

IDENTITY IN TRANSITION: LEIPZIG'S CULTURAL DOWNFALL 1943-49

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**Submitted to the School of History and Archaeology Cardiff University in
partial fulfilment of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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Glossary and List of Abbreviations

AB	<i>Antifaschistischer Block</i> (Antifascist Bloc)
CDU	<i>Christlich Demokratische Union</i> (Christian Democratic Union)
CIC	Counter Intelligence Corps
DNVP	<i>Deutschnationale Volkspartei</i> (German National People's Party)
FDJ	<i>Freie Deutsche Jugend</i> (Free German Youth)
GDR	German Democratic Republic
GARF	State archive of the Russian Federation
Gau	Administrative region in the Nazi organisation of the state
Gauleiter	Leader of the <i>Gau</i>
ICD	Information Control Division
Kapellmeister	Orchestra conductor (old German term, only in common use for the Gewandhaus)
KPD	<i>Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands</i> (German Communist Party)
Kreis	Area
Kreisleitung	Area leadership
Kreisleiter	Leader of an area
Kulturamt	Department for culture in Leipzig's city council
Kulturdezernent	Head of the department for culture in Leipzig's city council
Landesverwaltung	<i>Land</i> (region) Administration
LDPD	<i>Liberal Demokratische Partei Deutschlands</i> (Liberal Democratic Party of Germany)
LNN	<i>Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten</i> (newspaper)
LVZ	<i>Leipziger Volkszeitung</i> (newspaper)
NKFD	<i>Nationalkomitee Freies Deutschland</i> (National Committee Free Germany)
NSDAP	<i>Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiter Partei</i> (National Socialist party)
OSS	Office of Strategic Services
PWD	Psychological Warfare Division
Rektor	Vice Chancellor of the University
SD	<i>Sicherheitsdienst</i> (SS secret service)
SED	<i>Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands</i> (Socialist Unity Party)
SPD	<i>Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands</i> (Social Democratic Party)
SS	<i>Schutzstaffeln</i> (elite Nazi organisation)
StadtAL	Stadtarchiv Leipzig
SStA Leipzig	Sächsisches Staatsarchiv, Staatsarchiv Leipzig
Thomanerchor	St Thomas's Choir
ThoSchu	Archiv der Thomasschule
UAL	Universitätsarchiv Leipzig

Introduction

Ich komme nach Leipzig, an einen Ort wo man die
ganze Welt im kleinen sehen kann.

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, 20 January 1749¹

In 1945, Leipzig was indeed the place to see the whole world, or at least all facets of the Second World War and its aftermath. The historic town centre of this city in the very heart of Germany had been largely destroyed in the first complete firestorm that the British bombing squads accomplished in December 1943.² In total, 38 bombing raids on the city left large parts completely in ruins, including all cultural venues, dozens of churches, more than eighty percent of the trade fair buildings and forty percent of housing. Yet, Leipzig's military production survived intact, and the air armament factories went on producing right until the end of the war with the help of slave labour, namely some 20,000 concentration camp inmates, kept in the vicinity of Leipzig at Abtnaundorf, a satellite camp of Buchenwald.

Leipzig was expected to resist the advancing Allied forces in mid-April, since Himmler had forbidden the surrender of any German town. Yet, when the American troops entered the city, entire quarters were handed over peacefully; only small skirmishes ensued that were easily overcome. Thus Leipzig was initially occupied by the Americans, but under the terms of the Yalta Agreement the city, like all of Saxony, was to be part of the Soviet Zone. The Leipzigers, unaware of these agreements, welcomed the US troops with a sigh of relief, for fear of the Soviets was widespread, and had been steadily fuelled both by Goebbels' propaganda and, above all, by the harrowing accounts of Red Army atrocities related by refugees from the old German East.

¹ Gotthold Ephraim Lessing in a letter to his mother in *Lessings Werke* (Donauöschingen, 1822), p. 20.

² Although the death toll in Hamburg in the summer of 1943 was far greater, the actual 'technique' of the firestorm was 'perfected' in Leipzig. Olaf Groehler, *Bombenkrieg gegen Leipzig 1940-45* (Leipzig, 1994), p. 5.

Apart from the fundamental questions of food and shelter, the Leipzigers soon started to wonder whether the Americans would facilitate the renewal of the cultural life, so important to the city's self-conception. Leipzig's cultural institutions, wherever possible, continued throughout the war and even after the bombings of the city. Leipzig's *Gewandhaus* orchestra played its last concert six days before the American arrival, the university, despite a lecture stop, was still handling qualifications, the *Reichsgericht*, Germany's Supreme Court, only ceased proceedings with the American takeover. Yet, all suffered from the ideological isolation and politicisation of the Nazi years and hoped the Americans would support a reconstruction of the city and its culture. No one knew that less than a dozen weeks after the American arrival, the occupation would switch to the Soviet forces.

Although it was hoped that the Americans would support Leipzig in its reconstruction efforts, the city was largely kept in hibernation by the new rulers of the town, a city administration was installed but not equipped with much authority, all public entertainment facilities were closed and cultural events banned. The transitional nature of the occupation manifested itself most clearly in the field of denazification, where no decisive action (apart from a few arrests of the most obvious culprits) was taken as the American military administration saw no immediate need for it. Instead, the Americans 'relieved' Leipzig of some of its most important assets. Upon leaving, they forcibly 'evacuated' key members of Leipzig's academic, economic and cultural elites as well as major resources from the university and important companies of the city. The main aim of this was the removal of potential valuables from their supposed Allies, the Soviets. Here the Cold War was already knocking on the door. When the Soviets took over in Leipzig and Saxony as a whole, the denazification process gained pace. Nonchalant during the American occupation, the policy now emerged in its fiercest interpretation – Saxony's denazification laws 'outshone' those of any other area in the Soviet Zone, let alone

anywhere in the Western Zones. These measures impacted on all areas of public life, not least Leipzig's culture. The initial remit of removing National Socialists from positions of influence turned in the Soviet Zone into an instrument for creating a completely altered political, economic and cultural landscape – the establishment of a system in line with the ideas of Socialism.

Leipzig is not only an interesting topic for a regional history of a German town; its significance is farther reaching. Leipzig was a politically influential town with considerable importance on Germany as a whole. With the Supreme Court, Leipzig had in its midst a Reich-important institution, second only to the *Reichstag*. The city's cultural offerings were broader and more exquisite than those of almost any other German town, Leipzig had a substantial number of theatres, museums, galleries and musical enterprises. The physicist and philosopher Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker even judged them 'the best in Germany'; Berlin, usually lauded as Germany's unsurpassed cultural centre did not rival Leipzig in quality, just quantity as it only 'offered more of everything'.³ And it was in this cultural sphere that the city's *Bürgertum* showed most of their greatest efforts. The 'pride in one's own *Heimat* and its cultural achievements [and] the consciousness of one's own position as a representative of the region' as Mergel defined the 'fundamental social ideology' of the *Bürgertum*, definitely rang true in Leipzig.⁴ Although often described as a 'workers' stronghold', Leipzig was essentially a *Bürgerstadt* – a city based on the rule and achievements of its *Bürger*. Having never been a seat of residence or capital of its *Land* Saxony, the Leipzigers had trusted in themselves to further the fortune of their town. Rather than being ruled from the outside they led developments beyond their city walls. This was true for the development of German jurisdiction where Leipzig's city court soon assumed the judicial authority over the whole of Central Germany from the fourteenth

³ David C. Cassidy, *Uncertainty – The life and science of Werner Heisenberg* (New York, 1992), p. 273.

