introduction to the catalogue as being: '[...] die Persönlichkeit und das Werk der Künstlerin in einem großen Zusammenhang darzustellen.' (Ludwig et al., p.3). Without alluding to the Socialist Realism movement by name, Claudius spells out the exhibition's context with an explicit connection to Kollwitz:

Es gibt eine große Zahl von Künstlern, nicht nur in Deutschland, sondern auch in anderen Ländern, die wie Käthe Kollwitz von den großen sozialen Problemen und revolutionären Ereignissen ihrer Zeit gedrängt wurden, mit ihren Arbeiten Partei zu ergreifen. Viele dieser Künstler werden durch diese Ausstellung zum ersten Mal in Berlin bekannt gemacht, darunter auch einige, deren Arbeiten hauptsächlich Mitgefühl mit den durch die Klassengesellschaft entrechteten und verarmten bekunden (ibid., p.3)

The narrative of 'Kämpferin für das Proletariat' as the core political driver in Kollwitz's life is thus chosen as the common denominator in the show. The six selected works by Kollwitz all follow this theme, bearing the titles: 'Kampf im Wirtshaus', 'Zyklus "Ein Weberaufstand"', 'Zyklus "Bauernkrieg"', 'Aufruhr', 'Brot', 'Verbrüderung', and 'Heimarbeit'. Kollwitz's commitment to the cause of the socially and politically oppressed proletariat is also attributed to the works of the other artists selected. Beyond major German contemporaries of Kollwitz such as Ernst Barlach, Otto Dix, George Grosz, Oskar Kokoschka and Max Liebermann, the selection was expanded to non-German artists, constituting around a third of the total. The inclusion of representatives from five West European countries and prominent names such as Camille Pissaro and Georges Roualt, creates a clear message of Kollwitz's place, and by implication that of the GDR, in taking the lead in responding artistically to the universal issue of oppression.

Claudius positions the topic as not only retrospective but as an ongoing scholarly task, associated with the upcoming anniversaries of the twin pillars of Marxist-Leninism, in 1968 and 1970 respectively: 'Die Ausstellung soll der Beginn einer eingehenden wissenschaftlichen Erforschung des gesamten Problemkreises sein und in weiteren Ausstellungen, so zum 150. Geburtstag von Karl Marx und zum 100. Geburtstag von W.I. Lenin ihren Niederschlag finden' (ibid., p.3). This reference also implicitly helps to further anchor the narrative of Kollwitz as 'Freund der Sowjetunion' – albeit ranked in terms of the works chosen behind the narrative of 'Kämpferin für das Proletariat'.

The structure and content of the catalogue offers clues to how Kollwitz and her contemporaries were presented to the wider public reader beyond the exhibition's visitor. The cover features a self-portrait woodcut of Kollwitz which is not one of the actual exhibits, and does not point to the chosen context and political message of the show. However, the choice here makes sense; it reminds the reader and visitor of the personality being commemorated by the staging of the exhibition itself.

The catalogue itself is a modest 28-page booklet, containing a list of all works exhibited, where they were held at the time and short biographies of the artists. The booklet closes with photos of only 28 of the 210 works. 'Brot' (1924) one of Kollwitz's most iconic works, is the only one of the six exhibited that is reproduced in the catalogue. It appears in a group of several photos with an explicit political theme or message, such as Lea Grundig's 'Diskussion zwischen Kommunisten und Sozialdemokraten', and Martha Schrag's

‘Arbeitslose’. More important, in the context of implicitly aligning Kollwitz with the pre-war German Communist Party, is its placement as penultimate photo; ‘Brot’ is effectively inserted between Hans Grundig’s ‘Selbstmord ist kein Ausweg – Kämpft mit der KPD’, (1930), and the closing reproduction of John Heartfield’s poster, ‘Kämpft mit uns! Wählt Kommunisten – Liste 4’, (1930).

Consistent with the other artists in the exhibition, the paragraph on Kollwitz merely lists her key biographical dates with no further commentary. So, for example, it mentions her election as member of the Akademie in 1919 without observing that she was the first female member. Given the presumed space limitations in this section of the catalogue, it becomes evident that it is the mostly politically relevant dates that were chosen to set the scene for the choice and context of Kollwitz’s works. The loss of her son, Peter, in 1914 is therefore the only personal date listed after her marriage in 1891. Kollwitz’s public protest as pacifist in 1918, her trip to the USSR in 1927 and even her exhibition in Moscow in 1932 are all preferred to later personal milestones such as the death of her husband in 1940, the death of her grandson Peter in 1942 on the Russian front, and her banishment from Berlin in 1943 – all of which arguably influenced her final works.

The catalogue also contains the hint of a contradiction in how the exhibition was finally executed. A comparison of the works listed and the 28 reproductions selected for the catalogue reveals an anomaly. Three works by world-famous artists: Van Gogh’s ‘The Road Workers’, Bonnard’s ‘La petite blanchisseuse’ and Beckmann’s ‘Die Nacht’ are all pictured misleadingly in the catalogue, yet are absent from the list of exhibits. There is a small-print note at the end: ‘Aus konservatorischen Gründen konnten nicht alle für die Ausstellung erbetenen Werke ausgeliehen werden.’ However, a closer review of where the actual exhibits were held at the time reveals only museums and private collections within the Soviet bloc. The commercial and poster artist Klaus Wittkugel makes a sweeping attack on officials in West Germany in his inauguration speech for the exhibition. He puts forward a more significant, although unproven political reason for the absence of certain works: ‘Bonn hat sich an politischen Manipulationen schuldig gemacht und verhindert, daß man in großem Umfang Leihgaben aus Westdeutschland und den übrigen Ländern des NATO zeigen konnte’.<sup>68</sup>

In short, the exhibition differs from other activities in the Kollwitz centenary commemoration and how they were addressed in the GDR media as well as official speeches in one important

respect. The concept of the exhibition and its accompanying catalogue focuses almost exclusively on one construction of Kollwitz: 'Kämpferin für das Proletariat' (Ludwig et al., 1967). This appears to have been justified by the unifying context of Kollwitz's artist contemporaries and their works of Socialist Realism selected by the curators. The 'friend of the Soviet Union' allusions and the link to German pre-war communism go well with this single narrative. On the other hand, and in particular contrast to the film, both the pacifist and the grieving mother iconography that characterise so many of Kollwitz's best known works is completely ignored. This single-narrative slant may have been politically expedient, but it is all the more remarkable if one reflects on the artistic and intellectual background of the AdK's members acting here as curators. The above-mentioned coincidental linkage to the fiftieth anniversary of the Russian revolution in 1917, was addressed by staging the main Berlin exhibition as well as the initial screening of the documentary film at the Haus der Deutsch-Sowjetischen Freundschaft in Berlin. The exhibition was subsequently shown in Moscow, as a further mark of the importance in both countries of linking Kollwitz's personal history to the 1917 revolution, thus underlining that Kollwitz was 'one of us' in a wider, Soviet-bloc context. As a literal representation of the GDR-Soviet friendship, this may have arguably contributed, even positively enhanced a particular vision of GDR national identity based on a demonstration of socialist inclusivity.

### **3.3.5. The official Kollwitz pamphlet: cementing the political narratives**

A 42-page pamphlet (Lüdecke, 1967), commissioned by the Kollwitz Committee, was the AdK's second official contribution to the centenary alongside the organisation of the exhibition. In his introduction, Lüdecke points out that he is providing neither a biography nor an appraisal of Kollwitz's works. As the title, 'Käthe Kollwitz und die Akademie' indicates, the purpose of his publication is to chart the relationship between Kollwitz and the Akademie during the period of her membership, from appointment, together with fifteen other artists including Ernst Barlach (Schymura 2014, pp.236-237) on 17 March 1919 to the immediate aftermath of what was, effectively, her expulsion in 1933. The introduction closes with an implied connection between the past Akademie and the contemporary AdK. By suggesting a link to historical, progressive elements in the Akademie,<sup>69</sup> Lüdecke positions the AdK as its legacy institution, whose quasi-inheritance is further legitimised by the application of socialist historiography: 'Der Verfasser hofft, damit zu der Würdigung der progressiven Kräfte in der alten Akademie der Künste beizutragen, die eine Ehrenpflicht der neuen Akademie der Künste und der sozialistischen Geschichtsschreibung ist.' (Lüdecke 1967, p.6)

Lüdecke's short reference to Kollwitz's appointment is strangely uninformative, although he does offer an explanation for Kollwitz's widespread status across the main social classes who carried weight after the First World War:

Über die Einzelheiten der Aufnahme Käthe Kollwitz in die Akademie sind wir nicht unterrichtet. Bei dem Ruf, den sie in der Arbeiterschaft, in der sozialdemokratischen Partei, im liberalen Bürgertum und unter den Künstlern genoss, war es eine Selbstverständlichkeit, daß sie zum Akademiemitglied gewählt wurde, nachdem die Kräfte, die es bis zum Novemberrevolution nicht zugelassen hatten, vorübergehend kulturpolitisch entmachteten waren (ibid., p.10).

Given that he appears to have based his publication on access to the Akademie's archives, it is unclear whether any specific records on the appointment process were missing or had been destroyed during the Second World War. But if so, why does he not refer to this in his introduction? The implementation of the official legal framework of gender equality<sup>70</sup> was developing and expanding throughout most of the GDR's lifetime (Kranz, 2005). In this context there appears to be a missed opportunity for Lüdecke to highlight the pioneering aspect of Kollwitz becoming the first female member of the Akademie. However, this omission is in line with the apparent non-inclusion of this particular achievement in other, centenary-related publications, speeches, and the film as noted above. Although Kollwitz is referred to repeatedly in the pamphlet as a wife and mother, this apparent oversight in turn can be interpreted as further evidence of gender being viewed, as far as explicit references are concerned, as a relatively insignificant element in the socio-political framework of Kollwitz's centenary. Kollwitz herself appears to have been ambivalent about her appointment in her diary entry of 31 January 1919: 'Große Ehre, aber ein bißchen peinlich für mich. Die Akademie gehört doch zu den etwas verzopften Instituten, die beiseite gebracht werden sollten.' (cited in Kraemer, 1998, p.108)

Conforming to the overall ideological framework, Lüdecke puts forward the same, closely related, political narratives of Kollwitz, that have already been identified in the other Kollwitz commemoration events: 'Anti-Faschist und Kommunist' and 'Freund der UdSSR'. As in the official documentary film, and much of the press coverage of Kollwitz in the GDR, Lüdecke's account relies heavily on selective use of extracts from the Kollwitz diaries and letters. He chooses episodes in the early years of her membership as proof, that while identifying herself nominally with the SPD through her vote, her real sympathies lay with the

new German Communist movement. A letter from 1919, just after gaining Akademie membership, is interpreted as pointing to her emotions, and how they determined Kollwitz's underlying political leanings:

Aus diesem Brief erfahren wir auch, was Käthe Kollwitz damals politisch fühlte und dachte [...] <sup>71</sup> 'Das waren die Revolutionstage. Was geworden ist, hat ein etwas anderes Gesicht bekommen, als man geträumt hat [...] Gegen das, was man erwartet, ist das, was die Sozialdemokratie gegeben hat, dürftig. Und nun kommt der Kommunismus, in dem unbestreitbar eine Idee liegt, und zieht die Menschen eben diese Idee wegen an sich. Ich schick euch hier einen Aufsatz von Gorki; vielleicht kennt ihr ihn [...]. Er hat mich, muss ich sagen, erschüttert. Es ist mir furchtbar schwer, Stellung zu nehmen. Gewählt habe ich mehrheitssozialistisch, aber doch wünschte ich sehr, die Regierung gäbe mehr' (Lüdecke, 1967, pp.9-10).

As in Lea Grundig's article in ND, we note Kollwitz's own reference to Gorki in Lüdecke's editing. The quote may again serve to reinforce an association of Kollwitz with this Russian icon in the mind of the reader. The Gorki reference is repeated in a later episode, based on the celebration of her 60<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1927, which coincided with the tenth anniversary of the Russian Revolution. Lüdecke's version, and the accompanying extract, draw out the interwoven themes of Kollwitz as 'Freund der Sowjetunion' and 'Kommunist':

Käthe Kollwitz jedoch bekannte in der 'AIZ' (Arbeiter-Illustrierte-Zeitung, Jg. 1927, Nr.20): 'Es ist dies nicht die Stelle uns auseinanderzusetzen, warum ich nicht Kommunistin bin. Es ist aber die Stelle, um auszusprechen, daß das Geschehnis der letzten zehn Jahre in Russland mir an Größe und weittragender Bedeutung nur vergleichbar zu sein scheint dem Geschehnis der großen französischen Revolution. Gorki spricht in einem Aufsatz aus der ersten Zeit der Sowjet-Republik von dem Fliegen "Sohlen nach oben". Dieses Fliegen im Sturmwind glaube ich in Russland zu spüren. Um dieses Fliegen, um die Glut ihres Glaubens habe ich die Kommunisten oft beneidet.' Sie und ihr Mann, der Arzt Doktor Karl Kollwitz, waren dann in der 1. November Hälfte als Ehrengäste in Moskau. (ibid., p.16).

The narrative of Kollwitz as pacifist also emerges in the pamphlet in connection with her confirmation as a Prussian official; but, as in other centenary events and associated media commentary, this theme appears to be less important than the main political narratives, as it is alluded to only once, and indirectly: 'Die Kollwitz jedenfalls ließ sich durch ihre neue Würde

nicht daran hindern, sich im Oktober 1928 durch die Unterzeichnung eines Aufrufes dem Kampf der fortschrittlichen Intellektuellen gegen den Bau eines Panzerkreuzers anzuschließen.’

The second half of the pamphlet focuses on factual detail but with hardly any additional political commentary on the antifascist Kollwitz narrative that began before and continued after the *Machtergreifung* in 1933. This covers Kollwitz’s public appeal in 1932 to unite the political forces of the left as well as examples of decreasing public exposure to her works in the period between her resignation from the Akademie in February 1933 and her final contacts with the Akademie in October 1936. Drawing in detail on Kollwitz’s diaries and private letters, Lüdecke can be seen to have won the argument with the official Kollwitz Committee regarding the avoidance of hyperbole. He effectively corrects the phrasing chosen in the earlier published resolution that he had criticised as implying a voluntary resignation: ‘Kollwitz war 15 Jahre lang Mitglied der Preußischen Akademie der Künste, bis sie zusammen mit Heinrich Mann aus Protest gegen den Faschismus 1933 austrat.’<sup>72</sup> Instead he describes Kollwitz’s reaction, the key word ‘deklarieren’ making it clear that the resignation had been forced on her: ‘Käthe Kollwitz nahm den als freiwilligen Austritt deklarierten Ausschluß aus der Akademie der Künste ruhig auf, jedenfalls äußerlich.’ (ibid., p.34).

The pamphlet ends by staking a claim for the GDR as the only legitimate actor in the centenary commemoration:

Käthe Kollwitz erlebte den Augenblick nicht, da die von ihr geliebten Menschen die Fäuste aus der Tasche nehmen konnten. [...] Heute jedoch zu ihrem 100. Geburtstag, werden in unserem Teil Deutschlands, dem deutschen Arbeiter-und-Bauern-Staat, die Ehrungen nachgeholt, die ihr gebühren und ihrem Wesen gemäß sind. Sie beschränken sich nicht auf Reden, Schriften und Gesten, sondern bestehen vor allem darin, dass ihr humanistisches Vermächtnis auf allen Gebieten des Lebens erfüllt wird. (ibid., p.42).

By referring to ‘unserem Teil Deutschlands’, this statement manifestly claims Kollwitz for the GDR; it promotes closer identification with the GDR as the legitimate heir to this legacy of antifascism and the fight for a better society, than may be inferred in other sources analysed in this chapter. Finally, the message is further amplified when Lüdecke echoes a humanist narrative common among other cultural commemorations in the GDR; namely that the GDR alone can fulfil the humanist legacy of its German cultural heritage.

### 3.4. OUTCOMES

This section analyses the overall reception of the Kollwitz centenary commemorations and identifies potential legacies, both against the background of noticeably reduced appropriation and demarcation motives that were so prevalent in the previous case study. As noted in the Implementation section above, the media involvement before and during the main anniversary days, may be viewed as commemorative activity in and of itself. The media reporting thereafter can be considered as a measure of the reception/outcome of the events.

#### 3.4.1. Post-event media coverage in East and West: political themes dominate but not exclusively.

The day after the *Festakt*, ND reported the highlights of Abusch's speech at the event.<sup>73</sup> The report adopts a particular political tone at the outset:

Dr. Abusch, [...] gab in seiner Rede auf dem Festakt zum 100. Geburtstag von Käthe Kollwitz eine umfassende Würdigung ihrer Persönlichkeit und ihres revolutionären künstlerischen Wirkens. Über das Verhältnis der Künstlerin zur Arbeiterklasse sagte er unter anderem: 'wie alle Grossen der Kunst und Literatur, zeichnete sich Käthe Kollwitz dadurch aus, dass sie an einer Zeitenwende in den Klassenkämpfen das zu erreichen vermochte: die Gestaltung neuer Wirklichkeiten im künstlerischen Bild (ibid.).

Abusch begins by acknowledging Kollwitz's bourgeois upbringing. At the same time he positions her within the wider context of the German socialist workers' movement rather than a formal party-political allegiance: 'Der Weg ihrer Entwicklung seit den Jugendjahren, trotz mancher Widersprüchlichkeit, wurde geradezu klassisch für den Weg eines Künstlers, der sich am Ende des 19. und in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts mit der deutschen sozialistischen Arbeiterbewegung verband' (ibid.). Abusch continues to situate Kollwitz politically with two further items of evidence supporting an alignment with German communism:

Alfred Kurella berichtete davon, dass sie bereits Ende November 1919, also während sie an dem Liebknecht-Blatt arbeitete und sich mit den ersten Entwürfen für das Gefallenendenkmal auseinandersetzt, ihr Atelier für eine illegale Tagung der sich gründenden kommunistischen Internationale zur Verfügung stellte (ibid.).

Abusch describes Kollwitz's words and deeds in opposing the Nazis as being completely in step with those of the German communist party during the 1920s. These references to the German communist party of old, subsequently to be banned in West Germany, may be construed as a useful means for Abusch to implicitly appropriate Kollwitz for the GDR:

Fragt man nach der politischen Position der Käthe Kollwitz in der Weimarer Republik, ist es die Wahrheit, die meine Generation aus eigenem Miterleben kennt, daß sie den aggressivsten Standpunkt einer getreuen Verbündeten unserer Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands erreichte. Mit ihrem Wort und ihrem Werk setzte sie sich für die Politik ein, für die Aktionseinheit der Arbeiterklasse, gegen die drohende Gefahr einer faschistischen Diktatur (ibid.).

Given his role as former Minister of Culture and Chairman of the Kollwitz Committee, it is not surprising that Abusch's closing remarks, as quoted in ND, relate Kollwitz to her impact on art in the context of Socialist Realism:

Wir handeln im Geiste von Käthe Kollwitz, wenn wir in unserer sozialistischen Republik das neue aktive Verhältnis weiter Kreise des Volkes zur Kunst entwickeln [...]. Unsere Kunst ist ohne diese Vorkämpferin und Vorgestalterin undenkbar. Unsere Kunst des sozialistischen Realismus ist heute in ihrer historischen Thematik in manchem über sie hinausgewachsen. Doch dieses Wachsen und Allseitigerwerden, nunmehr bei uns in der Fassung des neuen sozialistischen Lebens und seiner Perspektiven, ist die einzig mögliche Form lebendiger Aneignung selbst des Größten, was menschlicher Geist vor uns hervorgebracht hat (ibid.).

Although this statement contains only an implied reference to the other Germany, the use of the words 'Aneignung...des Größten' lays an unambiguous claim to Kollwitz's artistic legacy as a building block of GDR national identity.

Complementing the ND reporting, *Aufwärts*, the youth newspaper of the FDGB, published its own tribute.<sup>74</sup> Built around a long extract from Kollwitz's diary, the author and *Aufwärts* editor, Hans Dohrenbusch, traces her life and explains her commitment to portray the working class instead of her bourgeois background. Kollwitz's diary (no date given) is cited as follows:

Ich möchte hierbei einiges sagen über die Abstempelung zur sozialen Künstlerin, die mich von da an [date or time unclear] begleitete [...] Das eigentliche Motiv aber,

warum ich von jetzt an zur Darstellung fast nur das Arbeiterleben wählte, war, weil die aus dieser Sphäre gewählten Motive mir einfach und bedingungslos das gaben, was ich als schön empfand. [...] Ohne jeden Reiz waren mir Menschen aus dem bürgerlichen Leben. Das ganze bürgerliche Leben erschien mir pedantisch. Dagegen einen großen Wurf hatte das Proletariat. [...] Nur dies will ich noch einmal betonen, daß anfänglich in sehr geringem Maße Mitleid, Mitempfinden mich zur Darstellung des proletarischen Lebens zog, sondern, daß ich es einfach als schön empfand (ibid.).

In contrast to the political stance of the ND's coverage, Dohrenbusch suggests in his interpretation of her diary a uniqueness in Kollwitz's personality, reflected in the extract: 'Das ist ein Bekenntnis. Moral und künstlerische Auffassung begegnen sich und bilden eine Einheit. Ihre Kunst galt im Ausdruck den Unterdrückten, Erniedrigten und Beleidigten, ihr Gesamtwerk gehört allen Menschen' (ibid.). As in some of the ND contributions, Dohrenbusch links the significance of Kollwitz's personal tragedies as mother and grandmother to her work: 'Schwarz und Weiß sind die Farben dieser Meisterin aller grafischen Künste., die als Mutter die entsetzliche Not der Mütter jederzeit darstellte. Und der Kinder. (ibid.)'

In closing, Dohrenbusch's epithet on Kollwitz and her artistic and personal provenance differs notably from Abusch's official designation of Kollwitz: 'Einzureihen in irgend eine Kunstrichtung ist Käthe Kollwitz nicht. Sie war selbst eine Richtung. Eingegangen ist sie in die Herzen der Menschen, die diese Erde wohnlicher machen wollen' (ibid.). This divergence by a representative of the FDGB from the SED leadership's emphasis on the ideological link between Kollwitz and Socialist Realism is important. Similar variances could be observed in the previous Schiller commemorations in relation to another mass organisation, the DKB. Once again, this may be interpreted here as a gap between an official intent to propagate a theory as framework for a commemoration and the subsequent reality of those involved in the implementation. In the case of the Kollwitz centenary it is the FDGB newspaper, through its comments, whose instance of *Eigensinn* creates this disparity.

The tone and content of West German media coverage of Kollwitz during her 1967 centenary was mixed. A regional newspaper from West Berlin gave a glowing review of the November exhibition, although clearly uninformed about the highly selective choice of her works: 'Das Jahr ihres 100. Geburtstages neigt sich schon dem Ende, da bietet es eine Ausstellung, die an Vollständigkeit kaum etwas zu wünschen übrig lässt, Käthe Kollwitz eine großartige,

verdiente Ehrung.’<sup>75</sup> More influential West German publications however took little notice of the centenary events in the GDR. *Der Spiegel* preferred to comment on the concurrent ‘Kollwitz-boom’ at Western international art auctions that year in its Art Market section: ‘Der Deutsche Kunsthandel stand kopfschüttelnd überrumpelt vor diesem Phänomen’.<sup>76</sup> *Die Zeit* focussed on these commercial aspects; but goes further and presents an approach to Kollwitz that stands in contrast to how it see Kollwitz being treated in the GDR.<sup>77</sup> The art historian Gottfried Sello notes in a lengthy article how Kollwitz's undisputed standing as a politically engaged artist had produced a contrasting reception in both East and West Germany before 1967:

Man stelle sich vor, das Jubiläum wäre vor fünf Jahren fällig gewesen: Kein Hahn hätte (im Westen) nach der Kollwitz gekräht [...]. Sie wurde zum Prototyp des engagierten Künstlers in unserem Jahrhundert. Das macht sie im Osten, in der DDR, zur *persona gratissima* und im Westen zu einer menschlich anrührenden Figur, die künstlerisch nicht in Betracht kommt (ibid.).

Sello proposes that Kollwitz's work was already an artistic anachronism in its day – a very different approach to any interpretation in the GDR:

Die Wurzeln ihrer Kunst liegen in der Tradition des 19. Jahrhunderts. Als ein bedeutender Beitrag zum 19. Jahrhundert ist ihr Werk aufzuwerten. Spurlos ist die künstlerische Revolution des 20. Jahrhunderts an ihr vorüber gegangen. Nur die Holzschnitte, die nach 1920 entstanden sind,..., sind ein problematischer Versuch, an der generellen Entwicklung zu partizipieren. Die Kollwitz ist trotz progressiver Ideen eine erkonservative Künstlerin. (ibid.).

Notwithstanding her ‘*persona gratissima*’ status, Sello suggests that even in the GDR Kollwitz may be on the verge of becoming a *political* as well as an artistic anachronism:

Auch im Osten ist die Frage latent, was mit einer extrem zeitbezogenen Kunst geschieht, wenn ihre Zeit vorüber ist. Für die Weltsituation 1967, heißt es in einer Ostberliner Besprechung,<sup>78</sup> ‘reicht freilich der Blick auf die verehrungswürdige Käthe Kollwitz allein, auf ihr Werk, daß sie aus dem bedrückenden Erlebnis der sozialen Not des Berliner Proletariats zu ihrer Zeit als ihre Aufgabe erfüllte und verwirklichte, nicht mehr aus. Ein großer Abstand trennt uns zum Beispiel in unserer Deutschen Demokratischen Republik von dem Deutschland jener Zeit. Politische und gesellschaftliche Problemstellungen vieler Art, nicht nur die sozialen, liegen heute in

vielen Ländern anders'. Das heißt, bei aller Verehrung, ihre Thematik ist antiquiert, ihr Werk eine historische Reminiszenz an die Jahre des Kampfes, und was dann allein noch zu Buche steht, ist die Gesinnung, die Ideologie (ibid.).

By quoting from an unattributed GDR publication, Sello seems to add weight to this dismissal of one of the dominant Kollwitz narratives in the GDR – that of 'Kämpferin für das Proletariat'. He concludes his article by discounting prevailing interpretations of Kollwitz on either side of the Iron Curtain: 'Der Versuch, aus ihrem Werk parteipolitisches Kapital zu schlagen, ist ebenso unsinnig wie die auf unserer Seite geübte Praxis, das gesellschaftliche Engagement ihrer Kunst als eine blühende menschliche Geste zu verharmlosen' (ibid.).

Considering therefore what may otherwise have been received in the GDR at the time as somewhat provocative West German press coverage of Kollwitz, it is striking that GDR media and official speeches did not appear to react more openly, as may otherwise have been expected in the prevailing Cold War climate of hostility to West German media in general.<sup>79</sup>

Finally, the AdK archives contain a transcript (source unknown) of a statement by Karl Hubbuch, a prominent West German artist and Professor at the Karlsruhe Academy of Fine Arts. In it he explicitly acknowledges the spiritual home of Kollwitz and also appears to emphasise her gender, in conjunction with Helene Weigel:

Wohl kaum eine Frau (außer Helene Weigel) hat in unserem Jahrhundert, im deutschen Sprachraum, den Kampf für die Leidenden und Unterdrückten solche künstlerische Kraft geführt wie Käthe Kollwitz. [...]. Die Deutsche Demokratische Republik kann stolz darauf sein, diesen beiden Frauen eine geistige Heimat zu sein!<sup>80</sup>

The lack of any internal and external arguments on the legacy and other potentially contentious points, including the apparent commercialisation of Kollwitz noted in some of the West German media thus encourages the conclusion that she was silently acknowledged by the media and the Fine Arts communities in both Germanies as already being 'one of us / them'. In other words, both sides appear to have accepted a de facto identification of the GDR's as Kollwitz's spiritual resting place.

### 3.4.2. The legacy of Kollwitz's centenary in the GDR: more of the same?

Some contradictions emerge when attempting to evaluate to what extent the Kollwitz commemoration produced a noticeable change in how she was subsequently viewed in the GDR. A decrease in the profile of further Kollwitz related anniversaries and exhibitions suggests that the centenary marked a high point for Kollwitz in the GDR, and that the public discourse around Kollwitz thereafter was static at best (Schymura, 2014, pp.380-384).

Evidence from a later planning document of the DKB however suggests that, at least in the first few years after 1967, there was an official intent to refer back to the centenary by intensifying Kollwitz-related cultural activities: '25. Todestag Käthe Kollwitz am 25. April 1970: Für diesen Gedenktag sind keine besonderen Ehrungen vorgesehen. Wir verweisen auf die große Kollwitz-Ehrung zum 100. Geburtstag im Jahre 1967. Wir werden unsere Kollwitz-Ausstellung verstärkt einsetzen und Freundeskreise und Clubs behilflich sein bei der Gewinnung von geeigneten Gesprächspartnern für Ausstellungsgespräche.'<sup>81</sup>

Kollwitz continued to be memorialised in an increased naming of public spaces in the GDR such as streets and squares, as well as schools and workplaces; this fact alone must be seen as reinforcing a sense of GDR national identity among the wider population towards her political and artistic legacy. Yet when it comes to a more tangible post-1967 legacy, it is surprising that neither the AdK, as primary champion of Kollwitz, nor any other GDR institution established a permanent museum and resource centre dedicated to Kollwitz. This omission is all the more remarkable compared to developments in West Germany, where – admittedly private – initiatives in Berlin and Cologne established such centres in the mid-1980s, which still flourish today.

One final outcome should be noted regarding the ideological framework described in this chapter. Official revisionism of a historical SED policy on Kollwitz may have been the result of her stature being actually strengthened by the centenary commemoration in 1967. In its 1988 book, previously mentioned in the Schiller case study, the SED seeks, with hindsight, to delegitimise and discount attacks in the early 1950s on Kollwitz. Haase concentrates particularly on the anonymous critic 'N. Orlow', mentioned in the introduction to this case study:

Er [Orlow] brachte wichtige Fragestellungen des ideologischen Klassenkampfes, wie sie die KPdSU in den Jahren zuvor gestellt hatte, in die Kunstdiskussion der DDR ein, enthielt aber gerade auch in Hinsicht auf das Problem der künstlerischen Traditionen

bedenkliche Überspitzungen und Irrtümer. Beispielsweise wurden bedeutende Leistungen von Käthe Kollwitz [...] fälschlicherweise einer scharfen, unangemessenen Kritik unterzogen, weil nicht der politisch-geschichtliche Standort, sondern vorwiegend die Formgebung der Künstler zum Kriterium der Beurteilung gemacht wurden. (Haase, 1988, pp.203-204)

The SED also attempts to retrospectively distance itself from its own, earlier association with the attacks on Kollwitz in the early 1950s. Under the wider heading, ‘Zur Problematik der Tradition proletarischer-revolutionärer Literatur und Kunst’ (Haase, 1988, pp.150-151), Haase contends:

Äußerliche Erscheinungsformen und nicht das Wesen der Sache selbst waren also die Grundlage solche kritischen Urteile über Käthe Kollwitz. Demgegenüber muss hervorgehoben werden, daß sich weder im Referat noch in der Entschliebung der fünften Tagung des ZK der SED, die etwa zur selben Zeit zusammen trat und außerordentlich kritisch zu den Fragen der Kunstentwicklung Stellung nahm, solche Bewertungen der großen proletarischen Künstlerin finden. Wilhelm Pieck, der Vorsitzende der Partei, nahm sogar demonstrativ an der Eröffnung einer umfassenden Käthe-Kollwitz-Ausstellung teil, die eben in jener Zeit stattfand, als auch jene kritischen Artikel publiziert wurden. Am gleichen Tag, an dem die 5. Tagung des ZK der SED eine Entschliebung über den Kampf gegen den Formalismus fasste, erschien im Zentralorgan des ZK der SED ‘‘Neues Deutschland’’ ein Artikel von Heinz Lüdecke unter der Überschrift ‘‘Die Friedenskämpferin und Humanistin Käthe Kollwitz’’ [...]’.

The defensive reference to the venerated national icon, Pieck, and his implied gesture of political solidarity, encapsulate the particular emphasis placed on this passage, whilst downplaying the controversial involvement of the SED. The catchwords ‘proletarisch’, ‘Friedenskämpferin’ and ‘Humanist’ used here were all components of the political narratives employed in 1967; their continued usage to reaffirm the ideological framing of Kollwitz twenty years later indicates that the centenary itself was ultimately successful in reinforcing these particular strands of her characterisation as elements of distinctive GDR national identity.

### 3.5. CONCLUSION

Considering the apparent acceptance by West German media and intellectuals of Kollwitz's spiritual links to the underlying ideological framework of the GDR's foundation, there was never any need by the GDR authorities to demarcate a claim to her legacy by appropriating her life and work through educational and other propaganda means. Whilst less disruptive than during the Schiller commemorations, one might have expected a similar dysfunctionality between the stakeholders analysed above to have influenced the intended impact of the Kollwitz centenary. However, there is no evidence to support this possible outcome. More importantly, this case study demonstrates that each of the three proposed narratives of Kollwitz – artistic, socio-political and personal – received differing emphasis during the commemorations. Nonetheless, the evidence presented here supports a conclusion that none of these themes came to dominate the commemorations at the expense of the other two. In summary, the prevailing strength of her unassailable position in the consciousness of GDR society before 1967, meant that the composite Kollwitz narrative was likely to have been acceptable to the population at large; if anything, it served to reinforce her existing status in GDR culture by supporting rather than incrementally boosting national identity relating to an icon of German art.

In summary, my case study analysis of the Kollwitz centenary commemoration offers more insights into the GDR's cultural and political structure at the time than how it may have affected national identity. We can clearly note from various primary sources that certain stakeholders, notably the AdK intellectuals, were able to display agency openly in their preference for the one or other narrative of Kollwitz, without uniformly adhering to the officially proclaimed ideological framework for the commemoration. Their freedom to do so, without apparent censure or intervention from the SED or government, may therefore challenge interpreting the GDR as a system always able to impose policy through a top-down power structure.

## 4: THE BEETHOVEN BICENTENARY, 1970

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Of the four strands represented in the case studies of this thesis, classical music is arguably the one most associated with German high culture, both within and outside Germany. Despite lacking the East German geographical *lieux de memoire* of major German composers such as Bach (Leipzig) and Handel (Halle), Beethoven appears to occupy a special place in GDR cultural history and its pantheon of great men and women. This is evidenced by no less than three anniversaries commemorated during the first twenty years of GDR history, the 125<sup>th</sup> and 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death and, the most prominent, the bicentenary of his birth in 1970. Echoing the pronouncement of his predecessor, Johannes R. Becher, in 1959: ‘Denn er ist unser: Friedrich Schiller’, Klaus Gysi, Minister for Culture, is quoted in the magazine *Der Spiegel* as proclaiming in 1970: ‘Beethoven gehört uns!’ To which the magazine replied in defence of an all-German perspective: ‘Schon – aber nicht ausschließlich!’<sup>82</sup> The cultural antagonism towards West Germany that featured so heavily in the 1959 Schiller bicentenary, but far less in the Kollwitz centenary in 1967, re-appears in the 1970 Beethoven bicentenary. A renewed linkage between appropriation of cultural heritage and demarcation towards West Germany may be observed. This third case-study will explore how the GDR authorities not only contemporised but appropriated Beethoven in order, once again, to encourage a heightened sense of GDR national identity – this time towards an icon of the musical world. As in the other case-studies, the key aims, implementation and outcomes of this high profile anniversary will be analysed, relying on a similar research methodology and range of primary archival sources.<sup>83</sup>

Secondary literature on the position of classical music in GDR cultural and socio-political history, and the Beethoven bicentenary in particular, is limited. Kelly (2014), Jungmann (2011) and Williams (2013) have written about various features of classical music in twentieth century Germany, its historical roots, and the specific significance of Beethoven. Applegate (1992), Silverberg (2009) go further in exploring the links between classical music and German identity. Dennis (1996) and Tischer (2008) in particular both briefly examine the 1970 GDR bicentenary within their research on Beethoven’s importance in Germany generally as well in the GDR. It is within this broader context of existing multi-disciplinary

scholarship on classical music in the GDR that the related significance of Beethoven and the resulting impact on national identity in the GDR will be examined in this chapter. In analysing a far wider range of primary sources than researched hitherto in existing scholarship, this chapter will explore a related question which also surfaced in both previous case-studies. Socialist Realism aimed to remove the traditional distance between upper-class art, and the people's art of workers and peasants in order to create collective socialist art. Could the overt appropriation of a major musical figure such as Beethoven via a large-scale commemoration, involving all classes of society and not only the cultural and educated elite actually make Beethoven more accessible to the population at large? Could such increased exposure to his works and to the heritage of German classical music, thus explicitly or implicitly enhance a distinct GDR national identity?

