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THE GDR, WEIMAR CLASSICISM AND RESISTANCE AT BUCHENWALD

Buchenwald memorial site and the town of Weimar are but a few kilometres apart. In the German Democratic Republic (GDR), however, the two institutional structures responsible for the maintenance of Buchenwald memorial site on the one hand, and for overseeing the sites of Weimar Classicism on the other, were entirely separate organisations, despite being embedded to varying degrees within the Ministry for Culture. Buchenwald's National Site of Warning and Commemoration (*Nationale Mahn- und Gedenkstätte Buchenwald*), after an 8-year prehistory, was established in 1958. Its remit was to promote antifascist-oriented memory of the camp and to inculcate anti-western propaganda. It was responsible for the maintenance not just of the former camp, reduced in the early 1950s to a few symbolic buildings such as the crematorium, but also for the promotion of the memorial complex on the Ettersberg. Here, a huge sculpture celebrating the supposed self-liberation of the camp formed the centrepiece of an extensive memorial compound whose overall architectonic purpose was to assert the triumph of communist-led internationalism. Weimar's National Research and Memorial Centre for Classical German Literature (*Nationale Forschungs- und Gedenkstätten der klassischen deutschen Literatur*) was set up in 1953, and was responsible for the upkeep and memorialisation of buildings associated with Weimar Classicism. It was also responsible for propagating a view of the humanist legacy of Goethe and Schiller which stressed its contribution to the development of socialist thinking and culture. As the Socialist Unity Party (SED) General Secretary Walter Ulbricht put it, somewhat simplifying a line of interpretation one might associate with Georg Lukacs: « if you want to know how progress is made, then you should read Goethe's *Faust* and Marx's *Communist Manifesto*¹. » Both the NMG Buchenwald and the NFG Weimar, as I will call these awkwardly named institutions for the purposes of this article, were mini-empires, with responsibility

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for an ever-expanding legacy. While the NMG Buchenwald's duties extended to cover the memorialisation of satellite camps such as Dora and Laura, the NFG Weimar was, by the 1970s, so overloaded with responsibilities that, in 1967, a plan was drawn up to create 10 separate directorates within it: one, for instance, for the Goethe and Schiller Archive; another for the Goethe National Museum; another for various gardens and parks such as the Ilm Park, and parks at Schloss Belvedere and Tiefurt; another for the planned Museum for German Literature; and one for the Central Library².

These two institutions were not only quite separate, they also forged few direct links. In fact, the only truly interinstitutional connection was set up in 1978, when the NFG Weimar, at the behest of the Ministry for Culture, provided manpower to assist the NMG Buchenwald in repairing and renovating remaining concentration camp buildings such as the crematorium, and the massive memorial complex on the Ettersberg (dedicated in 1958). Nevertheless, while the establishment of this link was motivated by financial common sense – the NFG Weimar had its own department for the upkeep of buildings, whereas the NMG Buchenwald did not – it also represented a symbolic expression of the degree to which the legacy of Buchenwald, including its memorials, had become as much a part of the GDR's legacy (« Erbe ») as Goethe's Garden House or the Goethehaus am Frauenplan. The humanist legacy embraced not just Goethe and Schiller, but also the history of Buchenwald.

The contention of this article is that, despite the lack of interorganizational links, the NMG Buchenwald and the NFG Weimar did collaborate. They did so indirectly, not least through Weimar's Town Council, the Free German Youth and other mass organisations. Moreover, that there was an intellectual and spiritual affinity between antifascism at Buchenwald and Weimar humanism was a point reinforced again and again in various ways in the GDR. How could it be otherwise, given that in East Germany connections were frequently drawn between antifascism generally between 1933 and 1945, and the legacy of Goethe and Schiller? In the GDR the making of such connections served to create a seamless historical tradition whereby the ideals of Weimar Classicism were understood to have been appropriated by Marx and Engels, shouldered by the workers' movement generally, enshrined in antifascism, and then finally brought to political fruition by the humanist SED. Within this teleological paradigm, antifascism at Buchenwald could claim a special place, for nowhere else in Nazi Germany had German resistance to Nazism – or at least so the argument ran – led directly to the overthrow of the fascists. Buchenwald was socialist revolutionary humanism in practice, applied Goethe and Schiller – and indeed, Buchenwald prisoners recalled how certain renowned passages from Schiller's *Don Carlos* were recited at secret cabaret events within the camp³.