⁴ Thomas Mergel, 'Mapping Milieus Regionally: On the Spatial Rootedness of Collective Identities' in James N. Retallack (ed.), *Saxony in German History* (Ann Arbor, 2000), pp. 77-98, here p. 90.

century onwards, which culminated in the establishment of Germany's Supreme Court, the *Reichsgericht*, in 1879 in Leipzig. It was also the case for the foundation of internationally renowned cultural institutions, the city's university, its musical establishments, its book printing and trading facilities. The *bürgerlich* component was pivotal in the city's cultural progress. And culture in turn was essential in the *Lebenswelt* of the *Bürgertum*; it was from the cultural realm that it drew its identity as 'Leipzig's cultural landscape reflected the self-conception and confidence of the *Bürgerstadt*'.⁵ Culture was seen to be the means with which 'Leipzig could position itself not just in comparison with Dresden, but also Berlin, Munich, Hamburg and Vienna'.⁶ The world famous *Gewandhaus*, St Thomas's Choir and Leipzig's publishing quarter with Germany's leading publishing houses were an illustration of this. Another example on a more local level was the city's premier fine art gallery, the *Museum der Bildenden Künste*. It was the brainchild of a collective of Leipzig *Bürger* whose aim was the representation of their city.⁷

Although Leipzig and Saxony developed in the latter half of the nineteenth century into workers' strongholds, the politically conservative *Bürgertum* remained at the helm of the city. This was to change after the takeover of power by the National Socialists when the *Bürgertum*, as the 'old elite', lost its hold on the politics and public life of Germany.⁸ Although many *bürgerlich* exponents had supported the National Socialist Party (NSDAP) initially, the reality of National Socialist rule soon led to a rude awakening. Large sections of Leipzig's population fell victim to the regime's racial policies – Leipzig had Germany's sixth largest Jewish community. The German *Bürger*, now politically powerless, retreated into the cultural and academic spheres where they

⁵ Rat der Stadt, *Leipzig lebt Kultur* (Leipzig, 1993), p. 22.

⁶ Margaret Menninger, 'Kulturelle Eliten und kollektives Mäzenatentum in Leipzig' in Thomas Höpel and Steffen Sammler, *Kulturpolitik und Stadtkultur in Leipzig und Lyon 18.-20. Jahrhundert* (Leipzig, 2004), pp. 83-102, here p. 83.

⁷ The *Museum* was founded by a *bürgerlich* society for the arts, which commissioned the building, bought the paintings and curated exhibitions for the purpose of education and representation. It hence was, following Mergel's definition, a truly *bürgerlich* enterprise. For a detailed account see: Ibid.

⁸ Ines Reich, *Carl Friedrich Goerdeler: Ein Oberbürgermeister gegen den NS-Staat* (Cologne, 1997), p. 267.

tried, and in a considerable number of cases succeeded, to maintain their standards and traditions. Yet with the physical destruction of the symbols of these *bürgerlich* accomplishments, namely in the firestorm of 1943 and subsequent bombings, the claim to these achievements weakened. The bombing raids on Leipzig erased the city's printing and publishing quarter and thus the material manifestation of the city of books, damaged most of its university facilities and destroyed the *Bürger*-built opera and world-famous *Gewandhaus* orchestra hall. The *Bürgertum* was presented with the finality that even those not persecuted under National Socialism could not survive unscathed. It was bitter irony that the destruction fell in the anniversary year of most of Leipzig's proudest *bürgerlich* establishments: the conservatoire celebrated its 100th, the *Gewandhaus* its 200th and the opera its 250th anniversary; the bombs struck on the day that Leipzig's university had been founded 534 years earlier.

This study investigates the combined effect of National Socialism, wartime damage and dual occupation first by the Americans and then the Soviets on the *Bürgerstadt* Leipzig and its internationally renowned cultural institutions. Key elements of both occupation policies can be explored in the city adding to the historical discourse of the occupation of Germany as a whole. The Americans furthered the decline of the *Bürgerstadt* by removing key members of the *Bürgertum* through the forced evacuations. The Soviets and the German communists continued this through applying denazification rules in the widest interpretation. To be a member of the *Bürgertum* was deemed reactionary. To be reactionary was placed very close to being National Socialist and hence became unacceptable. In 1946, the Communist Party leader Wilhelm Pieck made it clear that the majority of the *Bürgertum* has 'forfeited the right to be acknowledged as the agent of German culture'.⁹ The '*bürgerlich* classical heritage' was to be honoured, its

⁹ Wilhelm Pieck, 'Um die Erneuerung der deutschen Kultur', Speech, 3 February 1946, printed in SED, *Dokumente der SED, Volume 1* (Berlin, 1951), pp. 102-8, here p. 106.

protagonists, however, eliminated as a negative factor.¹⁰ The process of eradicating this 'detrimental' influence in what was to become the German Democratic Republic (GDR) was largely achieved by the end of the 1940s, around the time of the creation of the two German states. The demise of the *Bürgertum* had set in long before that; the loss of political leverage with the ascension of Nazism was one of the mile-stones. In Leipzig's cultural sphere, the physical destruction of the symbols of *bürgerlich* culture marked the loss of that realm, which was still considered the platform of the *Bürgertum*. The attempts to regain this territory and the eventual failure to do so marked the cultural downfall of Leipzig. The demise began in some parts already in the 1930s, and continued in others for over a half century. A panoramic view of this entire period would have exceeded the framework of this study. Therefore, the crucial phases are discussed but the main focus lies on the period of 1943 to 1949. This marks the important chapter in the decline of the *Bürgerstadt* and its *Bürgertum*, which had been the force behind the cultural excellence of Leipzig. The attacks on the *Bürgertum* in Leipzig did not end with the destruction of the Third Reich, nor did they only begin after the American or Soviet occupation. The continuity in the development is too strong to artificially introduce 1945 as cut-off or starting point. As Klaus-Dietmar Henke stated, the disintegration process of the National Socialist regime and the period of occupation are a 'historic integral process'.¹¹ Yet, the clinical compartmentalisation of modern German history in 'before' and 'after' 1945 is still widespread. This study will be a contribution to the slowly growing number of works of historic research that seek to change this. The idea for this study stems from the ubiquitous representation of Leipzig in present times as *Bürgerstadt* and cultural centre.

¹⁰ Horst Haase, *Die SED und das kulturelle Erbe* (Berlin, 1988), p. 61.

¹¹ Klaus-Dietmar Henke, 'Kriegsende West – Kriegsende Ost. Zur politischen Auswirkung kollektiver Schlüsselerfahrungen' in Hartmut Mehringer et al., *Erobert oder Befreit?* (Munich, 1999), pp. 13-18, here p.13.

However, all of these recent depictions completely neglect that the term *Bürgerstadt* and partly even *Kulturstadt* are historic, not present titles. They have been commodified without questioning of their origins and their viability. The *bürgerlich* influence, as it had existed in Leipzig at the beginning of the twentieth century, was not present anymore at the end of the century. The common notion of the dissolution of the *Bürgertum* cites the years after the end of the Second World War as the period when this process took place.¹² However, especially in Leipzig one can observe the continuities between the National Socialist regime and the onset of socialist rule in East Germany. This study seeks to explore this process with special regards to Leipzig's standing as an internationally renowned cultural centre. It argues that the elimination of *bürgerlich* influence in the cultural realm led to a transition in Leipzig's identity – from leading *Kulturstadt* to a city just evoking great traditions. As Leipzig found itself not to be the seat of the political rulers in the Soviet Zone, it was marginalised in the centralisation efforts of the Soviets and more importantly those of the German communists who sought to standardise all aspects of their society. In practice that meant a new form of discrimination in favour of workers and peasants. In Leipzig's cultural sphere it led to a downfall of quality and prestige. Traditions that had grown for centuries were cast aside to conform to the new order – more comprehensively than even during the Third Reich.

A note on terminology

A main theme of this study is the change of Leipzig's identity from a *bürgerlich* city of international cultural standing to a trade centre in the GDR. Therefore the concepts of *Bürgertum*, *Bürger* and *bürgerlich* are crucial to the discussion of the developments in the period under consideration and for an evaluation of the processes within the city.

¹² See inter al.: Thomas Großbölting, 'Bürgertum, Bürgerlichkeit und Entbürgerlichung in der DDR: Niedergang und Metamorphosen' in *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, 9-10/2008, pp. 17-25.