This case study will suggest that all facets of the Beethoven bicentenary as commemorated in the GDR point collectively to a moderate evolution rather than turning point in cultural commemorations that aimed to influence the development of GDR national identity based on cultural heritage at a midpoint in GDR history, 1970. My findings indicate a marked similarity with the Schiller bicentenary commemorations, eleven years earlier. On the one hand, the commemorations overall were received in a mildly positive way by the wider GDR public. and an important recording project may be identified as a limited legacy. However, once again primary sources provide substantial evidence pointing to various degrees of inconsistency and flaws amongst the stakeholders in their implementation of the commemorations. This observation applies especially to a number of prominent intellectuals and even within the government. As in the Schiller bicentenary the main way in which the Beethoven bicentenary commemorations did not meet the stated objectives was the apparent failure to effectively to appropriate another major icon of German cultural heritage by attaching and then trying to communicate a Marxist interpretation of that personality to the GDR citizens. Despite any increased sense of national pride in the limited, tangible legacy of the bicentenary celebrations, this failure suggests that the commemorations did little if anything to bolster the ongoing, more permanent formation of national identity based on an ideology-driven appropriation of cultural heritage.

Following the methodology of the previous case studies, I will show how interrelated aims were developed and articulated in the planning phase of the Beethoven bicentenary. The implementation section will analyse the efforts to put the aims into effect in the various events planned for the commemoration and identify, as in the earlier commemorations,

weaknesses that created a meaningful gap between theory and practice. Finally, I will assess the outcomes of the bicentenary by evaluating whether appropriating Beethoven was effective in helping to shape a socialist, East German national identity based on identification with a universal icon of classical music heritage.

#### **4.1.1. Music and German nationalism: facing a complex cultural and political tradition.**

Since the mid-19th century, politics and musical culture have been essentially united within a German nationalist body of thought (*Gedankengut*); this allowed a personality cult to develop around famous composers who were thus elevated to heroes and icons of national identity (Jungmann, 2011, p. 43). Compared even to literature and other forms of German high art, German music became unique in the nineteenth century in its international accessibility. As such, classical music may be seen as ‘defining the intersection of cultural, social, and political history in the 19<sup>th</sup> century development of German nationalism’ (Applegate, 1992, p.23). Ultimately, and exploited ideologically by the Nazis with the personality cult surrounding Wagner, German audiences could identify vicariously with the ‘Nation’ through music (Jungmann, 2011, pp.36-42).

Another, more recent musical tradition emerged after the First World War and was to become a socio-political theme carried on in the GDR: left-wing musicians in Germany aimed to remove a perceived bourgeois barrier between elitist art and the working class by forming workers’ orchestras and choirs, often performing at municipal and factory halls, which were rather more mundane venues than gilded concert palaces (Jungmann, 2011, p.42). The participation aspects of classical music form a key part of traditional musical culture in Germany. By cutting across conventional distinctions between popular and elite culture, playing and listening to music promoted a socially inclusive nationalism with implicit claims to represent the whole community (Applegate, 1992, p.30). In a similar vein, the official GDR policy of Socialist Realism can be arguably traced back to an older idea, that *Kunstmusik* has a particular power to elevate the individual personality and to lead the individual towards fulfilment in society (Jungmann, 2011, p.131). This power is noted as not exclusive to the GDR. It is mirrored in the West German educational mandate, *Bildungsauftrag*, at the time and still today in the official remit of West German broadcast media (Williams, 2013, p.18). In summary, this chapter will assess whether these themes of ‘elevation’ and ‘participation’ enabled Beethoven’s bicentenary commemoration to produce the quality and quantity of mass engagement that demonstrably promoted national identity.

## 4.2. AIMS

This section reviews the planning process and development of aims for the commemoration, which were led, as in the Schiller case study, by the DKB mass organisation. The analysis is set against the background of a cultural policy that retains the essential features of appropriation and demarcation towards West Germany, despite a perceptible thaw in the Cold War political environment and intra-German relations. Charting how the ideological framework was finalised once again exposes counter-productive tensions between the various stakeholders and even between the government and the SED. Some of these issues will be seen to carry over into the subsequent implementation phase.

### 4.2.1. Summary of planning process: timing lessons learned from the Schiller commemoration

In comparison to the Schiller commemorations eleven years before, the planning of the Beethoven events and activities was initiated rather earlier. Most of the detailed discussions and setting of aims took place in the preceding year, 1969, and was once again led by the MfK. The key milestones were a formal MfK submission of plans to the *Politbüro* on 11 July who in turn issued a *Politbüro* resolution on 6 December; the final MfK submission was formally ratified by the *Ministerrat* (Council of Ministers) on 10 February 1970. Following the well-established format from previous cultural commemorations, a high-profile committee of stakeholders – the ‘Beethoven-Komitee für die Beethoven-Ehrung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik’ (hereafter referred to as ‘Beethoven Committee’) – was formally constituted on 26 March 1970 to supervise the Beethoven bicentenary implementation. The key stakeholder for both articulating the ideological aims and then planning and implementing the cultural events and activities was the DKB, and its Zentrale Kommission Musik (hereafter referred to as ‘ZKM’) in particular. A major planning conference in Potsdam, from 31 October to 1 November 1969, led by the DKB, set the ideological framework for the commemorations.

### 4.2.2. *Abgrenzung* and GDR cultural policy move on since the Schiller bicentenary

Two closely inter-connected discourses, *Aneignung* and *Abgrenzung*, both highly visible in the 1959 Schiller bicentenary but far less so in the 1967 Kollwitz centenary, reappear in the 1970 Beethoven bicentenary. By early 1969, West German Chancellor Willy Brandt’s *Ostpolitik* was signalling the end of the *Hallstein-Doktrin*<sup>84</sup> and a de facto recognition of the

GDR. Yet there was no apparent evidence to suggest to the GDR authorities that West Germany's government was prepared to give up their long-term goal of reunification, and thus accept the GDR's concept of two separate and sovereign German nations. An undiminished Cold War and the long term objective of a permanent separation continued and even reinforced the persistent *Leitmotif* of *Abgrenzung*.

The GDR authorities also justified the appropriation of Beethoven by distancing themselves from perceived anti-Beethoven attitudes that appeared at his bicentenary in West Germany. In their eyes Beethoven had been removed from his iconic pedestal by West Germany's anti-bourgeois New Left composers, notably Kagel and his colleagues in the film and soundtrack, 'Ludwig Van', as well as Stockhausen's composition, 'Kurzwellen mit Beethoven' (Kelly, 2014, pp.103-105). In this context, Werner Rackwitz, Deputy Minister for Culture, demanded that: 'Beethoven needs to be revoked from the "barbaric and anti-humanist imperialists" in the bourgeois sector of German society' (cited in Dennis, 1996, pp.177-183).

The role of terminology in cultural policy should be mentioned when examining the enduring *Abgrenzung* discourse in 1970. The bicentenary was generally referred to in West Germany as the Beethoven *Jubiläum*. However, apart from a few references to the year as *Jubiläums-Jahr* the term almost exclusively used in official GDR documents, media coverage and publicity material was *Beethoven-Ehrung*. The use of *Ehrung* for this and similar major commemorations of historical personalities throughout GDR history suggests a notion of respectful acknowledgment, even idolised veneration of Beethoven in his bicentenary year, in contrast to the far more relaxed anniversary celebrations that year in West Germany. As an analysis of the implementation and media coverage of the GDR events will substantiate, this choice of terminology may be construed as evidence of an intent by the architects of the bicentenary in the GDR to differentiate their approach vis-a-vis (their portrayal of) prevailing musicological and cultural attitudes to Beethoven in West Germany: 'Beethovens politisches Engagement für die Sache des Fortschritts, das Heroische und Heldische in seinem Musik wird vom "Sockel der Verehrung" herabgezerrt. (Eine neue Spielart der von Thomas Mann beschriebenen Zurücknahme des Erbes)'<sup>85</sup>

#### 4.2.3. The DKB's task: determining a Marxist ideological framework for Beethoven

Planning began with an internal meeting of the ZKM within the DKB in which the Beethoven bicentenary was only one of several agenda items.<sup>86</sup> The meeting agreed the format and guest list for a two-day planning 'Beethoven-Kolloquium' at the end of October 1969, intended to be an internal meeting of approximately 100-120 representatives from the central ZKM and regional Bezirkskommissionen Musik, with a few invited guests from the URANIA, FDBG and FDJ mass organisations. A subsequent undated report records instead a widely publicised Beethoven Konferenz on 31 October to 1 November 1969, a larger scale format than was in the original proposal of an internal ZKM colloquium. The report begins with a reference to various preceding interventions by the MfK in the ZKM's planning of the conference agenda: 'Nach mehreren Gesprächen und Festlegungen im Ministerium für Kultur, speziell mit unserem Kommissionsmitglied, dem stellvertretenden Minister Dr. Rackwitz, und dem Verband Deutscher Komponisten und Musikwissenschaftler [...], führten Mitglieder und die Sekretärin der ZK Musik, Einzelgespräche mit den Referenten und den vorgesehenen Diskussionsrednern.'<sup>87</sup> The prescriptive interventions and far wider range of participants may reflect how the preparations for the bicentenary were increasingly gaining senior attention within the government. In contrast to the restricted scope of guests for the colloquium, the 140 attendees at the conference would thus include not only representatives of the ZKM, but also senior officials of the MfK, MfV, Deutsche Staatsbibliothek (Musik), TV, radio and press, and publishing houses.

The report's introduction summarises three main goals of the conference, exposing the priorities and concerns of the organisers and political authorities; firstly, 'die Musikpropagandisten im DKB und in anderen gesellschaftlichen Organisationen und Institutionen mit neuen theoretischen und praktischen Problemen der schöpferischen Aneignung des Beethovenschen Werkes vertraut zu machen'(ibid.). These 'problems' are not elaborated on in the report as such but are dealt with in the keynote closing speech, described below. The foregrounding of the term *Aneignung* up front as a common objective for all the *Musikpropagandisten*, that is, the bicentenary's artistic stakeholders, clearly shows it to be a significant policy in relation to cultural heritage in general and the Beethoven bicentenary in particular. The second goal of the conference sets out to clarify all of the musical community's roles and responsibilities as stakeholder in the commemoration: 'sie [die Musikpropagandisten] auf ihre wesentlichen Aufgaben zu orientieren und so die Beethoven-Ehrung 1970 zu einem wirksamen Höhepunkt im geistig-kulturellen Leben ihrer

Wirkungsbereiche zu gestalten.’ (ibid.). The words ‘orientieren’ and ‘wirksam’ suggest a concern for operational efficiency. The final goal of the conference states a general educational objective – aimed at workers and young people: ‘Die Schrittmacher der Produktion und darüber hinaus breite Schichten der Werktätigen und der Jugend für klassische Musik zu gewinnen’ (ibid.). Seen together, this goal creates an image of GDR citizens as culturally enthusiastic workers engaging with socialist passion in their particular musical heritage, thus enhancing their sense of national identity. Later sections of this chapter will assess whether and to what extent this goal was achieved.

However, even at this early aims-setting stage of the commemoration there is evidence that issues surfaced which, on the face of it, threatened the consistency of the ideological framework – and ultimately the desired promotion of national identity. Professor Harry Goldschmidt, a leading musicological architect of the bicentenary, gave a speech on his concept for the bicentenary. In the closing section of the conference report, under the title of ‘Kritisches’, Goldschmidt is admonished for deviating from a previously agreed ideological approach:

Leider hat sich Professor Goldschmidt nicht an die in der Beratung der zentralen Kommission vom 5.9.1969 diskutierte Konzeption gehalten. Deshalb wurde zu Beginn des zweiten Konferenztages durch die Versammlungsleitung noch einmal betont, daß seine vorgetragenen Untergliederungen von Schiller-Texten zu Beethovenschen Instrumentalwerken seine persönliche Auffassung darstellen (ibid.).

But in what may be seen as a conciliatory move with regards to Goldschmidt’s role, the report’s author, Helmut Neujahr, a DKB official, immediately acknowledges Goldschmidt as having followed the official line on the impact of Beethoven’s revolutionary credentials: ‘Trotz dieser kritischen Bemerkungen hat Professor Goldschmidt in seinem Vortrag Beethovens Rezeption der französischen Revolution und die progressiven Bildungselemente, die seine ideologische Haltung begründeten, das politische und künstlerisch-ästhetische Engagement Beethovens plastisch herausgearbeitet’ (ibid.).

The final speech of the planning conference was to provide a significant ‘Leitlinie für die praktische Arbeit’ of the commemorations that followed. As such it provides us with a useful, well-articulated synopsis of the official ideological aims of the commemorations. Prof. Paul Michel, Leiter der Hochschule für Musik in Weimar, and a prominent GDR musicologist, gave the closing keynote speech at this conference. In his lengthy (twelve-page) address, he

sets out several ‘Leitlinien für die Arbeit des Freundeskreises Musik im Deutschen Kulturbund anlässlich der 200. Wiederkehr des Geburtstages Ludwig van Beethovens’.<sup>88</sup> Although nominally phrased as guidelines for the musical community within the DKB, the speech provides a useful summary of the themes and phraseology which appeared in subsequent bicentenary events and GDR media coverage. Michel determines that the overall goal of the *Beethoven-Ehrung* is to maximise publicity for a revised, Marxist interpretation of Beethoven: ‘Ziel aller Bemühungen muss es sein, das neue Marxistische Beethoven-Bild zum festen Besitz möglichst vieler Menschen werden zu lassen.’ (ibid., p.1). Although the concurrent West German approach to Beethoven is mentioned at this point, by implication this new ‘Beethoven-Bild’ is integral to the GDR’s distinct ideological framework. As such, the underlying effect of the new ‘Bild’, that is, Marxist interpretation of Beethoven, may be expected at least to support and even promote a GDR-specific national identity.

Michel then sets out links between Beethoven and certain cultural movements, events, and individuals – all likely to be received as quintessentially important by his audience: citing the ‘Grundideen des dialektischen und historischen Materialismus’ as context, he positions Beethoven as a role model for an artist committed to the progress of society: ‘[...] es kommt vor allem darauf an, Beethoven in Realitäten gemäß als einen für den gesellschaftlichen Fortschritt und den Humanismus engagierten Künstler zu kennzeichnen.’ However, instead of providing historical examples of such progress, Michel uses hyperbole to place Beethoven onto a quasi-mythical pedestal: ‘Seine Kunst hat Leitbilder geschaffen, die den um einen neuen realen Humanismus liegenden Menschen zu ihrer geistigen Prägung verhelfen. Sie kulminiert in dem prometheischen Leitbild einer schöpferischen, von Ausbeutung und unterdrückungsfreien Gesellschaft verantwortlicher Persönlichkeiten. (ibid., pp.1-2).’ Michel goes on to connect Beethoven to arguably the most iconic – for GDR ideologues – historical event and historical personality:

Es gilt [...], die Bezugslinien zwischen den großen gesellschaftlichen Ereignissen der französischen Revolution und Beethovens Schaffen heraus zu arbeiten [...]. Im Besonderen soll aufgezeigt werden, wie Beethoven mit seinen progressiven Auffassungen über die Rolle des schöpferischen Menschen in der Gesellschaft die Schwelle zu den Lehren von Karl Marx erreichte [...] Beethoven begriff sein gesamtes musikalisches Schaffen als revolutionäre, praktisch-kritische Tätigkeit. (ibid., p.3).

Once again Michel proposes these links in general terms without specific references or examples. Instead he pays political homage to the coincidentally parallel 1970 centenary of Lenin's birthday. With reference to how it is embedded in the overall cultural policy of the GDR, Michel explicitly legitimises the GDR's claim to Beethoven as a continuation of Lenin's approach to proletarian culture:

Es wird so einer der Grundsätze unserer sozialistischen Kulturpolitik immer wieder über das Werk Beethovens transformiert, daß wir die großen Menschheitswerte der Kunst und Wissenschaft der Vergangenheit hochhalten und sie allen Menschen erschließen. Hier verwirklicht sich das verpflichtende Wort Lenins aus dem bekannten Resolutionsentwurf zur proletarischen Kultur (1920). [...] Die historische und die moralische Legitimation, den Genius Beethoven sein eigen zu nennen, ist in unserer Republik mit ihrer sozialistischen Gesellschaftsordnung gegeben [...]. (ibid., p.4).

Michel's subsequent attack combines the positive appropriation of Beethoven as part of socialist national heritage with a negative demarcation of Beethoven as 'not West German' and, by implication, therefore being 'of the GDR':

Die das Werk Beethovens als kostbaren Schatz integrierende sozialistische Nationalkultur ist eben der Kulturdemontage in der Bundesrepublik um eine ganze historische Epoche voraus. Nirgendwo anders sind daher auf deutschem Boden die gesellschaftlichen Voraussetzungen gegeben, als geistige Heimat Beethovens zu gelten als in der DDR, dem antiimperialistischen deutschen Friedenstaat, der den Sozialismus vollendet. (ibid. p.5).

As in other sections of the speech, the reference to a historic era is not substantiated. Instead Michel points bluntly to the 'Bonner Staat der Monopolisten, Tummelplatz des Neonazismus' and its 'Streben nach Atomwaffen' as diametrically opposed to the lofty ideals of 'Alle Menschen werden Brüder' in Beethoven's ninth symphony setting of Schiller's 'Ode an die Freude'.<sup>89</sup> All of the above elements culminate in a notable phrase that confirms a significant message to Michel's audience and to the readers of his speech: a discernable tie between an active awareness of Beethoven's cultural value and a GDR sense of national identity: 'Nur durch ein solches Bewusstsein der kulturellen Werte in der Musik Beethovens wird der Stolz auf unsere kulturellen Traditionen und damit zugleich auch der Stolz auf unsere Republik geweckt.'

In summary, Michel crystallises a new Marxist approach to Beethoven as the single most important objective of the bicentenary. Positioning Beethoven as a revolutionary, Michel then neatly links Marx as Beethoven's natural successor, in order to legitimise the appropriation of Beethoven in a twentieth century, socialist Germany, whose cultural policy is inspired by Lenin. The ideological conclusion of this progression is that the desired national identity can only be achieved by reinforcing the cultural demarcation to West Germany.

There is no documented evidence that this speech was to become a widespread, prescriptive reference document in the GDR on the official approach to Beethoven as a historical personality. However, the President of the DKB, Prof. Burghardt, confirmed at the October 1970 meeting of the Beethoven Committee that it had been published by the DKB in 12,000 copies and distributed as 'Leitlinie für die praktische Arbeit' – presumably mostly within the DKB.<sup>90</sup> Its circumstantial value as an encapsulation of the official, party line on Beethoven can therefore best be determined by investigating in the following sections of this chapter how the aims in the official concept were implemented, their reception and their longer-term outcome.

#### **4.2.4. Bicentenary aims: the appearance of public consensus from all stakeholders**

The initial planning phase of the bicentenary was concluded in March 1970 with the formal constituting (*Konstituierung*) of the Beethoven Committee. The fifty members included representatives of all the cultural and political constituencies mentioned earlier, who subsequently met from time to time throughout 1970 to review progress. The speeches at the inaugural establishment meeting were published in a single booklet and reproduced widely in the national press.<sup>91</sup> The six speakers were selected to represent most of the prominent stakeholders in the bicentenary. They included a lengthy introduction by the head of the GDR's government, Willi Stoph. His appointment as chairman of the Beethoven Committee may be seen, as with the choice of the Committee's title, to project the particular importance of the bicentenary. The title differs from that of the preceding, comparable Schiller Committee der DDR by including the term *Ehrung*, inferring, as discussed earlier, a reverential attitude to this bicentenary (*ibid.*, pp.5-12).

Stoph's keynote opening speech contains all of the themes previously articulated by Michel. Several additional points are noteworthy: at the outset, he expresses a wish that '[...] vom Beethoven-Komitee der DDR durch Ihrer aller Mitarbeit neue starke Impulse für das aufblühen unseres sozialistischen Musiklebens ausgehen werden' (*ibid.*). It is unclear whether

Musikleben may be interpreted here as a reference to the participatory aspects of music noted above as an important German tradition. Appearing implicitly to acknowledge the prevailing political hierarchy, Stoph then quotes General Secretary of the SED and GDR leader, Walter Ulbricht's speech at the annual New Year's concert of Beethoven's ninth symphony: '[...] alle Menschen können Brüder werden, weil das werktätige Volk sich von den Ketten imperialistischer Ausbeuter und Unterdrücker befreite und die Gestaltung seines Schicksals in die eigenen Hände nahm' (ibid.). Stoph characterises Ulbricht's words as the '[...] eigentliche Anliegen der Beethoven-Ehrung unserer Republik'. Repeating Michel's reference at the Potsdam planning conference, this phrasing alludes to the seventh line of the first verse of Schiller's 'Ode an die Freude' ('Alle Menschen werden Brüder'), used by Beethoven in the final movement of his ninth symphony. Stoph creates a layer of political legitimacy by combining the allusion with the construction of the GDR having been founded as a liberation by the working class.<sup>92</sup>

He then goes on to add a new dimension to the Beethoven bicentenary by associating it with two other anniversaries in 1970. The previous reference to a 'legitimizing anti-fascism' (Brinks, 1997, p.208) is repeated with: '[...] die Zerschlagung des Hitler Faschismus vor 25 Jahren durch die ruhmreiche Sowjetarmee schuf die Voraussetzungen für eine gesellschaftliche Entwicklung, in der sich Kunst und Kultur bei uns zu hoher sozialistischer Blüte entfalten konnten'.<sup>93</sup> Replicating Michel's references to Lenin, Stoph expands on the Soviet perspective by again drawing attention to the concurrent centenary of Lenin's birth. He notes a musical connection between Lenin and Beethoven: '[...] wir wissen um seine große Liebe zur Musik, um seine tiefen Beziehungen zu Beethoven, besonders zur "Sonate Pathétique" und zur "Appassionata"' (ibid., pp.13-17). More importantly, according to Stoph, and again continuing Michel's theme, Lenin is cited to also legitimise the appropriation of cultural heritage:

Es war Lenin, der sagte, daß sich jeder Kommunist, dass sich die gesamte Arbeiterklasse und ihre Verbündeten alle Schätze der Weltkultur aneignen müssen. [...] Als solches zentrales Problem stellen und lösen wir in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik die Frage der schöpferischen Aneignung des künstlerischen Erbes und seine Einbeziehung in die sozialistische Nationalkultur.' (ibid.).

In closing, the issue of which German state has a valid claim on Beethoven enables Stoph to revert to the persistent demarcation discourse:

In der Westdeutschen Bundesrepublik wird eine im Prinzip volksfeindliche Kultur- und Kunstpolitik betrieben. Unter den dort herrschenden Verhältnissen führt der Versuch, Beethoven als Aushängeschild für diese Politik zu benutzen, zu keiner Legitimation, das Erbe des großen Komponisten anzutreten. Hier zeigt sich die durch nichts zu überdeckende tiefe Divergenz zwischen unserer geistig-kulturellen Entwicklung und derjenigen in der Bundesrepublik.' (ibid.).

A defensive message of legitimacy appears therefore to be the overriding argument in Stoph's speech, possibly reflecting the anticipated publicity of the inauguration of the Beethoven Committee, both domestically and internationally.

Immediately following Stoph, Werner Rackwitz, Deputy Minister at the MfK gave an overview of all the planned major cultural events listed in the next, implementation section of this chapter, as well as the large-scale recording project of the complete works of Beethoven. Three features of Rackwitz's contribution stand out (ibid., pp.13-14). Firstly, he points to an innovative recording project of all Beethoven's works, as an opportunity to engage young people in the objectives of the bicentenary. Since the report on the planning conference reviewed above, this is a relatively rare public reference to youth in the context of the commemoration events: 'Zugleich werden durch diese Gesamtausgabe – insbesondere, wenn die Beschäftigung mit der Schallplatte und regelmäßige Konzertbesuch einander ergänzen – Voraussetzungen geschaffen, daß sich die Jugend Beethoven erobert und [...] sein revolutionärer Geist sie zur Größe im Denken und Handeln beflügelt.'<sup>94</sup> Secondly, much space is given over in his speech to explaining the logistical challenges of maximising live and recorded performances of Beethoven. However, there is no mention of using the bicentenary to extend the musical participation of the masses from listening to 'Musizieren', active making of music. This omission is in line with it not being mentioned as a goal in any preceding bicentenary concept or major speech. As we noted in the Kollwitz case study, promoting such participation as a 'Forderung nach einer Volksnähe von Kunst' was, however, a key component of Socialist Realism (Jungmann, 2011, p.84). The DKB and its ZKM, through its umbrella structure for amateur musicians, would have been the appropriate bicentenary sponsor to be publicly allocated this task. Its exclusion is difficult to interpret, and so this concentration on passive listening reveals already a gap between the ideal of a national identity based on the engagement of the masses and the reality of elite-driven events.

Finally, in a noticeably brief, two-sentence paragraph, the DKB itself receives only the cursory mention of the Potsdam planning conference as having made a ‘wertvoller Beitrag [...] um Musikpropagandisten im Deutschen Kulturbund [...] mit neuen Fragen der schöpferischen Aneignung des Werkes von Beethoven vertraut zu machen’.<sup>95</sup> Given its role as the initiator and major sponsor of the planning process, this apparent understatement is amplified by the absence of any high-ranking ZKB representative as one of the six speakers at this central bicentenary planning event. Instead, two of the four much shorter speeches were made by less senior musicologists associated with the ZKB: Professor Dieter Zechlin, discussing the importance of Beethoven for professional musicians and the musicologist, Professor Alfred Brockhaus, on the plans for the Academic Beethoven conference. A potential explanation for this seemingly undervalued treatment being caused by tensions between the DKB and the MfK will be explored in the internal post-bicentenary evaluations discussed later in this chapter. The remaining short addresses were given by Professor Horst Kunze, Generaldirektor of the Deutsche Staatsbibliothek, on the publication of Beethoven’s *Konversationshefte*, and Erwin Ernst, Direktor des VEB Kombinat Pumpen und Verdichter, Halle. His short contribution, entitled ‘Die Ehrung Beethovens – ein Anliegen der Arbeiterklasse’ came third in the running order of the event after the Stoph and Rackwitz speeches (*ibid.*, p.18). The placement may be viewed as demonstrating the political priority of the *Bitterfelder Weg* and its goal of bringing industrial organisations and its workers closer to the artistic community. This aspiration is summarised in Ernst’s closing words: ‘So gedenken wir unsere kulturpolitische Aufgabe im Sinne Lenins auch in Zukunft zu erfüllen, wonach die Kunst dem Volke gehört und ihre Wurzeln in den arbeitenden, schaffenden Massen haben soll.’ (*ibid.*, p.20).

#### 4.2.5 Internal tensions emerge between party and government

Compared to the 1959 Schiller bicentenary, the process described here so far suggests not only more timely preparation but also consistent links to the ideological framework set out by Michel six months earlier at the Potsdam planning conference. Superficially, Stoph's speech at the Beethoven Committee inauguration in March 1970 indicates continuity with Michel's address. It is important, however, to review the intervening period between the planning conference and the Beethoven Committee inauguration. Official archives reveal recurrent tensions between the stakeholders involved in the commemoration which were also recorded in subsequent official assessments. Both practical as well as ideological issues appeared over the entire period. Together they indicate that any explicit or implicit intention of the authorities to exploit the bicentenary in order to promote a national identity based on the principles of demarcation from the West and appropriation of classical heritage, may, to some extent, have been undermined as a result of these tensions.

Investigating the interaction between various political officials involved in the bicentenary raises the question as to how ideological objectives were articulated, and whether they were consistent, both in content and tone. Following the principal Politbüro resolution of 9 December 1969,<sup>96</sup> MfK Minister Klaus Gysi's final submission in February 1970 to the *Ministerrat der DDR* confirmed the formal establishment of the Beethoven Committee. It also approved a budget of 800,000 Marks for official bicentenary events, and the final concept for the design of the Beethoven commemoration events in December 1970.<sup>97</sup>

The content and language of Gysi's final submission in early 1970 on behalf of the MfK, reveals ideological inconsistencies when compared to his earlier correspondence with the ZK, Abteilung Kultur. Gysi had originally submitted an initial draft version of the 'Konzeption für die Beethoven-Ehrung der DDR 1970 für den Ministerrat' in March 1969 to the ZK.<sup>98</sup> Arno Hochmuth, Abteilungsleiter at the ZK had replied with a four-page statement, allowing ample time for Gysi and the Ministry to consider and implement any additions or corrections proposed.<sup>99</sup> The importance of the correspondence is reflected in the relative seniority of Hochmuth as *Leiter der Abteilung Kultur*, directly under Kurt Hager (the *Politbüro* member responsible for culture) in the SED hierarchy. As member of both the *Westkommission* and of the *Kulturkommission des Politbüros des ZK der SED*, Gysi was himself a senior SED official. But at the same time acting as government minister, Gysi was functionally outranked by Hochmuth: 'die Sekretäre und Abteilungsleiter des ZK waren gegenüber den staatlichen

Ministern weisungsbefugt'.<sup>100</sup> This reality reflects the explicit leadership role of the SED, enshrined in Article 1 of the 1968 GDR Constitution.

The opening paragraphs in Hochmuth's statement are positive: The concept is noted as providing a 'richtige Grundlage' for the 'Beethoven-Ehrung'. Yet, at the same time, this is qualified by 'im Prinzip', leaving the door open for more critical comments. The word 'richtig' is repeated twice in the acknowledgement of how the Beethoven-Lenin connection is handled in the concept, as well as, more vaguely, in 'wichtige Aufgaben' for the Ehrung itself. Double repetition of 'Überarbeitung und Vertiefung' towards the end of the opening paragraphs may at first suggest that what follows are drafting comments. The subsequent seven points, however, describe what Hochmuth regards as substantive omissions or faulty phrasings rather than wording that requires fine-tuning.

The first two items criticise the absence of any reference to progress in the 'entwickelte sozialistische Gesellschaft' since the previous Beethoven-Ehrung of 1952. In emphasising his wish for '...das Neue', of a new approach to Beethoven in 1970, to be visibly recognised, Hochmuth wants the concept to crystallise how GDR society has moved forward in terms of the prominence of the 'Arbeiterklasse'. The 'Verwirklichung des Bitterfelder Weges' is therefore specifically noted here as evidence of this raised profile, as is the need to record the 'Pflege' and 'Aneignung' of Beethoven as major contributions towards the 'Aufstieg der Arbeiterklasse zur siegreichen Klasse in der DDR'.

Looking forward, the item goes on to imply that the concept focuses more on theory than practice: 'In stärkerem Maße [...] sollten jedoch praktische Maßnahmen festgelegt werden', in order to facilitate the dissemination of the cultural events in the workplace. The existing composition of the Beethoven Committee is criticised for being too 'kulturexklusiv', thus calling for an expansion of 'werktätiger Schichten'. Hochmuth identifies an overall weakness in the concept's treatment of the working class, he recommends therefore that the concept first be restructured by substituting a purely historical construct with the 'Verhältnis der Arbeiterklasse zu Beethoven' as a basic premise and then introducing historic references as appropriate. The third item focuses on the planned 'Beethoven-Kongress' and all related 'wissenschaftliche Vorbereitungsarbeit'. The statement that 'die Vertiefung des sozialistischen Beethovenbildes muß also einen aktuellen Bezug haben' not only points to a supposedly missing contemporisation, but conspicuously insists on its inclusion in the concept. A further item calls for the removal of unclear 'Verschwommenheit' in certain

phrasings and terminology and (instead) advises consistent usage of ‘klare Begriffe des Marxismus-Leninismus und Parteibeschlüsse’. With almost a page of examples, this item reads as an implicit reprimand. Hochmuth alludes to ‘Parteibeschlüsse’ in his demand for specific terminology, such as ‘Ausbeutung’ and ‘Unterdrückung’ in preference to ‘eine Gesellschaft ohne Unterschied von Rang und Farbe’.<sup>101</sup> The response closes with two further action points: an external, public proclamation to be made by the Beethoven Committee, and an internal, final confirmation of the concept by the *Politbüro*. The latter may well have been interpreted by Gysi as a reminder of the ultimate political authority in the process.

In summary, this document demonstrates the role of Hochmuth and the ZK as the institutional guardian of SED ideology in influencing the implementation of cultural policy by the MfK at the time. Hochmuth’s key objective in this letter is to highlight the supposedly prominent role gained by the GDR’s working-class since the state’s inception in 1949 as a major feature of GDR national identity. From Hochmuth’s perspective as SED spokesperson, the Beethoven-Ehrung should therefore serve to solidify this identity (for example, by direct participation of the working classes in events). His critique also illustrates the emerging gap between theory and practice, that is the tension referred to earlier between an idealised ‘Volksnähe’ and a commemoration looking more likely to be dominated by the cultural and political elite of the GDR.

Hochmuth’s covering letter sets out an expectation that the points in his response ‘[...] sollten bei der Überarbeitung [...] Berücksichtigung finden’. This could be understood as implicitly prescriptive, according to a description of the euphemism code employed between the ZK and Ministry at the time (Bradley, 2010, pp.14-16). Hochmuth’s response may therefore have been understood by Gysi, notwithstanding his own senior SED role, as a list of follow-up points to be acted on, rather than as an advisory opinion. But neither of the references called for by Hochmuth to the ‘Siegreiche Arbeiterklasse’ and to the ongoing Lenin centenary appear in Gysi’s final submission to the *Ministerrat* of 10 February 1970. The final composition of the Beethoven Committee reveals a further deviation from Hochmuth’s letter. Hochmuth had set out very specific instructions: ‘Weiterhin sollte die Zusammensetzung des Beethoven-Komitees für die Beethoven-Ehrung der DDR erweitert werden. Es sollten hervorragende Vertreter der Arbeiterklasse, der Genossenschaftsbauern und anderer werktätiger Schichten in das Beethoven Komitee aufgenommen werden. Gegenwärtig ist das Beethoven-Komitee gewissermaßen zu kulturexklusiv zusammengesetzt’. But the subsequent list of fifty committee members reveals only three whose title seem to match Hochmuth’s

criteria: Herbert Braunroth, Brigadier der Komplexbrigade, “Ottmar Gerster”, VEB Weimar-Kombinat, Weimar; Ursula Drenger, Landwirtschaftliche Produktionsgenossenschaft “Lenin”, Marzahn; and Friedrich Ries, BGL- Vorsitzender des VEB Kombinat Tiefbau, Berlin.<sup>102</sup>

One might argue that all these departures from Hochmuth’s letter could be related to accidental slippage over the twelve months it took to complete the planning phase; more plausibly these substantive deviations indicate that some members of the political hierarchy retained a certain amount of leeway and agency in their reaction to instructions from nominally more senior SED authority. Already in the planning phase it is worth recording therefore that unanimity between the stakeholders on the aims and priorities of the Beethoven bicentenary was not as robust as projected in public. If these flaws were to continue into the implementation phase they could undermine official efforts to see the commemorations contributing towards the formation of national identity.

### **4.3 IMPLEMENTATION**

In the following I examine how the aims and plans for the Beethoven bicentenary commemorations were executed by the main stakeholders. The analytical focus is specifically on the most relevant sections of the DKB’s intellectual community, namely composers, conductors and musicologists. All of these provide examples of agency potentially detrimental to the aims of the commemorations. Much of the evidence reviewed here for the first time originates from internal, post-commemorations DKB reports; these documents reveal various difficulties arising during the implementation across the country. The challenges of communicating a Marxist interpretation of Beethoven’s personality and work to a wider public audience are particularly relevant to the research question. Finally, a variance in tone and approach will also be discussed as to how the GDR press and broadcast media communicated the aims of the commemorations.

#### **4.3.1. Summary of activities: adhering to a tried and tested format?**

As in the other case-studies in this thesis, the broad structure of the Beethoven bicentenary commemorations can be split into two, partly overlapping phases. The main events, generating the most publicity and senior political attendance, centred around the birthday anniversary on 16 December. These were a Beethoven exhibition in Berlin, from 3-31 December; a week of special concerts throughout the GDR ('Festwoche'), from 10-18 December; an international academic conference, from 10-12 December; and an official *Festakt* on 16 December. Throughout 1970 these events were complemented by a comprehensive, nationwide programme of live concerts and TV/radio broadcasts, lectures, exhibitions and publications. In the following I will evaluate how those commemoration stakeholders charged with implementing the aims actually executed their tasks. The objective here is to gauge whether any likely effect on the formation of national identity can be attributed to issues surfacing in this implementation and its identifiable reception.