There was, of course, another way of regarding Buchenwald, namely as evidence of a destructive tradition in Germany – as, in other words, Weimar's polar opposite. This perspective was not untypical of views in the eastern zone and, in its early years at least, the GDR. Thus one of the architects involved in plans for the construction of a memorial to Buchenwald's victims on the Ettersberg in late 1940s opined that any road leading to such a memorial should bypass Weimar « because the site of Weimar Classicism truly has nothing to do with Buchenwald ». And one of the very first guidebooks to the history of the camp, published in 1956, confirmed that there was a shocking contrast between the humanist legacy of Weimar and the inhumanity of what happened in Buchenwald⁴. Understanding Buchenwald and Weimar as irreconcilable was not, however, the norm, and there is increasingly less evidence of such an understanding as of the 1960s. Reading Buchenwald as a map of Nazi atrocities would have meant confronting the East German population, not least that of Weimar, with its responsibility for tolerating such atrocities. Politically, it made much more sense to offer a reading of Buchenwald as a site of German-led resistance, thereby presenting the East German population with the chance to avoid self-examination by identifying with « The Other Germany », as the title of a 1949 exhibition in Berlin termed German resistance. Generally, then, in the GDR the emphasis was on reconciling the history of Buchenwald with that of Weimar Classicism – a process supported by arguing that responsibility for perpetration at Buchenwald must be assumed by West Germany, given that most former SS men were now living there, not in the GDR.

Initially, the impulse behind drawing connections between Weimar Classicism and Buchenwald came from the Union of Those Persecuted by the Nazi Regime (*Vereinigung der Verfolgten des Naziregimes*) in the GDR, known as the VVN. It also came from former Buchenwald prisoners themselves. In a 1952 meeting, the VVN discussed the need to « popularise the site of memory on the Ettersberg by drawing attention to the former KZ and the Grove of Honour at Buchenwald in a guidebook to Weimar's Classical sites⁵. » What kind of popularisation the VVN had in mind becomes clear from a complaint by Weimar's VVN to the Thuringian Ministry for Industry in July 1952. The VVN objected that Weimar's newly-established Square of the 56000 in honour of Buchenwald's victims, surrounded as it was by rubble from Allied bombs, was in an unworthy condition. It was also in need of a memorial: « what all artists now have to do is build a bridge which leads from the town of humanists such as Goethe, Schiller, Herder and others across fascism to liberation and the victory of a new humanist world⁶. » Walter Bartel, former head of the resistance organisation at Buchenwald, also favoured strengthening links between Weimar and Buchenwald. He supported the construction of a memorial to Buchenwald's victims on the Square of the 56000, and called for an exhibition on the « horror of Buchenwald » to be

set up either in Weimar or near Buchenwald. He insisted at a VVN meeting that « we should remember that Weimar was not only the town of Goethe and Schiller, but was also a direct neighbour of Buchenwald. For this reason we need to establish in Weimar itself a connection to those murdered at Buchenwald⁷. » For all his reference to the horrors of Buchenwald, Bartel was certainly thinking of lines of continuity rather than contrast. This is clear from his general commitment to transforming Buchenwald into a humanist shrine to antifascist resistance. Along with another former Buchenwald prisoner, Robert Siewert, it was Bartel who proposed to the Politburo the virtual demolition of Buchenwald's remaining buildings in 1951 – with the exception of the crematorium, associated with the murder in 1944 of communist leader Ernst Thälmann, and the gatehouse, associated with the supposed storming of the gates by Buchenwald's prisoners on 11 April 1945⁸. And in 1958, the problem of a lack of memorial on the Square of the 56 000 was solved by constructing upon it a statue of Ernst Thälmann – imagined now as the symbol of German Communist Party resistance during the Nazi period.

For former Buchenwald prisoners in the GDR, placing themselves in the same lineage as Goethe and Schiller was their way of seeking to polish up their tarnished image; in 1946 and 1947, and again in the 1950s, internal SED investigations had revealed that communist prisoners at Buchenwald had sought to protect their own cadres at Buchenwald at the expense of other prisoners; their concept of solidarity, in other words, had been somewhat egoistic. The investigations soon led to the demotion of former Buchenwald prisoners from positions of power as Ulbricht sought to assert the authority of the exile communists over those communists who had survived the Third Reich in Germany (*Inlandskommunisten*). But as Buchenwald's legacy became part of the official SED legacy – proof of its emergence from antifascism in deed as well as name – so it became SED policy to explicitly link Weimar humanism with Buchenwald antifascist humanism. According to Christine Lost, who has analysed the GDR's « Deutsche Lehrerzeitung », teaching schoolchildren about the connection between Weimar Classicism and Buchenwald became part of the GDR's pedagogical programme in 1954, about the same time as the SED was committing itself to building a huge memorial to antifascism at Buchenwald on the Ettersberg⁹. In the same year, 1954, the local Weimar SED Party Group (*Parteiaktiv*), animated by concern at the Paris Treaties and an end to prospects of peaceful German unification, turned to the citizens of Weimar with an appeal which cited Schiller's play *William Tell*: « Join yourself to your cherished fatherland, hold fast to it with your entire heart. Here are the sturdy roots of all your strength ». The SED appeal went on to say that the German people now had the choice between peace and war. It explicitly linked the GDR with Weimar, and Weimar with Weimar Classicism as well as with humanism and peace. And it drew another connection: « let us not forget: alongside the memorials to German Classicism, any visitor to Weimar will