The choice of not translating the terms into English has been made consciously. Not only is there ‘a particular difficulty in the translation, into [...] English of the German *bürgerlich*.’¹³ The usual translation in English as bourgeois/bourgeoisie offers particular pitfalls as this study encompasses the onset of socialist rule in Leipzig, when bourgeoisie and being bourgeois were deemed debased concepts by the ruling ideology. Hence references by socialist authorities to ‘bourgeois/ bourgeoisie’ could be confused with *bürgerlich* as a broader concept. Even today, these phrases carry negative connotations often linked to their use in Marxist theory. ‘Bourgeois’ further limits any other concepts connected with it. A bourgeois culture is by definition only the culture of the bourgeoisie, devoid of any connection to another social stratum. However, this study appreciates the cultural landscape of Leipzig to be universal, that means its culture is firmly based in the European canon, ‘high art’ in its best possible sense.¹⁴ This cultural landscape was largely initiated, maintained and expanded by the city’s *Bürgertum*. Nevertheless, this does not mean that it only had an impact on or importance for the *Bürgertum*. Thus ‘bourgeois’ is definitely not broad enough to describe it accurately. Finally, even Marx and Engels did not use the term ‘Bürgertum’ in the *Communist Manifesto*, they used ‘Bourgeoisie’.¹⁵

The less ‘tainted’ term of middle class fails to portray the different levels contained in the social stratum of the *Bürgertum*. Michael Schäfer suggested the plural, ‘middle classes’, which addresses the problem of the multilayered character. Yet, even this

¹³ Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A vocabulary of culture and society*, (London, 1988), p. 46. This point is reiterated by Jürgen Schmidt in his review of Michael Schäfer’s work. See Jürgen Schmidt, Rezension zu: Schäfer, Michael: *Bürgertum in der Krise. Städtische Mittelklassen in Edinburgh und Leipzig 1890 bis 1930*. Göttingen 2003. In: H-Soz-u-Kult, 21 October 2003, <http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/rezensionen/2003-4-040> (accessed 22 May 2009).

¹⁴ The term ‘high art’ is contentious again and cultural theory has been on a war path against the perceived elitism of the term. This study, however, just refers to the ‘timeless’ and ‘universal’ aspects of high art culture without attempting to enter into a culture theory argument.

¹⁵ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei* (1890, repr. Stuttgart, 1998).

denotation is too limiting as it excludes the upper class that was a part of the *Bürgertum* in Leipzig and crucial to the funding of the arts.¹⁶

For a member of the *Bürgertum*, the German *Bürger* is chosen over both burgess, the inhabitant of a borough with full municipal rights, and citizen. The former is too strongly connected to habitation, thus more a physical connotation than a perspective. The latter is too broad as it encompassed every member of a city community, regardless of social standing, education and outlook. *Bürgerlich* means belonging to the *Bürgertum*, being of the *Bürgertum*, carrying the values of the *Bürgertum*. Another aspect of this is the *Bildungsbürgertum*, a category referred to in the literature as peculiarly German, relating to members of the *Bürgertum* that are well educated in the humanistic tradition.¹⁷ Intelligentsia would loosely refer to this in English; however, this term again is borrowed from Marxist theory and excludes wide portions of the *Bürgertum*. Furthermore, the intelligentsia created under socialism had little resemblance with the *Bildungsbürger*.

Bürgertum means an entity, a social classification, a signifier of perspective, economics, education, and essentially a combination of all of these aspects. Hence it is hard to define the concept. Suffice it to say that this study does not lay claim to having found an answer to the ongoing project of *Bürgertumsforschung* that still endeavours to distil definitions and grasp the full meaning of the term. In the literature it has served many masters, both to laud it as well as to condemn it. This study defines *Bürgertum* as broadly relating to the social stratum with its different layers and follows Joachim Fest's definition of a *Bürger* as characterised by the virtues of reliability, sense of duty and the resolve to become a valuable member of society.¹⁸

¹⁶ Michael Schäfer, *Bürgertum in der Krise. Städtische Mittelklassen in Edinburgh und Leipzig, 1890-1930* (Göttingen, 2003).

¹⁷ Hans Ulrich Wehler (ed.), *Wege zur Geschichte des Bürgertums* (Göttingen, 1994), p. 7.

¹⁸ Joachim Fest et al., *Der lange Abschied vom Bürgertum* (Berlin, 2005).

A note on the existing historic discourse

Since the collapse of the GDR, regional urban studies of the transition from the Second World War to the Cold War have been a main focus of historical research. However, no such study exists for Leipzig in Anglo-American historiography. The city is mentioned in passing in larger studies of Germany or the Soviet Zone of Occupation. A standard work is Norman Naimark's *The Russians in Germany*.¹⁹ In this book, Naimark explores all major aspects of Russian occupation policy and behaviour including the cultural aspect. Gareth Pritchard's work on the *Making of the GDR* also offers valuable insights into the political history of Saxony and Thuringia with special attention to the relationship of German communists and Soviet occupiers. It is in studies of Saxony that Leipzig gained some prominence in the Anglo-American discourse. Retallack's compilation on *Saxony in German History* touches on some aspects of Leipzig in its regional setting as well as exploring the wider merits of the concept of regional history. Szejnmann's study on Nazism in Saxony offers a detailed analysis of the contradictions in Saxon society – most notably between the 'organised working class' and the 'bourgeoisie' – and how these facilitated the rise of National Socialism in 'Red Saxony'.²⁰

The majority of historic work on Leipzig, however, has been done in Germany itself. Microhistoric studies concerned with particular aspects of the city, often one specific public institution, have been a staple of local Leipzig historians and lay people alike (Leipzig has a thriving history society open to all that also publishes on topics relating to the city's history). The local patriotism that shines through popular works renders some unscientific, however these books, especially on Leipzig's cultural organisations, are significant both in their content but also through their mere existence. They exemplify how

¹⁹ Norman Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation* (London, 1995).

²⁰ Gareth Pritchard, *The making of the GDR 1945-53* (Manchester, 2000); Retallack, *Saxony in German History*; (Claus-Christian Szejnmann, *Nazism in Central Germany: The Brownshirts in 'Red' Saxony* (Oxford, 1999).

much value and pride is placed in these institutions, thereby in turn illustrating their identity creating characteristics.

Germany's Supreme Court, the *Reichsgericht* in Leipzig, and its decisions have been largely the focus of jurisprudential studies, evaluating the practice of the court and its members.²¹ These are useful sources for the study of the history of the institution itself. Evaluations of the court's conduct during the Third Reich have increased in number since the fall of the Wall as more critical appreciations of the continuities between the *Reichsgericht* and the West German Supreme Court, the Bundesgerichtshof established in 1950, are no longer a taboo. The re-establishment of a court in the *Reichsgericht* building after the German unification opened a door to a historic analysis of the institution's development.²² However, most of these studies are strangely divorced from an acknowledgement of the interaction between the city of Leipzig and the institution, which had been very fruitful until the takeover of power by the National Socialists. This study seeks to rectify this.

The 600th anniversary of the city's university in 2009 has sparked a plethora of essays and short studies on individual events, persons of interest or historic periods.²³ The period immediately after the war and the conduct of both occupation powers with regards to the university have been explored in detail by Hans-Uwe Feige. This historian first wrote his Ph.D. thesis in 1978 at the then Karl-Marx-Universität Leipzig about the renewal of the university after the Second World War.

²¹ Some of the most recent studies include: Markus Klemmer, *Gesetzesbindung und Richterfreiheit* (Baden Baden, 1996), William Frederick Meinecke, jr., 'Conflicting Loyalties: The Supreme Court in Weimar and Nazi Germany 1918-1945', Ph.D. diss. (University of Maryland, 1998), Heiko Weidenthaler, 'Die Strafsenate des Reichsgerichts 1933-45: Hüter der Gerechtigkeit oder Handlanger des Terrors', Diss. (Universität Würzburg, 1999).

²² Sächsisches Staatsministerium der Justiz, *Sächsische Justizgeschichte – Leipzig Stadt der Rechtssprechung* (Dresden, 1994), Dieter Grimm, *Das Reichsgericht in Wendezeiten* (Leipzig, 1997); Ursula Oehme, *Das Reichsgericht* (Leipzig, 1995).

²³ See for example: Bert Sander (ed.), *Vivat, crescat, floreat! Sonderedition der Leipziger Blätter zum 600. Gründungstag der Leipziger Universität* (Leipzig, 2009); and the volumes published so far in the *Beiträge zu Leipziger Universitäts- und Wissenschaftsgeschichte* series begun in 2002.