#### **4.3.2. The DKB's role in the bicentenary: not consistently committed and engaged?**

In early 1971 the ZKM des DKB undertook a similar post-bicentenary internal evaluation to that of the MfK. Their report provides valuable insights into how this key mass organisation, charged with operating a major cultural project across the GDR, responded to the initiative. A questionnaire was sent to music work groups ('Arbeitsgruppen') within twelve regional DKB centres across the GDR.<sup>103</sup> The responses were then collated into a single report<sup>104</sup> which is analysed here from two perspectives. Firstly, the design of the questionnaire, and quality and timing of responses, in other words the evaluation process as such, gives an insight into the internal power structure within this mass organisation of some 200,000 members (at that time). Understanding the reality of the power structure is important in the context of the research question; it can be argued that the smoother and more efficient the 'command and control' nature of this structure, the more likely that the official aims of the commemoration can be achieved. Secondly, the response data provides some indications of grass root reception within an admittedly small sample of the population, but one that was nevertheless specifically targeted. This evidence is useful as an illustration of the success or failure of efforts to appropriate Beethoven.

The questionnaire is phrased as a recommendation to all twelve regions of the DKB 'nach einheitlichen Gesichtspunkten eine differenzierte Einschätzung unserer Arbeit im Beethoven-Jahr zu geben'. Taken literally, this 'recommendation' could have been received as a non-

mandatory request, rather than an implied, top-down instruction. The questionnaire also asks specifically for qualitative input about contributions from and cooperation within the DKB regional structure, that is ‘Ortsgruppen,’ ‘Klubs’ and the ‘Freundeskreise’. Four main questions are covered: communication of the Marxist approach to Beethoven; the number of events and participants, elaborating on worker and youth attendance plus a one to five scale success evaluation of event quality and activity level; the contribution of the DKB to performance of lesser-known works of Beethoven; and finally, conclusions for future musical activity in the region. The questions relating to ideology head the list:

In welchem Maße gelang es, in unseren Veranstaltungen das Marxistische Beethoven-Bild, – vor allem unter dem Gesichtspunkt der zur Gegenwart führenden Traditionslinien – zu vermitteln und erlebbar zu machen? In welchem Maße wurde zur Lösung dieser Aufgabe das schöpferische Gespräch zielstrebig genutzt? [emphasis in original]

This question appears to be the most important for the authors, Prof. Karl Laux, Vorsitzender der ZKM and Gerd Haines, Bundessekretär des DKBs; ‘Marxistisches Beethoven-Bild’ are the only words underlined throughout the three-page recommendation, demonstrating the overriding importance of creating a very distinct, politically-inspired image of Beethoven.

The content and date of the subsequent report reveal that some ZKM regions were either slow or very late in their responses. The report begins with a remarkable self-criticism of the ZKM itself; ‘Die Teilnahme von Mitgliedern der ZKM an den Arbeitsgruppen-Beratungen war noch nicht zufriedenstellend.’<sup>105</sup> The collated report notes that 855 events took place in the twelve regions, with an average of eighty-five participants per event. Many events were concerts, others were combined with or consisted only of lectures and/or discussions. The absence of a standard event format reveals that there was considerable organisational autonomy at local DKB level. The regions were asked to grade their assessments using a 1 to 5 range, with frequent feedback of 4, ‘unbefriedigend’ on the ideological aspects. The report summarises that the *Bezirke* struggled to deliver the required ideological aspects of the bicentenary, yet acknowledge the contributions, where received, of musicologists. Linking the success or failure of communicating a Marxist Beethoven to the presence of a musicologist suggests that the *Bezirke* did not understand the original objective:

Die ideologischen und inhaltlichen Fragen wurden mangelhaft und sehr allgemein beantwortet. Am schwersten fiel allen Bezirken die Beantwortung der Frage, in

welchem Maße es gelang, das marxistische Beethoven-Bild zu vermitteln und erlebbar zu machen. Neben einigen zu leicht gefällig genommenen Einschätzungen, die feststellten, daß es gelungen sei, wird bewertet, dass es am besten dort gelang, wo Musikwissenschaftler tätig waren. Auf alle Fälle hat es überall große Bemühungen gegeben, ein marxistisches Beethoven-Bild zu vermitteln.<sup>106</sup>

Three selected returns illustrate the range of variances between regions: Berlin records 1500 participants in twenty events (with an average of seventy-five participants per event) two-thirds of which are categorised as youth. The overall evaluation of event quality is three ('befriedigend'). The three-page response mentions that one-third of events had no lecture or discussion, attributed to an absence of expert support from higher levels in the DKB structure. The Dresden report (one and a half pages) cites forty-two events and 3,200 participants (with an average of eighty). The 'Marxistische Beethoven-Bild' question is left unanswered, and there is no information on youth and worker participation. Finally, and in contrast, a five-page Magdeburg return provides detailed answers to all questions. With 3,600 participants at fifty-five events in total (an average of sixty-five per event), reception was considerably higher in urban than in rural areas. Without providing any quantitative data the youth percentage is described as one ('sehr gut'), and that of workers as two ('gut').

As a final item, the report refers to the designated lead role and self-perceived importance of the DKB's 'Kunstpropagandistische Arbeit' in actively promoting culture at grass root level:

Über neue Partnerschaftsbeziehungen gibt es erfreuliche Berichte.

- Zu Freundeskreise Literatur,
- Zu Betrieben (Neubrandenburg, Karl-Marx-Stadt, Rostock),
- Zu Facheinrichtungen (fast in allen Bezirken),
- Zum Staatsapparat. Auch im Beethoven-Jahr hat sich gezeigt, daß der Kulturbund oft der Initiator gewesen ist: wir müssen es weiter bleiben; aber das wird uns nur gelingen, wenn wir ein attraktiver und zuverlässiger Partner sind.<sup>107</sup>

Although there is no specific reference here to the commemoration events, strengthening cultural ties to various sections of GDR society during the anniversary year inserts a positive, if indirect, contribution to the overall aims of the Beethoven centenary. All the activities listed here may well have been received by the reader of the report as reinforcing the ZKM's

role in helping to promote an aspect of national identity linked to a distinct socio-cultural approach to music.

The patchy execution of the bicentenary events within the DKB can be interpreted as a sign of some weakness within the overall operational organisation of the bicentenary in the GDR. If one reads a degree of voluntary cooperation into how those addressed responded to the questionnaire, then this aspect of mass organised GDR culture demonstrates the reality of a consensus based rather than a rigid, top-down, imposed system. Mary Fulbrook argues that ‘the system of mass organisations in the shaping and experience of East German lives cannot be overestimated’. At the same time, she concedes that ‘the nature of this influence is harder to define clearly’. The sample evidence, researched here, of the bicentenary’s reception within the DKB supports her description of mass organisations as a ‘not necessarily heavily politicised activity’, ‘part of normal leisure’, and ‘bringing culture to the masses’ (Fulbrook, 2005, pp.74-86). In the narrower terms of the research question and the bicentenary focus, the evidence shows that the mass organisations on the ground did not always understand what the senior functionaries meant by a Marxist Beethoven. This outcome points to an interim conclusion that the effort to construct identity based on the ideal of mass engagement with cultural heritage was only partially successful. In summary, all this evidence on the DKB as a significant bicentenary stakeholder complements similar findings on the gap between theory and reality described throughout the case studies in this thesis.

#### **4.3.3. *Eigensinn* threatens the national identity objective: the role of intellectuals in the implementation of bicentenary events.**

What does the bicentenary’s implementation tell us about the relationship between the SED party and government on the one hand, and academics, musicians, composers and musicologists, all referred to in the following as ‘intellectuals’? This aspect is relevant to the research question as the Schiller and Kollwitz commemorations each reveal a certain degree of independent thinking and non-compliance with explicit aims that was demonstrably exercised by intellectuals. This evidence in turn may be seen to have affected efforts to construct, in each case, a specific kind of national identity, based on a coherent and consistent approach to the cultural icon being commemorated.

Two months before the main December 1970 events, the Beethoven Committee met to review progress of the year to date and ongoing preparations.<sup>108</sup> Professor Rodenberg, the Committee’s Vice Chairman, representing the *Staatsrat* as senior government official,

summarised all educational and media activities as being on track. However, his introduction also contains a thinly disguised reprimand to the several prominent academics on the Committee: 'Es bedarf weiterer angestrebter Arbeit der Musikwissenschaft in unserer Republik, um alle wissenschaftlichen Potenzen auf diese Aufgabe zu orientieren und neue hohe Maßstäbe zu setzen.'<sup>109</sup>

Subsequent MfK and DKB documents offer further evidence of an apparent weakness in the presumed chain of authority between party, government and intellectuals. Most of the latter operated within the DKB, and its many affiliated organisations such as the Verband der Komponisten und Musikwissenschaftler der DDR. Gysi's files include an unsigned, that is, anonymous document that provides insights from an initial, post-bicentenary assessment of all events and activities.<sup>110</sup> Several critical comments in this thirty-one page assessment report expose strains in the relationships between the main participants during the course of the bicentenary year. A few prominent conductors are criticised for not conforming fully to the (inferred official) musicological portrayal of Beethoven's works, and for being too subjective in their musical interpretations: 'Die Übereinstimmung zwischen der wissenschaftlich-theoretischen Darstellung des Beethovenschen Schaffens und der Praxis der musikalischen Interpretation war nicht in allen Konzerten gleich überzeugend gegeben' (ibid.). Two conductors are singled out for specific censure:

Am differenziertesten sind die Leistungen unserer Dirigenten zu werten. Die Aufführung der 'Messa Solemnis' durch Rolf Kleinert zeigte deutlich, daß der Dirigent weder im geistig-konzeptionellen noch in der Beherrschung der künstlerisch-handwerklichen Mittel dem Werk gewachsen war und daß er die glänzenden Instrumente, die ihm mit dem Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin und der Solisten-Vereinigung und dem großen Rundfunkchor gegeben waren, nicht zu handhaben verstand. Auch die Aufführung der dritten Symphonie, der Eroica durch Herbert Kegel konnte nicht überzeugen. In der eigenwilligen Auffassung wurden Bedeutung und Größe gerade dieses Werkes nicht erfasst; ja man muss die Frage aufwerfen, ob die subjektiv zugespitzten Interpretationen, ob die Absicht, unter allen Umständen neu und andersartig zu musizieren, nicht vom Misstrauen gegenüber dem Erbe und seine Wirkung auf den 'Hörer von heute' inspiriert ist. (ibid.).

The negative undertones in these comments are remarkable in their reach, whilst at the same time differentiated. Kleinert's basic conducting competence is questioned. But his allegedly

mismatched selection as conductor of high-calibre musicians may also be seen to point a finger at the concert arrangers. Kegel, the better-known conductor, faces a more serious charge of not conforming to prevailing ideology. The unnamed author of the MfK evaluation not only attacks him for deliberately deviating from an expected musical interpretation. He unambiguously faults Kegel for distancing himself from the doctrine of contemporising cultural heritage. Kegel's Eroica performance also attracted negative comments in the press. These are all the more noticeable sitting alongside positive reviews on the same respective page of other Beethoven concerts conducted by Kurt Masur and Kurt Sanderling at the same Beethoven-Festwoche:

Die in technischer Beziehung an sich vorzüglich ausgefeilte Wiedergabe der 'Eroica' litt unter der zu geringen Differenzierung. Vor allem betrifft diese Einschränkung die Ecksätze. Gewiss, gegen einen straffen interpretatorischen Zuschnitt des Kopfsatzes ist an sich nichts einzuwenden. Doch sollte die Binnenstruktur klar werden weil die Wiedergabe sonst trocken wirkt.<sup>111</sup>

Der Höhepunkt einer Beethoven nahen 'Eroica' blieb leider aus, weil Kegel die vier Sätze zu straff durchexerzierte; das führte [...] zu einer Vergrößerung des Stilbildes, in dem bekanntlich auch Glanz und sinnliche Wärme lebt.<sup>112</sup>

In Roloff-Momin's biography, Sanderling, an internationally respected GDR conductor, notes that concert programmes throughout GDR history were always expected to include a work by a GDR composer, but otherwise the programme's design was left to the conductor or musical director (Roloff-Momin, 2002, p.225) Yet amongst the elite of the musical community, the ability of composers and conductors to resist political influence in implementing all the bicentenary guidelines may have been more limited than Sanderling implies. A high profile concert, conducted by Sanderling during the Beethoven bicentenary, suggests an instance of successful political influence. A revised text by Johannes R. Becher was used for the performance of Beethoven's Choral Fantasy in C Minor No.8 at the main December *Festakt*. This text had been written for an earlier performance at the GDR-hosted World Youth Festival in 1951 but was otherwise not commonly used (Naeser, 2002). A comparison of the last two verses with the original text by Christoph Kuffner (1808) reveals how Becher had replaced religious references with the theme of 'Friede' and the community of mankind (Silverberg, 2009b, p.131). *FF Dabei*, a Deutsche Fernsehfunk publication for the week of the *Festakt* broadcast, underlines the contemporary political dimension, noting, that 'Becher's

text bridges the humanist Beethoven to our times. Today there is one state on German soil in which Beethoven's legacy of "Alle Menschen werden Brüder" is achieved', an allusion already intoned by Ulbricht and Stoph earlier in the year (my translation, cited in Zell, 2012, p.16).

There is further evidence of a gap between concept and practice in how composers and conductors in the GDR responded to the official bicentenary guidelines and ideological objectives. Rainer Bredermayer, a GDR composer, wrote a work for the bicentenary called *Bagatellen für B.* Elaine Kelly describes how in this composition Bredermayer challenged the accepted socialist view of Beethoven by choosing a low key, non-heroic underlying work by Beethoven as basis for his new composition (Kelly 2014, pp.117-127). Evaluated together these examples do not mean that conductors and composers as particularly important stakeholders – in terms of musical influence rather than numbers – were a significant obstacle to a successful implementation of the bicentenary. However, the evidence of artistic latitude corroborates other research data that substantiates an overall gap between ideological objectives and commemorations in reality.

Beyond the narrow musical community of composers and conductors, the subsequent report criticises several other groups of intellectuals. Musicologists and DKB members who organised the Beethoven academic conference are criticised for not encouraging enough discussions after the lectures. In addition, the main Beethoven exhibition in Berlin had taken too long to organise: 'Mängel in der Leitungstätigkeit des Ministeriums für Kultur waren die Ursache für anfängliche konzeptionelle Mehrgleisigkeit und Schwierigkeiten.'<sup>113</sup> Various working groups within the Beethoven Committee are reproached: [...] 'die Arbeitsgruppen arbeiteten mit unterschiedlicher Qualität und Intensität. Große Anstrengungen waren nötig, um den anfänglichen Zeit und Tempoverlust einzuholen (Ausstellung).'<sup>114</sup> Given the alleged execution issues outlined above, a small core of seven SED members within the Beethoven Committee, including two prominent ZK representatives, took on pro-active rather than just monitoring responsibilities: 'Zur parteimäßigen Vorbereitung, zur Diskussion und Entscheidung aller wichtigen konzeptionellen Fragen und der Kontrolle ihrer Durchführung, wurde ein kleiner Leitungskopf aus sieben Genossen gebildet'.<sup>115</sup> This small group of senior ZK members began to regularly monitor and intervene in the process; their task was to deal with academics and DKB members who were seen as being at best negligently, at worst deliberately, out of line with the planned execution of their respective bicentenary roles. Here we can observe a top-down, SED intervention similar to that observed in the Schiller

commemoration. Once again senior authorities identified a gap between theory and practice that created the need to prop up the implementation in order to enforce the integrity of the commemoration aims.

#### **4.3.4 Implementing the bicentenary and self-censorship: did the GDR press and broadcast media communicate differently?**

The official Beethoven bicentenary concept, subsequent documents such as progress reviews of the Beethoven Komitee, and the post-bicentenary MfK and DKB assessments do not explicitly include media objectives within the list of measures for the bicentenary. However, in the light of existing practice at the time, it would most likely have been unnecessary to issue specific directives; public statements in early 1970 by SED leaders, such as Michel's speech at the Potsdam planning conference and Stoph's speech at the first meeting of the Beethoven Committee, would have provided journalists with enough ideological content and tone to understand what they were expected to write and refer to throughout the bicentenary year. But senior officials were not standing idly by. Johanna Rudolph was listed in the Beethoven Committee's membership as 'Wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter' at the MfK. Despite her modest title she is mentioned several times in the 1986 SED publication (Haase 1988, p.300), and lauded as 'Johanna Rudolph, die in den sechziger Jahren als Mitarbeiterin des Ministeriums für Kultur auf die Politik zur Aneignung des kulturellen Erbes einen erheblichen Einfluss ausübte'. Rudolph delivered a detailed and positive report to the October 1970 meeting on how the GDR press had been covering the bicentenary hitherto.<sup>116</sup> The comprehensiveness and authorship of this feedback would suggest that bicentenary press coverage, aligned with official ideological objectives, remained very important to the regime.

In its coverage, *Neues Deutschland* can be seen to demonstrate its position amongst other GDR media as the official voice of the SED, by underlining the superiority of the GDR's ideological framework for the Beethoven bicentenary. Commenting on the Beethoven academic conference in December, Hans-Joachim Kynass, music editor, condemns the West German approach to the Beethoven bicentenary: '[...] die reaktionäre Bourgeoisie dagegen verneint den klassischen Realismus Beethovens und das humanistische Programm seiner Kunst. Sie betreibt die Zerstörung des klassischen Erbes'.<sup>117</sup> These attacks on West Germany were repeated in a polemic article on the bicentenary programming of DFF that appeared in the *National Zeitung*.<sup>118</sup> Hansjürgen Schäffer sets an aggressive tone with the headline 'Beethoven als musikalische Droge, – kapitalistische Bewußtseinsindustrie verzerrt das Bild

des großen Komponisten'. His commentary singles out the West German pop hit adaptation, 'Song of Joy', as an example of decadent 'Verschnulzung of Beethoven'.<sup>119</sup> In contrast, other newspapers appear to concentrate more on the musical interpretation of major bicentenary concerts, without ignoring at least a passing reference to the official ideological framework, such as linking Beethoven to the French Revolution:

Das Eröffnungskonzert der Beethoven-Festwoche bestritt die Berliner Staatskapelle unter Otmar Suitner [...] Die glanzvolle Aufführung der siebten Sinfonie besaß vor allem enorme Spannung, was bereits in der Einleitung des ersten Satzes deutlich spürbar wurde [...] während das Finale kraftvoll und ausgesprochen brillant musiziert wurde. Die scharfen Akzente kamen gut heraus und besonders auch der so charakteristische 'éclat triomphale', jene von der französischen Revolutionsmusik her kommende triumphierende Begeisterung.<sup>120</sup>

While there is an absence of documented guidelines and objectives for the GDR press, major plans for TV, radio and film cultural programming feature in the concept and implementation agendas of the bicentenary.<sup>121</sup> But in terms of polemical content and relative prominence, TV, radio and newsreel film coverage of the bicentenary's cultural events follows different patterns to that of press coverage. Apart from cultural programming itself, the bicentenary events appeared infrequently as news items on GDR Television (*Deutscher Fernsehfunk*, hereafter referred to as 'DFF'), and in cinemas. The relevant series were the main DFF current affairs programme, *Aktuelle Kamera*, and *Der Augenzeuge*, a fifteen-minute newsreel shown in GDR cinemas. The monthly cinema cultural documentary, *DDR-Magazin*, produced primarily for use abroad by the GDR foreign ministry and its embassies, also mentioned the bicentenary. As will be shown in the following, closer viewing of the output from these three programmes reveals it to be noticeably more restrained in the use of ideological rhetoric than much of the reporting and commentary in the GDR newspapers.

The only event in 1970 to be covered specifically on DFF news was the main Beethoven Festakt of 16 December. Willi Stoph hosted a reception in the morning at the Ministerrat which was reported in a 39 second news item.<sup>122</sup> The entire 69-minute official ceremony that day was then broadcast live that evening within an extended *Aktuelle Kamera* news programme.<sup>123</sup> The broadcast had no added commentary. Frequent shots of younger members of the audience may have been received as highlighting the importance of the event for the younger generation. This aspect of the broadcast is in line with the youth legacy objectives

articulated earlier by Werner Rackwitz at the formal inauguration of the Beethoven Committee. In a post-bicentenary review of DFF's Beethoven symphony cycle, Hans-Jürgen Schaefer points out the importance of TV production expertise in extracting the political message of the performances by focussing in on certain members of the audience:

Der Zyklus wurde mit einer Übertragung der Aufführung der neunten Symphonie aus der deutschen Staatsoper am Neujahrstage beendet [...] Programmatisch hatten sich hier Angehörige unserer nationalen Volksarmee, Werktätige verschiedenster Berufe mit Berufskünstlern zusammengefunden, um Beethovens revolutionäre Freudensbotschaft Klang werden zu lassen. Die Fernsehregie und die geschickte Kameraführung machten gerade dieses Charakteristikum der Aufführung deutlich.<sup>124</sup>

*Der Augenzeuge* included the bicentenary in an April 1970 newsreel, and again in December, coinciding with the Beethoven week of ceremony and academic conference. The earlier item contained two minutes of a Beethoven chamber music performance and a very brief, factual mention of the bicentenary.<sup>125</sup> The December edition was illustrated by paintings and drawings of Beethoven with a short comment on the events of that week, stressing – as phrased by the commentator – Beethoven's universal personality and conscience, and his demonstration of the artist's responsibility to society, a valid model for our times (cited in Zell, 2012, p.17). Finally, *DDR-Magazin* confined its attention to a six-minute item in its February 1971 edition, describing factually the highlights of the bicentenary events and recording output, but then defining Beethoven as revolutionary hero, accompanied by visual images of the French Revolution and ending in the spoken portrayal of Beethoven as 'Lebendiger Ausdruck sozialistischer Nationalkultur' (ibid., p.18). This depiction, *Der Augenzeuge*'s positioning of Beethoven as a model for the GDR's times, and the allusion to the French Revolution all conform to the appropriation theme in the ideological framework of the bicentenary, as set out by Michel.

All available evidence of newspaper, TV and newsreel coverage of the bicentenary and its individual events in the GDR media reveals therefore a range of tone and content, although nothing seems to contradict the image painted at the start of the centenary planning, i.e., Beethoven as revolutionary and as precursor to socialism. By 1970, as the GDR economy had stabilised, and the state was on the verge of international recognition, the authorities had realised that too much and too frequent overt propaganda was counterproductive. Michael Meyen sets out the limits of how much propaganda the SED could realistically insert in the

GDR's media output, especially on television: 'Die Strukturen des täglichen Lebens und die daraus resultierenden Erwartungen an die Medien sowie die Alltagserfahrungen haben zugleich verhindert, daß die SED ihre kommunikationspolitischen Ziele erreichen konnte. Das DDR Fernsehen konnte die Zuschauer nur gewinnen, wenn es weitgehend auf publizistische Sendungen verzichtete' (Meyen, 2003, p.10). This 'Dominanz des Wunsches nach Unterhaltung' (ibid., p.11) was reflected in official audience research. In response to the question: 'Welche Sendungsarten sehen die Zuschauer im Abendprogramm zwischen 20:00 Uhr und 21:30 Uhr am liebsten?', only 4,7% in 1965 and 4,0 % in 1971 chose opera, classical ballet and classical music programmes (ibid., p.70). Prime time evening slots were kept free for thrillers, shows and similar popular entertainment so as to avoid alienating TV audiences. So in an apparently autonomous decision, DFF's concerts of all nine Beethoven symphonies, recorded specially for the bicentenary, came to be broadcast on Sunday mornings, well outside peak viewing time, and resulting in poor viewing figures. This objectively weak outcome uncovers a further gap between the ideal that is the TV contribution promised in the bicentenary's plans and the subsequent engagement of the mass TV audience.

The GDR musicologist, Gerhard Müller offers a plausible explanation for this diversity of media coverage (cited in Zell, 2012, p.17). Firstly, there were variations in where reporting and commentary on the bicentenary was positioned. For example, the front pages of all GDR newspapers, but particularly *Neues Deutschland*, were reserved for political journalism, whilst cultural content featured usually on inner pages. The more specialised the publication and its readership – for instance the journal *Musik und Gesellschaft* – the subtler the ideological over- and undertones. Secondly, the two ZK sections, *Abteilung Kultur* and *Abteilung Propaganda & Agitation*, together with their respective *Politbüro* representatives, apparently did not always coordinate their agendas. Müller maintains that the *ZK Abteilung Kultur* continuously promoted Socialist Realism as part of a long-term ideological strategy. In contrast, the *ZK Abteilung Propaganda & Agitation* would use the media opportunistically to communicate whatever might serve to enhance the GDR image domestically and externally. Lastly, and in the context of tone of official rhetoric, Müller suggests that many in the GDR population were 'nicht blöd' at recognising overblown official language, all the more as most citizens were continually exposed to West German broadcast media.

The relatively low public interest in cultural programming may explain the almost complete lack of bicentenary-related DFF news coverage of cultural events taking place across the country. Instead, DFF concentrated on broadcasting specially recorded concerts. However, it

is important to note that news coverage was not the sole outlet for communicating political messages to television audiences; DFF programme schedules reveal that bicentenary transmissions, such as the Beethoven concert recording of 10 December 1970, were preceded by a short introductory round-table discussion with two musicologists, Dr. Eberhard Rebling and Dr. Karl-Heinz Köhler, and the GDR's most famous conductor, Kurt Masur.<sup>126</sup> Tapes or transcripts of these programmes are no longer available. But in his review of this particular television programme in *Neues Deutschland*, Schaefer notes the ideological framing of such broadcasts:

Das Bemühen, Beethovens Musik nicht nur zu spielen, sondern tiefes Verständnis für ihr Wesen, ihre Funktion in Geschichte und Gegenwart zu wecken war daran erkennbar, daß jeder Aufführung ein Rundtischgespräch vorausging, [...] in dem sich [...] [Rebling, Köhler & Masur,][...] über das jeweils klingende Werk, seine Entstehungsgeschichte, seine Aussage unterhielten.<sup>127</sup>

The key phrase here is 'Funktion in Geschichte und Gegenwart'. Whether or not this was intended by the discussants, Schaefer suggests that the broadcast was enhanced by attributing a function and statement to the works performed – evidence of the SED as such, through its main newspaper, contemporising Beethoven to produce a particular understanding, ('Verständnis wecken'), of the composer related to a distinct GDR identity (Zell, 2012).

#### **4.4 OUTCOMES**

Replicating the structure and methodology of the previous two case studies, we need to identify and evaluate the outcomes of the commemorations in order to assess the potential influence of the Beethoven bicentenary commemoration on the construction of national identity in the GDR. Once again, the most fruitful primary sources for this case study are to be found in MfK, SED and DKB files, especially within official reports and related correspondence. Media coverage and a limited amount of audience research data offer further clues to the quality and quantity of popular reception. This section will concentrate on four outcomes, in the ascending order of their potential value to the research question: Firstly, the mobilisation of interest and participation in classical music; secondly, the international reception of the GDR commemorations; thirdly, GDR public reception of domestic TV coverage; and lastly, the Beethoven complete works recording project.

#### 4.4.1. The call for more *Musikpropaganda*: evidence of a missed outcome?

The anonymous MfK assessment of the bicentenary cited in several instances in this chapter ends by spelling out some generalised results and potential legacies: The bicentenary is judged to have created new momentum for spreading culture and mobilising the masses, as shown in the sheer number of bicentenary events and attendances (presumably based on DKB feedback). Progress is also stressed in strengthening the relationship between state and musical community including musicologists, but without specific evidence. Whether, as the report also claimed, the bicentenary increased competition and thus quality amongst musical performers would seem very difficult to verify as a legacy. Looking to the future after 1970, the three conclusions on the final page of the assessment appear to reflect the importance of the bicentenary for the GDR cultural-political system:

- a) auf dem Gebiete der Musikwissenschaft ist die Konzentration der Kräfte zur Durchsetzung und Lösung von Hauptfragen die wesentliche Aufgabe. Dabei geht es um die Festlegung von Projekten und um die Konzentration der Kräfte.
- b) die große emotionale Wirkung des Werkes Ludwig van Beethovens muss gründlicher und genauer untersucht und dem kompositorischen Gegenwartsschaffen in unserer Republik nutzbar gemacht werden.
- c) aus der breiten Wirksamkeit der Beethoven-Ehrung sind Lehren und Erkenntnisse für eine intensivere, wirksamere Musikpropaganda unter der Bevölkerung zu ziehen und zu verwirklichen.<sup>128</sup>

Each of these action points may also be seen to contain implied criticism, aimed particularly at musicologists (in terms of their variable engagement with the commemoration's aims and implementation) and composers, such as Bredermayer and Stockhausen. The call for intensification of *Musikpropaganda* in the last conclusion might be understood as questioning whether the impact of the Beethoven-Ehrung was, in reality, as wide as intended. If so then this outcome would somewhat reduce the presumed effect on national identity in the more general context of musical heritage.

#### 4.4.2. International recognition of the commemorations: another important objective unfulfilled?

The bicentenary concept documented an aim to promote a positive image of the GDR abroad in the context of the continuing discourse of demarcation, and ultimately as a means of promoting national identity:

[...] auch gegenüber dem Ausland darzulegen, daß in der DDR das Erbe Beethovens angetreten wurde und das humanistische Gedankengut seines Werkes gepflegt und in der sozialistischen Nationalkultur aufbewahrt wird. Es ist dabei den Bemühungen der westdeutschen auswärtigen Kulturpolitik entgegenzutreten, die im Sinne der westdeutschen Alleinvertretungsanmaßung das Werk Beethovens für die imperialistische Außenpolitik Westdeutschlands missbrauchen will.<sup>129</sup>

The accusation of ‘pretension’ levelled against West Germany, *Alleinvertretungsanmaßung*, (my underlined emphasis) accentuates the weight of the GDR’s claim to be the sole legitimate heir to German cultural heritage, *Alleinvertretungsanspruch*, a term used repeatedly in this and previous cultural commemorations.

There are only two short paragraphs within the MfK’s thirty-one page post-bicentenary assessment under the heading ‘Auslandsaktivitäten’. Following a bland opening, ‘Alle geplanten Vorhaben zur repräsentativen Interpretation der Musik Beethovens im Ausland wurden erfolgreich verwirklicht’, the report expands on two achievements. Firstly, foreign concert tours by GDR orchestras in several western countries, notably an open-air concert in Paris attended by over 50,000. This is noted as a successful competitive counter-measure to West German international cultural activity; ‘Diese Tatsache ist besonders bedeutungsvoll, weil die Auslandsaktivitäten der BRD vor allem durch ihre Goethe-Institute intensiv waren’.<sup>130</sup> Secondly, the international TV coverage of the major December events by other countries is described rather optimistically: ‘Die Festwoche hat insgesamt ein starkes Echo in unserer Republik und in der Weltöffentlichkeit gefunden.’ In reality it appears that transmissions were only relayed by the Intervision network to socialist bloc countries and not to those Western countries forming the far larger Eurovision network.

One of the measures used to assess the success of the bicentenary, set out as aim in the final MfK conceptualisation document on the Beethoven academic conference described above, was to enable a target of fifty to seventy guests from so-called capitalist countries to attend the Beethoven academic conference in December.<sup>131</sup> The underlying motive was arguably to

bolster national pride at home by promoting a national image linked to an international acknowledgement of a new, 'GDR' Beethoven. There were five UK guests, including the composers Benjamin Britten and Alan Bush, and Sir Thomas Armstrong, Director of the Royal Conservatory. The final list of those who actually attended records only thirteen out of sixty-two invited, none of whom came from major Western countries (Brockhaus, 1971, p.98). A short section in the MfK assessment is devoted to 'Äußerungen ausländischer Gäste zur Beethoven-Ehrung der DDR'.<sup>132</sup> However, it is unclear in the text whether the quotes were recorded at the academic conference, or the *Festakt*, where no details on foreign guests and attendance are to be found in the files. Several general compliments on the success of the events are recorded by a total of five named Austrian and Finnish academics. There is no evidence from which one might infer the existence of a co-ordinated political boycott by western intellectuals of the GDR's bicentenary events. The historian, Christoph Kleßmann's recollection of the bicentenary from the perspective of a West German academic at the time may help to explain the lack of foreign attendance; western academics were either hardly aware of, or just ignored the GDR's Beethoven bicentenary events, even if invited to attend (cited in Zell, 2012, p.21). Kleßmann's explanation is credible in the light of the low level of attention given in western media to the bicentenary in the GDR. The relatively small amount of space devoted to foreign visibility and reception in the post-bicentenary MfK report may thus be seen to reflect its meagre, essentially unsuccessful outcome.

#### **4.4.3. Audience research: a meaningful indicator of the effect of TV reception on national identity**

Quantative and qualitative data in the DFF archives adds a potentially more tangible dimension in this case study to how television coverage of the commemoration was received. The files contain some audience research data relating to the Beethoven bicentenary programming, as well as overall viewer attitudes to cultural broadcasts at the time. Around a thousand viewers over the age of fourteen, selected, according to the files, as a representative sample of GDR households, were asked in December 1970 about their preference for two types of programmes, drama and documentaries. 'Das Leben großer Persönlichkeiten' ranked only eighth in named popularity amongst drama subjects.<sup>133</sup> No comparative figures are presented to reflect whether the Beethoven focus of the bicentenary had increased this topic's popularity behind the top three of crime thrillers, adventure and comedy. Culture is named as second most popular subject for documentaries behind 'the future' and ahead of science and current affairs programmes. Comparative data for July 1970 show no changes in the top four

rankings. A section in this twelve-page report is devoted to viewer reception data on programming for the 1970 Lenin centenary, but there is no mention anywhere of the Beethoven bicentenary (Zell, 2012, pp.20-21).

In addition to this comparative analysis exposing the relatively low profile of cultural programming, there is some audience research data available on the programmes related to the Beethoven bicentenary. This data provides a context on the wider GDR public attitudes to classical music. More specifically, it helps to answer the question on the effectiveness of the regime's efforts to construct national identity around this seemingly prominent component of German culture and heritage. Ratings for the evening transmissions of Beethoven's opera, *'Fidelio'*, on 13 December 1970 and the New Year's Day 1971 transmission of Beethoven's ninth symphony are around twenty per cent. Although these ratings are noted as being below average for prime time programmes compared to popular entertainment (typically between thirty to fifty per cent), they received an above-average grading of 1.9 on a one (excellent) to five (bad) scale. This data is in line with research on viewer interests from the same report, showing that almost fifty per cent of GDR viewers were uninterested in classical music; only thirteen per cent identified themselves as enthusiasts, the remainder as occasionally interested. The New Year's concert 1970/71 was an annual event (featuring Beethoven's ninth symphony as Ulbricht's favourite music), and therefore potentially an exception. It could be a meaningful indicator of bicentenary reception, if it were possible to see changes in ratings compared to previous years; unfortunately, this data is not available. Finally, Sunday morning transmissions of Beethoven symphony concerts on 1 November and 22 December 1970 attracted ratings of only around three per cent, reflecting the non-prime time scheduling explained above. In summary, there is no meaningful data to support a noticeable increase in viewing figures for the bicentenary events compared to customary data for similar cultural programming. One can only conclude therefore that the intended TV propagation of bicentenary events made no perceptible contribution in terms of audience engagement with these efforts towards the appropriation of classical heritage for the construction of a particular form of national identity, and therefore a further gap between theory and practice.<sup>134</sup>

The differing messages and tone of press and broadcast media coverage of the Beethoven bicentenary reviewed here and in the earlier implementation section illustrate the reality of diminished influence by the authorities on the whole GDR media. As such it demonstrates the limited value of self-censorship in supporting the aims of a high-profile project such as a major cultural commemoration. This conclusion does not sit comfortably with a model of the

GDR as a rigid, top-down authoritarian society. In the context of the research question it is ultimately conceivable that this divergence in how the Beethoven commemoration was presented and its events reported to the wider GDR public may have diluted the desired effort to promote a consistent message that could enhance the formation of national identity relating to cultural heritage.

#### **4.4.4. The recording project's likely impact: long-term identity or short-term pride?**

The most tangible outcome of the Beethoven bicentenary commemorations in the GDR, mentioned in the MfK report is the special edition of Beethoven recordings produced in the GDR at the time. Commissioned officially in 1969 as a bicentenary measure,<sup>135</sup> this was the world's first recording project of the entire opus of Beethoven, of which some 80 LP records of 250 works were produced in 1970, with the remainder over the following years. The recordings left an apparent legacy at more than one level. The MfK post-bicentenary assessment mentions total sales of some 700,000 individual LP records (not as a box set) of which six of the most popular symphonies and concertos account for over half.<sup>136</sup> This would have been a respectable sales achievement for classical music at that time. Apart from the positive educational and cultural impact of including many previously unrecorded works, most of the recordings were made by GDR musicians. This may have been due primarily to the ever-present scarcity of foreign currency available to pay non-GDR musicians (Zell, 2012, p.22). But the project is considered even by a contemporary West German musicologist (Tischer, 2011, pp. 474-480) to have been a significant logistical and interpretative achievement at the time.