find terrible testimony to German shame – Buchenwald. But this Buchenwald », so the appeal continued, « is also home to the great tradition of the revolutionary working-class, and a site of memory both for its loyal son Ernst Thälmann, and of the struggle of the international resistance movement against fascism¹⁰. »

There is good reason to believe that the intensification of the Cold War between 1953 and 1956 led to the setting up of the NFG Weimar and the decision to build a memorial on the Ettersberg hill near Buchenwald. As the two Germanies drifted seemingly inevitably and irrevocably apart, both the GDR and the FRG sought to create for themselves a separate, coherent identity. This identity, in each case, was based on the claim that the « better » Germany could be found in the East or West respectively. To underpin the legitimacy of this claim, each state argued that it represented the continuation of the more positive traditions in German history. The 1955 Schiller Year in the GDR was, nominally, celebrated under the universal slogan « the world honours Schiller ». But its real purpose was to demonstrate to international and particularly West German visitors that the message of Schiller's works – understood as a commitment to freedom, humanism and patriotism – had become living practice in the GDR. Over and over again festive events emphasised how East Germany, in implicit contrast to West Germany, now acted as the champion of these values¹¹. Similarly, the events and speeches which accompanied the dedication of the NMG Buchenwald in 1958 sought to present the GDR as the home of antifascist humanism, and the West as that part of Germany against which antifascism was now directed. With unification no longer a realistic prospect, there was little need for the pragmatism and diplomacy of restraint. What remained was the crudely teleological instrumentalisation of the past in an attempt to demonstrate moral supremacy and historical legitimacy.

The telescoping of German history to fuse Buchenwald's antifascist resistance movement with Weimar Classicism was born of such instrumentalisation. By the late 1950s, such a fusion was well-established, and it remained the practice from then on. In 1957, the town of Weimar began with the organisation of annual holiday courses for teachers. The « Holiday Course for Teachers from the German Democratic Republic » covered Weimar Classicism and Buchenwald. Thus in October 1958, teachers were treated not just to seminars and discussion groups on Weimar Classicism, nor did they just pay visits to the various Goethe and Schiller shrines; they also had an afternoon at Buchenwald memorial site, as they did in 1959, 1960, 1961 and in subsequent years¹². In 1961, the high-profile « Weimar Days for the Young » (*Weimartage der Jugend*) were held for the first time. Weimar's Town Council, the local FDJ, the NFG Weimar, the Deutsches Nationaltheater Weimar and the NMG Buchenwald were all involved in organising these, but it was the Town Council and the FDJ which orchestrated the event. In the programme for the 1963 « Weimar Days », Weimar's mayor Luitpold Steidle addressed prospective young visitors. He stressed the importance of



Inauguration of the statue of Ernst Thälmann on the Square of the 56,000 in August 1958 in Weimar. © Bundesarchiv, image 183-57700-0004.



The monument of Goethe and Schiller outside the Deutsches Nationaltheater in Weimar. © Carola Hähnel-Mesnard.

« engaging with the humanist traditions and the spiritual legacy of great Germans », before going on to say: « Ernst Thälmann, whose memorial stands on the Square of the 56000, and Goethe and Schiller outside the Deutsches Nationaltheater – these are three German men whose intellectual worlds are rooted in humanism. Today », Steidle enthused, « thanks to the victorious power of the working-class, we are making possible those things of which our great poets dreamed and for which they selflessly fought in decades of struggle against reactionary powers¹³. »