This work, though factual, had a strong whiff of Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy about it. After the end of socialist rule in Germany, however, Feige returned to the subject and reassessed the facts in a more objective approach. His findings, however, were no less critical of the American conduct in Leipzig.²⁴ The fall of the Wall also enabled a revisiting of the period at the end of the Second World War by the protagonists. In a colloquium in 1992, Manfred Heinemann and Alexandr Haritonow brought together Soviet 'Hochschuloffiziere' (the military personnel in charge of overseeing the re-instatement of Germany's higher education institutions) and German students of the period for discussion, most notably Major Pjotr Nikitin and Wolfgang Natonek.²⁵ These documents of oral history are invaluable, since many of these witnesses have now died and in the words of Pjotr Nikitin 'at the most only about thirty percent of the documents' relating to Soviet cultural policies at the time 'have survived, locked away in the Russian archives'.²⁶ Nikitin's own autobiography, published following the colloquium also presents unique insights into Soviet policies but also the behaviour and agenda of the key German players, especially those in political offices.²⁷ In this book, Nikitin also re-wrote part of his own history as previously told in a GDR volume on the *Hochschuloffiziere* of 1977. While he was highly complimentary of the events and outcome of his time in office when asked to reminisce about it by the *Institut für Hochschulbildung der DDR*, in his autobiography, he was far more candid and outspokenly critical. After the fall of Communism, he felt free to re-evaluate his own position but more importantly that of the German communists.²⁸

²⁴ Hans-Uwe Feige, 'Zum Beginn der antifaschistisch-demokratischen Erneuerung an der Universität Leipzig', Diss. (Karl-Marx-Universität Leipzig, 1978); Ibid., 'Vor dem Abzug: Brain Drain – Die Zwangsevakuierung von Angehörigen der Universität Leipzig durch die US-Army im Juni 1945 und ihre Folgen' in: *Deutschlandarchiv* 24, 12/1991, pp. 1302-1313.

²⁵ Manfred Heinemann and Alexandr Haritonow, *Hochschuloffiziere und Wiederaufbau des Hochschulwesens in Deutschland, 1945-1949, Die Sowjetische Besatzungszone* (Berlin, 2000), a similar volume exists for the Western Zones.

²⁶ Pjotr I. Nikitin, *Zwischen Dogma und gesundem Menschenverstand, Wie ich die Universitäten der deutschen Besatzungszone sowjetisierte* (Berlin, 1997), p. 215.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Roland Köhler and Hans-Jürgen Schulz, *Erinnerungen sowjetischer Hochschuloffiziere* (East Berlin, 1977).

This type of politically prescribed view is of course not limited to the East German historiography. The West German view of post-war developments was often oversimplified and does not lag behind some socialist works in terms of one-sidedness, especially when describing events in the Soviet Zone/GDR. This was due to a lack of access to primary sources as well as ideologically informed views.

When considering Leipzig as a whole, different identities emerge in the historical discourse – the *Bürgerstadt*, the city of music, the city of books. The cultural aspect is as important as the reasons for the city's affluence – the city of trade fairs, the international centre for fur trade. The *Bürgerstadt* has been used in recent years as a tool for comparative histories. Leipzig has been paired with Lyon, Edinburgh and Birmingham to explore the history of the middle classes in these cities and as a template for the development of the *Bürgertum* in the respective countries as a whole. Especially Antje Pieper's work on *Music and the Making of Middle Class Culture* reflects on the interaction and interdependency of the *Bürgertum* and cultural endeavours in the urban setting of the nineteenth century.²⁹

In Germany, the historic analysis of the *Bürgertum* became a research interest from the late 1970s onwards and has grown over the years to vast proportions. The university of Bielefeld had its own collaborative research centre (Sonderforschungsbereich) devoted to the social history of the *Bürgertum* in modern history.³⁰ Several of the over 500 publications in the framework of this research project relate to the present study's subject, directly and indirectly. Wehler's *Wege zur Geschichte des Bürgertums* introduces the term *Bürgertum* in a multitude of facets over the course of the eighteenth to the twentieth century. Thereby it identifies the pitfalls of a general fixed

²⁹ Antje Pieper, *Music and the Making of Middle Class Culture* (Basingstoke, 2008); Höpel and Sammler, *Kulturpolitik und Stadtkultur in Leipzig und Lyon 18.-20. Jahrhundert* (Leipzig, 2004); Schäfer, *Bürgertum in der Krise*.

³⁰ See project report of the university of Bielefeld for Sonderforschungsbereich 177: 'Sozialgeschichte des neuzeitlichen Bürgertums', Universität Bielefeld, <http://www.uni-bielefeld.de> (accessed 08 August 2008).

definition as both regional diversity and the 'respective historic reality' of this social formation in different times changed the understanding of what *Bürgertum* signified.³¹ Especially valuable is the suggestion that *Bürgertum* as a social category does not adequately describe the historical reality. In Leipzig, the *Bürgertum* was politically and economically diverse, a heterogeneity furthered in the period under investigation by the Second World War and its devastation. Nevertheless, *Bürgerlichkeit* (the culture and habitus of the *Bürgertum*) overcame these adversities only to be confronted with an onslaught by the new rulers after the collapse of the Third Reich.³²

Michael Schäfer's *Bürgertum in der Krise* investigates the interplay of economics, politics and culture in shaping this class or more precisely 'classes' as Schäfer stipulates. He explores the diversity of Leipzig as a *Bürgerstadt* and explains its multitude (both in number and spectrum) of economic and educated *bürgerlich* existences. The focus of his study is the period of 1890 to 1930, thus he remains outside this study's time frame. However, he portrays Leipzig's *Bürgertum*, its customs and values as well as its influence and activity in the cultural field in an insightful way that offers a good overview of the *Lebenswelt* of Leipzig's citizens. However, some criticism is appropriate as Schäfer neglects the fluidity of the Leipzig *Bürgertum* by drawing a strict line between the economic and the educated parts of the *Bürgertum*. Leipzig had a strong mercantile tradition as the city was founded on the intersection of ancient trading routes. Moreover, merchants showed a great interest and aptitude in cultural questions, and wealth and business acumen could be found in the educated middle class (Leipzig's dominant position in printing and publishing was a prime example of this). Indeed, 'Leipzig's economic strength and reputation were closely associated with the bourgeois ideals of education, virtue and cultural refinement.'³³ Nevertheless, Schäfer provides a wealth of useful detail

³¹ Wehler (ed.), *Wege zur Geschichte des Bürgertums*, p. 7.

³² For 'Bürgertum' versus 'Kultur des Bürgertums' see: Ibid., p. 8.

³³ Pieper, *Music and the Making of Middle Class Culture*, p. 7.

in his analysis. Furthermore, his study already draws attention to critical areas in the later development (signs of disintegration) of the *Bürgertum* of the city of Leipzig.³⁴

The concluding publication of the Bielefeld project, *Sozial- und Kulturgeschichte des Bürgertums*, combines the various strands of analysis and offers some general insight into the topic. It is a valuable source especially for the explanation of key terms and concepts as well as a helpful guide in the historic development of the *Bürgertum*.³⁵ In contrast to the analysis of terminology and deeply theoretical approach of the mentioned Bielefeld studies, other publications approach the topic in more light-hearted fashion. Fest's *Der lange Abschied vom Bürgertum* is a dialogue in book form that nevertheless appropriately outlines historical developments and *bürgerlich* mentalities that are valid in the context of the present study. It does so by inseparably linking *Bürgertum* with a quest for culture, thereby providing an apt explanation for the conditions in Leipzig. This publication is also of particular interest as it does not follow the customary placing of the *Bürgertum* into the nineteenth century.³⁶ It is, however, a general feature of the historiography, both German and Anglo-American, that the nineteenth century is the 'bürgerlich century', hence most studies centre around this period. Jürgen Kocka, a leading historian of social classes, has devoted considerable work to the *Bürgertum*, yet mostly around the hundred years between 1800 and 1900.³⁷ David Blackbourn and Richard J. Evans published a volume investigating the German bourgeoisie, which built on their previous research of the topic and again, the focus of the contributions was the 'end of the eighteenth century to the 1930s' – loosely the 'long nineteenth century'.³⁸ This time has

³⁴ Schäfer, *Bürgertum in der Krise*.

³⁵ Peter Lundgree (ed.), *Sozial- und Kulturgeschichte des Bürgertums* (Göttingen, 2000).

³⁶ Fest et al., *Der lange Abschied vom Bürgertum*.

³⁷ See inter al.: Jürgen Kocka, *Bildungsbürgertum im 19. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart, 1985), *Bürgertum im 19. Jahrhundert*, Volumes 1-3 (Göttingen, 1995), *Bürger und Bürgerlichkeit im 19. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen, 1987).