A seventeen-page booklet on Beethoven, his works and the recording project was published as a 'Kompendium' to accompany the records.<sup>137</sup> The final paragraphs emphasise the core objective of the recording project as a means to an end – that is not so much as an artistic endeavour but as providing mass access to the new, progressive Beethoven image:

Den konsequent marxistisch-leninistischen Grundlagen unserer Kulturpolitik, Ästhetik und Musikwissenschaft verdanken wir es, daß die Schallplattenindustrie der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik nicht zuletzt auf diesem wichtigen Sektor den Welthöchststand mitbestimmt. Zu den Hauptaufgaben nicht nur der historischen Musikwissenschaft, sondern der gesellschaftlichen Aneignung des musikalischen Erbes überhaupt zählt, als Gegenpol zu den Fehldeutungen und Fälschungen aus Geschichte und Gegenwart, der Ausbau und die massenhafte Aneignung eines von Grund auf

progressiven Beethoven-Bildes. Das Beethoven-Jubiläum 1970 beweist mit besonderer Deutlichkeit, welche der beiden deutschen Staaten einzig berufen ist, das legitime Erbe der großen humanistischen Traditionen unserer Nationalkultur anzutreten'.<sup>138</sup>

Three key, connected themes of official GDR Beethoven – and cultural – ideology are thus captured here: appropriation of heritage, setting the GDR apart as the opposite of the West German approach to Beethoven, and the legitimacy of an underlying claim to be the sole representative. It is difficult to reconcile how these political messages can have contributed perceptibly to the cultural experience of listening to a music recording. So it appears unlikely that this artificial political dimension alone would have promoted national identity in the ears and minds of the listeners. Furthermore, as a cultural event, any intended perception of this recording project as an independent GDR achievement does not stand up fully to closer scrutiny. The recordings included several relatively minor works of Beethoven, that would otherwise not have been considered commercially viable for Western record companies. The unprecedented completeness of the edition was therefore arguably attractive only to musicologists. The main difference for GDR consumers to existing recordings of Beethoven works produced in the West would have been availability and price, coupled possibly with a recognition that the project could only have been made possible as a non-capitalist, that is commercially unviable venture. But given the interpretative and technical similarity, even sameness, of existing international recordings, the assertion of a clear demarcation from West Germany may have been received with scepticism by the GDR public buying the records. Moreover, whilst the producer, Peter Czerny, Künstlerischer Direktor, VEB Deutsche Schallplatten - ETERNA, highlighted in a radio broadcast interview that eighty to eighty-five percent of the recordings involved GDR musicians, many record buyers may well have registered that the ten to fifteen percent of foreign involvement in the new recordings included high profile Western conductors and soloists such as Herbert von Karajan and the pianist, Claudio Arrau.<sup>139</sup> Nevertheless, the fact remains that the complete edition was the first of its kind. The nature of the project was easily understandable in the GDR, both as an innovative achievement, as well as an accessible consumer product. As such it is may well have generated a meaningful amount of general national pride, at least amongst the professional musical community.

#### 4.5. CONCLUSION

How does this assessment of the outcomes and legacies relate to other scholarly interpretations in the context of GDR historiography and the construction of national identity?

In the only published scholarship specifically devoted to the Beethoven bicentenary in the GDR, Matthias Tischer's short article identifies national education and the GDR's international image (*Außenwirkung*) as practical outcomes (*Nutzanwendung*) of the commemorations (Tischer, 2008, p.476). The educational impact is evident in the major concert, lecture and media exposure given to Beethoven's music over the year. However, considering the archival evidence discussed in this chapter, it is difficult to agree with Tischer that the commemoration made a meaningful impact on the GDR's international image. Tischer makes an equally unconvincing case of the Beethoven bicentenary as an example (as he sees it), of the efficiency of one-party rule and *Durchorganisation* in almost all sections of GDR society (ibid., p.476). His interpretation conforms to the theory of a pervasively ruled society, in other words a top-down operation with senior GDR officials consistently pulling all the Leninist 'transmission levers' of a communist system (Stalin, 1954). He goes further to posit that 'Beethoven erscheint gleichsam als eine Geisel im Kalten Krieg' (ibid.). Without providing additional evidence, Tischer concludes by speculating on areas where the bicentenary may have achieved a political legacy, such as reinforcing Walter Ulbricht's retention of power, and 'das methodische Erstarren einer marxistischen Kulturwissenschaft' (ibid., p.480). By stressing the political factors that influenced the regime's approach to the bicentenary, Tischer arguably over-emphasises the cultural policy responses in the GDR as driven predominantly by West Germany's *Ostpolitik*. Political motives are clearly an important aspect of the cultural demarcation noted in the Beethoven and Schiller commemorations; however, I contend that the demarcation was also significantly driven by perceived differences between the GDR's elaborately developed ideological framework and West German academic, media and popular culture approaches to these same cultural icons.

The material reviewed in this chapter thus only supports certain superficial aspects of Tischer's argument. One may conclude from available archival evidence that the overall concept of the bicentenary was relatively well planned – certainly compared to the 1959 Schiller bicentenary. As a result of the process having begun much earlier than in the case of

the Schiller commemorations, the list of agreed measures was implemented more smoothly. Overall, there is little evidence to suggest any significant practical problems associated with any of the smaller or larger events and bicentenary initiatives. So as a logistically competent operation it would be fair to assess the bicentenary as being successful overall. The most relevant and influential SED officials can be seen to have been actively involved throughout the bicentenary, but this does not prove the efficiency of one party rule, that is of the GDR's political system as such. The ultimate success of the bicentenary plan and the resulting implementation measures was clearly dependent on cooperation at the level of MfK and DKB officials as well as the intellectual and artistic community. Although this was sporadic and variable it does, in total, appear to have been more consistent than in the Schiller commemorations.

Laura Silverberg (2009a, pp.506-510) takes a different approach to many scholars who argue that *Abgrenzung* was a consistently applied feature of cultural policy throughout the GDR's forty-year life. Instead she contends that the regime initially established a socialist music culture as part of an overall cultural policy centred on promoting German heritage rather than a separate East German identity. Citing also Klingberg's evidence of changes in the official dissemination of an autonomous 'sozialistische Nationalkultur der DDR' (Klingberg, 1997, p.65), she points plausibly to the SED's enactment of a new GDR citizenship law in 1967 as a turning point in the official promotion of an East German national identity. Articulating and disseminating a socialist Beethoven for the 1970s as a contrast to a perceived German political and cultural enemy remained as much of a challenge as in the case of a socialist Schiller for the 1960s. But in practice, the political rhetoric in 1970 was rather more differentiated in tone and depth, both between the various players involved in the actual commemoration events as well as within all sections of the GDR media. The policy of demarcation to West Germany was therefore perceptibly less overt than at the Schiller bicentenary, eleven years earlier. This aspect was arguably less important as an aspect of national identity in the more mature society of 1970. In other words the focus was more on internal identification with the GDR – as was the case in the Kollwitz centenary commemorations – rather than demarcation from West Germany.

As discussed in the above section on implementation, an analysis of one particular set of relationships between state and intellectuals, namely musicologists and certain musicians, shows that they were not consistently in agreement. Official reports of the bicentenary reveal that these weaknesses as well as those within the DKB created considerable tension with

higher echelons of political authority. The bicentenary's planning and execution thus exposed cracks in the structure of political hierarchy at that time together with a degree of agency at different levels of party, government and mass organisations. Echoing, in summary, the findings of the Schiller and Kollwitz case-studies, this research result on the Beethoven case study adds weight to consistent 'participatory' and 'consensus' dictatorship models of the GDR, notwithstanding the eleven years elapsed since the Schiller commemorations.

My overall analysis of the relationship between commemorations and national identity thus differs ultimately from that of Silverberg. She bases her interpretation of East German music and national identity on a top-down historiographical model of the GDR and questions to what extent one can even speak of an East German identity – musical or otherwise.

Silverberg notes an underlying tension facing the regime between crystallising a 'Germanness' whilst needing to acknowledge an overarching, Soviet-inspired socialist ideology. Based on this political versus socio-cultural model of the GDR, her hypothesis proposes an all-embracing role of the state, the SED and its execution of a predetermined cultural policy (Silverberg, 2009a, pp.503-504). The evidence revealed and analysed in this chapter, however, suggests that specific outcomes of the Beethoven bicentenary may be seen to have contributed to the construction of a separate GDR identity, despite rather than because of varying degrees of agency amongst participants and stakeholders of the commemoration events. In addition to the material success of the recordings, some of these longer-term legacies are less measurable but equally valid. The physical/performative elements of going to concerts, attending lectures, following TV and radio broadcasts may all be judged to have been largely positive in their domestic reception. A few specific measures, namely attractive commemorative stamp and coin issues, were added to the bicentenary measures; these were typically included in major cultural as well as political anniversary commemorations in the GDR.

In contrast, the continuing, if less strident efforts – than was the case in the Schiller bicentenary – to demonstrate a separate approach to West Germany seem to have produced little evidence to suggest that the GDR's external image was enhanced by the commemorations as a potential contribution to a separate national identity. In contrast, the legacy of partly increasing the involvement of the working class, in response to ideological objectives, sits alongside comparable features and outcomes of the Schiller bicentenary as possibly contributing moderately to the formation of national identity within the GDR. In summary, although the political and social environment within and outside the GDR had

changed over eleven years, the comparability and similarity of both commemorations suggests a gradual evolution rather than a significant change in approach and outcomes.

## 5: THE *LUTHERJAHR* QUINCENTENARY, 1983

### 5.1. INTRODUCTION

The final major cultural commemoration in the GDR chosen as a case study for this thesis differs in several respects from those researched and interpreted in the previous chapters focusing on Schiller, Kollwitz and Beethoven. The *Lutherjahr* was exceptional with regard to its political and cultural importance at the time, both domestically and externally. This in turn influenced the unprecedented scope and scale of the commemoration events, the planning process and the range of official GDR stakeholders. Two of these stakeholders are unique in terms of extensive involvement in a cultural commemoration: the Protestant church (hereafter referred to as the ‘church’) and, to a degree not seen in previous commemorations, the Ministerium für Staatssicherheit (referred to hereafter as the ‘Stasi’).

The *Lutherjahr* offers an extensive amount of primary archival material for scholarly investigation and interpretation; as a result, the *Lutherjahr* presents the current researcher with a wider range of published scholarship than for any comparable cultural commemoration in GDR history. This scholarship derives from perspectives that have changed over the past thirty years. Contributions in the first half of this period such as volumes edited by Siegfried Bräuer (1983), Horst Dohle (1996), Horst Dähn and Joachim Heise (1996), as well as monographs by Robert Goeckel (1984) and Raina Zimmering (2000) appear to rely heavily on retrospective personal and third-party testimony of the *Lutherjahr* commemorations, and on providing a narrative of the planning process, notably the ideological framework. Works by Martin Roy (2000), and more recently, Peter Maser (2013) and Jon Berndt Olsen (2015), have investigated and interpreted the evolving portrayal of Luther before, during and after the *Lutherjahr* and how the outcome may have been influenced by proactive SED activity working through and alongside GDR historians. A further feature of the *Lutherjahr* to have been more recently researched by historians, notably Robert Walinski-Kiehl (2004), and Karl Cordell (2007), is the changing relationship between state and church in the GDR during this period and its resulting effect on the critical political role that the church was to play in the final years of the GDR. The specific impact of the *Lutherjahr* on GDR national identity has also been analysed in more recent scholarship, although primarily in the context of the explicit policy of improving the GDR’s external image that inspired certain aspects of the commemoration (Zimmering, Olsen).

Within this context this chapter will analyse official sources including Stasi records, many of which have not been previously researched. As in earlier chapters, the purpose is to fill a gap in scholarship by concentrating on the aims, implementation and outcomes of the *Lutherjahr* commemoration as a cultural and political phenomenon, measured against the state's declared as well as identifiable intentions. Gaps between theory and practice, between an ideological framework and the compromise of event-driven reality that often emerged during previous commemorations can be detected much earlier in the case of the *Lutherjahr*. Given the considerably longer and more complex gestation period of the *Lutherjahr*, the chapter will also highlight key parts of the planning phase, as they will be shown to provide meaningful answers to the research question. In this context, and replicating the analysis in the Kollwitz case study, an identification of the *Lutherjahr*'s outcomes in terms of legacy – and its potential impact on GDR national identity will also take into account contemporary reception in German media on both sides of the Wall.

The *Lutherjahr* case study posits that the SED was essentially reactive in situating the ideological framework in response to internal and external political pressures that then continued to change throughout the course of the *Lutherjahr*. In summary, the analysis of selected primary SED sources in this chapter will show a shift from the Party's supervisory stance on the *Lutherjahr* to an increasingly reactive and hands-on intervention, driven primarily by growing state-church tensions. By the beginning of the commemoration events in 1983, a set of lofty proclamations, based on a revised Marxist-Leninist approach to Luther, and intended to reinforce national identity and international recognition had already succumbed to the reality of a visibly defensive fixation on state security, perceived as acutely threatened by significant elements within the church on both sides of the Iron Curtain. In closing, the chapter will evaluate the outcomes of the *Lutherjahr*, also in the light of existing scholarship, and assess its likely influence on the longer-term issue of GDR national identity.

## **5.2. AIMS**

Although the *Lutherjahr* was unique in scale, concept and stakeholder composition, this case study replicates the basic structure of previous chapters. It begins therefore by examining in some detail how the commemorations were planned, its ideological objectives developed, and then articulated. Given the far longer duration and complexity of this pre-*Lutherjahr* phase compared to previous cultural commemorations, archival sources from the four most important stakeholders, namely SED, government, Stasi and the church all offer evidence that

illustrates tensions within and between these participants. Gaps between initial theory and subsequent practice already emerge in this planning stage that will ultimately affect the subsequent implementation and outcomes in terms of the research question.

### **5.2.1. The planning timeline summarised**

The duration, complexity and scale of the commemoration project over several years preceding the *Lutherjahr* calls, as introduction, for a brief summary of the main chronological milestones in the planning process: the first official, documented meeting of a working group on the *Lutherjahr* took place as early as 15 December 1975, over seven years before the *Lutherjahr*. This was followed over the period 1975 to early 1979 by several further meetings of working groups within the church as well as various government and SED departments. From early 1979 onwards, the main organisational efforts evolved in parallel streams, within the church on the one hand and government on the other. The first official meeting of the *Lutherkomitee* of the church took place on 10 January 1979. Shortly hereafter, on 16 May 1979, the ZK of the SED met to approve the initial structure of the *Lutherjahr* and to confirm that Honecker himself would act as patron for the whole event. Mirroring similar structures in earlier commemorations it was also decided to form an official body, representing all official *Lutherjahr* stakeholders including academics and the church, in order to present a unified approach to the outside world. This was to be known as the ‘Martin-Luther-Komitee der DDR’ (hereafter referred to as the ‘MLK’) and was the first such commemoration-specific body to be chaired by Honecker himself; the corresponding Beethoven Committee had been chaired by Stoph.

The SED was involved from the outset, and in contrast to the other three case studies in this thesis, a three-page planning concept of the *Lutherjahr*, attached to an SED *Beschlussvorlage*, is remarkably short on detail. An introductory paragraph highlights Luther’s contributions to German culture as foundation stone of a ‘Sozialistische Nationalkultur’:

Martin Luther gab der neuzeitlichen Kultur wichtige Impulse für die Entwicklung der Nationalliteraturen, der neuhochdeutschen Schriftsprache, der Volksbildung, des Liedschaffens sowie der Moral und Ethik. Er war einer der größten Meister der deutschen Sprache vor Goethe, ebenso einer der bedeutendsten Ethiker vor Kant.<sup>140</sup>

This catalogue of achievements clearly seeks to set apart Luther’s secular from his religious role; it is positioned as a political framework for the *Lutherjahr*, combining ‘kultur- und

wissenschaftlichpolitische, bündnis- und kirchenpolitische, internationale und außenpolitische Aspekte.’ (ibid.). The planning and execution of the *Lutherjahr* is consequently to be ruled by four explicit ‘politische Grundpositionen’. Firstly, a demonstrative continuation of cultural appropriation; the ‘Erbaneignung’ of ‘humanistische und progressive Kräfte der Vergangenheit’, reflected in previous GDR cultural commemorations, namely the 450<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation (1967), and the quincentenaries’ of Albrecht Dürer (1971) and Lucas Cranach d.Ä. (1972). Secondly, Luther’s significance in terms of being positioned here as a role-model in the ‘Weltweiten ideologischen Auseinandersetzung zwischen Sozialismus und Imperialismus’ (ibid.). Luther’s conflict in how he overcame his reactionary bourgeois background is linked to an emphatically phrased warning of a similar, ongoing ‘Auseinandersetzung mit reaktionären bürgerlichen und sozialpolitischen [...] Auffassungen, [...] sowie mit allen Versuchen, das Erbe Luthers für die imperialistische Fiktion von der “einheitlichen deutschen Kulturnation” zu missbrauchen’ (ibid.). The third *Grundposition* clarifies the issue underlying this warning by unambiguously re-asserting the Accord as a framework for the *Lutherjahr*. The state’s *Konzeption* must govern at all times: ‘Mit Hilfe der staatlichen Konzeption der Luther-Ehrung und durch Koordinierung der staatlichen und kirchlichen Aktivitäten wird darauf Einfluss genommen, daß alle Veranstaltungen in Übereinstimmung mit der Politik des Friedens und des gesellschaftlichen Fortschritts unseres sozialistischen Staates durchgeführt werden.’ (ibid.). The final *Grundposition* locates the importance of the GDR’s *Lutherjahr* in an international context, both vis a vis fellow socialist states and, more importantly, the anticipated interest of predominantly protestant non-socialists. The GDR’s notion of Humanism in political life thus appears here again as a central *Leitmotif* of the *Lutherjahr*: ‘[...] die humanistischen Grundsätze der Politik der DDR wirksam und erlebar zu demonstrieren’. (ibid.).

Having laid out the four core political objectives, the 1979 *Konzeption* spells out the ultimate political goal, target audience and implementation of the *Lutherjahr* as all relating to national identity: ‘Zur weiteren Herausbildung und Festigung des sozialistischen Geschichts- und Nationalbewusstseins sowie zur Persönlichkeitsentwicklung der Werktätigen der DDR, insbesondere der Jugend, ist eine wirksame politisch-ideologische und kulturpolitisch-propagandistische Arbeit zu entwickeln...’ (ibid.). The success of this strategy in practice will be evaluated in this case study, as the planning and implementation phase unfolded

between 1979 and the end of 1983. The SED's changing role will be described later in this section.

The first widely publicised inaugural meeting of the MLK was held on 13 June 1980. By that time the MLK had grown to 104 members, more than twice the size of the corresponding Beethoven bicentenary committee. The range and seniority of government, party, mass organisation, academic and artists selected is pointedly styled as the 'Who is Who' der besseren DDR-Gesellschaft' (Maser, 2013, p.97), reflecting the unique political importance of the *Lutherjahr*. Following the pattern of earlier major commemorations, this body was only to meet in plenary session on a few occasions, essentially to publicise the project and to approve the preparatory work in progress. Following the format and planning process of previous major commemorations, a central organisational unit was set up within the MfK – the 'Organisationsbüro des Martin-Luther-Komitees der DDR' (DDR). Their primary purpose was to coordinate *Lutherjahr* activities initiated under the auspices of the MLK but also to liaise, and in effect supervise adherence to state policy by the church's *Lutherkomitee* on all church-sponsored events.

Following a separate development period described later in this chapter, the official ideological framework for the *Lutherjahr* was published on 25 September 1981 as 'Thesen über Martin Luther zum 500. Geburtstag'.<sup>141</sup> The final key date to be noted in the run-up to the *Lutherjahr* took place a year later. The *Organisationsbüro* published a 115-page booklet, containing several speeches, photos and a programme of all planned MLK sponsored *Lutherjahr* events.<sup>142</sup> As discussed later in this chapter, the programme of events comprised over 70 conferences, concerts, festivals and official commemorations throughout the GDR territory. The church's *Lutherkomitee* and the MLK nominally coordinated each other's activity through representatives on each other's working groups. However, as noted above, the *Lutherkomitee* appears to have been junior in terms of its allocated role, which was focused on planning local and national church events and publications for the *Lutherjahr*, especially the major church congresses (*Kirchentage*) in seven GDR locations.

The MLK has been characterised in recent scholarship as an 'Instrument des mythenpolitischen Monopols der politischen Elite der DDR' (Zimmering 2000, p.261). This simplistic and somewhat dismissive label, however, ignores the considerable precedence of earlier major cultural commemorations, that all involved a very similar organisational structure. In line with similar formal assessments in earlier cultural commemorations, the

MfK files contain an eight-page report by the *Organisationsbüro* on its contribution to the *Lutherjahr*, signed by its head, Siegfried Rakotz.<sup>143</sup> The report will be discussed in more detail in the ‘outcomes’ section of this chapter. To begin with, the report repeats the three main aspirational objectives of the unit, picking up on similar pronouncements before and during the course of the *Lutherjahr* by senior SED and government officials. This introduction provides a very useful summary of the MLK's importance in the context of the research question in this thesis. Two of these objectives had been to act as a catalyst for integration of all sectors of GDR society involved with the *Lutherjahr*, and to raise the external image (*Ausstrahlungskraft*) of the GDR and its *Friedenspolitik*. But the first and foremost aim had been to ensure that the *Lutherjahr* would contribute to GDR national identity in the context of its cultural policies: ‘...die Lutherlehre als Beitrag zur Vertiefung des sozialistischen National- Geschichts- und Traditionsbewusstseins der Bürger der DDR zu gestalten’ [...] im Sinne der Erbpolitik unseres Arbeiter- und Bauernstaates’. (ibid.).

### **5.2.2. The GDR's historical approach and the 1981 *Thesen*: a Marxist rehabilitation of Luther?**

The most important responsibility of the MLK within the first objective highlighted above was to coordinate the ideological framework for the *Lutherjahr*. In this context, it is helpful to briefly review the evolution of Luther in Marxist historiography. Thomas Brady distinguishes three chronological stages (Brady, 2014a, pp.195-203). The first two go back to the mid-nineteenth century. Marx set out a concept of Luther as a European liberal whose attacks on the medieval church paved the way to a bourgeois-capitalist society (ibid.). Twenty years later, Engels developed a more enduring representation of Luther as a German reactionary and traitor to the cause of the common man in the Peasants War (ibid.). GDR historiography at first followed the official line of Soviet historiography which maintained a negative stance on Luther. The GDR historian, Max Steinmetz is credited as initiating the rehabilitation of Luther in 1960. He recommended that the GDR should allocate, in general terms, Luther's progressive achievements to the *Nationalerbe* of the GDR and so place Luther as a revolutionary precursor of the German people: ‘Luther, the trailblazer of a modern humanist culture in Germany.’ (ibid.).

Even before the MLK and the *Lutherkomitee* had been formed, several meetings involving senior SED officials, historians and representatives of the church took place between 1978 and late 1982 to further develop Steinmetz's approach to Luther as an ideological framework

for the *Lutherjahr*. The concept for one of the main events of the *Lutherjahr*, an international academic conference in October 1983, was agreed in December 1980. It sets out what was to become a central agenda for defining the new approach to Luther. Key components of the future framework are defined as a need to clarify Luther's position, in the context of Marxist-Leninist theory, both in terms of class, and of his impact on subsequent revolutions:

Wissenschaftlich-theoretisch geht es um die Weiterentwicklung des Marxistisch-leninistischen Lutherbildes auf der Grundlage der Konzeption der frühbürgerlichen Revolutionen. Dies erfordert insbesondere eine exakte Bestimmung der Klassenposition Martin Luthers; seiner Funktion in der frühbürgerlichen Revolution; seiner bleibenden weiter wirkenden Leistungen für den Fortschritt und seine Grenzen.<sup>144</sup>

'Weiterentwicklung' is a key term here as it emphasises that the revised approach should be received as evolutionary rather than challenging the earlier, more negative interpretation of Luther in the GDR.

The official ideological framework for the *Lutherjahr* was published in September 1981 as a forty-page document, setting out fifteen *Thesen*. The introduction proposes an underlying attribute of Luther by emphasising three times the term 'progressive':

Die Deutsche Demokratische Republik ist tief verwurzelt in der ganzen deutschen Geschichte. Als sozialistischer deutscher Staat ist sie das Ergebnis des Jahrhundert langen Ringens alle progressiven Kräfte des deutschen Volkes für den gesellschaftlichen Fortschritt. Alles, was in der deutschen Geschichte an progressivem hervorgebracht wurde, und alle, die es bewirkt haben, gehören zu ihrer unverzichtbaren, die nationale Identität prägenden Tradition... In diesem Sinne würdigt die DDR die historischen Leistungen Martin Luthers und pflegt das von ihm hinterlassene progressive Erbe.<sup>145</sup>

Luther is firmly anchored here in the context of the twin concepts of *Kulturerbe* and *Tradition* within the cultural policy of Honecker's GDR. As noted in the introductory chapter, these concepts encapsulate the differentiation between *Erbe* at the core of the GDR as *Kulturnation* and *Tradition* at the heart of the modern GDR *Staatsnation*. Luther is thus to be understood as not only one of the most important German cultural personalities but progressive in a contemporary sense. This statement may be read as dispelling any earlier official ambivalence on his status alongside other major German cultural figures:

‘Wegbereiter... Er gehört zu den großen Persönlichkeiten der deutschen Geschichte von Weltgeltung.’(ibid., p.5).

The progressive description of Luther as a ‘Wegbereiter’ is then expanded by emphasising that he was an early revolutionary:

Martin Luther löste durch seinen Kampf gegen das ‘Internationale Zentrum des Feudalsystems’ (Friedrich Engels) die Reformation aus. Darin liegt sein bleibendes historisches Verdienst. Die Reformation wurde wesentlicher Bestandteil der beginnenden Revolution. (...) Ihr historischer Platz (...) bestimmt den Charakter der Revolution als frühbürgerlich. (ibid., p.8).

But at the same time the *Thesen* recognise the preceding negative image of Luther in the GDR, reflected in his earlier official description as ‘Fürstenknecht und Bauernverräter’. This historic argument relates to mainly to the perception of Luther’s class. A similarity with the Kollwitz centenary commemoration can be noted here, where a controversy surrounding her bourgeois background had also featured repeatedly.

Martin Luther war durch seine Herkunft mit der bäuerlichen Sphäre und mit dem frühkapitalistischen Unternehmertum verbunden. (...) Er wurde zu einem Vertreter einer zumeist dem Bürgertum nahestehenden, zum Teil frühkapitalistische Interessen ausdrückenden, vom Territorialfürstentum und der Kirche materiell abhängigen Intelligenz, die letztlich in seiner bürgerlichen-gemäßigten, auf das Landesfürstentum orientierten Klassenposition begründet war. (ibid., p.9).

The issue is not glossed over but dealt with; albeit the choice of a mitigating adjective, ‘gemäßigt’, appears to be defensive. Furthermore, the *Thesen* also differentiate between the reality of his limited, local impact at the time and the longer term major outcomes of the Reformation that he instigated: ‘...zwischen seiner Rolle als Initiator einer breiten, alle oppositionellen Klassen und Schichten einbeziehenden revolutionären Bewegung und seiner eigenen begrenzten Zielstellung.’ (ibid. p.19).

The *Thesen* also add an international dimension to Luther’s characterisation as a revolutionary:

Martin Luthers Reformation übte eine nachhaltige Wirkung auf die europäischen Länder aus. Sie trieb die Lösung grundlegender Widersprüche der Feudalgesellschaft voran und wurde deshalb sehr rasch zu einer europäischen Erscheinung, die den

Übergang vom Feudalismus zum Kapitalismus beschleunigte [...] dieser bürgerliche Revolutionszyklus konnte auf den Ergebnissen der Reformation aufbauen. (ibid., p.23-24).

The prominence and European context of this theme thus reveals an underlying political aim, namely to instrumentalise the *Lutherjahr* in order to raise the international visibility of the GDR. This interpretation concurs with Zimmering's argument that the emphasis in the *Thesen* on the European dimension of the Reformation may have been intended to reinforce a national identity as viewed from outside the GDR; a certain existing deficit in domestic national identity could thus have been compensated by an increased foreign respect and legitimisation of the GDR (Zimmering 2000, p.276).

Luther's revised interpretation in the *Thesen* contains a compilation of positive qualities:

[...] vielfältige Anstöße gab Luther für die Entwicklung einer den Menschen dienenden Sozialethik. Er vermittelte vielen Generationen die Verpflichtung zum Dienst am Nächsten, die Ermutigung zu schöpferischer, sinnvoller Arbeit, die Ablehnung des Missbrauchs menschlicher Arbeit zu Profitzwecken, den Schutz der Familie und die Hochschätzung von Fleiß, Arbeit, Pflichterfüllung und Sparsamkeit als wesentliche Tugenden.

These idealised epithets may have been seen at the time as reinterpreting earlier, negative aspects in the reception of Luther within a more recent, GDR-specific notion of humanism. This notion, mentioned briefly in previous chapters, was regularly emphasised in comparable GDR commemorations of other major cultural personalities. Erich Honecker himself uses the term 'Humanist' when depicting Luther in his introductory remarks to a working session of the MLK on 29 October 1982:

Nicht wenige Bürger aus allen Schichten haben in den zurückliegenden Monaten die Vorbereitung des Jubiläums zu ihrer eigenen Sache gemacht. Das zeugt davon welche lebendige Beziehung die Menschen in der DDR mit dem fortschrittlichen Erbe unseres Volkes, den Idealen der bedeutenden Humanisten seine Geschichte verbindet.<sup>146</sup>

The final of the fifteen *Thesen* explicitly positions the entire framework within a comprehensive claim of the GDR on Luther.<sup>147</sup> The ideological reconciliation of the GDR with Luther's work and his historical impact is highlighted: 'Von Beginn der marxistischen

Geschichtswissenschaft der DDR wurde – anknüpfend an Friedrich Engels – die bahnbrechende Bedeutung der Reformation hoch gewürdigt und bereits Anfang der 50er Jahre der Begriff der frühbürgerlicher Revolution geprägt’ (ibid.). Turning to the present, the GDR’s commitment to implementing the constitutionally guaranteed activities of the church is then stressed:

Die von Luther inspirierten und sich auf ihn berufenen protestantischen Kirchen haben wie alle anderen Glaubensgemeinschaften in der DDR verfassungsmäßig garantierte breite Möglichkeiten zu ihrer Betätigung. [...] Partei und Staatsführung der DDR waren und sind stets offen für die humanitären Anliegen der christlichen Kirchen und haben immer Sorge getragen für eine Zusammenarbeit in diesem Geiste. (ibid.).

At first glance this statement may appear to demonstrate an enhanced status of the church in the GDR as demonstrated by the upcoming Luther commemoration. But a closer look at the choice of words here is important: ‘breite Möglichkeiten zur Betätigung’ may be read as [specific] ‘activities’, rather than a general concession of independence; ‘humanitären Anliegen’, implies [allocated or defined] humanitarian – as opposed to wider, socio-political – concerns. This phrasing suggests a defensive assertion of the state’s absolute hegemony in the spirit of the ‘Kirche im Sozialismus’ church-state accords, rather than a genuine ‘Zusammenarbeit’, that is cooperative relationship of state and church as independent components of GDR society.

The closing paragraph of the *Thesen*, explaining the leading role of the MLK, contains a significant statement that explicitly links Luther’s legacy to GDR ‘national culture’: ‘Luthers progressives Erbe ist aufgehoben in der sozialistischen deutschen Nationalkultur’ (ibid., p.37). As in the aims of commemorations analysed in the first two case studies, references to national culture seem to confirm the regime’s objective of promoting national identity through the commemorations. In this case, the inferred appropriation of Luther can be read as an inward looking, positive identification, comparable with the Kollwitz commemoration sixteen years earlier; as such, this approach therefore contrasts with the earlier appropriations of Schiller and Beethoven, both of which were mainly expressed as a negative, outward looking demarcation versus West Germany.

Although the historian and Luther expert, Professor Gerhard Brendler, has been identified as the main individual behind the official authorship of the *Thesen*, scholars have speculated

more recently on the nature of any wider involvement of GDR historians in their development (Roy, 2000, pp. 180-232). SED pressure for a clear consensus amongst GDR historians meant that even though various historians may have had somewhat different interpretations of Luther and the Reformation, these differences were not reflected in the official fifteen *Thesen*. In their day-to-day relationship with the SED in 1983, GDR historians needed to second-guess the likely reaction and support from the SED rather than create an interpretative framework on Luther in accordance with predetermined parameters (ibid., p.180). Rather than trying to substantiate an interpretation with scholarly analysis, historians preferred the politically safe approach of employing dubious adjectives such as bourgeois or intelligent, and then securing appropriate support from party officials (ibid., p.230). In other words, political expediency and usefulness was more important than trying to debate a particular scholarly approach. Roy's interpretation corresponds to other evidence in this chapter on precedence given to short-term pragmatism when intellectuals were involved in planning and implementing the *Lutherjahr*.<sup>148</sup> A decade earlier, Hartmut Lehmann, a West German historian, had summarised the *Thesen* polemically:

[...] welch gigantische Heldengestalt wird uns hier geschildert, oder präziser: welch gigantisches Klischee von einem Helden! Was nicht in dieses Bild passt, ist wegetuschiert. [...] Alle Widersprüche, die wir bei Luther finden, sind eingeebnet, alle Zweifel, alle Unsicherheiten, aus denen Luther selbst nie ein Hehl machte, sind ausgeräumt. [...] Kurzum: Luthers Bild wird in den Thesen durchgängig harmonisiert [...] Bezweifelt werden muss, ob auch der von den 15 Thesen nicht eingefangene Luther dazu dient, 'Zement' in die Staatsfundamente der DDR zu gießen. (Lehmann, 1990, pp.234-236)

Lehman's exaggerated approach was characteristic of its time. Nevertheless, his argument that the *Thesen* served to reinforce longstanding official efforts to reinforce the regime's legitimacy may still be sustained today. However, it does not alter the reality of the *Thesen* as a political framework for the *Lutherjahr*. In essence, the *Thesen* may be best summarised as a new, simplistic positioning of Luther, necessary to amplify the transition to 'Luther, the early modern German humanist' – the final of the three stages of Marxist historiography according to Brady (Brady, 2014a, p.203). The humanist attribute here is crucial as it exemplifies a core component of the regime's policy on constructing national identity. As Matthew Philpotts argues in '*Contested Legacies: constructions of cultural heritage in the GDR*':

Above all, the cultural construction of these narratives, understood in the broadest possible sense, is one of the central planks in the formation of national identity. [...] the SED ascribed immense significance to historical narratives as a source of self-legitimation. [...] Looking further back, the SED strove to construct a political and cultural heritage that could support the idea of a continuous progressive humanist tradition from the Enlightenment [...] to this first socialist state on German soil (Philpotts and Rolle, 2009, p.1).

### **5.2.3. Reconciling different images of Luther within state and church: progressive humanist and reformer of church and faith**

A highly publicised agreement, signed on 6 March 1978 (the ‘Accord’), marked a particularly significant milestone in the relationship between state and the church. The purpose of the Accord was to set out the agreed understanding on the respective roles of state and church in GDR society in such areas as education and social policy. More importantly, however, was the underlying purpose of asserting the state’s exclusive role on setting and executing from time to time the political agenda and thus explicitly restricting the church’s competence to influence domestic or international policy in any way. Since this Accord, the church was generally perceived as having established a *modus vivendi* with the state based on the concept of the ‘church within Socialism’. This was not ‘a church fully committed to the goals and praxis of the SED, but one which maintain[ed] a position of critical solidarity with the government’ (Cordell, 2007, p.51). The *Lutherjahr* provided the state with the first major opportunity to demonstrate the limited autonomy of the church and present a newly-won, and allegedly harmonious relationship between church and state. Paradoxically, this was to be achieved by establishing two separate committees to oversee the *Lutherjahr*: a state committee, presided over by Erich Honecker and a church committee chaired by Werner Leich, the Bishop of Thüringen (Walinski-Kiehl, 2004, p.52).

The church’s conceptual ambivalence to the state’s *Lutherjahr* plans was noted by contemporary historians. Whilst understanding the benefits of cooperation, the church was clearly anxious as to how the official ideological framework and overall ‘embrace of Luther’ might influence the church’s own position on Luther (Goeckel, 1984, p.118). The extent of these contradictory attitudes emerges in a remarkable primary source published just before the *Lutherjahr* by Harald Schultze, a prominent theologian and church official.<sup>149</sup> In his blunt introduction, Schultze appears to distance himself from the fuss surrounding the *Lutherjahr*:

‘So viel Skepsis hat es vor einem Jubiläum wohl noch nicht gegeben, wie man sie hören konnte, ehe das Lutherjahr 1983 noch begonnen hatte. Wem eine scharfe ironische Bemerkung zum Lutherrummel einfällt, darf sicher sein, in seinem Konvent Beifall zu bekommen.’ (ibid., p.47). However, as mitigating factor he endorses one of the main official concerns surrounding how the *Lutherjahr* was to be used to raise the GDR’s international profile; he concedes that the scale of events may be justified by his own perception of the GDR’s external image: ‘Für ein kleines Land, wie es die DDR ist, muss solch Ereignis, [the *Lutherjahr*], in der Tat zum Mittelpunkt des Jahres [1983], werden, weil mit so viel Gästen von außerhalb zu rechnen ist, die weder zu einer Messe noch zu einer Sportveranstaltung kommen.’ (ibid., p.47).