If the focus on Thälmann was one way of connecting Buchenwald with Weimar Classicism, reference to the famous Oath of Buchenwald was another; this oath had been sworn by former prisoners after liberation, and in it they pledged not to rest until they had extirpated fascism at its very roots. A statement in the preamble to the 1966 programme for the « Weimar Days » provides a good example of the way this Oath could be instrumentalised: « the 1966 Weimar Days for the Young aim to bring to life both the solemn obligation of the Oath of Buchenwald, and the enlightened, antifeudal, revolutionary and humanist spirit of German Classicism¹⁴. » In 1968, the programme went so far as to link Buchenwald antifascism as a whole with Weimar Classicism:

Every year hundreds of thousands of people from the towns and the villages of our Republic and from many countries around the world come to Weimar. In shock, they make their way through Buchenwald's National Site of Warning and Commemoration, the former concentration camp. With deep respect, they enter the house where Goethe wrote the words about a 'free people on free land'. Goethe's house on the Frauenplan, and the Ettersberg with its memorial for the victims of fascism and the heroes of the antifascist resistance struggle are landmarks of the Weimar of today. Goethe's house speaks to us of the humanist, forward-looking inheritance of the German people, while the Ettersberg calls upon us to fight evil ideology wherever and in whatever form it appears¹⁵.

To an extent, the presentation of resistance at Buchenwald as the active, revolutionary form of humanist traditions not only benefited the image of resistance; it also was designed to « update » Weimar Classicism and make it appear modern and relevant. It was a way, to use a metaphor, of shaking the dust off Goethe and Schiller. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the mythology surrounding the famous oak-tree at Buchenwald, the only tree left standing within the compound by the SS until it was semi-destroyed by a fire resulting from an Allied bombing raid in 1944. According to legend, it was under the boughs of this oak-tree that Goethe and Charlotte von Stein would rest during their peregrina-

tions on the Ettersberg. When the SS ordered the charred tree to be cut down, Buchenwald prisoner Bruno Apitz managed to smuggle a piece of it into the Pathology Building, where, by analogy with the plastercast death-masks of prisoners, he sculpted « The Last Face » (« Das Letzte Gesicht »). The sculpture had to be smuggled out of the camp; it was brought, in the most circuitous manner, to the town of Apolda, where Apitz was able to retrieve it after the war. Until the « Wende » in 1989, it was on display in the German Historical Museum in Berlin.

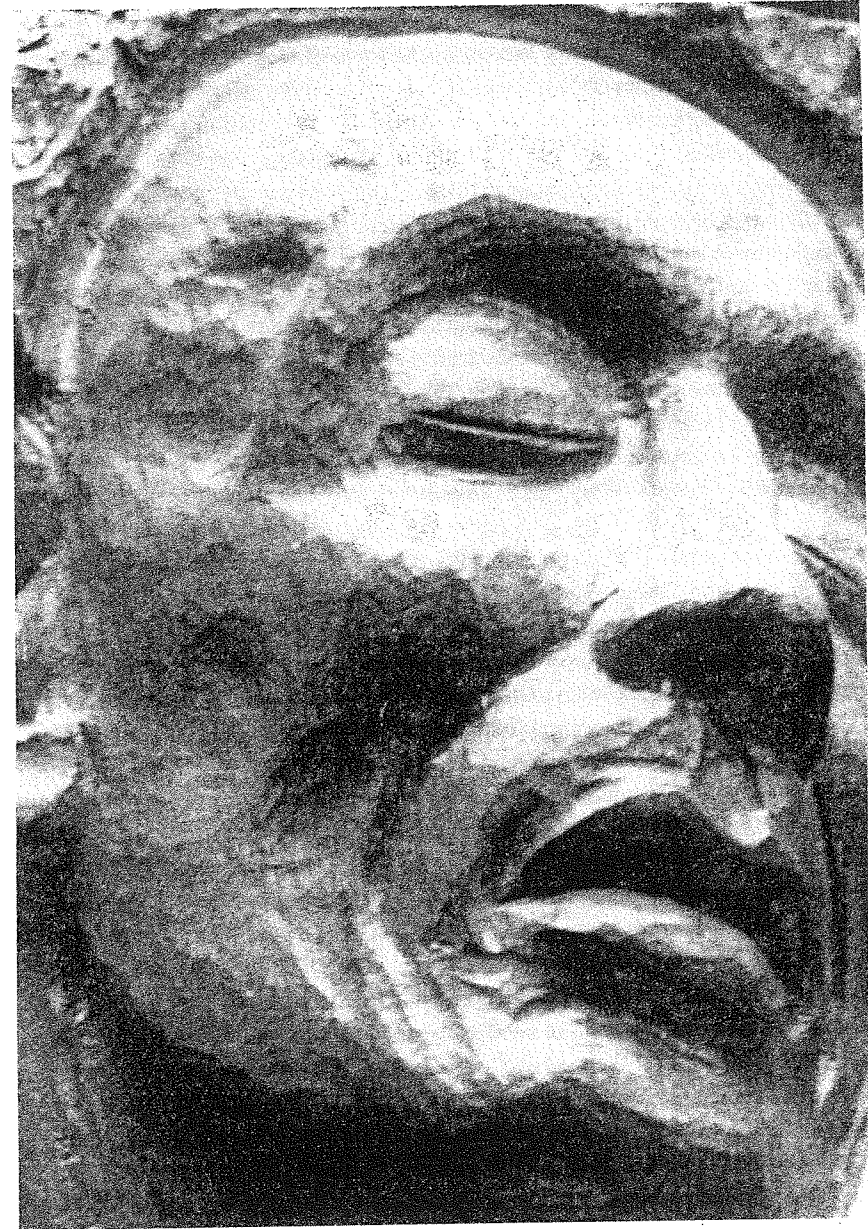
By rescuing part of the oak and transforming it into a death-mask, Apitz appeared both to salvage traces of Buchenwald's sole surviving physical association with Weimar Classicism, and to imprint upon these traces the ineluctable reality of the destruction of that tradition. His sculpture is inherently ambivalent, but that ambivalence was overlooked in the GDR in favour of a purely positive reading. « The Last Face » was understood solely as the defiant expression of human creativity at a site of man's, or rather fascism's worst inhumanity to man, and therefore as remarkable evidence of the durability of the free artistic spirit and humanity enshrined in Weimar Classicism. In sculpting « The Last Face », so the standard reading ran, Apitz had staged an act of artistic resistance inspired both by his socialist faith, and by a sense of responsibility towards a fragment symbolically redolent with Weimar Classicism. He had fused past and present. Sometimes, attempts were made in the GDR to link the Goethe Oak with resistance in a less rarified way. In fact the stump of the Oak was turned into a shrine.