³⁸ David Blackbourn and Richard J. Evans, *The German Bourgeoisie* (London 1991), p. 2.

been characterized as the zenith of the *Bürgertum*.³⁹ Indeed, Leipzig's culture blossomed especially in this time, yet it also had important developments before and after that period. Margaret Menninger's study on cultural elites in Leipzig provides an insight into the characteristics of Leipzig's cultural landscape in the first half of the twentieth century. Moreover, she combines this analysis with a portrayal of *bürgerlich* involvement and patronage in the cultural life of the city and illustrates how culture was not only supported and commissioned by the highest echelons of society but also among the lower levels of the *bürgerlich* stratum. This exemplifies both the notion that Leipzig's *Bürger* valued culture greatly and saw it as their civic duty to commission and make publicly available works of art. Thomas Höpel expands on this in his work on democratisation of culture by demonstrating how *bürgerlich* culture was taken up by the working classes and emulated to the point of merging.⁴⁰ Thomas Adam furthers this point in his studies of Leipzig's working class and Social Democratic milieu towards the end of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century. He observed that although Leipzig was traditionally viewed as a stronghold of the worker's movement and the birthplace of German Social Democracy, its working class had a distinctive flavour: it was far removed from the proletariat and much closer to the *Bürgertum* than the working classes of other cities. The workers perceived themselves as enlightened and educated, and endeavoured to create a culture quite similar to that of the *Bürgertum*. Where they did not create their own parallel cultural institutions, they entered into the *bürgerlich* cultural sphere itself and became part of it, an occurrence Adam described as 'integrative component culture (*Teilkultur*)', the integration of the workers into the existing *bürgerlich* culture.⁴¹ Furthermore, he

³⁹ Gunilla-Friederike Budde, *Blütezeit des Bürgertums: Bürgerlichkeit im 19. Jahrhundert* (Darmstadt, 2009).

⁴⁰ Menninger, 'Kulturelle Eliten und kollektives Mäzenatentum in Leipzig'; Thomas Höpel, 'Demokratisierung von Kultur und Kulturpolitik in Leipzig und Lyon in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhundert' in Höpel and Sammler, *Kulturpolitik und Stadtkultur in Leipzig und Lyon 18.-20. Jahrhundert*, pp. 139-172.

⁴¹ Thomas Adam, 'How proletarian was Leipzig's Social Democratic Milieu' in James Retallack, (ed.) *Saxony in German History*, pp. 255-75, here p. 270.

demonstrates that the Social Democratic milieu was by no means exclusively working class. It contained white collar workers, civil servants and even small entrepreneurs – traditionally all exponents of the *Bürgertum*. Adam manifested the political diversity of Leipzig's *Bürger* and in the same vein revealed a homogeneity in the cultural identity of Leipzig's citizens that transcended traditional social classifications. According to him, the greatest successes were achieved in the field of music, as workers first entered the same concert and opera auditoria as the *Bürgertum* and later even shared them.⁴² The theme of music is also taken up by Recknagel and Horlitz in their compilation *Musik und Bürgerkultur*. Strongly rooted in historic musicology, this work draws on the connection of cultural endeavour and economic considerations in the historic development of Leipzig towards a city of music of international standing. Recknagel and Horlitz demonstrate that cultural patronage was not purely idealistic, for a strong mercantile spirit pervaded all aspects of Leipzig's life.⁴³ Leipzig was built on a trading tradition, which underlined all its cultural endeavours. Art, culture and mercantilism shaped Leipzig's identity.⁴⁴

There is a vast historiography dealing with the topic of Leipzig as a city of music. As the period under consideration here encompasses the last two years of National Socialist rule it is necessary to turn to studies of music and music policy of the Third Reich in Germany. This topic in general has been recently explored in Anglo-American historiography, for example in the works of Pamela Potter, Michael Kater and Erik Levi.⁴⁵ Although all of these offer valid points, Kater's and Levi's analyses are slightly problematic. Kater's work, in particular, has received criticism for his manipulative

⁴² Thomas Adam, 'Leipzig – Die Hochburg der Arbeiterkulturbewegung' in Werner Bramke and Ulrich Heß, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft in Sachsen im 20. Jahrhundert* (Leipzig, 1998) pp. 229-68.

⁴³ Marion Recknagel and Stefan Horlitz, *Musik und Bürgerkultur – Leipzigs Aufstieg zur Musikstadt* (Leipzig, 2007).

⁴⁴ Rat der Stadt, *Leipzig lebt Kultur*.

⁴⁵ Pamela Potter, *Most German of the Arts* (London, 1998); Michael Kater, *The Twisted Muse* (Oxford, 1997); Erik Levi, *Music in the Third Reich* (London, 1994).

treatment of sources to fit his argument.⁴⁶ Moreover, he uses sweeping statements that might be due to the fact that his subject is very wide; however, some seem designed to cast him and his research in a better light. This is especially noticeable in his critiques of other historians where he moves from valid criticism to outright misrepresentation of facts that have even earned him legal action.⁴⁷ Levi's book provides a good outline of the state administration of music to the 'war against modernism' and the reaction of musical institutions such as orchestras and opera houses towards state measures. However, in his consideration of the latter, his arguments are at times factually incorrect, especially in his examination of the *Gewandhaus* orchestra. His assertion that the concert hall's reputation was 'essentially local' might pass for eccentricity given its international standing, however, his analysis of the 'matters of personnel' is blatantly wrong.⁴⁸ Hence, despite providing a basis for understanding of music policy in the Third Reich, these authors offer little to elucidate the period for the topic of the present study. Therefore, it is necessary again to turn to German research on music in the Third Reich. The eminent historian Fred K. Prieberg has approached the topic in numerous studies with attention to detail and meticulous archival research. His 2004 *Handbuch deutsche Musiker 1933-1945* is a good reference guide to the musicians involved in Leipzig's musical institutions. His work on music in the National Socialist state also offers some insight into how Leipzig's musical scene fitted into the developments in the Germany as a whole.⁴⁹ Specifically focusing on Leipzig, Thomas Schinköth has thrown new light on the developments in the sphere of

⁴⁶ For a further discussion of this particular point see: Helen Bluemel, 'The Triad of St Thomas School, Church and Choir during 1933-45' MA diss. (Cardiff University, 2005), pp. 40-1.

⁴⁷ Whereas Kater's critique of Levi's overly structural approach might be reasonable, his criticisms of Moor's and especially Prieberg's research have no basis in fact. At Prieberg's instigation, Kater had to alter unfounded claims in later editions of his book. See Fred. K Prieberg, *Handbuch deutsche Musiker 1933-1945* (Prieberg, Fred K., 2004, [CD-Rom]), p. 9.

⁴⁸ Levi, *Music*, pp. 205-7. Although Levi is correct in stating that Bruno Walter had been removed from his post in 1933, the orchestral leader Leo Schwartz (also Jewish) remained in office until 1934. Max Brockhaus and Anton Kippenberg, named by Levi as having left, actually remained in office in the directorate right throughout the Third Reich. Kippenberg was very outspoken in the post-war arrangements for the *Gewandhaus*, and was thus far from 'being lost for the *Gewandhaus* in 1933'.

⁴⁹ Prieberg, *Handbuch; Musik im NS-Staat* (Cologne, 2000).

music during the Third Reich. He has focused on Jewish musicians in the period and has also compiled a highly useful outline of Leipzig's main musical institutions in his work on the *Musikstadt*.⁵⁰

There is a significant body of publications on Leipzig's musical institutions. However, they mostly focus on music and performance history, usually factoring out political aspects beyond the superficial. While they offer detail on the developments of the establishments, the wider political and social aspects are ignored. This is especially obvious in the case of the *Gewandhaus*.⁵¹ In the case of St Thomas's, Judith Krasselt has examined St Thomas's School in the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich.⁵² The school's and choir's alumni, the *Thomanerbund*, have also undertaken historic research and published their findings in essays in the alumni society's own publications. Much of this, however, is confined to biographical examinations or individual events, wider studies remain unpublished.⁵³

There are numerous biographies of Leipzig musicians of the period. Many of these, especially early works, however, tend to exclude in-depth political analysis, either out of fear of broadcasting 'inconvenient' truths, or because political discussion was deemed 'somehow irremediably vulgar'.⁵⁴ For Leipzig, the biographies of and biographical studies on Gustav Brecher, Bruno Walter, Karl Straube and Hermann Abendroth are of

⁵⁰ Thomas Schinköth, *Musikstadt Leipzig im NS- Staat* (Altenburg, 1997); *Wirken und Schicksale jüdischer Musiker 1855 bis 1945* (Leipzig, 1994); *Musik als Lebenshilfe – Barnet Licht* (Altenburg, 2000); *Musik – das Ende aller Illusionen?* (Hamburg, 1996).