Pointing to his perception of internal weaknesses Schultze questions the church’s ability to fully step up to the expected role of host: ‘Wir müssen uns nicht nur fragen, ob unsere Kräfte ausreichen, um in solchem Maße ein Jubiläum zu begehen. Die tiefer reichende Frage geht dahin, ob unsere Kirche eigentlich berechtigt sei, in solchem Rahmen als Gastgeber aufzutreten.’ But this pessimistic assessment also attributes the blame outside the church, even hinting that the church’s *Lutherjahr* role had been imposed: ‘Eine angefochtene, eine finanziell nicht einmal selbstständige Kirche, eine Kirche, [...] die nicht mehr überall als Volkskirche lebendig ist [...]. Als ob die Kirche nun doch stark genug sei, zu repräsentieren, einfach, weil diese Rolle von ihr erwartet wird’. The article’s title poses the question: ‘Konzeptionen für ein Jubiläum oder: Wie begehen wir den 500. Geburtstag?’ (ibid., p.47). He suggests that the answer may be found in a unifying concept for the *Lutherjahr*: ‘Umso nötiger ist es, sich miteinander über die Konzeption zu verständigen, mit der wir das Jubiläumsjahr gestalten wollen.’ Initially, this call for *Verständigung*, a term that may be translated both as understanding as well as active agreement, appears to address an internal audience and process within the church. But the main section of the article goes on further to elaborate other aspects that the church’s *Lutherjahr* committee were considering in developing their projects. First and foremost was the avoidance of a personality cult surrounding Luther. Noting the church’s particular responsibility, one may read a suggestion that others, that is the state, may be going astray: ‘Wir bauen heute nicht gern Denkmäler, wir fürchten jeden Personenkult, in der Kirche noch mehr als anderswo. Und wir wissen, daß Personenkult gegenüber Luther ganz falsch am Platze wäre. [...]. Wer Luther heroisiert, hat von seinen Schriften nichts begriffen’. Schultze demands transparency about Luther’s weaknesses, in apparent contrast to the absence of such negatives in the official *Thesen*. With

the headline ‘Offenes Gespräch über Fehlentscheidungen’, Schulze singles out Luther’s uncompromisingly hostile position to peasants at the end of the *Bauernkrieg*, his persecution of the Anabaptists and his antisemitic sermons (ibid., p.48).

Turning specifically to the official *Thesen*, Schultze adopts an apparently conciliatory tone, describing the dialogue with Marxist research on Luther as a ‘Bereicherung für die Kirche’. However, his phrasing seeks ambitiously to position the church in an ongoing process as an equal partner to the state-appointed historians: ‘Gegenwärtig ist auf beiden Seiten die Gesprächsbereitschaft und Offenheit für die Ergebnisse des anderen größer geworden. Das Gespräch über die präzise begründeten, weiterführenden Thesen der Akademie der Wissenschaften der DDR zu Martin Luther ist daher in vollem Gang.’ (ibid., p.48). This notable effort to assert the church’s autonomy is reinforced by specific reference to differing methodology and historical analysis, inferring optimistically that they were politically equally valid: ‘Andere methodische Voraussetzungen und unterschiedliche Bewertungen des historischen Kontextes haben zu einem vielfach unterschiedlichen Lutherbild geführt.’ (ibid., p.48).

The subsequent report on the *Lutherjahr* by the MLK’s *Organisationsbüro*, referred to earlier, includes a wide-ranging reference to the MLK’s relationship with the church’s *Lutherkomitee*:

Die sachbezogene Förderung der vertrauensvollen Zusammenarbeit mit dem Lutherkomitee der evangelischen Kirchen in der DDR im Rahmen der Jubiläumsfeierlichkeiten als aktiven Beitrag zur Verwirklichung der Bündnispolitik unseres sozialistischen Staates und der weiteren Vertiefung der politisch-moralischen Einheit unseres Volkes und der Gestaltung der Beziehungen zwischen Staat und Kirche.<sup>150</sup>

The desired improvement of the church-state relationship is easier to understand here than the vague-sounding appeal for ‘political-moral unity’. ‘Sachbezogen’ is an unambiguous reference to want the relationship to focus on concrete, even operational matters rather than wide-ranging, politically sensitive issues, such as the peace movement. *Bündnispolitik*, defined as the fundamental alliance of the SED as lead entity in the GDR society with all non-communist parties and mass organisations in the GDR (Tempel, 1987, p.221), is an underlying common denominator of all the commemorations in this thesis. Pronouncing here explicitly on using the *Lutherjahr* as a means to the end of strengthening the *Bündnispolitik*

marks an important difference to the other commemorations. The aim of improving the church-state relationship appears here to take precedence over strengthening the involvement of the working class, which received so much emphasis in those previous commemorations. The subsequent reality of a discrepancy between the theory and practice of complementary ideological concepts, related political tensions and resulting operational weaknesses in the relationship between the state and the church will be examined later in this chapter.

#### **5.2.4. An increasingly nervous SED makes its presence felt**

Horst Dohle, a senior SED official and assistant to Klaus Gysi, comments retrospectively on the relationship between the state and church *Lutherjahr* committees by presenting an engaging analysis, supported by evidence of growing disagreement within the SED during 1983 (Dohle, 1996, pp.56-93). Factions within the party, backed up by internal evaluations from the Stasi, were becoming concerned that the church was strengthening its position, given the popular reception of individual events such as the church congresses. This is seen as the primary reason for unexpected cutbacks in the scale of events towards the end of the year; that is that the more conservative SED members were getting the upper hand in lowering the public profile of the events organised by the church.<sup>151</sup> The following section examines several documents from the SED's files that shed more light on the Party's growing involvement in the *Lutherjahr*, both before and during 1983.

In the aftermath of the 6 March 1978 Accord, the SED's two highest organs, the *Politbüro* and the *Sekretariat des ZK*, administered *Kirchenpolitik* within a similar process of *Beschlussvorlagen* to other areas of GDR life. The *Politbüro* set policy on objectives and strategy whereas tactical, short-term decisions were delegated to the *Sekretariat des ZK* (Dohle, 1995, pp.404-405). As noted above, the relative importance of the *Lutherjahr* compared to similar major cultural commemorations in the GDR in the past may be seen in its far longer gestation process that began four years before, in early 1979. However, the hitherto unmatched significance of the *Lutherjahr* was not reflected in any exception to the standard SED discussion and approval process for such commemorations, even allowing for Erich Honecker's designated chairmanship of the Luther committee. The appropriate *Beschlussvorlage* of 1979 mentioned at the beginning of this section, was thus effectively rubber-stamped rather than deliberated by the *Sekretariat des ZK*.<sup>152</sup> There is no evidence in this document of any discussions of the *Lutherjahr*'s impact and relevance to larger, ongoing issues relating to the church in the GDR. These might have included the church's increasing

association with the emerging GDR peace movement, as well as related, unauthorised public readings by GDR authors at church venues. As described later in the chapter, this type of activity was increasingly viewed by the Stasi at the time as threatening state security. As a result, the Stasi was to become comprehensively involved in the planning and subsequent surveillance of all major *Lutherjahr* events; this had not been the case in previous cultural commemorations (Dohle 1995, p.394).

Three further SED records over that period reveal key milestones in the evolution of how the most senior party organs approached and handled the planning stage of the *Lutherjahr*. The transition from nodding through the original *Konzeption* in 1979 to hands-on immersion in planning and execution by 1983 represents a gap between the original concept and the subsequent reality of the *Lutherjahr*. Eighteen months after the *Lutherjahr* concept had been approved by the highest SED organs, Gisela Glenda, recorded here as being ‘Leiterin des Büros des Politbüros’, issued a strongly worded internal, i.e. confidential, status report on the relationship between church and state.<sup>153</sup> This update was addressed and circulated to all regional and local SED offices as well as to all departments of the ZK. The document highlights several ongoing developments that, in Glenda’s view, contradict the spirit and content of the 6 March 1978 Accord. Specific reactionary sections of the church are accused of being receptive to external influence and pressures particularly from the (Protestant) church in West Germany seeking to interfere in various aspects of GDR policy including defence and education. For example: ‘In letzter Zeit versuchte man die Eigenständigkeit der Kirchen der DDR auch unter dem Vorwand gemeinsamer Verantwortung für den Frieden zu betreiben’ (ibid.). The key point here is the contradiction to the clear separation of the church’s responsibilities from that of the state as articulated in the 1978 Accord. Furthermore the memorandum notes several initiatives by both West German media and the West German church to declare ongoing events involving citizens from both German states as constituting an ‘all-German’ activity, which according to official SED policy was illegal:

Seit einiger Zeit interessieren sich Vertreter westlicher Massenmedien verstärkt für kirchliche Tagungen, für Synoden u.a. [...]. Die sogenannten Partnerschaftsbeziehungen von Kirchengemeinden in der DDR zu solchen in der BRD sowie zwischen den Leitungen und Synoden der Kirchen wurden weiter ausgebaut und intensiviert. Gemeinsame Treffen fanden zuweilen unter Verletzung der Gesetze der DDR statt. (ibid.).

The memorandum goes on to allude to the principle of emphasising the total organisational separation of the GDR's (Lutheran) church from its counterpart, the West German church – a fundamental policy embodying a cornerstone of GDR sovereignty and national identity:

‘Auch Vertreter der Kirchen müssen veranlasst werden, Staatsbewusstsein zu beweisen und im Ausland als Staatsbürger der DDR aufzutreten. Sie müssen erkennen, daß sie in einem souveränen sozialistischen Staat, der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, leben und danach handeln.’ (ibid.). But this reminder means in practice that the SED addresses the need to become more educationally proactive in their respective relationships with the church: ‘Das ist eine große politisch-ideologische Aufgabe in der Arbeit unter kirchlichen Kreisen.’

Finally, the acute nervousness that permeates this memorandum translates to a renewed call for proactive pressure by the party on the church. This may be found in the closing demand for the Party to exercise stronger control including, by implication, Stasi surveillance:

Angesichts der Tatsache, daß die Feinde der DDR ihre Tätigkeit auf die Störung der Staat/Kirche-Beziehungen der DDR konzentrieren und mit großem Aufwand versuchen, Verwirrung besonders in kirchlichen Kreisen der DDR zu stiften, ist es erforderlich, die politische und ideologische Wachsamkeit zu gewährleisten, Erscheinungen gegnerischer Einflüsse auf kirchliche Kreise schnell zu analysieren und die Informationstätigkeit weiter zu verbessern. (ibid.).

A second document, minutes of a high-level SED meeting in September 1982, shows how the most senior levels within the SED had moved to a detailed involvement in the latter stages of the *Lutherjahr* planning, partly as a reaction to continuing tensions with the church.<sup>154</sup>

Superficially, the seventh appendix to the minutes suggests an orderly progress from the concept approved in 1979 through the establishment of the MLK in March 1980 to the more recent establishment of an internal SED working group, ‘... zur parteimäßigen Koordinierung und Kontrolle der politischen Aktivitäten zur Martin-Luther-Ehrung der DDR 1983’ (ibid.).

The document notes the specific tasks of the church's separate Lutherkomitee. However, any potential interpretation of equality between the two committees is eliminated by a reference to ‘Übertragung’ in the sense of ‘delegation’ rather than ‘transfer’, and ‘Abstimmung’ in the sense of ‘approval’ rather than ‘co-ordination’. Moreover, the longstanding tensions between the church and state are not glossed over but rather seen as reduced by this co-operation, described also as thriving (‘Gedeihliche Zusammenarbeit’):

Die Planung und Koordinierung aller kirchlichen Veranstaltungen aus Anlass des Lutherjubiläums 1983 wurde kirchlicherseits dem kirchlichen Lutherkomitee übertragen, das die Schwerpunktveranstaltungen mit dem Lutherkomitee der DDR und den zuständigen staatlichen Stellen abgestimmt hat. Die Zusammenarbeit beider Lutherkomitees hat sich in der zurückliegenden Zeit als ein stabilisierender Faktor für die kirchenpolitische Entwicklung in unserem Land erwiesen. (ibid.).

The status report in this section concludes with a negative political risk assessment, under the heading: 'Bisher bekannte Einflüsse des Gegners.' Without citing specific evidence, unnamed entities and the Western mass media are accused of attributing a negative 'marxistisch-leninistisches Lutherbild' to the SED party and GDR state: 'Gegnerische Kräfte suggerieren die Meinung, daß Partei und Staat in der DDR eine ungerechtfertigte, gegen die Kirchen und die Interessen gläubiger Bürger gerichtete missbräuchliche Vereinnahmung Luthers betreiben, gegen die sich Kirchen und Christen zur Wehr setzen müssten.' (ibid.). But the arguably more existential issue noted as facing the SED here refers to a major concern about the perennial issue of demarcation from West Germany. Any visible promotion of bilateral East-West contacts between church individuals and communities would, the document suggests, be posited by the West as demonstrating the 'gesamtdeutscher Charakter' of the *Lutherjahr*, thus implicitly threatening the fundamental identity of the GDR as a separate sovereign state.

These minutes of the meeting in September 1982 contain a final appendix listing several 'Schlussfolgerungen' for a set of new, ad-hoc SED working groups. These units are to be set up in the regions containing the seven towns selected by the church to host *Lutherjahr*-related 'Kirchentage': Erfurt, Rostock, Eisleben, Frankfurt/Oder, Magdeburg, Dresden and Wittenberg. The 'command and control' nature of these mandatory action steps contradicts any sense of a friendly, collegiate collaboration between the church and state that might have been read into the previous status report: 'Die Tätigkeit der Arbeitsgruppen zur Einflussnahme auf kirchliche Aktivitäten zum Lutherjubiläum 1983 ist vor allem darauf zu richten, eine mit den Interessen unseres Staates übereinstimmende, seine Politik unterstützende und von Störungen freie Durchführung der kirchlichen Luther-Ehrung zu gewährleisten.' (ibid.). Beyond 'exerting influence', party officials are instructed to ensure total adherence by the church to state policies when processing approvals for all major church events. The fear of public demonstrations in the context of the expected 'beachtenswerter internationaler Beteiligung' is amplified by an explicit instruction, that reads here as a veiled

threat, to remind church officials of their ‘Mitverantwortung für Ordnung und einen störungsfreien Verlauf geplanter Veranstaltungen’.

The optimistic status report, issued towards the end of the planning phase and three months before the commencement of the *Lutherjahr*, submits that a highly successful *Lutherjahr* will emanate from a harmonious church-state relationship. But this theory sits uncomfortably with the reality of actual events and perceived threats that dominate the proposed concrete action steps. Paul Verner, the senior Politbüro member chairing the SED’s central *Lutherjahr* working group at the meeting in September 1982, delivered a speech on ‘Kirchenpolitik’ seven months later (the full text of the speech is included as an appendix in Maser, 2013, pp.455-461). This address sets out even more starkly how the SED was now concentrating on instrumentalising the *Lutherjahr* during 1983 itself (Dohle, 1995, pp.404-405), in order to maximise SED hegemony over the church. Instead of any reference to the content of the *Lutherjahr* events as representing a welcome contribution to an innovative *Kirchenpolitik*, several phrases are repeated by Verner in the speech which clearly characterise a control objective for the *Lutherjahr*: ‘störungsfreier Verlauf’ of events, the avoidance of ‘Provokationen’, the maintenance of ‘Gesetzlichkeit’, and the elimination of ‘antisozialistischer Machenschaften von feindlich negativen Kräften’. As far as Verner, representing the SED Politbüro and addressing fellow SED members, is concerned, the GDR’s *Friedenspolitik* appears to become the crucial political framework and indicator for a successful *Lutherjahr*:

In allem was wir tun, liebe Genossen, in allem was wir mit den kirchlichen Gesprächspartnern beraten, sollte stets gegenwärtig sein, daß der 500. Geburtstag Martin Luthers auch mit dem Zieltermin der USA und der NATO für die Aufstellung neuer atomarer Mittelstreckenraketen in Westeuropa zusammenfällt. Wenn wir am Ende dieses Jahres 1983 unsere Arbeit für die Luther-Ehrungen abrechnen, dann wird sie vor allem daran gemessen werden, inwieweit es uns gelungen ist, die Luther-Ehrungen 1983 so zu gestalten, daß sie auf größtmögliche Weise die Friedenspolitik der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik unterstützt haben. (Maser, 2013, pp.455-461).

Thus, the political actuality of 1983 had overtaken earlier theoretical frameworks; comparatively short-term political agendas had become more important as the primary mission statement for the *Lutherjahr* than long-term ‘kultur- und wissenschaftlichpolitische

[...] Aspekte' set out in the 1979 *Konzeption* and in the 1981 *Thesen*. Furthermore, mobilising the church as a means to this end had gained paramount importance for the SED:

Alle kirchlichen Veranstaltungen im Jahre der Luther-Ehrungen, und ich habe dabei besonders die kirchlichen im Blick, verlaufen dann sinnvoll, wenn sie einen wirkungsvollen Beitrag leisten zur weiteren Einbeziehung, Formierung und Aktivierung religiöser Kräfte für den Kampf gegen die Realisierung der Raketenbeschlüsse der NATO. (ibid.).

In closing, and in contrast to his earlier reference to a 'nicht ungünstig verlaufende Kirchenpolitische Entwicklung', Verner dwells at some length on 'feindlich-negative Kräfte' within the church, which may be read to mean the independent peace movement that had partly grown up within the church at the time. These 'hinlänglich bekannte reaktionäre Kräfte aus Kreisen der evangelischen Kirchen' represent more than a just a short-term threat to a 'störungsfreie Verlauf der Luther-Ehrungen'. Elsewhere in the speech, Verner observes that, looking back to 1978, the church-state relationship had managed to resolve differences without any overtly public disputes: 'Ein wichtiges Ergebnis unserer Politik in dieser Periode war, daß erforderliche Auseinandersetzungen unterhalb der Schwelle der Konfrontation zwischen Staat und Kirche ausgetragen werden konnten. Das muss so bleiben.' (ibid.). As in the SED documents reviewed earlier, one can once again detect in this speech an unmistakable tone of intimidation for the immediate future. Going even further, Verner goes as far as stating that the very existence of the church is at stake should it not manage its own affairs according to the state's expectations: '...erforderliche Auseinandersetzungen... [müssen]... in zunehmendem Maße innerkirchlich ausgetragen werden. Diese Entwicklung muss weiter gefördert werden, wenn die Kirchen Kirchen bleiben wollen.' (ibid.).

### **5.2.5. The Stasi reacts to SED and government anxieties: security becomes a top priority**

On a scale without precedent for a cultural commemoration, the Stasi became actively involved in the *Lutherjahr* from the beginning of 1980 onwards. This appears to have been mainly triggered by reports received from the relevant government department, the Staatssekretariat für Kirchenfragen, headed by Klaus Gysi. As Staatsekretär, Gysi was as senior in the government structure as other government ministers, reporting to the Council of Ministers (Ministerrat); Paul Verner, responsible for security matters, was the senior ZK member with SED responsibility (Zimmerman, 1985, pp.1299-1300). Verner's role and Honecker's frequent interventions underline the sensitivity of church policy in the GDR at

that time. Shortly before the first meeting in June 1980 of the MLK, a Stasi report on a meeting of church bishops noted how certain elements within the church were being openly critical of state preparations for the *Lutherjahr*.

Anschließend kam es zu einem Meinungs­austausch über die Lutherehrungen in der DDR. Die Kirchenvertreter äußerten Bedenken, ob sie die Lutherkonzeption der DDR unterstützen können. [...] Leider habe man Fehlinterpretationen erlebt und wolle nun nicht in die Situation kommen, gegen bestimmte staatliche Positionen angehen zu müssen.<sup>155</sup>

Later that month, a further report from the Stasi quotes sources in Magdeburg at a clerical retreat, commenting on the newly established MLK and seeming to challenge the official theoretical framework for the *Lutherjahr*:<sup>156</sup>

Akzeptiert wurde, dass Genosse Honecker den Vorsitz führt. Die evangelische Pfarrerschaft schätzt dazu ein, daß der Staat dieses Luther-Jubiläum durchführen muss um ein Geschichtsbewusstsein darzulegen [...] Bedenken gibt es kirchlicherseits, daß der Staat vielleicht die gleichen Fehler macht, wie in der wilhelminischen Ära und Luther für sich vereinnahmt wird. Ähnlich der Jubiläen in den sechziger Jahren waren die Vertreter des Auslands schockiert und fanden es lächerlich, wie kirchliche Leute vom Staat vereinnahmt werden. Luther war und ist Theologe und Geistlicher. (ibid.).

From that time on the Stasi developed a comprehensive, military-style strategy to gather advance information and prepare detailed surveillance and monitoring plans for the *Lutherjahr* on all official and church events across the GDR. In practice this meant concentrating on preventing any kind of disruption or ‘Provokation’, such as political demonstrations at the seven ‘Kirchentag’ locations and other major commemoration places. One such district was ‘Bezirk’ Halle, within which were two of the most important commemoration towns, Wittenberg and Eisleben. An eighteen-page plan covered twenty *Lutherjahr* events between February and November, many of which were over more than one day, and involving several hundred visitors.<sup>157</sup> The introduction summarises the core Stasi mission statement: ‘Ein ständig hohes Niveau der politisch-ideologischen und politisch-operativen Arbeit, Einsatzbereitschaft und des Kampfes zu allseitigen Aufklärung und vorbeugenden Verhinderung feindlicher Pläne und Absichten zur Störung der Luther-Ehrung in der DDR.’ (ibid.). In this and similar plans for other areas a substantial number of officials

at all levels within the church hierarchy were singled out, as were suspected peace movement activists amongst the GDR population. Additionally, foreign individuals, foreign journalists attending events and other foreign visitors from the non-socialist countries who were suspected of seeking to contact GDR citizens were all targeted for monitoring during their attendance at events. Western media registered Stasi involvement even in the context of tourist guides:

Sorgen bereiten die Luther-Touristen auch der Wittenberger Stasi [...]. Vorsorglich haben die örtlichen Aufpasser des Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit schon mal die Stadtbilderklärer ausgetauscht: die älteren Stadtführer waren den Zensoren bei ihren Führungen durch die Vergangenheit zu kirchen-fromm und zu wenig revolutionär.<sup>158</sup>

Understandably for a news organisation, *Der Spiegel* did not disclose its sources for this report at the time. A status report from January 1983, now accessible in the Stasi files, confirms this as well as several large scale preparatory measures, all designed to ‘safeguard’ the events in Wittenberg.<sup>159</sup>

[...] Es kann eingeschätzt werden, daß positive Ergebnisse in Vorbereitung der Sicherung der Luther-Ehrung erreicht werden konnten. Dabei handelt es sich um solche politisch-operativen Maßnahmen wie die Schaffung von Schlüsselpositionen und deren Besetzung mit zuverlässigen und teils inoffiziellen Kräften, die Schaffung von Beobachtungsstützpunkten entlang der Protokollstrecke, die Schaffung eines neuen Systems der Stadtbilderklärer, Betreuer von Reisegruppen sowie Journalisten aus dem nichtsozialistischen Ausland. [...] Im Rahmen der Neuorganisation des Systems der Stadtbilderklärer wurden 35 Personen für ihren Einsatz bestätigt, insgesamt ist ein Bestand von 50 Stadtbilderklärer vorgesehen, zum Teil mit Fremdsprachenkenntnissen. Im Ergebnis der Neuorganisation der Stadtbilderklärer konnte erreicht werden, dass unzuverlässige Personen herausgelöst wurden und im engen Zusammenwirken mit dem Rat der Stadt nur zuverlässige Personen bestätigt werden. (ibid.).

A subsequent status report from the same Stasi unit provides a brief but telling insight into the gap between the aim of publicising and framing the *Lutherjahr* commemoration beforehand, and non-socialist bloc reception of those efforts invested. In a section listing the 1,873 tourists from those countries registered in the first three months of 1983 (of which just over 1,000 from West Germany), a Stasi witness reports that: ‘[...] während der Führung

einer Reisegruppe gab es eine Meinungsäußerung dahingehend, daß man beim Stadtrundgang wenig von Luther sieht, dafür jedoch sehr viel Plakate, die sich auf das Karl-Marx-Jahr [concurrent 1983 centenary of his death] beziehen.<sup>160</sup>

Reflecting the ongoing apprehension articulated at the highest SED levels, the entire Stasi effort was thus directed towards a basic ‘störungsfreier Verlauf der Luther-Ehrung’, rather than to support overtly any of the cultural and political objectives set out in the previously disseminated theoretical framework and objectives for the *Lutherjahr*. Stasi records indicate evidence that the urgent commitment in late 1982 to massive Stasi involvement was based on real as well as perceived threats. A top-secret three page Stasi memo, based on specific intelligence, and circulated to only eight senior SED officials including Honecker and Gysi, lays out a detailed scenario of potential (in the eyes of the Stasi and readers) troublemaking activities by individuals on both sides of the German-German border.<sup>161</sup>

Der Stasi bisher vorliegenden ersten internen und offiziellen Hinweisen zufolge beabsichtigen gegnerische Kräfte, im Zusammenwirken mit reaktionären kirchlichen Personenkreis in der DDR, das Luther-Jubiläum 1983 und damit im Zusammenhang stehende kirchliche Veranstaltungen und andere kirchliche Vorhaben für ihre antisozialistischen, gegen die DDR gerichteten Ziele zu missbrauchen. (ibid.).

Citing also several comments in the West German press, such activities were expected to include an unacceptable promotion of personal contacts, particularly between the churches and communities in East and West Germany, intended to demonstrate the ‘Gesamtdeutscher Charakter, die Zusammengehörigkeit und Gemeinsamkeiten der Kirchen beider Deutscher Staaten’. Another crucial aspect highlighted in the memo that would have contributed to raising official anxiety levels even further was the sheer scale of anticipated visitors from the West, totalling over 34,000 individuals who had already applied for visas by August 1982. Overall attendance from East and West at the seven ‘Kirchentage’ was expected to be up to 100,000 for each event. As the apparent originator of the regime’s decision to designate security as number one *Lutherjahr* priority, it is difficult to assess whether the Stasi may have been pursuing its own socio-political agenda at the time, despite the Stasi responding officially to the SED. However, it is likely that the ubiquitous presence of the Stasi during the key large-scale gatherings, in many cases clearly visible as an intimidating enforcer of the state (as seen in the *Spiegel* article cited above), may have devalued the desired sense of pride and therefore national identity amongst the population witnessing these high profile events,

whether in person or on television. If so, then it is equally plausible that the political need to involve the Stasi may have inadvertently contributed to a gap between theory and practice in the planning and execution of the *Lutherjahr*.

### **5.3. IMPLEMENTATION**

This section will evaluate in summary form how the main events and activities of the *Lutherjahr* were completed, before examining in greater detail the involvement of television, and the major *Martin Luther* film in particular. This high profile feature of the *Lutherjahr* offers valuable insights into whether, and if so how the aims of the *Lutherjahr* were translated through its development and execution stages. Moreover, the film's reception at home and abroad provides meaningful pointers to whether and how national identity may have been influenced by this cultural contribution.

#### **5.3.1. The main events: partly formulaic, partly original**

The wide-ranging *Lutherjahr* events and activities can be separated into three broad categories: academic, religious and state-sponsored, with a fourth strand, media, interwoven throughout. Between February and October 1983 nine academic conferences, mostly organised by the DKB and the AdK, were held on various aspects of Luther's life and work (Maser, 2013, p.8). During the entire year, a number of major exhibitions were staged throughout the GDR, including a travelling poster exhibition outside of the GDR. Five, newly renovated Luther-related houses in Wittenberg, Erfurt, Eisleben and the Wartburg were reopened. The outstanding media event was a five-part film on episodes from Martin Luther's life and work, produced by DEFA for prime time transmission on DFF state television. The religious celebrations consisted firstly of small-scale events in churches and communities across the GDR. But the main church activities were seven large-scale *Kirchentage*. These commemorative congresses were held between May and September in Thüringen (Erfurt, Gotha and Weimar), Rostock, Eisleben, Frankfurt/Oder, Magdeburg, Dresden, and Wittenberg. They are said to have attracted a total of over 200,000 participants including some 45,000 Western and 26,000 West German registered visitors (Olsen, 2015, p.159).

Whereas the MLK's *Arbeitstagung* of 29 October 1982 had identified sixteen *Lutherjahr* events, conferences and exhibitions as 'Höhepunkte',<sup>162</sup> four events stand out retrospectively in relation to senior government and party attendance as well as media publicity: the state-sponsored re-opening of the Wartburg castle on 21 April, a church-led ecumenical ceremony

commemorating Luther entering the Wartburg on 4 May, the *Festakt* at the East Berlin *Staatsoper* on 9 November and the final ‘Abschlussfeier’ ceremony in Eisleben on Luther’s birthday, 10 November. Within the overall *Lutherjahr* agenda, it is the final two November ceremonies that were designed to mark the culmination of the state’s and the church’s respective commemorations.

The *Festakt* followed ‘the usual ritualistic pattern adopted by the GDR leadership for large commemorations’ (Maser, 2013, p.305). The GDR-CDU Chairman, Gerald Götting, in his role as Deputy Chairman of the MLK, gave the main speech, discussed in the later, ‘outcomes’ section of this chapter. The remainder of the ceremony was devoted to performances of Mendelsohn’s ‘Reformation-Sinfonie’, which includes the choral tune ‘Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott’ by Luther. After the interval, during which Honecker was introduced to VIP guests, including the Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Runcie, the ceremony closed with Beethoven’s ninth symphony (Maser, 2013, p.310).

The *Abschlussfeier* on the following day in Eisleben, the town where Luther was both born and died, was an altogether unique event. It was conceived by the church as an elaborate set of ceremonies structured, to begin with, around concurrent services in four churches with sermons by local and visiting Protestant as well as ecumenical personalities. The guest list numbered over 200 from 70 churches in 36 countries on both sides of the Iron Curtain. The festive day was designed to be a showpiece for the church, climaxing in a 65-minute closing ceremony on the market square of Eisleben, broadcast live on the DFF, West German ZDF, and television networks in East and West (Maser, 2013, pp.314-316). Landesbischof Dr. Leich, a leading church representative and member of both the MLK and the *Lutherkomitee*, gave the welcome address and Dr. Philip Potter, General Secretary of the International Ecumenical Council of Churches in Geneva the main speech.<sup>163</sup> This was followed by short readings from Luther’s works by young Christians from the GDR, Netherlands and Sweden, the laying of wreaths at the Luther monument and a final mass prayer.<sup>164</sup>

Both the attendance as well as absence of certain senior GDR officials and lower-ranking foreign dignitaries (ambassadors and foreign religious leaders) at the final November events attracted western media speculation at the time and subsequent academic debate. West German President Karl Carstens and Chancellor Helmut Kohl decided not to attend both the *Festakt* and the Eisleben closing ceremonies; the invited heads of state of five, overwhelmingly Protestant, Nordic countries (like the GDR) i.e., Finland, Sweden, Norway,

Denmark and Iceland, were absent as well. The most senior, 'high profile' foreign attendee was arguably Runcie. Despite Honecker's attendance, Götting replaced him at the last minute as main speaker at the *Festakt*. Immediate western media comment interpreted Honecker's decision as a direct, unhappy response to the non-attendance by foreign dignitaries. Without speculating on other reasons such as illness, Maser refers to substantive evidence that disproves this linkage. He points to several documents in official GDR files going back to May 1983 that anticipate the intentions of the Swedish and Norwegian Kings, and the Queen of Denmark not to attend. President Carstens informed the GDR foreign ministry on 24 August 1983 that he would not be attending, citing 'Terminliche Gründe' as the reason (Maser, 2013, p.265). Chancellor Helmut Kohl excused himself from the ceremonies in writing at the same time, without giving any reasons. This is interpreted convincingly by Maser as compounding Carstens's absence. The negative effect of Honecker subsequently stepping back from both November events, including the Eisleben closing ceremony, whether coincidental or not, is discussed later in the evaluation of the *Lutherjahr*'s outcomes.

Despite wide GDR media coverage and a faultless execution, as a contribution to the *Lutherjahr*'s aim of promoting national identity it seems unlikely that the predictable and elitist quality of the *Festakt* would have resonated amongst the population more than the very similar *Festakte* in previous cultural commemorations. In contrast, the Eisleben *Abschlussfeier* registered both success and setbacks. The whole staging and the large participation of the public at the market square ceremony, visible on the recording of the live television broadcast, is impressive.<sup>165</sup> But despite months of careful planning the actual day and its overall reception, as described by Maser, was somewhat impaired. Thick fog in the Eisleben area on the day and a serious car accident involving Götting on his way from Berlin to once again stand in for Honecker as main speaker in the evening, were unavoidable. However, the smooth implementation of the day's events was also affected by over-zealous security imposing roadblocks in a 30 km. radius of Eisleben, allowing only authorised members of the public from further away to join the festivities. Coincidentally or possibly partly as a result, public participation at the afternoon events, as recorded in Stasi reports, did not live up to the predicted numbers; all four churches were each filled to less than half of their capacity (cited in Maser, 2013, p.324). In summary, both of the main events of the *Lutherjahr* were, on the face of it, successfully implemented. But their potential to contribute to a longer term national identity was diminished. At the same time, it can be argued that the far more visible participation of the general public at the *Abschlussfeier* must have made an

impact. Combined with the notable active involvement of representatives from non-socialist countries in the actual ceremonies this may well have heightened a sense of national pride amongst participants, television viewers and readers of the printed media reports.

### **5.3.2. Film and Television at the *Lutherjahr*: reporting, educating and entertaining in equal measure?**

Compared to other major cultural commemorations reviewed in this thesis, the scale of *Lutherjahr* related media activity in the GDR was unprecedented in terms of variety and depth of television and film content produced for domestic consumption and external distribution. Both specific as well as general audiences at home and abroad were targeted. To begin with, DEFA produced in early 1981 a 31-minute documentary film, *Martin Luther*, on behalf of the GDR foreign ministry. This was specifically aimed at foreign viewers and was shown to representatives of the foreign diplomatic corps in the GDR as well as at some 130 events held in foreign GDR embassies and cultural venues between May and October 1983. Although focusing on the touristic attractions of the various Luther-related venues in the GDR, this film also contains excerpts from Erich Honecker's address at the initial meeting of the MLK, on 30 June 1980, as discussed above, thus ensuring that the SED's key political and cultural messages were appropriately publicised (Simons, 1996, p.99).

Comprehensive television content for domestic GDR viewers consisted of niche and general audience productions. A short outline of the range of productions is noteworthy, as it illustrates the scale of output that markedly exceeds that of the cultural commemorations analysed in the preceding case studies. Three 30-minute documentaries on Luther's life and a series of several 15- to 25-minute programmes on various theological aspects of Luther's works were produced jointly with the church. A general domestic audience was addressed with brief *Lutherjahr* news items within the main daily *Aktuelle Kamera* programme, totalling some 63 minutes over the year (Simons, 1996, pp.99-103). The most important news coverage, however, was reserved for four major live outside broadcasts: the *Festakt* on 9 November and the three other major events throughout the year, namely the opening ceremony on 21 April, the religious service at the Wartburg on 4 May and the final event in Eisleben on 10 November. A viewing of recordings of the DFF news coverage of the *Festakt* and the Eisleben *Abschlussfeier* reveals similarities and differences in terms of production. Both live broadcasts were of similar length – the *Festakt* at 70' 55" and the *Abschlussfeier* at 65' 17". The *Festakt* broadcast has no commentary other than a short introduction

summarising the political messages – another reflection of the 'routine' features of this commemoration component.<sup>166</sup> Reflecting the organisational ownership of the event, a church representative provides an intermittent religious commentary at the *Abschlussfeier* broadcast and there is a noticeable lack of any polemics. However, at the DFF production level there is a visible similarity from the perspective of the broadcast director. As in the TV broadcast of the *Festakt* at the Beethoven commemoration, the camerawork at all these events focuses several times on younger members of the audience. This may well have been intentional as it would match one of the official aims of the *Lutherjahr* (and the Beethoven *Jubiläum*), namely targeting youth involvement. Finally, the production set-up for the broadcasts of the 4 May and 10 November, church-sponsored events was based on a close technical collaboration between DFF and West German, Austrian and Dutch television authorities (Maser, 2013, p.184). It is plausible that this large-scale, apparently unprecedented – for the DFF – technical collaboration in itself gained foreign recognition for the GDR, thus partly achieving one of the aims for the *Lutherjahr*, noted earlier in this chapter.