In a mid-1970s East German DEFA film designed for showing to visitors at the NMG Buchenwald's cinema – *Accursed be the Wolf and not only its Teeth* (*Verflucht den Wolf und nicht nur seine Zähne*) – the Goethe Oak plays a significant role. Dramaturgically, a photograph of the Oak serves as a link between the film's preamble, which focuses on Weimar Classicism, and the main part of the film, which focuses on the inhumanity of Buchenwald. The Oak comes to embody or at least symbolise an incomprehensible contrast. Later in the film, however, it serves as the location for the stubborn persistence of that humanism with which it was historically associated. Towards the end of the film, the viewer is informed of the activities of Buchenwald's international resistance committee. There follows an interview with Apitz, who relates: « the Goethe Oak was often a meeting place for groups of prisoners – groups of three or five – where they would pass on news or conduct political education. The SS didn't notice, because the Goethe Oak protected the prisoners from view¹⁶. » Thus it was that, in retrospect, the Goethe Oak became not just a symbol but also a *location* of the humanist struggle of antifascist prisoners against the SS. It was rarely pointed out that prisoners also met in the latrines to discuss resistance; that was a less uplifting thought.

But did the attempts in the GDR to link Weimar Classicism with resistance at Buchenwald really work as effectively as those who posited these links hoped? When Weimar began drawing up plans for the development of cultural life



The oak-tree inside the Concentration Camp of Buchenwald.
© Philippe Mesnard.



„Das letzte Gesicht“ (“The Last Face”). Sculpture by Bruno Apitz.
© Bundesarchiv, image 183-19136-0011, photo : Günter Weiß.

in the town in the early 1980s, the connection was evoked in a manner which sounded routine, even banal: « Weimar is the town of German Classicism and of the antifascist resistance at Buchenwald¹⁷. » In the 1980s, celebrations in honour of Goethe, Schiller, Karl Marx, Thälmann and the liberation of Buchenwald followed in rapid, formulaic succession¹⁸. It is unlikely that the thousands of young people who attended the « Weimar Days » always felt convinced by the claimed links between Buchenwald and Weimar Classicism. When students of Berlin's Humboldt University conducted a survey among GDR schoolchildren during the 1972 « Weimar Days », they found that the children reacted positively to attempts by the organisers to unite the spirit of the Oath of Buchenwald with that of Weimar Classicism. But it seems this « unity » was only palpable on visits to the NMG Buchenwald.