⁵¹ Bernhard Weinkauff and Gerald Grosse, *Gewandhaus Leipzig: Zwei Variationen zu einem Thema* (Leipzig, 1990); Rudolf Skoda, *Das Gewandhaus Leipzig* (East Berlin, 1986); Johannes Forner, *Res severa verum gaudium* (East Berlin, 1976); to mention but a few.

⁵² Judith Krasselt, *Die Thomasschule zwischen Weimarer Republik und Nationalsozialismus* (Leipzig, 2000).

⁵³ Maria Hübner, 'Karl Straubes letzte Lebensjahre: Zum Gedenken an seinen Todestag am 27. April 1950', pp. 54-55 and Stefan Altnier, 'Karl Straube', pp. 50-54 both in *Thomanerchor Almanach IV* (Leipzig, 2000), Roland Weise, 'Der Thomanerchor in der Fürstenschule' in *Thomanerchor Almanach II* (Leipzig, 1996), pp. 10-15. The Thomanerbund has commissioned a history on the choir's development during socialism, a date for publication is forthcoming.

⁵⁴ Toby Thacker, *Music after Hitler 1945-1955* (Aldershot, 2007), p. 1. A prime example for this in relation to Leipzig is Charlotte Ramin's biography of her husband published shortly after his death. In it she completely glosses over all 'darker' aspects of Ramin's history. Charlotte Ramin, *Günther Ramin* (Freiburg, 1958).

particular interest.⁵⁵ Both works concerned with Brecher and Walter exemplify the fate of Jewish musicians in the Third Reich whilst giving an insight into the developments of that period in Leipzig. Especially Walter's memoirs evoke the picture of Leipzig as a *Bürgerstadt* that knew and valued culture.⁵⁶ Lucke-Kaminiarz's study on Abendroth specifically sets out to juxtapose a life history with political analysis. She examines how Abendroth became entangled in politics and political manoeuvring during National Socialism and in the Soviet Zone/GDR. Thereby Lucke-Kaminiarz manages to illustrate very effectively the differences and variations in cultural policies in different areas within the Soviet Zone of Occupation, a topic that hitherto has been largely neglected in the area of music history.

Historic analysis of musical developments after the Second World War has only slowly found entry into the historiography. Maren Köster's study was the first to appear on the situation in the Soviet Zone. It focuses both on biographical studies as well as practical analysis of the musical output against the background of the political circumstances.⁵⁷

Pamela Potter's and Celia Applegate's co-authored work on *Music and German National Identity* illustrates continuities in music and music reception from the nineteenth century to the twentieth century, revealing links right across the watersheds of 1933 and 1945.⁵⁸

These continuities in German music are taken up in Toby Thacker's *Music after Hitler 1945-1955*.⁵⁹ Thacker set himself the massive task of examining the policies towards music and musicians in all four zones of occupation and later both German states.

⁵⁵ Jürgen Schebera, *Gustav Brecher und die Leipziger Oper* (Leipzig, 1990); Bruno Walter, *Thema und Variationen* (Stuttgart, 1963); Hübner, 'Karl Straubes letzte Lebensjahre'; Irina Lucke-Kaminiarz, *Hermann Abendroth* (Weimar, 2007).

⁵⁶ See: Walter, *Thema*, pp. 386-90.

⁵⁷ Maren Köster, *Musik-Zeit-Geschehen: Zu den Musikverhältnissen in der SBZ/DDR 1945-52* (Saarbrücken, 2002).

⁵⁸ Although these relations are mostly analysed either in musical styles or the abstract notion of 'national identity', they also allow an insight into developments and continuities that conditioned the course of cultural institutions in these periods. Pamela Potter and Celia Applegate, *Music and German National Identity* (Chicago, 2000).

⁵⁹ Thacker, *Music after Hitler*.

The first part of his book, concerned with the period up to 1949, is of particular interest to the present study. Thacker investigates regeneration, denazification, re-education and questions of Allied control and direction of music. Amid such vast amounts of primary sources some detail eludes him. For example, in his treatment of denazification, he ignores the fact that the implementation of policies within the Soviet Zone differed markedly from one region to the next and was by no means consistent.⁶⁰

Bettina Hinterthür's study on music publishing in the years 1945 to the mid 1960s approaches the topic from an unusual, yet logical angle – music publishers were the intersection between composers, musicologists, musicians and the audience.⁶¹ They supported composers and through their marketing and distribution efforts influenced the musical scene. As Leipzig was a main location in printing and publishing, the music publishing houses there and their development after the war were a mirror of cultural and musical policy and a tool in the implementation of re-educational measures in this field in the Soviet Zone/GDR.

Hinterthür's book also addresses another of Leipzig's identities: the city of books. Leipzig had been the German centre for book printing and publishing, and a location at the heart of European book trading. A lively historiography about the publishing industry in Leipzig emerged after the fall of the Wall and the opening of archives in the former GDR. Moreover, the period from 1990 onwards was a time when book publishing surfaced in current politics. Publishing houses bearing the same name existed in both parts of Germany, a legacy of political partition, of nationalisations in the East and of relocation to the West. Historical research thus became a practical tool in the organisation and clearing of tenures and the return of property to former owners.

⁶⁰ This aspect has received attention in numerous publications. See for example: Helga A. Welsh, *Revolutionärer Wandel auf Befehl?* (Munich, 1989).

⁶¹ Bettina Hinterthür, *Noten nach Plan* (Stuttgart, 2006).

The publications that emerged in the process range from studies on individual prominent publishing houses and their most famous directors to general studies on the city's book history.⁶² A particularly interesting example is the volume *Das literarische Leipzig*, compiled by Juliane Brandsch and Andreas Herzog. Its various contributions offer a good insight into the developments of Leipzig after 1945, especially the onset of nationalisation of publishing houses and the centralisation of cultural policy under the socialist administration.⁶³ Individual aspects of Leipzig's publishing history have received further attention. In the course of the *Buchhandelstage* 1995, a special book was compiled that focused on the 'resettlement' of Leipziger publishers by the Americans and the subsequent re-establishment of their businesses in the Western Zones and the resulting split in the book traders' umbrella organisation – the *Börsenverein* – into a Leipzig and a Western branch. This was one of the first publications that offered a nuanced analysis of the events since 1945.⁶⁴ Western accounts of the *Börsenverein*'s development in West Germany usually ignored the continued existence of the organisation's head office in Leipzig, whilst East German histories had mentioned only in passing a 'capitalist' copy-cat, set up on the orders of the imperialist powers, highlighting instead the uninterrupted history of an institution that had grown to be a true representative of the workers in the publishing sector.⁶⁵ The absolute singularity of their institution and its proud history was not relinquished by either side.⁶⁶

A similar picture exists in the historiography of the Deutsche Bücherei, Germany's national library founded by the *Börsenverein* in 1912. The establishment of a

⁶² To name but a few: Dietrich Bode, *Reclam: 125 Jahre Universalbibliothek* (Stuttgart, 1992); Wolfgang Jeske and Heinz Sarkowski, *Der Inselverlag 1899-1999* (Leipzig, 1999); Sandra Knopf and Volker Titel, *Der Leipziger Gutenbergweg* (Beucha, 2001).

⁶³ Juliane Brandsch and Andreas Herzog (eds.), *Das Literarische Leipzig: kulturhistorisches Mosaik einer Buchstadt* (Leipzig, 1995).

⁶⁴ Jan Egel (ed.), *Neuanfang 1945* (Frankfurt am Main, 1995).

⁶⁵ See inter al.: Andreas Werner, *Der Börsenverein des Deutschen Buchhandels* (Munich, 1971) and Max Freyer, *Der Börsenverein der Deutschen Buchhändler zu Leipzig seit 1945* (Leipzig, 1961).