### **5.3.3. The Luther film: a contentious gestation exposes differing approaches to the ideological agenda**

All this output was dwarfed in terms of length as well as positive domestic and foreign critical reception by the five-part film, *Martin Luther*. In the main section of the edited volume, *Luther und die DDR: Der Reformator und das DDR-Fernsehen* (Dähn and Heise, 1996), Rotraut Simons presents a comprehensive description of all television and film activity in the GDR surrounding the *Lutherjahr*, focussing primarily on the television film, (Simons, 1996, pp.99-185). Her account of several complex political interventions in the making of the Luther film, together with a summary of subsequent audience reception data, is almost entirely descriptive. However, it cites valuable primary sources at length; these in turn provide a useful access point for analytical research in this chapter. In the following I will concentrate on the relevance of the film's gestation, content and reception to the formation of national identity linked to this *Lutherjahr* 'event'.

The extensive scale of the production and the timing of the film's broadcast raises it to a highlight of overall *Lutherjahr* commemorative activity in the GDR. DFF took the initiative of commissioning a major film production which was created by DEFA, partly in collaboration with a state Czech film studio between 1981 and 1983.<sup>167</sup> With a total running time of 7:25 hours, the film remains to this day the longest ever produced on Martin Luther.

Unlike similar film projects in comparable preceding commemorations, there was a particularly long, and uneven development phase for the Luther film (Simons, 1996, pp.104-126). A rough outline of the overall project was first initiated in mid-1978 within DFF itself, rather than as an instruction from higher political levels. The film was designated as a drama production in order to make it more attractive for a wide GDR audience as well as for foreign television broadcasters. This meant avoiding it being designed and received as an educational documentary and instead employing dramatic entertainment and visually attractive production values. At first, 'Die Rebellen von Wittenberg' by Hans Lorbeer, a popular, mostly fictional novel about Luther, was selected as a potential basis for a screenplay. However, the scope and importance of the film meant that over time the screenplay was to become less of an adaptation than a stand-alone script, drawing on certain fictional figures from Lorbeer's work as inspiration (Simons, 1996, p.106). Perhaps anticipating subsequent political obstacles in the process of developing a screenplay, the DFF took the fortuitous step at the end of 1978 of appointing Gerhard Brendler, noted above as the subsequent main author of the *Thesen*, as historical adviser to the project. Brendler was able to work with the screenplay team of writers in reconciling a small number of fictional characters, included by the writers for dramatic purposes, with underlying historical facts.

However, even early on potential political issues emerged on how best to portray Luther's historically controversial attitude towards the Peasants' War and especially the role of Thomas Müntzer, a radical theologian, contemporary of Luther, and consistently valued socialist role model, even before Luther's official rehabilitation. Müntzer was the religious leader of the peasant's uprising in 1515 but the revolt 'placed him [Luther] in a difficult spot. On the one hand he [Luther] pronounced the grievances of the common folk to be just, but, on the other, he rejected the violence employed by them to achieve their goals' (Hendrix, 2010, p.27). The first complete draft of the film's screenplay was approved by the production team on 7 August 1981. Following completion of a subsequent revised draft, the responsible DFF dramatist, Heide Hess, produced a written appraisal of the film script on 22 December 1981. In it she concludes that the lead screenplay writer, Hans Kohlus, had delivered an impressive and cinematographically effective approach to depicting Luther. In this context Luther was to be positioned as: '[...] große widersprüchliche Renaissancefigur' and 'seine Leistung, seine Tragik, seine Größe, und seine Grenzen' needed to be recognised ('Einschätzung', cited in Simons, 1996. p.111).

Brendler issued an equally positive expert opinion on the screenplay on 14 January 1982, in which he concurred with Hess, noting positively the dramatic intentions of the screenplay: ‘Der Film ist kein gebildetes Lehrbuch, und das ist gut so. Die Spannung steigert sich von Folge zu Folge’ ‘Gutachten von Gerhard Brendler vom 14.1.1982 zum Szenarium ‘‘Martin Luther’’’, cited in Simons 1996 pp.111-112). More important, as it would later turn out to be, was his approval of compliance with the *Lutherjahr*’s ideological framework, which he himself had authored: ‘Ich glaube, daß der Film hinsichtlich der Aussage und des beim Publikum hervorzurufenden Eindrucks durchaus dem Anliegen der Thesen entspricht.’ (ibid.). But going further, he then singles out an aspect of the screenplay, which was to create, in the lead-up to the final approval of the screenplay, high level controversy, namely the reappraisal of Luther’s bourgeois involvement as containing revolutionary elements:

Das Novum, dem sich dieser Film stellt, besteht darin, auch das bürgerlich-gemäßigte Lager in seiner Qualität als Bestandteil der Revolution anzuerkennen. [...] Wir identifizieren uns nicht mit der theologischen und historischen Position Luthers, auch nicht mit der Müntzers oder Karstads. Wohl aber nehmen wir diese unterschiedlichen und gegensätzlichen Positionen zur Kenntnis und würdigen sie in ihrer je eigenen situationbezogenen Raison. Früher haben wir dies vornehmlich für jene Kräfte getan, die sozusagen ‘links’ von Luther standen. [...] Heute tun wir dies auch für die Position Luthers. Darin zeigt sich die Erweiterung der Erberezeption. (ibid.)

Three months before these two official reports, various senior officials outside the immediate DFF production team and outside the DFF itself were already becoming drawn into the process. In doing so they revealed an organisational dysfunctionality and apparent mistrust both within the DFF and, later on, within the SED apparatus, echoing internal dissonances that had surfaced during previous cultural commemorations (Simons, 1996, pp.112-114). In September 1981, Erich Selbmann, ‘Bereichsleiter Dramatische Kunst’ at the DFF, sent Klaus Gysi the first draft of the screenplay, requesting that the screenplay writers should not be notified of the disclosure. Selbmann raised two potentially controversial issues regarding the screenplay: how would the Protestant and Catholic churches, but particularly the former, react to the film, and were there any potential minefields to be addressed regarding the often stormy relationship between Luther and Müntzer [Luther was very much opposed to Müntzer’s endorsement of violence, which ultimately led to Müntzer’s arrest and execution]. On the first question Gysi’s initial reaction was that he did not anticipate any negative reactions as such. However, the phrasing of his statement on the expected reaction indicates

some inconsistency: despite suggesting his overall acceptance, at the same time he appears to refer to fears exhibited by other SED officials (as described in the planning stage section of this chapter) on potential exploitation by certain ‘negative’ elements within the church. Gysi also concedes that the official rehabilitation of Luther might inevitably be seen to threaten – or even diminish – the traditionally positive depiction of Müntzer, creating the need for internal debate and clarification within the Party:

Wenn wir auch nichts von den großen Idealen Müntzers preisgeben, kommt es uns doch vor allem darauf an, der Figur Luthers die richtige geschichtliche Bewertung zu geben und sie in die Vorgeschichte der DDR einzuordnen, weil wir nur so erreichen, dass sich alle Klassen und Schichten unseres Volkes, unter Führung der Arbeiterklasse, mit unserem Staat als der konsequenten Fortsetzung alles Progressiven unserer Geschichte identifizieren. Die Diskussion in der Partei ist also unumgänglich (‘Akttenotiz’, cited in Simons 1996, p.113).

Gysi was not the only recipient of a confidential advance draft of the screenplay; Hanfried Müller, theologian and publisher of the ‘Weißenseer Blätter’ (rigidly socialist, according to Simons) had also obtained a copy of the first draft screenplay in August 1981. He then submitted his own written evaluation to Gysi (Simons, 1996, pp.114-119). This sixteen-page memo disagrees fundamentally with Brendler’s positive assessment without mentioning him by name and served as basis for Gysi’s own official report on the script, dated 17 December 1981, Müller condemns the use of modern colloquial language adopted in much of the script, a point largely accepted and subsequently referred to by Gysi as ‘unsere abgeschliffene Alltagssprache’, (‘Gutachten’, cited in Simons, 1996, p.115). However, Müller’s main criticism is directed towards the screenplay’s overall portrayal of Luther, which he sees as too similar to Luther’s nineteenth century depiction as a conservative counter-revolutionary. In this sense, he contends that Luther appears too opportunistic, and acts as a ‘top-down’ reformer rather than a revolutionary.

Although Müller held no senior government or SED position, his criticism was largely adopted by Gysi in his own official appraisal of the screenplay. The production team at DFF was thus faced with the dilemma of being urged to produce a screenplay focused more on the theology of Luther than dramatising and thus popularising his challenges and relationships as they reacted to his theology. This threatened to create precisely the type of educational film that DFF had been trying to avoid all along (Simons, 1996 p.124). The situation was finally

resolved on 25 February 1982, when DFF escalated the controversy within the SED apparatus. The production team as well as Selbmann referred the whole matter up the DFF reporting line to Wolfgang Schnedelbach, within the 'Abteilung Agitation des ZK der SED' (Simons, 1996 p.125). This senior official, responsible specifically for 'Geschichtspropaganda', took a far more positive view of the screenplay than Gysi:

Überflüssiges Fachgespräch muss entfernt werden, denn der normale Zuschauer, für den wir das machen, hat keine Spezialkenntnisse. Der Luther-Film ist kein Dokumentarfilm, kein Film für Theologen sondern ein Spielfilm für Werktätige, wenn auch einer, von dem in entsprechend entscheidendem Maße das ausprägende Luther-Bild der DDR-Bürger abhängt. (ibid.).

Schnedelbach's approach is particularly noteworthy in that he clearly views the whole project very much from a reception perspective. His intervention not only exposes the reality of the power hierarchy within the SED; it may further be seen as evidence that the SED wanted to reinforce national identity by means of the 'working class', that is the 'man on the street' viewer in the GDR identifying with a certain image of Luther created by the film.<sup>168</sup>

The film's shooting program was largely completed in February 1983 but was subsequently subject to several revisions, cuts and even new shooting, before it was finally approved for transmission at the end of September 1983. Reports on the reception of successive viewings by senior DFF and 'Abteilung Agitation des ZK der SED' officials over a six-month period in 1983 reveal considerable differences even within the ZK (Simons, 1996 pp.130-36). Much of this centred on the recurring issue of the film's treatment of Müntzer, and whether he was given sufficient recognition as an undisputed GDR role model as compared to Luther. One of the interventions during this time displays the nervousness of senior party officials that the film might not fully conform with the full extent of the official ideological framework for the *Lutherjahr*. On 27 April 1983 the DFF production team's main dramatist, Manfred Seidowsky was instructed by Heinz Adameck, 'Vorsitzender des Komitees für Fernsehen' and DFF's most senior SED and ZK member, to review the entire script, word by word and provide a listing of all corrections. The purpose of this review was to ensure the screenplay's conformity with the *Thesen* as well as with Honecker's speech at the opening meeting of the MLK on 13 June 1980 (Simons, 1996 p.134). The film was finally broadcast in prime-time slots over five evenings between 9 and 13 October 1983 and subsequently on West German television as well.

#### **5.3.4. The Luther film: well crafted and ideologically within the *Lutherjahr*'s official aims**

Luther lived from 1483 to 1546; however, the film is a dramatisation of selected events in his life between 1515 and 1525. This period begins shortly before, and continues after the start of the Reformation, marked in 1517 by the publication of Luther's Ninety-Five Theses, also known as the 'Thesensanschlag von Wittenberg'. The film was broadcast in prime-time slots over five evenings between 9 and 13 October 1983, and on various West German channels in 1985 and 1986.<sup>169</sup> The episodes carry the titles 'Der Protest', 'Der Sohn der Bosheit', 'Die Geheimnisse des Antichrist', 'Hier stehe ich...' and 'Das Gewissen'. However, the film version reviewed for this case study is continuous and there are no obvious breaks indicating where the episodes were divided.

In the following, I will comment specifically on the film's visual and spoken content and its often intricate handling of several themes that can be associated with the ideological framework of the *Lutherjahr*. Within this perspective, I will evaluate the likely reception of the viewer and to what extent the film may have encouraged her or him to identify with the GDR as a nation based on the values ascribed to this major religious and cultural figure. Although the five episode titles carry no overtly ideological undertones, the opening sequence shows an extract from the gigantic *Bauernkrieg* panorama painting by Professor Werner Tübke – '*Frühbürgerliche Revolution in Deutschland*' – specifically a parade of peasants being trodden down by a cardinal on a horse. This painting, executed between 1976 and 1987, sets the tone from the outset as being a socio-political representation of Luther, rather than a predominantly theological one.

The first two hours are devoted to the build-up to the *Thesenschlag* and the subsequent hearing before Cardinal Cajetan in Augsburg. The emphasis appears to be more on the abuse of indulgences by the Catholic Church than on Luther's wish to reform much of Catholic ritual including the use of the Latin language. The apparent dominance of Luther's anti-corruption campaign could be viewed as an emblematic reference to socialism standing up to the excesses of modern capitalism, a theme that is broadly in line with Luther's overall depiction in the 1981 *Lutherjahr Thesen*. However, as noted above, the same *Thesen* position Luther as a 'Vertreter einer zumeist dem Bürgertum nahestehenden, zum Teil frühkapitalistische Interessen ausdrückenden, vom Territorialfürstentum und der Kirche materiell abhängigen Intelligenz'. This image appears to diverge from the anti-capitalist

narrative that appears in Luther's passionate attacks on the banking practices of the Fugger family in Augsburg (2:32:32).

The variance is, however, tempered by a second narrative that defines Luther as a man of the people, for the people. The corruption of the Catholic Church is expressed in how he attacks the Church for collecting money that should have gone to the poor. A third theme running throughout the film concerns continuing tensions between both the Catholic and evolving Protestant churches on the one hand and the state at different levels and different times: the regional community, e.g. Wittenberg, the regional ruler e.g. the Elector of Saxony and the ultimate, supra-regional Emperor. The state is always presented as dominating the power structure. Moreover, the state, (Saxony), protects Luther by providing safe physical passage at various times in the film, including his supporter-enforced exile from Wittenberg to the Wartburg fortress. His confidante and backer Georg Spalatin, who also acts as intermediary between Luther and Frederick, Elector of Saxony (Hendrix, 2010, p.119), appears throughout the film as symbolising the moderate yet omnipresent state. This representation of the enduring hegemony of the state sits well with the official aspiration of the state-church relationship in the GDR.

Two further interlinked themes that project certain attributes of Luther can be identified in the film. Firstly, three examples of Luther, the socially engaged revolutionary: in a striking dialogue with his father, Luther complains:

Weltliche Macht soll die Schuldigen strafen, auch Päpste, Bischöfe, Priester. Warum hält das geistliche Recht ihre Freiheit so hoch, gerade als wären Schuster, Steinmetz, Zimmermann nicht auch so gute Christen wie sie? Wird ein Priester erschlagen, so liegt das Land im Bann. Warum nicht auch wenn ein Bauer erschlagen wird? Woher kommt solch ein großer Unterschied zwischen gleichem Christen? (4:14:22).

In a letter to his co-reformer, Philip Melancton, Luther writes: 'Wenn Kurfürst Friedrich seine allerheiligen Stifte abschaffte mit den Schätzen, wie viele arme Leute könnte man davon in Sachsen ernähren?' (5:05:50). And a peasant tells a disguised Luther during his stay at the Wartburg:

Der Wald gehört uns nach altem Recht. [Der Burgherr] hat es uns einfach weggenommen. Den Luther haben sie uns auch genommen, weil er verkündigte, ein Christ ist frei, und niemandem Untertan. Aber das kommt, Holz und Wald und Fisch

und Vogel fallen wieder der ganzen Gemeinde zu. Das ist die rechte christliche Freiheit.

Luther is portrayed as a pacifist in the latter stages of the film, particularly in his troubled relationship with Müntzer. This attribute fits in well with the demarcation of the church's role in the GDR when Luther maintains that 'die Welt kann nicht mit dem Evangelium regiert werden' (5:58:35). In a final speech to his wife at the end of the film, delivered with considerable pathos, Luther says:

So lange ich lebe will ich Gott drum bitten, Deutschland soll durch Krieg keine Not haben. Vom Frieden haben wir Leib und Leben, Leib und Kind, Haus und Hof [...]. Alle Gesundheit und Freiheit. Der Friede kann dir helfen daß dir ein gewisses trockenes Brot wie Zucker schmeckt, und ein Trunk Wasser wie der beste Wein. Es ist ein halbes Himmelreich wo Friede ist (7:20:30).

Placing a closing statement that is highly relevant to the internal and international political environment at the time may be taken to imply its top priority amongst all the messages that the film sets out to communicate. All of the themes identified so far in the film conform with the official aims of the *Lutherjahr*, and the *Thesen* on Luther in particular. They also reflect the result one may have expected from film's detailed, protracted and uneven gestation.

A final theme worth mentioning surfaces noticeably at various points in the film. Luther's German identity and even East German roots are alluded to repeatedly. This aspect is fortuitously supported – despite the brief interlude in Augsburg – by the historically accurate storyline being set and partly filmed in the GDR locations of Wittenberg, Leipzig and Eisenach (the Wartburg). This 'Germanness' appears, for example, in Luther's sermon in Wittenberg (3:04:00) which he closes for the first time with the Lord's prayer in German. Shortly afterwards the state of Saxony is highlighted as being a bastion of good politics and a staunch defender of Luther and his work (3:17:00). Luther says at one point: 'Lasset mich Deutsch reden!' (3:36:00) Later, Luther refuses to repudiate his theses in front of the Emperor, attacking Rome – 'der Besitz der Deutschen Nation wird verschlungen durch diese unglaubliche Tyrannei' – and reasserting his specific duty to protect Germany (4:42:40). His single-minded dedication is again revealed when, after some persuasion, he agrees to translate the Bible stating: 'Für meine Deutschen bin Ich geboren, Ihnen will Ich dienen.' (5:23:15). Any appropriation of Luther (versus West Germany) as an official aim of the commemoration is far less explicit in this compared to the earlier case studies; however, the

repeated emphasis on 'German', together with the strong historical links to GDR locations, may have arguably served to associate Luther with a new, German and socialist national identity even more than the other themes described above.

Viewed as a whole, it is not immediately apparent whether the underlying aim of this *Lutherjahr* project to communicate Luther as a suitable role model for a cultural icon in the GDR was achieved, given the complexity and number of themes introduced into the script. The film is on balance a largely successful combination of entertainment and education, despite certain weaknesses. Given its broadcast allocation of prime-time viewing, it does not give the impression of being easily accessible to the general public as it demands a reasonably good knowledge of 16<sup>th</sup> century German history. This is exacerbated by a lack of introduction to the key personalities, no dates being mentioned until approximately one and half hours into the film, and there is little sense of a timeline – only three dates are mentioned in the remaining five hours. Furthermore, the language spoken often sounds archaic. In an interview conducted in 1996, Erich Selbman, the DFF's Head of Drama at the time, explains that a large part of the script, used by Ulrich Thein as Luther, was taken from original Luther texts (cited in Simons, 1996, p.149). The film fails to mention this and it is doubtful whether the authenticity would have enhanced the film's ease of understanding for the average viewer, particularly given the complexity of the indulgence issues.

On the positive side, the film works moderately well as entertainment; although it is heavy in terms of dialogue and light on action, the scenes are kept short and well dramatised. The soundtrack is evocative and includes music attributed to Luther, and the overall production values, including the cinematography, are in keeping with international standards. The strongest feature of the production is the uniformly high quality of acting headed by a charismatic Ulrich Thein in the lead role. In short, the film's critical reception by GDR and foreign media, discussed below, may be attributed to all of these positive factors with the weaknesses explaining the relatively poor viewing figures, as will be seen in the next section.

## **5.4. OUTCOMES**

### **5.4.1. A positive reception of the film in East and West, but a differing emphasis on ideology and artistic values**

As already demonstrated in the Beethoven bicentenary case study, official audience research reports in the GDR after 1970 provide a potentially valuable primary source for gauging both the quantitative interest and the qualitative reaction of the viewers, that is, the GDR population at large, to commemoration-related programming. As such they represent one of the few sources for assessing popular reception of commemoration activity. This assumes that the data-gathering methodology was statistically sound and that, even with the reports being classified as confidential, the data, as presented, was undistorted. Simons points out correctly that the reports must also be interpreted through the perspective of competitive programming at the time of broadcast. Even if the Luther film episodes were broadcast in prime-time, registered viewer interest may have been diminished if less demanding, popular entertainment such as a thriller or a comedy was being broadcast simultaneously on the other GDR channel – let alone on a West German television channel (Simons, 1996, pp.150-151).

Audience research reports for the month of October show viewing percentages for the five Luther film episodes ranging between 8.4% and 9.6% (Simons, 1996, pp.151-152). Just over one million viewers were estimated to have seen all five episodes and another 2.3 million at least one episode. In total, this meant approximately 3.4 million viewers of the Luther film. Other scholars have estimated a total audience of three million (Maser 2013, p.184) To put this into context, only five to eight cinema films per annum reached more than 1 million viewers in the GDR at that time. The impact of competitive programming may be observed in the fact that whilst the first episode attracted 8.4% of viewers, a British film from the ‘Carry on...’ series, broadcast on the second GDR channel, registered 35.5% viewing; a Woody Allen film was also being broadcast that evening on the second West German television channel (Simons, 1996, p.182).

As was the case for audience research related to the Beethoven commemorations, qualitative feedback was measured on a 1(best) to 5 scale; the average mark awarded by viewers for the five Luther film episodes ranged between 2.5 and 3.1. In contrast to the simpler methodology employed in 1970, the data also breaks down into demographic and age groups and geographical locations. Viewing figures for older segments, that is over 46 and particularly over 65 was higher than for younger viewers. The same pronounced disparity may be identified between viewers with higher education and manual workers. This outcome was substantiated by the findings of a one-off, additional piece of audience research carried out amongst 134 individuals, largely young and ‘working class’, in eight large workplaces on 14 October 1983 (cited in Simons, 1996 p.154). Despite uniformly positive feedback on the

acting quality, the film was judged as 'schwer' and the viewing experience as 'erzieherisch' rather than 'artistisch'. In summary, one may assume that both youth and the wider working class would have been considered prime target sections of the population for purposes of communicating a revised image of Luther that matched the one intended by those in the SED planning the *Lutherjahr*. In terms of thereby promoting national identity as a legacy of the *Lutherjahr*, the reality of this result alone may be seen as missing an important objective of the commemoration.

The mild reservations expressed by viewers were not replicated in politicised reviews in the GDR press. *Neues Deutschland* praised the film's Marxist approach to Luther<sup>170</sup>:

... Wie sorgsam und dialektisch Luther als Initiator einer großen revolutionären Bewegung in den Klassenkämpfen seinerzeit gestaltet wurde: als ein gläubiger Mensch, der sich aus christlicher und humanistischer Gewissensentscheidung gegen die Doktrinen einer erstarrten Gesellschaft wandte und für eine bessere Welt eintrat.

In contrast, the main (GDR) CDU newspaper appears to downplay contemporary as opposed to historical political aspects of the film:

Ein Lutherbild für unsere Zeit, [...] die Sicht auf Luther und seine Zeitgenossen ist zwar durchaus von heutigen gesellschaftlich-historischen Einsichten und Erkenntnissen über die Reformation als Teil der frühbürgerlichen Revolution in Deutschland bestimmt, aber sie schreibt ihm und ihnen nicht gesellschaftlich-historische und dann auch politische Motive zu, die sie nicht haben konnten. Er war alles andere denn ein Revolutionär in heutigem Verständnis [...]. Und gerade darin besteht denn auch eine große, in dieser Lutherdeutung vollbrachte Leistung, daß sie Luther nicht vordergründig politisiert und vergegenwärtigt.<sup>171</sup>

West German press comments immediately following the broadcasts were generally positive: 'Ein künstlerisches Ereignis'<sup>172</sup> and 'Ein bemerkenswerter Film, der in der Bundesrepublik, wo die Missachtung der eigenen Geschichte jahrelang gerade zur Modesache wurde, nachdenklich stimmen sollte'.<sup>173</sup> Compared to the more hostile tone of the earlier *Der Spiegel* article (quoted above) which reported on the apparent overall politicisation of the *Lutherjahr*, West German press reviews of the Luther film seem more benign: 'Die Ostberliner Führung hat das Luther-Jahr vor allem durch die fünfteilige Fernsehserie dazu genutzt, der Bevölkerung der DDR eine im wesentlichen objektives Bild vom Reformator zu präsentieren, dabei aber stets die ideologische Komponente eines Geschichtsbildes des "sozialistischen

Vaterlandes" im Auge behalten'.<sup>174</sup> Yet, while noting Luther's revised stature as being positioned in its historical context, *Der Tagespiegel* refers explicitly to the contemporisation aspects of Luther that forms the basis of this thesis; the relationship between cultural appropriation and national identity: 'Luther wird rehabilitiert: der Volksvertreter von damals ist heute ein frühbürgerlicher Revolutionär. Der Film unterließ es, ihm anstelle der theologischen politische Motive unterzuschieben. Das hatte er auch nicht mehr nötig. Mit diesem Film hat die DDR Luther für sich vereinnahmt – er soll Teil des nationalen Selbstbewusstseins sein.'<sup>175</sup>

The West German media reception of the film is reminiscent of the generally positive West German media reaction to the Kollwitz commemorations sixteen years earlier - with the proviso that unlike with Kollwitz, there is no insinuation that the GDR is Luther's spiritual home. Whilst *Der Tagespiegel's* tone may be interpreted as sarcastic, it may be also taken at face value as evidencing not only acceptance but even respect for the GDR's unexpectedly light touch in politicising Luther. At the same time the GDR's ongoing appropriation of Luther as a contribution to a separate national identity is accepted without reservation as a logical outcome of the film. This last aspect is possibly the most interesting as it is likely to have been especially welcomed by the few readers in the GDR with access to West German printed media and receptive to this apparent endorsement. The article spells out and thereby in itself validates a sometimes hidden yet always present objective of the *Lutherjahr* and the earlier cultural commemorations. Finally, the ultimate positive reception of the film suggests a noteworthy parallel between the film and the 1970 Beethoven recordings in achieving a degree of enduring international legacy.

#### **5.4.2. Mixed messages in government assessments**

A further responsibility of the *Organisationsbüro* of the MLK mentioned in their post mortem report is the self-monitoring of the unit throughout the year as a means of developing best practice for the future: 'Die kontinuierliche Aktualisierung des Standes der Vorbereitung und Durchführung der Martin-Luther-Ehrung 1983 der DDR, verbunden mit der Verallgemeinerung bester Erfahrungen'.<sup>176</sup> This is a noteworthy novelty in the context of previous, similar organisational units described in earlier chapters. The report goes on to list all the many tasks carried out, but without measuring their effectiveness and impact against the three targets. Even more surprising for a post mortem is the apparent absence of any negative outcomes over the entire planning and implementation period. The only adverse

experience mentioned is the unit's involvement in the actual production and distribution of publicity material and souvenirs.

The closing section of the report, headed: 'Zu einigen Erfahrungen und Schlussfolgerungen', elicits several comments: in contrast to comparable post mortems in the past, the author specifically mentions learning from the past as an important success factor: 'Zur politisch-wirksamen Verwirklichung der Beschlüsse [...], hat sich die frühzeitige Einrichtung eines Büros bewährt, wobei verstärkt auf die Erfahrungen bei der Vorbereitung und Durchführung früherer Jubiläen aufzubauen ist.' A further success factor for the unit's apparent effectiveness was the manner in which it had supposedly collaborated with the church's 'Lutherkomitee'. Two fundamental terms appear here: a focus on factual issues – 'Sachfragen', therefore by implication excluding personality problems, and trust – 'vertrauensvolle Zusammenarbeit'. In comparison with similar reports in the past, this report is remarkably free of any specific negative experiences or conclusions. This observation may be linked to repeated references in the report that credit the unit's success to having enjoyed a long gestation period. The report's overall value as a primary source, that also marks it as a further step in the evolution of similar commemorations, is that it looks both backwards as well as forwards, characteristics missing from previous reports of this kind. Its main deficiency is that the overall content and tone seems rather too positive and self-congratulatory to serve as realistic evidence that the unit was actually able to deliver on its goals and theory-based aspirations. Rakotz suggests in a post-1989 interview that his report had been a pro-forma exercise. It was thus able to justify his and the unit's *Lutherjahr* work, as basis for the unit continuing to be responsible on a permanent basis for organising subsequent cultural commemorations. Whilst of little immediate relevance to the *Lutherjahr*'s contribution to national identity, this outcome marks an evolution of how cultural commemorations planned for the last six years of the GDR were to be better organised – a subject for further research.

Unmittelbar danach hat keiner von der Luther-Ehrung mehr etwas wissen wollen, keiner. Die ganze Luther-Ehrung ist sang-und klanglos abgehakt worden. Nicht einmal meinen Abschluss-Bericht wollte jemand lesen. Das war nicht mehr interessant. [...] Das Büro, das ich leitete, hat danach die 750-Jahrfeier der Stadt Berlin, die Münzer-Ehrung und anderes vorbereitet (cited in Roy 2000, p.271).

The minutes of a subsequent review meeting with church policy officials chaired by Gysi offer different perspectives on the *Lutherjahr*, compared to the more operations-centred MLK report. The meeting concentrated mainly on detailed implications of the *Lutherjahr* for church policy. The introduction contains a significant summary of the ‘Bedeutung und Ergebnis’ of the *Lutherjahr* in the context of the research question in this thesis. The first sentence states definitively: ‘Den Bürgern wurde in breitem Maße die nationale Identität bewusst gemacht, das Bewusstsein der nationalen Identität wurde neu entwickelt’.<sup>177</sup> The introduction elaborates this outcome with references to the historical legitimacy of [the GDR’s] society. This claim, is followed in the closing sentence by praise for the contribution of GDR historians, phrased as bullet items:

Dieses Ergebnis wurde möglich durch die hohen Leistungen der Historiker – zu Luther wurde keine Vereinnahmung vorgenommen wie im Westen – sondern das reale Bild seiner Bedeutung heraus erarbeitet – fand im Ausland weiteres Interesse – aber auch die theologische Literatur besaß hohes Niveau – durch die geistige Auseinandersetzung mit Luther wurde Gewaltiges für die DDR geleistet. (ibid.).

The assertion of ‘historische Legitimität der Gesellschaft und des Staates’ beforehand sits uncomfortably with the subsequent claim of no ‘Vereinnahmung’. That term rather than the more commonly used *Aneignung* had appeared repeatedly as an accusation in West German media coverage of the GDR’s approach to the *Lutherjahr*, as discussed below. Gysi’s unproven reference here to West German appropriation looks like a defensive response in the spirit of demarcation as used in preceding cultural commemorations, rather than a well-founded criticism of West Germany.

#### **5.4.3. West German press coverage as complementary source of the *Lutherjahr*’s reception in the GDR**

Given the scarcity of evidence originating in the GDR, it is helpful to consider how GDR reception was interpreted through the lens of the West German press. Early in 1983, *Der Spiegel* devoted five pages to the ongoing *Lutherjahr* commemorations. The piece describes in some detail the fifteen *Thesen* and the overall ideological positioning of the year’s events by the SED. Particular attention is given to the revised depiction of Luther in the context of *Erberzeption*, some of the planned major events, and the money being spent to restore historical locations such as the Wartburg and reporting Wittenberg: ‘Denn die DDR beschränkt ihre Luther-Rezeption keineswegs nur auf Reden und Denken. Sie läßt es sich eine

Menge kosten, auch den letzten DDR-Fleck aufzuhellen, in den Martin Luther seinen Fuß gesetzt hat'.<sup>178</sup> The article includes a significant item of evidence on East German critical reception of the *Lutherjahr*, not available in primary sources from the GDR: the East Berlin based cabaret, Die Distel, is recorded as having included the following verse in one of their shows: 'Wer immer noch glaubt / der Martin sei für unser Geschehn / philosophisch gesehn / nicht ganz legitim / der Genosse Erich steht hinter ihm!' (ibid.). This satirical rhyme is all the more remarkable as it exposes an overtly cynical reception of both Luther's apparent rehabilitation and Honecker's high profile involvement.

In the immediate aftermath of the *Lutherjahr*, a West German academic journal reviewed the final *Festakt*, and its keynote speech in particular. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the article notes that the one-hour speech was delivered by Gerald Götting, instead of, as expected, by Honecker, himself. The author points out that about a quarter of the speech was devoted to the theme, 'Luther und der Frieden' and he remarks persuasively on the far-fetched use of Luther quotes:<sup>179</sup>

Allerdings machte der Redner den Versuch, Luther mit der Fähigkeit (der DDR), den Frieden mit 'bewaffneten Mitteln zu schützen, die dem Grad der Friedensbedrohung angemessen sind', in Einklang zu bringen, und zwar mit Luther-Zitaten über das den Frieden (und die Ordnung im Innern) sichernde 'Schwert' (ibid.).

In short, the tone and content of this overall reception hints at a potential credibility gap both within the GDR and externally. No explicit primary evidence came to light in researching this case study that the organisers of the *Lutherjahr* referred back to earlier cultural commemorations when planning and executing the *Lutherjahr*. Nevertheless, the reception gives the impression that efforts were made to project an image of Luther that was arguably less fixated on ideology and negative demarcation to West Germany than previous commemorations.

In short, this evidence of West German media reception presented here as an outcome is sometimes contradictory. Overall it does too little to endorse Roy's assessment, that the foreign reception created a bigger impression on the GDR population than any *Lutherjahr*-related propaganda campaign directed internally (Roy 2000, pp.190-197).

#### **5.4.4. Conclusion: was the *Lutherjahr*'s overall impact more important for church policy in the GDR than for national identity?**

Defining the benefits and positive outcomes of the *Lutherjahr* has proved to be a challenge for historians and theologians alike. Writing in the immediate aftermath of the *Lutherjahr*, Siegfried Bräuer, a leading GDR theologian and church official highlights the tangible benefits to the church of state spending on restoration of church property under the sub-heading 'Möglicher Ertrag des Luther-Jubiläums'. Without any meaningful evidence he also proposes an intangible increase in awareness of Luther amongst the population (Bräuer, 1985, pp.54-56). Stefan Wolle adds more recently but equally unpersuasively this prosaic observation: 'Die Jubiläumssucht der SED-Führung hatte auch ihre guten Seiten. [...] Die direkt oder indirekt Beteiligten sagten sich: immer noch besser ein "Luther-Jahr" als ein "Lenin-Jahr", so wie es 1970 zum 100. Geburtstag des sowjetischen Staatsgründers erbarmungslos über die DDR hinweggerollt war. Jedes Jubiläum diene dazu, vorsichtig die ideologischen Grenzen auszuweiten und von den knappen Baumaterialien und-Kapazitäten etwas für die Restaurierung alter Bauwerke abzuzweigen.' (Wolle, 2013, p.215).

Two further conflicting approaches illustrate the challenge facing the scholar drawing conclusions on the *Lutherjahr*: Olsen summarises his assessment of the *Lutherjahr* correctly, if simplistically, as 'illustrating a case where the state attempted to appropriate a memory and tradition that had been kept alive by the Evangelical Church and tried to subsume [Luther's] image into the heritage and traditions of the GDR state' (Olsen, 2015, pp.141-142). As alluded to in the Schiller bicentenary chapter, Olsen's interpretation here is again considerably weakened when he positions the *Lutherjahr* as an 'example of rehabilitation and commemoration' within a specific, all-encompassing and deliberate SED 'memory-work agenda', (ibid.). In this sense it can be held that, like Zimmering and Roy before him, Olsen sees a top-down structure on display by the GDR's ruling party and government planning and executing the *Lutherjahr*. As we have seen in examples such as the modest international recognition of the formal events, the gestation of the Luther film, but above all the church's ambivalent support for the state's ideological framework, this approach is not supported by much of the gap between the *Lutherjahr*'s official aims and outcomes.

In contrast to the intentionalist interpretations of Roy, Zimmering and Olsen, Peter Maser, a prominent theologian and *Kirchenhistoriker*, takes a moderate, functionalist approach that supports the argument of this thesis. Written in anticipation of the 2017 Reformation

quincentenary, Maser's substantial work contains strong documentary evidence of repercussions of the *Lutherjahr* on the SED and its subsequent cultural and educational policies. In short, he determines persuasively that the multi-faceted *Lutherjahr* not only reflects the political, cultural and social status of the GDR in 1983; in itself the *Lutherjahr* may be considered to have provoked subsequent internal processes regarding the role of the church in the GDR, that played a major part in the ultimate fall of the regime in 1989. My analysis of primary sources on the *Lutherjahr*, conducted mainly through the prism of the commemorations' likely impact on national identity, concurs with Maser's functionalist approach – in itself an important endorsement of the participatory dictatorship historiographical model of the GDR.