By contrast, attempts to make this unity clear during events relating to Weimar Classicism were less successful. A number of participants remarked critically that hardly any recognisable links were established between the visit to Buchenwald and the other events. In other words, the question as to why we focus on the Classical legacy *in the here and now* should have been posed more clearly. For many young people, 'Classicism' and the 'legacy' seem by and large to be 'finished with', 'remote', 'unrelated to the present', to our political struggles, while Goethe appears to them to be 'over and done with'¹⁹.

Generally speaking, the NFG Weimar never seemed truly committed to the idea of seeking to establish or emphasise continuities between Weimar Classicism and Buchenwald's antifascist resistance – neither during the « Weimar Days », nor during the « Teachers' Courses » or « Pedagogical Weeks »; the NMG Buchenwald was much more active in this respect, as was the town of Weimar itself. The precise reasons can only be guessed at: high-cultural elitism, a sense of the inappropriateness of linking Goethe with Buchenwald, or perhaps a feeling that Weimar Classicism did not need such crude actualisation. There is evidence, certainly, that the NFG Weimar was aware of the need to commemorate the socialist as well as the Classical past. Thus the NFG commissioned a plaque for mounting at the Dornburger Schloß in memory of Rosa Luxemburg's visit there in 1905; it was put up in 1971²⁰. The « NFG-Informationen » published monthly reported regularly on the establishment of various links between the legacy of Weimar Classicism, and that of Buchenwald. But I could find little evidence in NFG speeches and acts of commemoration of explicit mention of Buchenwald or antifascism at Buchenwald; by contrast, the Director of the NMG Buchenwald, Klaus Trostorff, gave a lecture on connections between Weimar and Buchenwald during the 1971 « Weimar Days²¹ »

Yet not all of those involved in promoting the antifascist legacy at Buchenwald adopted the same approach to the relationship between Weimar Classicism and antifascist resistance. For most, creating a « golden bridge » between the two was the key²²; but for some others, contrasting them was more important. 1956 plans for a new exhibition at Buchenwald, for instance, envisaged placing a greater stress on Goethe and Schiller and contrastively juxtaposing the representation of Weimar humanism with that of « Buchenwald as the starkest expression of fascism and horror²³. » Interestingly, there was some opposition to the often-mooted idea of setting up a separate exhibition at the NMG Buchenwald on artistic creativity at the camp – an exhibition which would have drawn links between Weimar Classicism and art at Buchenwald²⁴. Some former Buchenwald prisoners refused to recognise art as a form of resistance; the preferred definition of resistance was that it was *armed* resistance, or at least preparation for armed resistance; direct, rather than indirect; physical, not spiritual. And there was another objection, one which came not just from former Buchenwald prisoners. In the GDR in the late 1950s, an international, largely communist editorial commission set about producing a volume on the history of Buchenwald; it appeared in 1960. Plans to include a separate chapter on art at Buchenwald, however, did not go unopposed. According to Walter Bartel, « some comrades feared that a special chapter in our documentation on art and literature would detract from the anti-humanist character of the camp ». This was not Bartel's opinion, and indeed the commission did agree to the chapter. But there appeared to be a caveat. « Of course the chapter has to be put together in such a way » Bartel continued, « that it clearly illustrates the combative character of art and literature, the high morality expressed by most of what was produced, and the great effect that it achieved²⁵. »

Clearly, given that Goethe and Schiller had expressed their humanism through art, it would seem only appropriate to emphasise that the humanism of Buchenwald's antifascism also took the form of words and images, as well as deeds. But for some former prisoners, to focus on the production of literature and art at Buchenwald was to run the risk of implying that Buchenwald was perhaps not such a terrible place after all – otherwise how could prisoners have found the time, space and materials to produce literature and art? On the other hand, opening up this exceptional space could be presented as an achievement of the resistance movement – a defiant refusal to allow the SS to destroy all creative freedom and human dignity. Moreover, the diverse forms and moods of artistic expression possible at Buchenwald in no way contradicted the camp's inhumanity; in fact they highlighted it in their portrayal of suffering. Yet this, in turn, posed another problem. Would not the focus on art produced at Buchenwald only serve to undermine the impression of Buchenwald as a site of effective resistance?²⁶ Against this, it could be argued that the portrayal of suffering was simultaneously a protest against it, a refusal to allow it to pass unrecorded. It was born of the same indi-

gnation and anger which inspired the more « active » forms of resistance. In the event, the 1960 Buchenwald documentation sought to resolve the apparent ambivalence by only including literature, dramatic scenes and music which went beyond suffering and despair to express a palpable spirit of resistance, hope and (communist) faith; *visual* art was omitted altogether²⁷. There was little place in the documentation for artistic expressions that focused on Jewish death and despair; Apitz's story « Esther », which focuses on Jewish suffering, was omitted²⁸.