⁶⁶ It is interesting to note that both branches, in East and West, invoked the same history beginning with the *Börsenverein*'s establishment in 1825.

second – rival – institution in the Western Zones (the Deutsche Bibliothek) was treated in fiercely partisan accounts.⁶⁷ Most West German publications focused only on the West German institution and clearly sought to legitimize the establishment of the Deutsche Bibliothek. These publications claim ‘impartiality’, yet an ideological slant is quite pronounced and the Cold War clearly entrenched between the lines.⁶⁸ The East German accounts hardly acknowledged the existence of the Western rival and highlighted instead the proud history of their own institution as the true German national library.⁶⁹

A note on archival sources

Primary sources have now been available in East German archives since the collapse of Communism. However, most archives still suffer a lack of financial means for the vast task of cataloguing documents that had been neglected in forty years of GDR rule. The city archive in Leipzig, despite its very helpful staff, is a case in point. Most documents of the era under investigation are fragile, therefore the eager historian is often faced with a ‘blocked for usage’ remark on his or her order slip. The scanning of these documents onto microfilm has allowed some of them to become obtainable, but also created additional problems. German archives operate a strict policy of data protection. Hence names, excluding those of prominent figures, have to be anonymised in historic studies. More frustrating for the historian are the cases in which the information included in these documents referring to non-prominent characters is deemed sensitive.

⁶⁷ It is significant to note that in this specific case – the Deutsche Bücherei versus the Deutsche Bibliothek – East German historians were more wedded to the idea of presenting facts than their West German counterparts who took it upon themselves to produce highly ideologically tainted works.

⁶⁸ Hanns W. Eppelsheimer, *Die Deutsche Bibliothek in Frankfurt am Main, Ein Bericht* (Deutsche Bibliothek, 1950) and Deutsche Bibliothek and Börsenverein des deutschen Buchhandels, *Drei Ansprachen gehalten aus Anlaß der Einweihung des Neubaus der Deutschen Bibliothek in Frankfurt am Main 24.4.59* (Frankfurt, 1959).

⁶⁹ See inter al.: Helmut Röttsch, *Die Deutsche Bücherei* (Leipzig, 1987).

Then the document becomes off limits and cannot be studied.⁷⁰ When the file exists in paper form, the 'offending' document can be withdrawn, the remainder of the folder is accessible for study. Once the file has been put onto microfilm, however, this solution is no longer available. Thus, the files concerning the denazification and arrests of members of Leipzig's *Reichsgericht* remained a mere tantalizing entry in the finding aids of the archive.⁷¹ The Bundesarchiv has transferred some files concerning the developments in Saxony to the Saxon State archive. Those involving Leipzig are in the city's branch and can be accessed there. The archives of most of Leipzig's cultural institutions suffered greatly in the war, the *Gewandhaus*'s burned in the building's destruction, St Thomas's suffered greatly and was transferred to the city archive and the university archive fell prey to political manoeuvres. Until the end of the Second World War, there was no unified archive for the entirety of the university and individual departments stored their materials in boxes wherever there was opportunity. During the bombings, much material was lost and further losses were incurred after the war – paper was scarce and used for heating or exchanged for other commodities. A 'clean-up' exercise by the National Socialists in the final days of the war as well as the removals of documents by both American and Soviet occupation forces added to the fragmentary nature of the archive. When finally an inventory of all stock was drawn up in 1950 a further reduction of material was noted. As the missing files contained politically contentious material – for example the deliberations for the re-instatement of ex-NSDAP academics – it must be assumed that these were removed by the political authorities at some stage after 1945.⁷²

⁷⁰ Exceptions can be made, but the process is lengthy involving several hearings with archive officials over months in which the historian has to state his or her case. A positive outcome is by no means certain and the procedure is discouraged.

⁷¹ The files in question: Stadtarchiv Leipzig (StadtAL), Stadtverordnete und Rat (StVuR), No. 1309, No. 17506, No. 17507.

⁷² The depiction of the state of the university archive is largely based on the preface to the university's finding aids for the Bestand Rektorat (affectionately referred to by the archivist as 'green monsters') and my own experience of repeatedly reading the line 'Bei Inventur 1950 nicht mehr vorhanden' next to an interesting entry.

Nevertheless, an abundance of primary sources are available, including the GARF (state archive of the Russian Federation) files in the Bundesarchiv, the reproductions of archived documents of the Soviet military administration in Germany. Due to the temperamental policy in Russia regarding archival accessibility, these files remain the safest way of studying Russian sources of the period. Parts of these, namely those concerning cultural policies, have also been published in both Russian and German and are thus widely available.⁷³

All translations from German sources, unless otherwise stated, are my own.

Drawing on this considerable body of primary and secondary sources this study seeks to highlight the interconnectedness of Leipzig's cultural identities and its status as *Bürgerstadt* by giving equal weight to the main institutions as symbols of each of the city's cultural characters, as city of music, books, law and learning. This is important to avoid the distortion often created by utilizing a one-dimensional approach. Leipzig's cultural identity in 1943-49 encompassed war time destruction, dual occupation, denazification, attempts at regeneration, growing political interference and the remodelling of the Soviet Zone in a socialist image. All these factors had ramifications on Leipzig's interwoven cultural scene and their full impact can only be appreciated with an analysis of its main facets. Leipzig's prominent institutions (those of international renown) have been chosen as they were both signifiers of the city's *bürgerlich* quest for culture as well as the most public venues of the determined and at times violent attempts to recast Leipzig in a socialist image.

⁷³ Horst Möller et al., *Die Politik der Sowjetischen Militäradministration in Deutschland: Kultur, Wissenschaft und Bildung 1945-1949* (Munich, 2005).



1 Leipzig city centre pre-1943



2 Leipzig city centre 1945

The maps show Leipzig's old city centre framed by the New Town Hall on the bottom left and the central train station on the top right.

Source: Stadtgeschichtliches Museum Leipzig, Wiederaufbauplan 1949

1 Leipzig – City Politics

In the first half of the twentieth century, Leipzig was a politically divided city. The strong workers' movement and its political representation clashed with a no less organised *Bürgertum*, which traditionally held power in the city and intended to continue in this manner. This resulted in complex relations between the city council and the *Oberbürgermeister* (Lord Mayor) where divisions on party lines had to be overcome through personal efforts. This can be exemplified both in the case of Leipzig's last freely elected Lord Mayor Goerdeler and the first post-war Lord Mayor Erich Zeigner. Goerdeler is a well-known historical figure who played a crucial part in the German *bürgerlich* resistance to the National Socialist regime and was a key member of the circle around Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg, the protagonist of the 20 July 1944 attempt on Hitler's life. Goerdeler was a Prussian civil servant who proved himself an able local politician as second mayor of Königsberg before taking up his post in Leipzig. He was a *bürgerlich* conservative and member of the DNVP (Deutsche Nationale Volkspartei – German National People's Party) until 1931 when he became an independent. He had been a supporter of the *Kaiserreich* who only reluctantly accommodated himself with the Weimar Republic. Thus, he initially welcomed the NSDAP takeover until he came to understand the full extent of the National Socialist revolution and committed himself to the resistance. This transition occurred during his time in office in Leipzig. Erich Zeigner, on the other hand, is less represented in the historical discourse. The natural location for historical research into this man's life, the GDR, was barred by the ambivalent view the SED rulers took towards Zeigner after his early death. Indeed, it was not until after 1990 that proper historical debate started around Zeigner. Previously only one larger study, a biographical sketch written at the behest of the SED in 1985, existed. Michael Rudloff

aptly stated that Zeigner is a 'source of irritation' as he was both a '*Bildungsbürger* and Social Democrat' – two characteristics that seem incompatible.¹

Both men were crucial figures in the politics of Leipzig and important also on a national scale through Leipzig's prominent position within Germany. Equally, both men invested a lot of their efforts in the cultural sphere of Leipzig and shaped its institutions accordingly. Albeit of different political persuasions, both Goerdeler and Zeigner were exponents of the *Bildungsbürgertum*, which had an immense impact on their dealings within the city government. Their *bürgerlich* sense of civic duty paired with strong ideas about how to govern their city brought them into conflict with the respective political systems in which they operated. This *bürgerlich* background will be examined as to how it impacted on their decisions in Leipzig in the complex interplay of city administration and both the National Socialist regime before the end of the Second World War and the Allied occupation powers and new East German authorities thereafter.