Each major cultural commemoration in the GDR also needs to be appraised in the context of its time and wider issues prevailing in the political environment. The *Lutherjahr* presents the scholar with unique features and outcomes, compared to the ones reviewed in the previous chapters of this thesis. Unlike the other three case studies in this thesis, the so-called 'planning stage' was so long and complex that much of it constituted memory-work in its own right. This is particularly the case for the Luther film. Better coordinated, more thorough and timelier organisation than was the case in earlier commemorations, boosted during the *Lutherjahr* by unprecedented and visible Stasi involvement, may have secured a smooth, ostensibly successful *Lutherjahr*. This apparent outcome was materially improved by the additional benefits of much needed foreign exchange inflows, estimated at between DM 140-200 million (Goeckel, 1984, p.129), as well as the above-mentioned expenditure on restoration of Luther-related property.

Yet the *Lutherjahr* did not fully achieve its designated secondary objective of gaining additional external respect. This aim, as already illustrated in the previous case-studies, was meant to strengthen a particular type of national identity, namely by removing residual external doubts regarding the GDR's legitimacy. As described above, the aim was not uniformly met by western media coverage of events. In its simplest form, and again mirroring similar outcomes at the Beethoven commemorations, external recognition also fell short when it came to attendance by most foreign non-ecumenical guests at the two most important events – the *Festakt* and the Eisleben closing ceremony. This external attitude is corroborated by the apparent views of the West German government registered at the time. The senior resident West German diplomat in East Berlin, Hans-Otto Bräutigam, discussed his assessment of the *Lutherjahr* in a meeting with foreign journalists on the eve of the *Festakt*.

A Stasi report based on their secret recording of the meeting reveals that the West German government was focusing on the same underlying motive for this (and previous similar commemorations?) that the research question addresses: ‘...die Vertretung der BRD in der DDR habe die Ansicht, daß der künstliche Staat DDR in letzter Zeit versuche, seine eigene national-kommunistische Identität zu finden. Damit soll das Land attraktiver gemacht werden’ (cited in Maser, 2013, p.309).

The widely published ideological framework provides an important example of how the reality of the *Lutherjahr* differed from the initial theory and declared aims. This framework was based, as in comparable major commemorations, on appropriating a major German historical personality. The calendar-driven anniversary of Luther's quincentenary provided, on the face of it, an opportunity of advancing GDR national identity based on identification with a Marxist depiction of Luther within the larger ambit of *Erbepolitik*. But as the reality of subsequent interventions – even in the making of the Luther film – was to illustrate, the *Lutherjahr* commemoration was essentially about reacting to the unresolved challenges of the GDR's *Kirchenpolitik*. By 1983 and thirty-four years of growing external acceptance of the GDR's existence and sovereignty, prioritising the promotion of a positive national identity, had become less essential than countering perceived and real internal opposition that was growing within the church, and into wider sections of GDR society via the peace movement. The prospect of revising a hitherto ambivalent approach to Luther in the GDR was seized on to underpin and publicly demonstrate a recently won, seemingly harmonious collaboration with the church, whilst intending all along to end up solidifying the church's unquestioning acceptance of state hegemony. This underlying core objective represents another yardstick of gauging to what extent the *Lutherjahr* was a success and whether there is a closer match to be found between theory and reality in the *Lutherjahr* than in other previous cultural commemorations. Given the resulting legacy of ever-increasing political and social dissent after 1983, spearheaded by elements within the church, the overall outcome of the *Lutherjahr* may thus be ultimately judged to have been a failure.

## 6: CONCLUSION

The research question asks whether the commemorations of major German cultural figures contributed to the construction of a national identity in the GDR, based on those figures and their historical legacy in German culture. If so, what do the efforts and the outcomes tell us about the kind of society the GDR was? My findings suggest that it is problematic to conclude that commemorative activities made any long-lasting contribution to national identity. The underlying appropriation and Marxist re-positioning of Schiller, Beethoven, and Luther does not appear to have been well communicated, let alone accepted by GDR citizens; the same process was arguably unnecessary to begin with for the Kollwitz centenary. But the manifest reasons why the ideological frameworks, as articulated in the aims of the commemorations, were not met, in themselves offer new perspectives on the GDR as an evolving political entity within a twenty-four year period. These insights add weight to the consensus- and participatory dictatorship models of the GDR.

This concluding chapter first considers the issues involved in attempting to measure national identity. The case studies are then compared and contrasted in order to draw generalised conclusions about the political and cultural value of commemorations in an authoritarian state such as the GDR. The broader implications of how the main themes of *Abgrenzung* and *Aneignung* evolved over the course of this central period in GDR history is summarised in relation to national identity. Finally, these conclusions are discussed in the context of the two broad theoretical frameworks set out in the Introduction chapter.

### 6.1. INITIAL LIMITATIONS TO ASSESSING THE RECEPTION OF COMMEMORATIONS

The case studies in this thesis analyse a range of primary sources on each of the three key stages shared by the case studies, that is, aims, implementation, and outcomes. When examining the commemoration activities and their outcomes it soon becomes problematic to identify, let alone appraise the effect on national identity. This applies to the *Festakt* and similar 'ritualised' events, such as the official launch of the organising committees. All of these appear to have been performed in a seemingly formulaic and repetitive manner.

Tangible evidence of how other commemoration activities may have been received is mainly to be found in attendance records from events that were accessible to the general public, such as exhibitions and cultural performances, as well as some quantitative and qualitative data of

audience reception regarding broadcast output. The relevance of all this data for purposes of the research question assumes that it was not adjusted for political purposes and is therefore accurate. Similarly, and as noted in the Beethoven case study, domestic printed media coverage was subject throughout this period and almost all of GDR history to the constraints of prevailing press guidelines and potential short-term propaganda directives – all of which must be taken into account when assessing how they can be used for specific purposes in this thesis. West German media reporting of GDR commemorations was more differentiated than its GDR counterparts, yet also exhibited Cold War-related political bias, particularly during the Schiller, Kollwitz, and Beethoven commemorations. Nevertheless, on occasion, West German media comment was also in line with correspondingly positive GDR media reception, particularly in the case of the Luther television film. In summary, if reception of the commemorations cannot supply the necessary evidence, we must investigate the interaction between aims, implementation and ultimate outcomes as an alternative tool to gauge the likelihood of any impact on national identity.

## **6.2. CASE STUDIES COMPARED: THEORY VERSUS PRACTICE**

The findings of the four case studies reveal parallels as well as differences between them; when combined they enable the potential relevance of these commemorations to national identity formation to be estimated. The four commemorations are similar in how the aims were developed, despite differences in timing. This may have been caused by lack of much prior experience, as in the case of the Schiller bicentenary, or by the different scale of the commemorations in the other three case studies. The basic format of the commemorations was clearly comparable, comprising the articulation of an ideological framework, the establishment of a high profile, official organising committee, the staging of an academic conference, with all commemoration activities culminating in a *Festakt* ceremony on the birthdate anniversary. Given their primary remit, the MfK was involved in all four commemorations, which may help to explain the likeness in concept and design of the basic commemoration programme. But this uniform approach offers no further insight other than of appearing static and unimaginative. Although there is little documented evidence of deliberate cross-reference between commemorations, we can observe an overall improvement in the actual execution of the events, which suggests that some lessons have been learned from previous commemorations. In this connection one might assume that the subsequent assessment reports had helped, supported by the continuity of certain MfK staff involved in the working groups.

As far as a potential impact on the construction of national identity is concerned, the second apparent similarity between the four commemorations concerns the evident gap between aims, implementations and outcomes, in other words between theory and practice. The case studies demonstrate clearly that the implementation and outcomes were unable always to live up to the aims as declared in the ideological frameworks. This applies in part to how the official and main cultural and academic events were executed but above all to how a revised, Marxist interpretation of Schiller, Beethoven and Luther was not uniformly and successfully communicated. Several incidents of organisational muddle, mixed narratives and recurring SED intervention in how these commemorations were implemented can only have amplified the weak impact of unrealistic ideological aims in each case. Tensions in the internal relationships between the party, the government and the mass organisations can be detected in all case studies, another factor aggravating the reality gap. Even in the least challenging – in terms of promoting the GDR's claim on the personality being commemorated – Kollwitz commemoration, underlying insecurity amongst official organisers may be detected in the manipulative editing of her diaries in the documentary script, most likely to reinforce an already existing perception of Kollwitz in line with her official depiction.

A significant common denominator in all commemorations appears to be evidence of ever-present agency, displayed by many of the key individuals, notably the intellectuals, participating in the planning as well as the execution of the commemorations. However organisational issues and even the communication of ideological messages were not the only problems, particularly as the former tended to become less apparent over the timeline of the four commemorations. In its place, the more dominant theme to emerge was that the commemorations were influenced, even during their planning phase by political reactions to external developments and internal challenges, such as the church-state relationship in the *Lutherjahr*. A final, unhelpful (for purposes of national identity formation) gap between theory and practice was the absence of large scale, active participation of the general public in commemorations activities, with the exception of the mass involvement in church events at the *Lutherjahr* commemorations. This particular disparity between aims and implementation reflected an ostensible divergence between the core aim of exemplifying, in the spirit of the *Bitterfelder Weg*, the prominent participation of the working class in each commemoration, and the reality of an elite driven implementation.

Given all these interwoven impediments, attempting to *measure* impact on national identity becomes an unrealistic challenge. Instead we can only make reasonable assumptions about

what the commemorations may have achieved. It seems appropriate to conjecture that the promotion of the personalities and their works by means of a marked increase in cultural events and output (publications, performances etc) during their anniversary year must have at least heightened awareness amongst the public at large. But to argue that such an awareness may have created national pride in the fact that the GDR was able to stage such elaborate commemorations, particularly in comparison to more modest commemorations in West Germany, is already more speculative. Conversely, it seems more plausible to conclude that this consciousness may have been short-term in nature. In short, it is challenging to build a convincing case that it promoted an incremental intensification in the more tenuous concept of GDR national identity. What the gap between theory and practice thus signifies is a disparity between official attempts to propagandise the GDR's claim on the four German cultural icons and the subsequent outcomes in terms of any evident difference in how GDR citizens may have identified with those icons after their anniversary year.

### **6.3. ABGRENZUNG & ANEIGNUNG: TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN?**

The twin themes of demarcation and appropriation were marked in all four commemorations and yet they could be seen to evolve during the underlying twenty-four-year period from the end of the 1950s to the early 1980s. In essence they represented opposite perspectives derived from the political reality of two German states. *Abgrenzung* took an essentially negative approach of cultural antagonism by focussing on the 'other' (West Germany), or 'what we are not'. *Aneignung* was the positive counterpart, emphasising the self, 'what we are' thus justifying the GDR's claim on the figure as identifying him/her with the new, humanist and socialist Germany. Both themes appeared side by side in all commemorations, but demarcation was more explicit and dominant in the Schiller and Beethoven commemorations than in the commemorations of Kollwitz and Luther. Lacking international recognition of its sovereignty outside of the Soviet bloc until the early 1970s, demarcation reflected the defensiveness and insecurity of the GDR regarding its legitimacy, both internally and externally. This sense of having to endure 'second-class' status as a political and cultural entity was amplified by West Germany's official name for the GDR in 1959 – the 'Soviet Occupied Zone'; even in 1970 the name was still the 'so-called GDR'. But by the time of the *Lutherjahr* in 1983, both German states had become essentially equal in terms of full international recognition of their respective sovereignty; demarcation was less of a concern for the GDR authorities although the FRG never renounced its claim to be the sole legitimate German state. *Erbe-Aneignung* became an ever more important component of GDR cultural

policy in the Honecker era of the 1970s and 1980s. As a consequence, the later commemorations also show that reducing the demarcation narrative and its strident rhetoric did not mean less emphasis on an overt appropriation of German cultural heritage – which remained a consistent and central feature of the ideological frameworks in the commemorations. Even so, the continued manifestation of *Aneignung* as the core component of ideological aims cannot be judged to have made a deeper impression on the *Lutherjahr* in terms of likely national identity formation, than when demarcation dominated such aims in earlier commemorations.

#### **6.4. NATIONAL IDENTITY AND COMMEMORATIONS: A CONVINCING INSTRUMENT OF CULTURAL MEMORY?**

Standing back and examining the ritualised, repetitive facets of the four commemorations as a whole sheds new light on the role that commemorations play within the wider concepts of national identity and cultural memory. The case studies appear to confirm Benedict Anderson's concept of 'official nationalism' propagating a self-protective policy, comparable to that of several nineteenth- and early twentieth-century nations. The GDR regime throughout understood the political need for interlinked concepts of national pride, patriotism and national identity to be encouraged wherever possible. Mindful of the above-mentioned limitations on measuring national identity, it is nonetheless plausible to conclude that the commemorations had the potential to affect national pride and national identity positively and to a small degree. However, it can be argued that this was not necessarily a result of the citizens accepting, even understanding the regime's appropriation ideology focused on the personalities themselves. Instead, one may classify positive outcomes noted in each case study, such as a modicum of new cultural awareness and participation, film, book and recording output, as incidental side-effects of the commemorations. This means that beyond these 'by-products', it may be appropriate to re-evaluate the main, repetitive elements of the GDR's cultural commemorations, in relation to Aleida and Jan Assmann's concept of cultural memory performance. This applies principally to the recurring format of ritualised ceremonies and events described above. It should be emphasised that the limitations of ceremonies, as analysed here, are dependent on the context; in other words my findings relate specifically to the GDR and its cultural commemorations. The success of the 2012 Olympic Games opening ceremony in the UK is an example of a ceremony, repeated at all Olympic Games, that was arguably successful in terms of impact on national pride and identity in the UK. Based on the findings of this thesis, I contend that the repetitive aspects of cultural

commemorations in the GDR seem to question the effectiveness of political actors performing ‘narrativizing acts of remembrance’, as described by Anne Rigney. In summary therefore, although Jan Assmann asserts that ‘collective identity needs ceremony’, it does not always follow that ceremony will produce any measurable results, including the construction of national identity.

## **6.5. AGENCY AND CONCEPTUALISATION OF THE GDR**

The relative ineffectiveness of ideological frameworks in the case studies that can be ascribed to many examples of agency (*Eigensinn*) adds new empirical weight to defining what sort of society the GDR was. It would be wrong to generalise that all the relevant individuals, admittedly pigeonholed here as ‘intellectuals’, displayed the same type and degree of agency. Some of the literature experts involved in the Schiller bicentenary, who still may have felt connected to the 1955 commemoration and its ‘All-German’ aspects, seem to have been uncomfortable with the more rigorous demarcation approach emanating from the authorities. Intellectuals from the realms of education and theatre were also inconsistent in their responsiveness to commemoration aims. The art historians and related intellectuals in the AdK were able to differ in the narratives that they felt should be highlighted when marking the Kollwitz centenary. This example of agency may also be a result of a comparatively relaxed attitude by the authorities to the need to appropriate Kollwitz in ideological terms. Compared to the other three commemorations, it was probably the intellectuals participating in the Beethoven bicentenary who exhibited the strongest examples of agency. The professional musicians such as composers and conductors stand out here, but also to some extent some of the musicologists and music-focussed intellectuals within the DKB. Lastly, the *Lutherjahr* reveals a different side of agency in respect of theologians concerned with the church-state relationship rather than historians repositioning a Marxist interpretation and rehabilitation of Luther. Despite all these variations, the consistent evidence of agency throughout all commemorations is a significant finding of this thesis. In itself it was arguably the most important factor contributing to the theory versus reality gap described earlier. It follows that the evidence of agency yielded here was the main reason in each case for the GDR regime state to be unable to impose a top-down ideological, as compared to organisational implementation of its aims; the fact that this outcome was only marginally improved by repeated SED intervention may be noted during all the commemorations. Rather than relying on being able to command and control, the regime was heavily dependent on the mass organisations and other stakeholders in the four commemorations cooperating internally

and with each other, so as to ensure that at least the organisational aspects were achieved. In summary, abundant examples of the reality of the GDR power structure across its core period, as analysed here, substantially endorse 'bottom-up' models of the GDR; both 'consensus dictatorship' and 'participatory dictatorship' concepts are equally validated and enhanced by this new perspective on cultural commemorations and national identity.

The scope and comparative case study methodology chosen for my thesis is thus upheld by a meaningful pattern of valuable findings from selected samples of cultural genres, set against a selected time line of GDR history. The revealing research conclusions point to opportunities for further investigation into the relationship between cultural commemorations and the construction of national identity. An alternative case study research of West German versus East German commemorations of the same major cultural figures might offer new insights on the comparative impact on national identity across different political and socio-cultural systems. In a purely GDR context, further primary sources could include samples of cultural commemorations before 1959 and after 1983 as well as the additional dimension of oral history testimony from former GDR citizens participating in, or especially exposed to commemoration activity.

Understanding what East German identity was before 1989 and may still be today remains topical. A long-term project in Saxony, described recently by a regional broadcaster based in the former GDR, represents a good example of on-going research. This longitudinal study had been following one hundred young people since 1987, observing that the majority retain an identification with the GDR whilst also embracing a new *Bundesbürger* identity.<sup>180</sup> This present-day example of popular history demonstrates why an understanding of the many factors affecting national identity is one of the potentially more rewarding pathways to a better understanding of the GDR itself.

## 7: BIBLIOGRAPHY

### ARCHIVAL SOURCES

#### **Bibliothek des Bundesarchivs, Berlin-Lichterfelde**

#### **Stiftung der Partei und Massenorganisationen der ehemaligen DDR im Bundesarchiv (SAPMO)**

DR 1 (Ministerium für Kultur)

DR 2 (Ministerium für Volksbildung)

DY 27 (Kulturbund der DDR)

DY 30 (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands)

DC 20 (Ministerrat der DDR)

ZPA (Zentrales Parteiarchiv)

#### **Bundesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (BStU)**

Ministerium für Staatssicherheit (MfS), Bezirksverwaltung Magdeburg

Ministerium für Staatssicherheit (MfS), Bezirksverwaltung Halle

Ministerium für Staatssicherheit (MfS), Zentrale Auswertungs- und Informationsgruppe (ZAIG)

#### **Archiv der Akademie der Künste**

Historisches Archiv: Akademie der Künste der DDR (1950-1993), (AdK-O)

#### **Deutsches Rundfunkarchiv**

Fernsehen Bestände

Schriftgutbestand Fernsehen

Schriftgut Zuschauerforschung

Tondokumente

Zeitschriftensammlung

#### **DEFA-Stiftung**

Filmbestand (*Der Augenzeuge*)

## CONTEMPORARY NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS

*Aufwärts: Jugendzeitschrift des Deutschen Gewerkschaftsbundes*

*Berliner Zeitung*

*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*

*Nationalzeitung*

*Neues Deutschland*

*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*

*Spandauer Volksblatt*

*Der Spiegel*

*Tägliche Rundschau*

*Volksstimme Magdeburg*

*Die Welt*

*Die Zeit*

## ONLINE SOURCES

Wikimedia Commons. 2.12.2015. *Stamps of the German Democratic Republic* [online]. Available from: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Stamps of the German Democratic Republic by year](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Stamps_of_the_German_Democratic_Republic_by_year) [Accessed 15.2.2016].

Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung/bpb. [undated]. *Datenbank Deutschland-Chronik: 12.1 Europapolitik, Nato und Bundeswehr: 20-25. März 1958* [online]. Available from: <http://www.bpb.de/geschichte/zeitgeschichte/deutschland-chronik/131475/20-25-maerz-1958> [Accessed 23.11.2016].

Verfassungen der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1949-1990. 5.11.2004. *Verfassung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik vom 7. Oktober 1949* [online]. Available from: <http://www.verfassungen.de/de/ddr/ddr49-i.htm>. [Accessed 20.2.2016].

Friedrich Schiller Archiv. ©2018. *Schiller Ode 'An die Freude' – Interpretation, Inhaltsangabe, Text, Videos: 2.Fassung (1808)* [online]. Available from: <http://www.friedrich-schiller-archiv.de/inhaltsangaben/an-die-freude-schiller-interpretation-inhaltsangabe/#freudetext2>. [Accessed 6.9.2017].

FFernsehen der DDR Online: Lexicon der DDR-Fernsehfilme, Fernsehspiele und TV-Inszenierungen. ©2009-2018. *Martin Luther (Gesamtübersicht) (1983)* [online]. Available from: <http://www.fernsehenderddr.de/index.php?script=dokumentationsblatt-detail&id1=17044> [Accessed 24.8.2016].

Imfernsehen GmbH & Co.KG. ©1998-2018. *Martin Luther DDR 1983: TV-Termine* [online]. Available from: <https://www.fernsehserien.de/martin-luther-ddr/im-tv>. [Accessed 26.08.2017].

MDR Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk. 3.10.17. *MDR Aktuell: Langzeitstudie – Die zwei Identitäten der Ostdeutschen* [online]. Available from <http://www.mdr.de/nachrichten/politik/inland/ostdeutsche-sachsen-studie-langzeit-einheit-100.html> [Accessed 4.10.2017].

## SECONDARY LITERATURE

- ALLINSON, M. 2001. The Failed Experiment: East German Communism. In: FULBROOK, M. (ed.) *Twentieth-Century Germany, Politics, Culture and Society 1918-1990*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- APPLEGATE, C. 1992. What Is German Music? Reflections on the Role of Art in the Creation of the Nation. *German Studies Review*, 15, 21-32.
- ARENDT, H. 1951/2017. *The origins of totalitarianism*. London: Penguin Random House.
- ASSMANN, A. 2005. Jahrestage – Denkmäler in der Zeit. In: MÜNCH, P. (ed.) *Jubiläum, Jubiläum: zur Geschichte öffentlicher und privater Erinnerung*. Essen: Klartext Verlag.
- ASSMANN, J. 2010. Communicative and Cultural Memory. In: ERLI, A. & NÜNNING, A. (eds.) *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies*. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- ASSMANN, J. 2011. *Cultural Memory and Early Civilisation: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- BARCK, S. & HEIMANN, T. 1999. The Fettered Media – Controlling Public Debate. In: JARAUSCH, K. (ed.) *Dictatorship as Experience – Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR*. Oxford: Berghahn.
- BERGER, S. 2004. *Germany (Inventing the Nation)*. London: Arnold.
- BERGER, S. 2011. Former GDR Historians in the Reunified Germany: An Alternative Historical Culture and Its Attempts to Come to Terms with the GDR Past. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 38, 63-88.
- BESSEL, R. & JESSEN, R. 1996. *Die Grenzen der Diktatur: Staat und Gesellschaft in der DDR*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- BILKE, J. B. 2007. ‘Denn er ist unser: Friedrich Schiller’ Zur DDR-Rezeption eines Deutschen Klassikers. In JOHN. J. & ULBRICHT, J. (eds.) *Jena – ein nationaler Erinnerungsort?*. Cologne: Böhlau.
- BOLLINGER, S. & VILMAR, F. 2002. *Die DDR war anders: kritische Wuerdigung ihrer wichtigen sozialkulturellen Einrichtungen*. Berlin: Edition Ost.

- BRADY, T. 2014. Luther und der deutsche Marxismus. In: SCHILLING, H. (ed.) *Der Reformator Martin Luther 2017: eine wissenschaftliche und gedenkpolitische Bestandsaufnahme*. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- BRADY, T., HEALY, D. & MCGARRY, F. 2014. Forum – Anniversaries. *German History*, 32.
- BRÄUER, S. 1985. Das Luther-Gedenkjahr 1983 und die Kirche in der DDR. In: SÜSSMUTH, H. (ed.) *Das Luther-Erbe in Deutschland*. Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag.
- BRINKS, J.H. 1997. Political Anti-Fascism in the German Democratic Republic. *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol 32, 207 - 217.
- BROCKHAUS, A. (ed.) 1971. *Bericht über den internationalen Beethoven Kongress 10.-12. Dezember 1970*. Berlin: Verlag Neue Musik.
- BROCKMANN, S. 1999. *Literature and German Reunification*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- BURKE, P. 2011. History as Social Memory. In: OLICK, J.K., LEVY, D. & VINITZKY-SEROUSSI, V. (eds.) *The Collective Memory Reader*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- BUTLER, J. 1988. Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory. *Theatre Journal*, 40, 519-531.
- CHILDS, D. 1983. *The GDR, Moscow's German Ally*. London: Allen & Unwin.
- CONNERTON, P. 2011. 'How Societies Remember?'. In: OLICK, J.K., VINITZKY-SEROUSSI, V. & LEVY, D. (eds.) *The Collective Memory Reader*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- CORDELL, K. 2007. The Role of the Evangelical Church in the GDR. *Government and Opposition*. 25(1), 48-59.
- DÄHN, H. & HEISE, J. 1996. *Luther und die DDR: der Reformator und das DDR-Fernsehen 1983*. Berlin: Edition Ost.
- DANN, O. 2003. Deutsche Erinnerungsorte – Schiller. In: FRANÇOIS, E. & SCHULZE, H. (eds.) *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte*. Munich: Beck.
- DENNIS, D. B. 1996. *Beethoven in German Politics, 1870-1989*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

- DENNIS, M. 2000. *The Rise and Fall of the German Democratic Republic, 1945-1990*. Harlow: Longman.
- DOHLE, H. 1995. Die Auswirkungen des Spitzengesprächs vom März 1978 auf die Kirchenpolitik der SED bis zur Luthererehrung (1979-1983). In: HARTWEG, F. (ed.) *SED und Kirche*. Neuenkirchen-Vluyn: Neuenkirchner Verlag des Erziehungsvereins.
- DOHLE, H. 1996. Die Luther-Ehrung und die Kirchenpolitik der DDR. In: DÄHN, H. & HEISE, J. (eds.) *Luther und die DDR: der Reformator und das DDR-Fernsehen 1983*. Berlin: Edition Ost.
- ERLL, A. 2011. *Memory in Culture*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- ERLL, A. & NÜNNING, A. (eds.) 2010. *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies*. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- FAULENBACH, B. 2013. *Lernen aus der Geschichte – Die DDR: Unrechtsstaat? Stasistaat? Zur Auseinandersetzung mit dem Begriff der Diktatur*. Berlin: Bundestiftung Aufarbeitung.
- FRIEDRICH, C. & BRZEZINSKI, Z. 1966. *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* (2nd. edn.). New York: Praeger.
- FULBROOK, M. 1995. *Anatomy of a Dictatorship: Inside the GDR 1949-1989*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- FULBROOK, M. 2005. *The People's State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker*. New Haven, CT, Yale University Press.
- GILLIS, J. 1994. Commemorations: the Politics of National Identity (Introduction). In: GILLIS, J. (ed.) *Commemorations: the Politics of National Identity*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- GOECKEL, R. 1984. The Luther Anniversary in East Germany. *World Politics*, 37, pp.112-133.
- GOESCHEN, U. 2001. *Vom sozialistischen Realismus zur Kunst im Sozialismus: die Rezeption der Moderne in Kunst und Kunstwissenschaft der DDR*. Berlin: Duncker & Humblot.
- HAASE, H. 1988. *Die SED und das kulturelle Erbe: Orientierungen, Errungenschaften, Probleme*, Berlin: Dietz Verlag

- HALBWACHS, M. & COSER, L.A. 1992. *On Collective Memory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- HENDRIX, S. 2010. *Martin Luther: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- HERBST, A., RANKE, W. & WINKLER, J. 1994. *So funktionierte die DDR. Bd.1 Lexicon der Organisationen und Abteilungsgewerkschaftsleitung (AGL)-Liga für Völkerfreundschaft der DDR*. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt.
- HERF, J. 2008. Post-Totalitarian Narratives in Germany: Reflections on Two Dictatorships after 1945 and 1989. 1. *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, 9, 161-186.
- HIGH, J., MARTIN, N. & OELLERS, N. (eds.) 2011. *Who is this Schiller now?* Rochester, NY: Camden House.
- HOFMANN, M. 2003. *Schiller: Epoche, Werk, Wirkung*. Munich: C.H.Beck Verlag.
- HOLTMAN, E. 2010. Die DDR – ein Unrechtsstaat? *Dossier: Lange Wege der Deutschen Einheit*. Berlin: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung.
- JARAUSCH, K. 1999. *Dictatorship as Experience: Towards a Socio-Cultural history of the GDR*. New York: Berghahn.
- JARAUSCH, K. 2013. Review of *The German Democratic Republic* by Peter Grieder. *German History*, 31, 442-443.
- JESSEN, R. 2010. Alles schon erforscht? Beobachtungen zur zeithistorischen DDR-Forschung der letzten 20 Jahre. *Deutschland Archiv*, 1052-1064.
- JOHNSTON, W. M. 1991. *Celebrations: the Cult of Anniversaries in Europe and the United States Today*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.
- JONES, S. 2011. *Complicity, Censorship and Criticism: Negotiating Space in the GDR Literary Sphere*, New York: De Gruyter.
- JONES, S. & PINFOLD, D. 2014. Introduction – Remembering Dictatorship: State Socialist Pasts in Post-Socialist Presents. *Central Europe*, 12, 1-15.
- JUNGMANN, I. 2011. *Kalter Krieg in der Musik: eine Geschichte deutsch-deutscher Musikideologien*, Cologne: Böhlau.

- KELLY, E. 2014. Late Socialism, Late Beethoven. *Composing the Canon in the German Democratic Republic: Narratives of Nineteenth-Century Music*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- KELMAN, H. C. 1997. Nationalism, Patriotism, and National Identity: Social-Psychological Dimensions. In: BAR-TAL, D. & STAUB, E. (eds.) *Patriotism in the lives of individuals and nations*. Chicago: Nelson-Hall.
- KLESSMANN, C. 2013. DDR – SED Diktatur – Unrechtsstaat – Totalitarismus? Zur Auseinandersetzung mit schwierigen Begrifflichkeiten. *LaG Magazin von Lernen aus der Geschichte*, 8-10.
- KLINGBERG, L. 1997. *Politisch fest in unseren Händen: musikalische und musikwissenschaftliche Gesellschaften in der DDR: Dokumente und Analysen*. Kassel: Bärenreiter.
- KOCH, G. 1997. Nachstellungen: Film und historischer Moment. In: MÜLLER, K.E. & RÜSEN, J.R. (eds.) *Historische Sinnbildung: Problemstellungen, Zeitkonzepte, Wahrnehmungshorizonte, Darstellungsstrategien*. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt.
- KOCKA, J. 1994. Eine durchherrschte Gesellschaft. In: KOCKA, J. & ZWAHR, H. (eds.) *Sozialgeschichte der DDR*. Stuttgart: Klett.
- KOCKA, J. 1999. The GDR: A Special Kind of Modern Dictatorship. In: JARAUSCH, K. (ed.) *Dictatorship as Experience: towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR*. New York: Berghahn.
- KOCKA, J. & SABROW, M. 1994. *Die DDR als Geschichte: Fragen, Hypothesen, Perspektiven*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag.
- KOSHAR, R. 2000. *From Monuments to Traces: Artifacts of German Memory, 1870-1990*: Berkeley: University of California Press.
- KRAHMER, C. 1981. *Käthe Kollwitz*. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt.
- KRANZ, S. 2005. Women's Role in the German Democratic Republic and the State's Policy towards Women. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 7, 69-83.
- KRISCH, H. 1985. *The German Democratic Republic*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- LEHMANN, H. 1990. Die 15 Thesen der SED über Martin Luther. In: FISCHER, A. & HEYDEMANN, G. (eds.) *Geschichtswissenschaft in der DDR*. Berlin: Duncker & Humblot.

- LEWIS, B. 1976. *History: Remembered, Recovered, Invented*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- LINDEMANN, H. 1974. *Die auswärtige Kulturpolitik der DDR: Die kulturelle Abgrenzung der DDR von der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*. Bonn: Verlag Neue Gesellschaft.
- LIPPKE, O. 2000. Kunst im Auftrag kultureller Abgrenzung – Zwischen Herrschaftsprinzip und Autonomiesehsucht. In: OFFNER, H. & SCHROEDER, K. (eds.) *Eingegrenzt, ausgegrenzt: bildende Kunst und Parteiherrschaft in der DDR 1961-1989*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag.
- LÜDECKE, H. 1967. *Käthe Kollwitz und die Akademie zum 100. Geburtstag 1967*. Berlin: Deutsche Akademie der Künste; Verlag der Kunst VEB in Kommission.
- LUDWIG, H., STELZER, U. & WEISSGÄRBER, H. 1967. *Käthe Kollwitz und ihre Zeitgenossen: Ausstellung zum 100. Geburtstag von Käthe Kollwitz am 8. Juli 1967*. Berlin: Deutsche Akademie der Künste.
- LUSERKE-JAQUI, M. (ed.) 2005. *Schiller-Handbuch: Leben – Werk – Wirkung*. Stuttgart: Metzler.
- MARTIN, N. 2006. Introduction: Schiller after Two Centuries. *Schiller: National Poet – Poet of Nations. A Birmingham Symposium*. Rodopi.
- MASER, P. 2013. *‘Mit Luther alles in Butter’?: das Lutherjahr 1983 im Spiegel ausgewählter Akten*. Berlin: Metropol.
- MEYEN, M. 2003. *Einschalten, Umschalten, Ausschalten?: das Fernsehen im DDR-Alltag*. Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag.
- MIKLAUTZ, E. 1999. Feste: Szenarien der Konstruktion kollektiver Identität. In: KOPPERSCHMIDT, J. & SCHANZE, H. (eds.) *Fest und Festrhetorik: zu Theorie, Geschichte und Praxis der Epideiktik*. München: W. Fink.
- NAESER, W. 2002. *Lehrveranstaltung und Projekt: Deutsch im 20. Jahrhundert*. Marburg: Universität Marburg.
- NUTZ, M. 1992. The Obstructed Dialogue: a Discourse Analysis of the Schiller Celebrations in 1955 and 1959. In: PARKER, S., PEITSCH, H., RIORDAN, C. & WILLIAMS, R. W. (eds.) *German Writers and the Cold War 1945-61*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

- OELLERS, N. 1970. *Schiller, Zeitgenosse aller Epochen: Dokumente zur Wirkungsgeschichte Schillers in Deutschland*. Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum-Verlag.
- OLICK, J.K., LEVY, D. & VINITZKY-SEROUSSI, V. (eds.) 2011. *The Collective Memory Reader*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- OLSEN, J.B. 2015. *Tailoring Truth – Politicizing the Past and Negotiating Memory in East Germany, 1945-1990*. New York, Oxford: Berghahn.
- ORLOW, D. 2006. The GDR's Failed Search for a National Identity, 1945-1989. *German Studies Review*, 29, 537-558.
- PALMOWSKI, J. 2009. *Inventing a Socialist Nation: Heimat and the Politics of Everyday Life in the GDR, 1945-1990*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- PHILPOTTS, M. & ROLLE, S. 2009. *Contested Legacies: Constructions of Cultural Heritage in the GDR*. Rochester, NY: Camden House.
- PORT, A.I. (ed.) 2013. *The Banalities of East German Historiography*. New York: Berghahn.
- REHBERG, K.-S. 2009. Die DDR-Gesellschaft als multiple Projektionsfläche. In: MONTAG, T. (ed.) *Wie schmeckte die DDR? Identität und Leben in der Diktatur*. Sankt Augustin / Berlin: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung e.V.
- RIGNEY, A. 2010. The Dynamics of Remembrance: Texts between Monumentality and Morphing. In: ERLI, A. & NÜNNING, A. (eds.) *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies*. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- ROLOFF-MOMIN, U. 2002. 'Andere machten Geschichte, ich machte Musik' – Kurt Sanderling: *Die Lebensgeschichte des Dirigenten in Gesprächen und Dokumenten*. Berlin: Pathas Verlag.
- ROSS, C. 2002. *The East German Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives in the Interpretation of the GDR*. London, New York: Arnold.
- ROßBERG, J. 2009. *Der 'geteilte' Schiller: die Schiller-Feiern 1955 und 1959 in beiden deutschen Staaten*. Weimar: wtv-campus.
- ROY, M. 2000. *Luther in der DDR: zum Wandel des Lutherbildes in der DDR-Geschichtsschreibung: mit einer dokumentarischen Reproduktion*. Bochum: Verlag Dr. Dieter Winkler.

- SABROW, M. 1999. Dictatorship as Discourse – Cultural Perspectives on SED Legitimacy. In: JARAUSCH, K. H. (ed.) *Dictatorship as Experience – Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR*. Oxford: Berghahn.
- SABROW, M. (ed.) 2000. *Geschichte als Herrschaftsdiskurs: der Umgang mit der Vergangenheit in der DDR*. Cologne: Bohlau Verlag.
- SAUNDERS, A. 2007. *Honecker's Children: Youth and Patriotism in East(ern) Germany, 1979-2002*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- SAYNER, J. 2013. *Reframing Antifascism: Memory, Genre and the Life Writings of Greta Kuckhoff*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- SCHYMURA, Y. 2014. *Käthe Kollwitz 1867-2000: Biographie und Rezeptionsgeschichte einer deutschen Künstlerin*. Essen: Klartext.
- SILVERBERG, L. 2009. East German Music and the Problem of National Identity. *Nationalities Papers*, 37, 501-522.
- SILVERBERG, L. 2009. (Re)defining the Musical Heritage: Confrontations with Tradition in East German New Music. In: PHILPOTTS, M. & ROLLE, S. (eds.) *Edinburgh German Yearbook, Volume 3, Contested Legacies: Constructions of Cultural Heritage in the GDR*. Rochester, NY: Camden House.
- SIMONS, R. 1996. Das DDR-Fernsehen und die Luther-Ehrung. In: DÄHN, H. & HEISE, J. 1996. *Luther und die DDR: der Reformator und das DDR-Fernsehen 1983*. Berlin: Edition Ost.
- SMITH, A.D. 1991. *National Identity*. London: Penguin Books.
- SMITH, A.D. 2000. *The Nation in History: Historiographical Debates about Ethnicity and Nationalism*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- STALIN, J. 1954. Concerning Questions of Leninism. In: *Works, January-November, 1926*. Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House.
- Stable URL: <http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1926/01/25.htm>,  
(Marxist Internet Archive) [last accessed 18/7/12].