In conclusion, it would be true to say that the GDR did seek to construct uplifting links between Weimar Classicism and Buchenwald's antifascism, but it was a process in which the NFG Weimar played a largely lacklustre part. Attempts were orchestrated to resolve the apparent tensions in Weimar's history, but there were those for whom these contradictions remained, and they still found expression here and there. Overall, there is very little evidence in the archive material consulted for this article of a reception of the ideas of Adorno and Horkheimer regarding the dialectic of the enlightenment – perhaps surprisingly, given the firm blame the GDR placed on capitalism for what happened at Buchenwald. To judge from the archive material, the view constructed was that the SS and the enlightenment were absolute opposites. The more critical approach of the 1960s and 1970s to the Classical heritage seems to have had little effect on the politics of memory at Buchenwald or Weimar. Nowadays, of course, Goethe and Schiller stand in largely contrastive relation to Buchenwald. And Buchenwald is not viewed any longer as a place of conflict between antihumanism and humanism; the contemporary memorial site focuses much more centrally on suffering than the old GDR exhibition landscape did, while at the same time providing a more differentiated and wider understanding of what constituted resistance than was possible in East Germany. The continuities hinted at in today's Buchenwald are those between National Socialism, Stalinism and GDR socialism, not those between Weimar and Buchenwald.

NOTES

- ¹ Quoted in Lothar Ehrlich, Gunther Mai and Ingeborg Cleve, « Weimarer Klassik in der Ära Ulbricht », in Lothar Ehrlich and Gunther Mai (eds.), *Weimarer Klassik in der Ära Ulbricht*, Cologne, Weimar and Vienna, Böhlau, 2000, p. 7-31, here p. 7. All translations are my own.
- ² Cf. « Prognose für die Nationalen Forschungs- und Gedenkstätten der klassischen deutschen Literatur in Weimar », Thüringisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Weimar (THSt), Bezirkstag und Rat des Bezirkes Erfurt K261, Bl. 24 *et seq.*
- ³ International Buchenwald Committee and Committee of Antifascist Resistance Fighters (eds.), *Buchenwald: Mahnung und Verpflichtung*, Berlin, Kongress Verlag, 1960, p. 389.
- ⁴ Kuratorium für den Aufbau Nationaler Gedenkstätten in Buchenwald, Sachsenhausen, Ravensbrück (ed.), *Buchenwald: Aus Vergangenheit und Gegenwart des Ettersberges bei Weimar*, Reichenbach, VEB Volkskunstverlag, 1956, p. 3.
- ⁵ THSt, Konzentrationslager und Haftanstalten Buchenwald 32, note from VVN Kreisleitung Weimar (Heinsick) to Landessekretariat der VVN Erfurt (undated, probably May or June 1952).
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, letter from VVN Weimar (Heinsick) to the Ministerium für Industrie und Aufbau (Erfurt), the Landessekretariat der VVN (Erfurt), the SED (Erfurt), the Stadtverwaltung Weimar and the Generalsekretariat der VVN (Berlin), 21 July 1952.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, Niederschrift über die am 18. Juni 1949, 20 Uhr, in den Klubräumen der Gesellschaft zum Studium der Kultur der Sowjet-Union stattgefundenen Besprechung.
- ⁸ The proposal envisaged transforming Buchenwald « into a memorial site in honour and in memory of the thousands upon thousands of international and German resistance fighters, and in particular for the great and dedicated leader of the German working class, Ernst Thälmann ». Cf. *Ibid.*, « Regierungsvorlage », undated, but probably late 1951 or early 1952. The proposal to the East German government came officially from the International Buchenwald Committee and the international organisation of which the VVN was a part, namely the FIR (*Fédération Internationale des Résistants*). But the idea for the proposal probably came initially from Bartel and Siewert. Cf. Volkhard Knigge, « Opfer, Tat, Aufstieg: Vom Konzentrationslager Buchenwald zur Nationalen Mahn- und Gedenkstätte der DDR », in Volkhard Knigge et al., *Versteinertes Gedenken: Das Buchenwalder Mahnmahl von 1958*, Spröda, Edition Schwarz Weiss, 1997, vol. 1, p. 17-18.
- ⁹ Christine Lost, « Die 'Weimarer Klassik' in Pädagogisierungsprozessen der DDR-Gesellschaft – Teil eines 'abgerundeten Welt- und Geschichtsbildes' und 'Leitbild deutscher Erziehungsarbeit' », in Lothar Ehrlich et al. (eds.), *Weimarer Klassik in der Ära Ulbricht, op. cit.*, p. 233-50, here p. 244.
- ¹⁰ Stadtarchiv Weimar 77 20 40/1484, Büro Oberbürgermeister, Kulturelle Entwicklung Weimars in Vorbereitung auf das Schillerjahr 1955 : « Zur Pflege und Weiterentwicklung der kulturellen Traditionen der Stadt Weimar (Vorschlag des Kreisparteiaktivs der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands an die Bevölkerung der Stadt Weimar) », dated 1954.
- ¹¹ However, the degree of public involvement in the 1955 Schiller Year in Weimar itself left something to be desired, despite much National Front, FDGB and FDJ agitation. For a critical report from Weimar's Town Council on the lack of popular commitment, see THSt, Bezirkstag und Rat des Bezirkes Erfurt K161, « Abt. Kultur: Bericht über die Ergebnisse und Erfahrungen zur Schiller-Ehrung 1955 und die daraus abzuleitenden Aufgaben für die noch bevorstehenden Festveranstaltungen », Weimar, 25 May 1955.
- ¹² Cf. Goethe- und Schillerarchiv Weimar (GSA) 150/162, e.g. « Plan für den Ferienkurs für Lehrer aus der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik vom 13.-18. Oktober 1958 ».
- ¹³ GSA 150/NFG 1686, programme for « Weimartage der Jugend, vom 6.-14. Juli 1963 », introductory remarks by Luipold Steidle.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, programme for « Weimartage der Jugend 1966 », preamble.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, programme for « Weimartage der Jugend 1968, 3. bis 7. Juli », preamble.
- ¹⁶ Cf. Buchenwald-Archiv (BWA) 80 04 51, Archivnummer 194, « Rohdrehbuch: Buchenwald: Verflucht den Wolf und nicht nur seine Zähne », 1974.
- ¹⁷ Cf. GSA 150/NFG 4091, 1. Stv. d. GDir. Langfristige Konzeption Rat der Stadt Weimar 1981-1985 : « Rat der Stadt Weimar, Abteilung Kultur: Langfristige Konzeption für die weitere Entwicklung des

geistig-kulturellen Lebens der Stadt Weimar in den Jahren 1981-1985 (Erster Entwurf) », p. 1.

¹⁸ At least according to Weimar's plan of events (*ibid.*, p. 19-20).

¹⁹ Cf. GSA 150/NFG 1687/2, « Humboldt-Uni zu Berlin: Bericht über das kulturpolitische Praktikum der Studenten des 2. Studienjahres anlässlich der Weimartage der Jugend 1972 vom 1.-9. Juli 1972 », p. 3-4.

²⁰ Cf. Stadtarchiv Weimar 77 60 01/1515, Büro Oberbürgermeister, NFG: « nfg-informationen », 51 (June 1971), p. 1.

²¹ Cf. GSA 150/3710: « Analyse der Ferienkurse Stufe 1-III, Februar 1971 », p. 2.

²² Cf. Stadtarchiv Weimar 13/77 60 05/2228, letter from VdN (probably Schlaak) to Walter Bartel, 9 March 1953.

²³ Cf. BWA, Nachlaß Otto Halle: Korrespondenz: memorandum on a 14 December 1956 meeting to Dresden to discuss future developments at Buchenwald Memorial Site (signed Breitmann), 17 December 1956.

²⁴ For plans for such an exhibit, cf. Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR (SAPMO) DR1/7524: Abt. Bildende Kunst. Arbeit der NMG Buchenwald. Jan. 59-Nov. 61, « Perspektivplan der Nationale Mahn- und Gedenkstätte Buchenwald 1960-1962 », 1 January 1960.

²⁵ BWA, Nachlaß Otto Halle: Korrespondenz: letter from Bartel to Halle, 6 January 1958.

²⁶ When an exhibition on art at Buchenwald was shown in the GDR, it was in Weimar as part of the town's 1000-yr celebrations in 1975. This exhibition, « Lebenswille hinter Stacheldraht », in many ways expressed precisely that impression of unmitigated despair – in sections at least – that some former prisoners had not wanted conveyed.

²⁷ Cf. International Buchenwald Committee and Committee of Antifascist Resistance Fighters (eds.), *Buchenwald: Mahnung und Verpflichtung*, *op. cit.*, p. 435-82.

²⁸ A list of the originally planned contents contains « Esther », see BWA Nachlaß Otto Halle: Korrespondenz, Inhaltsverzeichnis (following letter from Bartel to Otto Halle, 6 January 1958).