- TEMPEL, K.G. 1987. *Die Parteien in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und die Rolle der Parteien in der DDR: Grundlagen, Funktionen, Geschichte, Programmatik, Organisation*. Opladen: Leske + Budrich.
- TETZLAFF, K.D. 1967. *Saatfrüchte sollen nicht vermahlen werden*. Berlin: DEFA-Stiftung.
- TISCHER, M. 2008. Ulbrichts Beethoven? Die Konzeption des Beethoven-Jubiläums in der DDR 1970. *Deutschland Archiv*, 41, 473-480.
- TOKTAS, S. 2002. Nationalism, Militarism and Gender Politics: Women in the Military. *Minerva, Quarterly Report on Women and the Military*, XX
- WALINSKI-KIEHL, R. 2004. Reformation History and Political Mythology in the German Democratic Republic, 1949-1989. *European History Quarterly*, 34.
- WELZER, H. 2010. Communicative Memory. In: ERLI, A. & NÜNNING, A. (eds.) *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies*. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- WERTHEIM, U. (ed.) 1959. *Friedrich Schiller, Dichter der Nation: 1759-1805; sein Werk; seine Zeit; in Bildern und Dokumenten*. Berlin: Neues Leben.
- WILLIAMS, A. 2013. *Music in Germany since 1968*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- WOLLE, S. 2013. *Der grosse Plan: Alltag und Herrschaft in der DDR (1949-1961)*. Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag.
- ZELL, D. 2012. *The 1970 Bicentenary of Beethoven's Birth and the Significance of Classical Music in the Political System of the GDR*. Dissertation. (MA). Kingston University.
- ZERUBAVEL, Y. 1994. The Historic, the Legendary, and the Incredible; Invented Tradition and Collective Memory in Israel. In: GILLIS, J.R. (ed.) *Commemorations: the Politics of National Identity*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- ZIMMERMAN, H.U. & FEHLAUER, M. (eds.) 1985. *DDR Handbuch*. Cologne: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik.

---

<sup>1</sup> Throughout this thesis, and particularly for the first two case studies, the term *Abgrenzung* is used to refer to demarcation more broadly than for the post-*Ostpolitik* period, described by Berger.

<sup>2</sup> The issuing of commemorative postage stamps by the Deutsche Post der DDR provides a valuable, comprehensive record of the variety of anniversaries that were marked throughout the history of the GDR:

Stable URL: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Stamps_of_the_German_Democratic_Republic_by_year)

[Stamps of the German Democratic Republic by year](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Stamps_of_the_German_Democratic_Republic_by_year) [last accessed 15.2.2016].

<sup>3</sup> From a history database maintained and published by the Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung/bpb, a Federal German public authority providing citizenship education and information on political issues, Stable URL:

<http://www.bpb.de/geschichte/zeitgeschichte/deutschland-chronik/131475/20-25-maerz-1958> [last accessed 23.11.2016].

<sup>4</sup> ‘Brief von Professor Otto Lang, Generalintendant, Deutsches Nationaltheater, Weimar, an den Vorsitzenden der Kulturkommission beim ZK, Genossen Professor Alfred Kurella’, dated 20.8.1958, BArch-SAPMO, DY 30/IV2/9.06/7.

<sup>5</sup> ‘Brief vom Vorsitzenden der Kulturkommission beim ZK, Genossen Professor Alfred Kurella, an Professor Otto Lang, Generalintendant, Deutsches Nationaltheater, Weimar’, dated 9.9.1958, BArch-SAPMO, DY 30/IV 2/9.06/7.

<sup>6</sup> ‘Mitglieder des Zentralen Schiller-Komitees’, (undated), BArch-SAPMO, DY 27/2758.

<sup>7</sup> ‘Bericht über die konstituierende Sitzung des Schiller-Komitees der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik’, (undated), BArch-SAPMO, DY 30/IV2/9.06/33.

<sup>8</sup> ‘Protokoll der Sitzung der Konzeptionskommission am 23.2.1959’, dated 6.3.1959, BArch-SAPMO, DY 30/IV2/9.06.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> ‘Protokoll der 2. Sitzung des Schiller-Komitees der DDR am 20.März 1959’, BArch-SAPMO, DY 30/IV2/9.06/71.

<sup>11</sup> ‘Vorlage für das Schiller-Komitee der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik’, 14.3.1959, BArch-SAPMO, DY 30/IV2/9.06/71.

<sup>12</sup> ‘Vorläufiger Plan des Schiller-Komitees der DDR’, (undated), BArch-SAPMO, DR 2/3744.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> ‘Erklärung des Schiller-Komitees der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1959’, (undated), BArch-SAPMO, DR 2/3744.

<sup>15</sup> ‘Direktive zum Schillerjahr 1959 an die Stellvertreter der Vorsitzenden und Leiter der Abteilungen Kultur der Räte der Bezirke’, (undated), BArch-SAPMO, DY 30/IV2/9.06/71.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> ‘Erklärung des Schiller-Komitees der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1959’, (undated), BArch-SAPMO, DR 2/3744.

<sup>19</sup> ‘Abschrift: Pädagogische Hochschule Potsdam, Abteilung Fernstudium Deutsch an die Mentoren des Faches Deutsch im Fernstudium der Oberstufenlehrer’, dated 15.9.1959, BArch-SAPMO, DR 2/3744.

<sup>20</sup> ‘Protokoll der 2. Sitzung des Schiller-Komitees der DDR am 20.März 1959’, BArch-SAPMO, DY 30/IV2/9.06/71.

<sup>21</sup> ‘Aktennotiz: Beteiligung des Freien Deutschen Gewerkschaftsbundes am Schiller-Gedenkjahr’, dated 19.1.1959, BArch-SAPMO, DY 30/IV2/9.06/71.

<sup>22</sup> ‘Arbeiter ehren Schiller’, (undated), BArch-SAPMO, DY 27/2758.

<sup>23</sup> ‘Methodische Hinweise für die Arbeit der Institute für Lehrerbildung und der pädagogischen Schulen im Schillerjahr’, (undated), BArch-SAPMO, DR 2/3744.

<sup>24</sup> ‘Brief vom Bundessekretär (Henniger) und Abteilungsleiter (Kuhn), Deutscher Kulturbund, an das Bezirkssekretariat des Deutschen Kulturbundes: Erfurt, Leipzig, Berlin, Rostock’, dated 30.4.1959, BArch-SAPMO, DY 27/2758.

<sup>25</sup> ‘Kommuniqué’, (undated), BArch-SAPMO, DY 27/2758.

<sup>26</sup> ‘Veranstaltungsumsicht’, (undated), BArch-SAPMO, DR 2/3744.

<sup>27</sup> ‘Vorlage für das Schiller-Komitee der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik’, dated 14.3.1959, BArch-SAPMO, DY 30/IV2/9.06/71.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> ‘Protokoll der dritten Tagung des Schiller-Komitees der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik am siebten Juli 1959 in Berlin’, (undated), BArch-SAPMO, DY 30/IV2/9.06/71.

<sup>30</sup> ‘Hausmitteilung von Abteilung Allgemeinbildung, Sektor Sprachunterricht, an das Ministersekretariat, Ministerium für Volksbildung’, dated 16.6.1959, BArch-SAPMO, DR 2/3744.

- <sup>31</sup> ‘Zur Tätigkeit des Schiller-Komitees der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik’, (undated), BArch-SAPMO, DY 30/IV2/9.06/71.
- <sup>32</sup> ‘Aus der Stellungnahme des Zentralkomitees der SED zum Schillerjahr’, (undated), BArch-SAPMO, DY 27/2758.
- <sup>33</sup> ‘Wissenschaftliche Konferenz über das Schaffen Friedrich Schillers, Mitteilung Nr. 1, Wissenschaftliches Programm’, BArch-SAPMO, DY 27/2758.
- <sup>34</sup> ‘Brief an Genossen Helmut Holtzhauer, Nationale Forschung und Gedenkstätten Weimar’, dated 13.8.1959, BArch-SAPMO, DY 30/IV2/9.06/71.
- <sup>35</sup> ‘Bericht über Dienstreise in die DDR vom 21. bis 23. Juli 1959’, dated 24.7.1959, BArch-SAPMO, DY 30/IV2/9.06/71.
- <sup>36</sup> ‘Protokoll der 3.Tagung des Schiller-Komitees der DDR am 7.Juli 1959 in Berlin’, BArch-SAPMO, DY 30/IV2/9.06/71.
- <sup>37</sup> ‘Vorläufiger Plan des Schiller-Komitees der DDR’, (undated), BArch-SAPMO, DR 2/3744.
- <sup>38</sup> ‘Protokoll der 3.Tagung des Schiller-Komitees der DDR am 7.Juli 1959 in Berlin’, BArch-SAPMO, DY 30/IV2/9.06/71.
- <sup>39</sup> ‘Bericht über die Sitzung des Schiller-Komitees vom 27.10.1959’, (undated), BArch-SAPMO, DR 2/3744.
- <sup>40</sup> ‘Einschätzung der vom Deutschen Kulturbund und von der Gesellschaft zur Verbreitung wissenschaftlicher Kenntnisse gemeinsam durchgeführten Schiller-Referentenkonferenzen’, dated 4.7.1959, BArch-SAPMO, DY 27/2758.
- <sup>41</sup> (Transcript): ‘Kommentar zum Sonntag’, Dr. Roedel, Sdg: 8.11.1959-19.00, dated 8.11.1959, DRA Babelsberg SG HF B086-02-00/0016 TSig. 0054.
- <sup>42</sup> ‘Erklärung des Schiller-Komitees der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1959’, (undated), BArch-SAPMO, DR 2/3744.
- <sup>43</sup> ‘Brief vom 1.März, 1960, AdK-O 308 Blatt 134.
- <sup>44</sup> ‘Kritische Stellungnahme zur Arbeit des Schiller-Komitees der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik’, dated 11.12.1959, BArch-SAPMO, DY 30/IV2/9.06/71.
- <sup>45</sup> Under the headline: ‘Die Kunst in ihrer Bedingtheit durch den Staat als Instrument der Identitätsbildung’: Lippke concludes: ‘Die zentrale Steuerung binnenkultureller Kunstprozesse glich einem Werbefeldzug von nationaler Dimension, der die ostdeutschen Lebenswirklichkeiten gegenüber dem westdeutschen Ideal erscheinen lassen musste, die es durch kulturelle Abgrenzung zu verteidigen galt.’
- <sup>46</sup> ‘Wege und Irrwege der modernen Kunst’, *Tägliche Rundschau*, no. 17, 20/21.1.1951, quoted in Goeschen, p.45. and Schymura, pp.335-336.
- <sup>47</sup> ‘Vertrauliche Verschlussache: Beschlüsse vom ZK Sekretariat TGB. Nummer 11/67 vom 8. Februar 1967’, AdK-O 348.
- <sup>48</sup> ‘Brief an den Präsidenten der Deutschen Akademie der Künste, Professor Otto Nagel’, dated 29.5.1962, AdK-O, 348.
- <sup>49</sup> ‘Brief’, dated 23.7.1966, AdK-O, 348.
- <sup>50</sup> ‘Protokoll der 1. Sitzung des Arbeitssekretariats des Käthe-Kollwitz-Komitees am 14. März 1967’, BArch-SAPMO, DC20/7482.
- <sup>51</sup> ‘Beschluss über die Käthe-Kollwitz-Ehrung 1967’, BArch-SAPMO, DC20/7482.
- <sup>52</sup> BArch-SAPMO, DC20/7482.
- <sup>53</sup> ‘Brief’, dated 18.4.1967, AdK-O, 720 BL313-4.
- <sup>54</sup> ‘Einladung’, AdK-O, 720.7 BL607.
- <sup>55</sup> ‘Beschlussprotokoll vom 26.6.1967 über die Arbeitstagung des Käthe-Kollwitz-Komitees am 14/6/1967’, BArch-SAPMO, DC20/7482.
- <sup>56</sup> ‘Postkarte von Dr. Heinz Lüdicke’, dated 12.6.1967, AdK-O, 720 BL119.
- <sup>57</sup> ‘Eine große Deutsche. Käthe Kollwitz’, *Volksstimme Magdeburg*, 30.9.1966.
- <sup>58</sup> *Neues Deutschland*, 13.2.1967.
- <sup>59</sup> *Neues Deutschland*, 17.3.1967.
- <sup>60</sup> ‘Einladung zum Festakt der Käthe-Kollwitz-Ehrung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik’, BArch-SAPMO, DY27/555.
- <sup>61</sup> *Neues Deutschland*, 8.7.1967.
- <sup>62</sup> ‘Beschlussprotokoll über die Arbeitstagung des Käthe-Kollwitz-Komitees am 14.6.1967’, BArch-SAPMO, DC20/7482.
- <sup>63</sup> ‘Aktentext Fachgruppe Bildende Kunst’, dated 22.6.1967, AdK-O, 348.
- <sup>64</sup> ‘Beschlussprotokoll (appendix) vom 26/6/1967 über die Arbeitstagung des Käthe-Kollwitz-Komitees am 14.6.1967’, BArch-SAPMO, DC20/7482.
- <sup>65</sup> Wilhelm Meister Lehrjahre, Book 7, Chapter 9 (Reference provided in Schymura, 2014).
- <sup>66</sup> *Neues Deutschland*, 9th July, 1967.

- <sup>67</sup> ‘Brief’ from Gerhard Heilmann [ADK] addressed to ‘Herr Wrede, Direktor des DEFA Studios für populärwissenschaftlicher Film’, dated 22.11.1966, AdK-O, 720.3 BL385.
- <sup>68</sup> ‘Käthe-Kollwitz-Ehrung anlässlich ihres 100.Geburtstags, Mappe 5: Ausstellung und Festakt, Akademie der Künste, Berlin, AdK-O, Nr.720’, cited in Schymura, p. 365.
- <sup>69</sup> Implied as constituting a minority of members at the time (ibid., p.16).
- <sup>70</sup> GDR Constitution of 1949, Article 7, Paragraph 1: ‘Mann und Frau sind gleichberechtigt’, Stable URL: <http://www.verfassungen.de/de/ddr/ddr49-i.htm>. [last accessed, 20.2.2016].
- <sup>71</sup> Ellipses in this and other edited extracts cited in this section are inserted by Lüdecke.
- <sup>72</sup> ‘Beschluss über die Käthe-Kollwitz-Ehrung 1967’, BArch-SAPMO, DC20/7482, p.1.
- <sup>73</sup> ‘Neue Wirklichkeiten im künstlerischen Bild – Alexander Abusch würdige Leben und künstlerisches Vermächtnis von Käthe Kollwitz’, *Neues Deutschland*, 9.7.1967.
- <sup>74</sup> ‘Zum hundertsten Geburtstag von Käthe Kollwitz, 8.7.1967, *Aufwärts: Jugendzeitschrift des Deutschen Gewerkschaftsbundes*, Nr. 7, Jahrgang 20 (15.7.1967), Stable URL: <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/History/History-idx?type=article&did=History.auf1967July15.i0011&id=History.auf1967July15&isize=text> [last accessed 18 February, 2016].
- <sup>75</sup> ‘Kollwitz-Ausstellung in der Akademie – großartige Ehrung’, *Spandauer Volksblatt* (undated), cited in ADN-Kultur Pressedienst, AdK-O, 720.7 BL702.
- <sup>76</sup> ‘Käthe Kollwitz – Fahne hoch’, *Der Spiegel*, 26/1967, 12 June 1967, pp.104-105.
- <sup>77</sup> ‘Hochgepriesen und hochbezahlt – Käthe Kollwitz war der Prototyp des total engagierten Künstlers’, *Die Zeit*, 14 July 1967.
- <sup>78</sup> No citation details provided in the article.
- <sup>79</sup> See also ‘Kollwitz-Feiern’, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 24.6.1967 and ‘Die Kunst und der Sozialismus’, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 8.7.1967.
- <sup>80</sup> ‘Abschrift’, dated 16.6.1967, AdK-O, 720.3 BL302’.
- <sup>81</sup> ‘Beschluss des Sekretariats des Präsidiums des DKB vom 9.12.1969 über den Beitrag des DKB zur Gestaltung der kulturellen Gedenktage des Jahres 1970’, BArch-SAPMO, DY27/3035.
- <sup>82</sup> ‘Beethoven – Für alle da’, *Der Spiegel*, 18/1970, p.201.
- <sup>83</sup> This chapter draws partly on research undertaken for my dissertation submitted for a Master of Arts in History (European) at Kingston University in 2012: ‘*The 1970 bicentennial of Beethoven’s birth and the significance of classical music in the political system of the GDR*’.
- <sup>84</sup> Named after a senior civil servant in the Foreign Ministry, a key foreign policy of the West German government from 1958 to the *de facto* recognition of the GDR by Chancellor Willy Brandt in 1969. It stated that the government would treat any formal recognition of the GDR by a third country (with the exception of the Soviet Union), as an ‘unfriendly act’. The *Hallstein-Doktrin* followed from West Germany’s claim, at that time, to represent the whole of Germany, the *Alleinvertretungsanspruch*.
- <sup>85</sup> ‘Bericht zur Einschätzung der Beethoven-Ehrung in der DDR, 15/1/71’, BArch-SAPMO, DR1/15100/1, p.26.
- <sup>86</sup> ‘Bericht - Beratung der Zentralen Musik Kommission, 26/6/69’, BArch-SAPMO, DY27/3035.
- <sup>87</sup> ‘Bericht, (undated), - Beethoven Konferenz vom 31.Oktober bis 1.November 1969’, BArch-SAPMO, DY27/3035.
- <sup>88</sup> ‘Beethoven in unserer Zeit’, ‘Überarbeitetes Schlusswort von Prof. Dr. Paul Michel an der Beethoven-Konferenz des Deutschen Kulturbundes am 31/10 und 1/11/1969 in Potsdam’, BArch-SAPMO, DY27/3088.
- <sup>89</sup> Ibid., p.4.
- <sup>90</sup> ‘Diskussionsbeitrag des Präsidenten des Deutschen Kulturbundes, Prof. Dr. H.C. Burghardt, anlässlich der Arbeitsberatung des Beethoven-Komitees der DDR am 26/10/1970’, BArch-SAPMO, NY/4199/109.
- <sup>91</sup> ‘Konstituierung des Komitees für die Beethoven-Ehrung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1970’, BArch-Bibliothek, 01/A296.
- <sup>92</sup> Second, revised version (1805) of Schiller’s poem, ‘An die Freude’:  
 ‘Freude, schöner Götterfunken,  
 Tochter aus Elisium,  
 Wir betreten feuertrunken,  
 Himmlische, dein Heiligthum.  
 Deine Zauber binden wieder,  
 Was die Mode streng getheilt,  
 Alle Menschen werden Brüder,  
 Wo dein sanfter Flügel weilt’.
- Stable URL: <http://www.friedrich-schiller-archiv.de/inhaltsangaben/an-die-freude-schiller-interpretation-inhaltsangabe/#freudetext2>, [last accessed 6.9.2017]
- <sup>93</sup> ‘Konstituierung des Komitees für die Beethoven-Ehrung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1970’, BArch-Bibliothek, 01/A296.

- <sup>94</sup> Youth was mentioned as a target in the report on the Potsdam planning conference: 'Bericht - Beethoven Konferenz', BArch-SAPMO, DY27/3035.
- <sup>95</sup> 'Konstituierung des Komitees für die Beethoven-Ehrung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1970', BArch-Bibliothek, 01/A296, p.16.
- <sup>96</sup> 'Beschluss des Politbüros des ZK der SED vom 9/12/69'(Nr.3/428, 48/69), BArch-SAPMO, DR1/15001/1.
- <sup>97</sup> Klaus Gysi, 'Vorlage', 10/2/1970, BArch-SAPMO, DR1/15000/1.
- <sup>98</sup> This document (first version) was not available for review in the BArch-SAPMO files.
- <sup>99</sup> BArch-SAPMO, DR1 15100/1.
- <sup>100</sup> 'Die SED und ihre führende Rolle' in *DDR - Mythos und Wirklichkeit - Staat und Gesellschaft* (Berlin, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2009), Stable URL: <http://www.kas.de/wf/de/71.6612/> [last accessed 21.12.2015].
- <sup>101</sup> These terms appear in Articles 2.3, 9.1, 19.3 and 23.2 of the GDR's 1968 Constitution.
- <sup>102</sup> 'Konstituierung des Komitees für die Beethoven-Ehrung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1970', BArch-Bibliothek, 01/A296, pp.32-34.
- <sup>103</sup> Karl Laux and Gerd Haines, 'Empfehlung an die Arbeitsgruppen Musik bei den Bezirksleitungen des DKB zur Auswertung des Beethoven-Jahres, 4/2/70', BArch-SAPMO, DY/27/3035.
- <sup>104</sup> 'Auswertung der Arbeit des Deutschen Kulturbundes im Beethoven-Jahr auf der Grundlage von Berichten der Bezirksarbeitsgruppen Musik, bzw. der Bezirkssekretariate', BArch-SAPMO, DY/27/7583.
- <sup>105</sup> Ibid., p.1.
- <sup>106</sup> Ibid., pp.6-7.
- <sup>107</sup> Ibid., p.6.
- <sup>108</sup> 'Sitzung des Beethoven-Komitees, 26/10/70', BArch-SAPMO, DR1/12836.
- <sup>109</sup> Ibid., p.3.
- <sup>110</sup> 'Bericht zur Einschätzung der Beethoven-Ehrung in der DDR, 15/1/71', BArch-SAPMO, DR1/15100/1.
- <sup>111</sup> 'Mit "éclat triomphale"', *Berliner Zeitung*, 16.12.1970, DRA Babelsberg, M07032.
- <sup>112</sup> 'Freudenruf in großer Emphase', *National-Zeitung*, 22.12.1970, DRA Babelsberg, M07032.
- <sup>113</sup> 'Bericht zur Einschätzung der Beethoven-Ehrung in der DDR', dated 15.1.1971, BArch-SAPMO, DR1/15100/1, p.16.
- <sup>114</sup> Ibid., p.28.
- <sup>115</sup> Ibid., pp.28-29.
- <sup>116</sup> 'Sitzung des Beethoven-Komitees', dated 26.10.1970, BArch-SAPMO, DR1/12836.
- <sup>117</sup> Hans-Joachim Kynaß, 'Wem das Proletariat Denkmäler errichtet', *Neues Deutschland*, 6.1.1971, DRA Babelsberg, M07032.
- <sup>118</sup> Helga Zeisberg, 'Musik die auftrübelt und Kraft verleiht', *National-Zeitung*, 18.11.1970, DRA Babelsberg, M07032.
- <sup>119</sup> Hansjürgen Schaefer, 'Beethoven als musikalische Droge', *Neues Deutschland*, 4.10.1970, DRA Babelsberg, M07032.
- <sup>120</sup> 'Mit "éclat triomphale"', *Berliner Zeitung*, 16.12.1970, DRA Babelsberg, M07032.
- <sup>121</sup> For example: 'Vorhaben des Deutschen Demokratischen Rundfunks zur Beethoven-Ehrung 1970', (undated), BArch-SAPMO, DY 27/3088.
- <sup>122</sup> *Aktuelle Kamera*, Deutscher Fernsehfunke, 16.12.1970, DRA Babelsberg, AD7246/1.
- <sup>123</sup> *Aktuelle Kamera*, Deutscher Fernsehfunke, 16.12.1970, DRA Babelsberg, OVC7716/1.
- <sup>124</sup> Hansjürgen Schaefer, 'Beethoven für Millionen - Über die Sendungen der neun Sinfonien im Fernsehfunke', *Neues Deutschland*, 19.9.1971, DRA Babelsberg, M07032.
- <sup>125</sup> *Der Augenzeuge*, DEFA-Studio für Dokumentarfilme, 14/70, Berlin: DEFA-Spektrum GmbH.
- <sup>126</sup> 'Korrigierter Sendeplan vom 10.12.1970', DRA Babelsberg, Schriftgutbestand Fernsehen.
- <sup>127</sup> Hansjürgen Schaefer, 'Beethoven für Millionen: Über die Sendungen der neun Sinfonien im Fernsehfunke', *Neues Deutschland*, 19.9.1971, DRA Babelsberg, M07032.
- <sup>128</sup> 'Bericht zur Einschätzung der Beethoven-Ehrung in der DDR', dated 15.1.71, BArch-SAPMO, DR1/15100/1, p.16.
- <sup>129</sup> 'Vorlage an das Politbüro des ZK der SED vom 11/7/1969: Beschluss über die Beethoven-Ehrung', Anlage 1, AdK-O, ZAA 792, Sitzungen der Sektion Musik 1969, Bl.1.
- <sup>130</sup> 'Bericht zur Einschätzung der Beethoven-Ehrung in der DDR' dated 15.1.1971, BArch-SAPMO, DR1/15100/1, p.24.
- <sup>131</sup> 'Konzeption für den Internationalen Beethoven Kongress der DDR vom 10. bis 12. Dezember 1970 in Berlin', BArch-SAPMO, DR1/1500/1, p.4.
- <sup>132</sup> 'Bericht zur Einschätzung der Beethoven-Ehrung in der DDR', p. 23, dated 15.1.1971, BArch-SAPMO, DR1/15100/1, p.16.
- <sup>133</sup> 'Ergebnisse der 25. (81) Sofortresonanz vom 11/12/1970', Programmdirektion Zuschauerforschung-Führungsinformation, dated 29.12.170, DRA Babelsberg, H008-02-04/51.

- <sup>134</sup> ‘Ergebnisse der 26. (82), und 1. (83) Sofortresonanz vom 22.12.1970 und 5.1.1971’, Programmdirektion Zuschauerforschung-Führungsinformation, 5/2/71, DRA Babelsberg, H008-02-04/61.
- <sup>135</sup> ‘Anlage Nr. 1 zum Protokoll Nr. 48/69’, dated 9.12.1969, ‘Konzeption der Beethoven-Ehrung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1970’, BArch-SAPMO, DR1/22030.
- <sup>136</sup> ‘Bericht zur Einschätzung der Beethoven-Ehrung in der DDR’, p.23, dated 15.1.1971, BArch-SAPMO, DR1/15100/1, p.16.
- <sup>137</sup> ‘Ludwig van Beethoven-Gesamtausgabe anlässlich der Beethoven-Ehrung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1970’ in: *Verzeichnis der Veröffentlichungen bis 1970*, (Berlin: VEB Deutsche Schallplatten, 1970), BArch-Bibliothek, 05 A 4040.
- <sup>138</sup> ‘Bericht zur Einschätzung der Beethoven-Ehrung in der DDR’, p.17, dated 15.1.1971, BArch-SAPMO, DR1/15100/1, p.16.
- <sup>139</sup> DRA Babelsberg, MG 896/2.
- <sup>140</sup> ‘Beschluss des Sekretariats des ZK der SED vom 16/5/1979, “Vorbereitung und Durchführung der Martin-Luther-Ehrung der DDR 1983 aus Anlass seines 500.Geburtstages am 10. November 1983”’, BArch-SAPMO, ZPA J IV 2/3/2909.
- <sup>141</sup> ‘Thesen über Martin Luther. Zum 500. Geburtstag’, Berlin: Akademie der Künste, 1981.
- <sup>142</sup> ‘Martin-Luther-Ehrung 1983’, Organisationsbüro des Martin-Luther-Komitees der DDR, Berlin / Weimar: Aufbau-Verlag.
- <sup>143</sup> ‘Abschlussbericht zur Tätigkeit des Organisationsbüros des Martin-Luther-Komitees der DDR’, BArch-SAPMO, DR 105 166.
- <sup>144</sup> ‘Konzeption für die zentrale wissenschaftliche Konferenz anlässlich der Martin-Luther-Ehrung der DDR 1983’, dated 18.12.1980, BArch-Bibliothek DO 4-453.
- <sup>145</sup> ‘Thesen über Martin Luther. Zum 500. Geburtstag’, Berlin: Akademie der Künste, 1981, p.5.
- <sup>146</sup> ‘Martin-Luther-Ehrung 1983, Arbeitstagung des Martin-Luther-Komitees der DDR am 29. Oktober 1982’, Organisationsbüro des Martin-Luther-Komitees der DDR, Berlin / Weimar: Aufbau-Verlag. p.6.
- <sup>147</sup> ‘Thesen über Martin Luther. Zum 500. Geburtstag’, Berlin, Akademie der Künste, 1981, pp.35-37.
- <sup>148</sup> In contrast, Zimmering’s interpretation of the *Lutherjahr* and the *Thesen* is less convincing in the context of her controversial approach to political mythology. Zimmering interprets the positioning of the GDR as natural heir to the Reformation as a ‘Mythenpolitische Wende’. An apparently deliberate strategic decision, driven by the SED, this effectively served to de-emphasise the hitherto traditional anti-fascist foundation myth. Quoting Klaus Gysi’s remarks in an interview, she sees this as a top-down initiative to reduce the ubiquitous presence of Marx and the propagation of class war, as highlighted throughout the preceding thirty years of GDR history. This hypothesis of a considered intent is unconvincing (Zimmering, 2000, pp.267-271).
- <sup>149</sup> ‘Konzeptionen für ein Jubiläum oder: wie begehen wir den 500. Geburtstag?’, cited in ‘Zur Luther-Ehrung in der DDR’: Seminarmaterial des Gesamtdeutschen Instituts, Bundesanstalt für gesamtdeutsche Aufgaben, Bonn, 1983, BArch-Bibliothek, 93C 444-a.
- <sup>150</sup> ‘Abschlussbericht zur Tätigkeit des Organisationsbüros des Martin-Luther-Komitees der DDR’, BArch-SAPMO, DR 105 166.
- <sup>151</sup> The Ost Verlag, publisher of this edited volume (Dähn und Heise 1996) has been criticised in recent German media articles for taking a revisionist and apologist approach to GDR history and culture: see *Der Spiegel* article on the ex-GDR contributors, including, notably, Horst Dohle in the book (*Der Spiegel* 24/1994) and a highly critical article in *Die Zeit* (*Zeit* online: Stable URL: <http://www.zeit.de/online/2007/34/ddr-geschichte>, [last accessed 12.8.2016]). However, these post-1989 German media sources are themselves arguably biased in their general ‘top-down’ approach to GDR history, as illustrated by their equally critical attitude to contemporary socio-political historians such as Mary Fulbrook.
- <sup>152</sup> ‘Beschluss des Sekretariats des ZK der SED vom 16/5/1979, “Vorbereitung und Durchführung der Martin-Luther-Ehrung der DDR 1983 aus Anlass seines 500.Geburtstages am 10. November 1983”’, BArch-SAPMO, ZPA J IV 2/3/2909.
- <sup>153</sup> ‘Information über das Verhältnis von Staat und Evangelischen Kirchen in der DDR, vom 2/12/1980’, BArch-SAPMO, ZPA IV 2/3/119.
- <sup>154</sup> ‘Beschluss des Sekretariats des ZK aus der Sitzung Nummer 113/82 vom 29/9/1982. Auszug aus dem Protokoll, Punkt 7, und Anlagen 7,8 “Information über den Stand der Vorbereitung der Martin-Luther-Ehrung 1983 und über kirchliche Aktivitäten”’, BArch-SAPMO, ZPA J IV 2/3/3427.
- <sup>155</sup> STS für Kirchenfragen. Abt.1.: ‘Information über ein Gespräch des Staatssekretärs mit der Leitung der vereinigten evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche in der DDR’, 2.6.1980, BStU, Stasi, HA XX/4-1735.
- <sup>156</sup> ‘Informationen zur Konsolidierung des staatlichen Luther-Komitees’, dated 24.6.1980, BStU, Stasi BV Magdeburg, HA XX/4-1736.
- <sup>157</sup> ‘Maßnahmeplan zur politisch-operativen Sicherung der Vorbereitung und Durchführung der Luther-Ehrung im Bezirk Halle’, dated 10.11.1982, BStU, Stasi BV Halle BdL 196.

- <sup>158</sup> ‘Mit Luther ist alles in Butter; wie die SED den 500. Geburtstag des Reformators feiert’, *Der Spiegel*, Nr. 10/1983, 7 March 1983, p.113.
- <sup>159</sup> ‘Berichterstattung zur Einschätzung des Standes zur Sicherung der Vorbereitung und Durchführung der Luther-Ehrung 1983, Stasi Kreisdienststelle Wittenberg’, dated 10.1.1983, BStU, Stasi BV Halle Abt.XX 756.
- <sup>160</sup> ‘Ergänzung zur Berichterstattung vom 1.3.1983 zur Einschätzung des Standes der Sicherung der Luther-Ehrung 1983, Stasi Kreisdienststelle Wittenberg’, dated 5.4.1983, BStU, Stasi BV Halle Abt.XX 756.
- <sup>161</sup> ‘Information über Absichten des Gegners, das Luther-Jubiläum 1983 politisch zu missbrauchen’, dated 14.9.1982, BStU, Stasi, ZAIG 3236.
- <sup>162</sup> Arbeitstagung des Martin-Luther-Komitees der DDR am 29. Oktober 1982, Berlin / Weimar: Aufbau-Verlag, pp.93-96.
- <sup>163</sup> The choice of an international speaker, based in a non-socialist country, is noteworthy. It is likely to have been intended, and may well have been received externally, as adding international legitimacy to the event, and to the GDR’s *Lutherjahr* as such.
- <sup>164</sup> ‘Inhalt’ – ‘Kirchliche Festveranstaltung zum 500. Geburtstag von Martin Luther am 10/11/1983’ AC00007214/DRAB/1/1.
- <sup>165</sup> ‘Kirchliche Festveranstaltung zum 500. Geburtstag von Martin Luther am 10/11/1983’ AC00007214/DRAB/1/1.
- <sup>166</sup> ‘Festakt des ZK der SED, des Staatsrates der DDR, des Ministerates’, dated 9.11.1983, OVC0008937/DRAB/1/1.
- <sup>167</sup> Stable URL <http://www.fernsehenderddr.de/index.php?script=dokumentationsblatt-detail&id1=17044> [last accessed 24.8.2016].
- <sup>168</sup> ‘Aktennotiz’, cited in Simons 1996, p.125.
- <sup>169</sup> Stable URL: <https://www.fernsehserien.de/martin-luther-ddr/im-tv> [last accessed 26.08.2017].
- <sup>170</sup> *Neues Deutschland*, 18.10.1983, cited in Simons, p.160.
- <sup>171</sup> *Neue Zeit*, 8.10.1983, cited in Simons, p.161.
- <sup>172</sup> *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 31.10.1983, cited in Simons, p.161.
- <sup>173</sup> *Die Welt*, 25.10.1983, cited in Simons, p.161.
- <sup>174</sup> *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 11.11.1983, cited in Simons, p.161.
- <sup>175</sup> *Der Tagesspiegel*, 30.10.1983, cited in Simons, p.161.
- <sup>176</sup> ‘Abschlussbericht zur Tätigkeit des Organisationsbüros des Martin-Luther-Komitees der DDR’, BArch-SAPMO, DR 105 166.
- <sup>177</sup> ‘Beratung des Staatssekretärs für Kirchenfragen mit den Sektorenleitern Kirchenfragen der Räte der Bezirke Berlin’, dated 15.12.1983, BStU, Stasi BV Halle Abt.XX 366.
- <sup>178</sup> ‘Mit Luther ist alles in Butter; wie die SED den 500. Geburtstag des Reformators feiert’, *Der Spiegel*, Nr. 10/1983, pp.113-118.
- <sup>179</sup> ‘Zum Abschluss der Staatlichen Luther-Ehrung in der DDR’, Institut für Gesellschaft und Wissenschaft an der Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg – IGW, Nr.3-1983, BArch-Bibliothek AFG 88/2672.
- <sup>180</sup> ‘Die zwei Identitäten der Ostdeutschen’, Stable URL: <http://www.mdr.de/nachrichten/politik/inland/ostdeutsche-sachsen-studie-langzeit-einheit-100.html> [last accessed 4.10.2017]