Leipzig had risen to national importance in the nineteenth century as the Kingdom of Saxony grew into one of the most developed areas in the wake of Germany's rapid industrial revolution. Saxony's population doubled while Leipzig's increased massively. From the second half of the nineteenth century until the 1930s, the number of Leipzigers grew sevenfold to around 700,000. One major increase had occurred in just ten years from 1885 to 1895 when the city's population jumped from 170,340 to over 400,000.²

¹ For Carl Friedrich Goerdeler (1884-1945) see Hans Mommsen, 'Carl Friedrich Goerdeler im Widerstand gegen Hitler' in Sabine Gillmann and Hans Mommsen (eds.), *Politische Schriften und Briefe Carl Goerdelers, Volume 1* (Munich 2003), pp. xxxvii-lxv. Zeigner (1886-1949) was a lawyer and judge in Leipzig before he entered politics in 1919 for the Social Democrats. He was the Saxon minister for justice from 1921-23 and briefly prime minister of Saxony in 1923 before being deposed and later arrested under manufactured claims. After the end of the Second World War he first became *Kulturdezernent* and then Lord Mayor of Leipzig, a post he continued to hold until his death in 1949. See Anneliese and Lothar Matthes, *Erich Zeigner: Eine biographische Skizze* (Leipzig, 1985); Michael Rudloff, *Erich Zeigner: Bildungsbürger und Sozialdemokrat* (Leipzig, 2000).

² Werner Bramke, *Carl Goerdeler und Leipzig* (Leipzig, 1995), p. 21.

Because of its economic structure, Saxony became a stronghold of the workers' movement. Leipzig in particular was a hotbed of socialism with the foundation of the *Zentralkomitee der deutschen Arbeiter* (Central Committee of Workers) in 1848 and the *Allgemeiner Deutscher Arbeiterverein* (ADAV, German Workers' Council) in 1863. The ADAV eventually led to the establishment of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD), making Leipzig the cradle of German social democracy. Yet, the workers' movement met with strong resistance from the conservative *bürgerlich* camp, which opposed any political strengthening of workers' representation. Until the end of the First World War, a restrictive three class voting system on *Land* and communal level kept the Social Democrats at bay. Yet after the war, the political power of the left grew. In the crisis year of 1923, in the wake of 'Germany's October', Saxony became the first of the German *Länder* to have a government made up of a coalition of Social Democrats and communists under the leadership of Prime Minister Erich Zeigner (SPD).³ This government was, however, quickly deposed on Reich orders. The *Reichswehr* (the army of the Weimar Republic) occupied Saxony, with soldiers patrolling the streets. The army then oversaw the *Reichsexekution*, an order of supersession of the Zeigner government from Reich president Ebert on the grounds of article 48 of the Weimar constitution; the elected *Land* government was removed.⁴ This happened less than a month after Zeigner's cabinet had first been joined by two KPD members.⁵ A participation in government on *Land* level by the Communist Party proved too much for the conservative national government in Berlin,

³ The crisis in Germany (occupation of the Ruhr area, inflation) had escalated over the course of the summer of 1923 and a state of emergency was proclaimed. The KPD, under instructions from Moscow, tried to gain positions of power to facilitate a 'revolution' akin to the developments in Russia in 1917. Despite finding entry into Saxony's government, the KPD failed to accumulate enough influence even to attempt a coup. In November 1923, an attack on the Weimar Republic from the right fringes (Hitler's Munich putsch) also failed. See Gerhard Schulz, *Zwischen Demokratie und Diktatur* (Berlin, 1987).

⁴ Reichsgesetzblatt, RGBl. (I), *Verordnung des Reichspräsidenten*, p. 995, 29 October 1923.

⁵ Schulz, *Zwischen Demokratie und Diktatur*, p. 438.

especially with the air of revolution around. Nevertheless, the SPD retained its share in Saxony's government throughout the 1920s, albeit in coalition with *bürgerlich* parties.

In Leipzig, the city council had strong left wing tendencies. The SPD frequently formed the largest party in the town administration. Thus the selection on 23 May 1930 of Carl Friedrich Goerdeler, a National Conservative, to become Lord Mayor of Leipzig went against the predominant left wing mood in Leipzig and the whole of Saxony.⁶ The communist city councillors showed their protest against this selection in no uncertain terms by boycotting his inauguration ceremony.⁷ Yet, Goerdeler was selected through the city council by the majority coalition of *bürgerlich* parties, some votes from the NSDAP but also several from the SPD faction.⁸ Goerdeler responded to the initial adversities with focused policies that convinced even his rivals. He led Leipzig onto a rigid but successful path of saving without forgetting social security, thereby placating his critics on the left.⁹ He also streamlined the city council by combining departments, and thereby curtailed the power of the parties through cutting the numbers of councillors. Furthermore, he pushed for more authority for his own post.¹⁰ It has been argued that authoritarian approaches by the *bürgerlich* camp such as exemplified in Goerdeler's restructuring of Leipzig's administration paved the way for the National Socialist takeover through the abandonment of democracy.¹¹ Yet, whilst it cannot be denied that Goerdeler was in favour of overcoming the Weimar Republic, his vision for Germany was not congruent with the unfolding Third Reich, as will be seen below.

⁶ Georg Wilhelm, *Die Diktaturen und die evangelische Kirche* (Göttingen, 2004).

⁷ Carl Friedrich Goerdeler, 'Rechenschaftsbericht 22. März 1937' in Gillmann and Mommsen, *Politische Schriften*, pp. 86-91, here p. 86.

⁸ Ines Reich, *Carl Friedrich Goerdeler: Ein Oberbürgermeister gegen den NS-Staat* (Cologne, 1997), p. 97.

⁹ Goerdeler, 'Rechenschaftsbericht 22. März 1937'.

¹⁰ Reich, *Carl Friedrich Goerdeler*, pp. 98-9.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

By becoming Lord Mayor in one of Germany's major cities, he also gained membership in the *Deutscher Städtetag* (German Association of Cities and Towns). This association decided issues of communal administration such as reforms of local government on a national level. Here Goerdeler quickly rose to prominence; his proposals for a stronger communal self-determination found agreement in the *Städtetag* and recommended him on a national level. His shrewd economic intellect earned him the post of *Reichskommissar für Preisüberwachung* (Reich Price Commissioner) in 1931 and in 1932 he was even considered for participation in the national cabinet of von Papen.¹² Leipzig's Lord Mayor had finally become a leading figure not only in local but national politics. It might have been this prominence, paired with his original welcome of the National Socialist takeover of power that allowed Goerdeler to retain his office. This was by no means a normal course of events. Goerdeler was indeed the only non-NSDAP Lord Mayor of a large town in Saxony to have remained in office.¹³ In the entire Reich only four continued in their post after January 1933.¹⁴ The Lord Mayor might have remained but the city council itself soon changed significantly. At the beginning of January 1933, the councillors had elected a left wing executive committee to head the city council (one communist and two SPD members).¹⁵ Within the following months the council was completely transformed. At first, when the KPD and SPD councillors came under pressure, Goerdeler tried to support at least the SPD faction, but to no avail. In the wake of similar national measures, the communists were driven out of the city council. The National

¹² Goerdeler refused participation. In his 'Rechenschaftsbericht' in 1944 he voiced deep regret about this decision. See Goerdeler, 'Rechenschaftsbericht' in Gillmann and Mommsen, *Politische Schriften*, pp. 1191-1248.

¹³ Large town in this instance refers to a city with more than 100,000 inhabitants.

¹⁴ Next to Goerdeler these were Heinrich Sahn (1877-1939) in Berlin (independent, stepped down in 1935), Carl Neinhaus (1888-1965) in Heidelberg (Neinhaus held on to his post by joining the NSDAP in May 1933) and Arthur Menge (1884-1965) in Hanover (Conservative [Deutsch Hannoversche Partei], deselected from office 1937, imprisoned in the wake of the 20 July 1944 assassination attempt), see Horst Matzerath, *Nationalsozialismus und kommunale Selbstverwaltung* (Berlin, 1970), p. 67.

¹⁵ Emil Dörfle, 'Tumult im Leipziger Rathaus. Die Stadtverordneten wählen ein Linkspräsidium' in *Neue Leipziger Zeitung*, 5 January 1933.

Socialist campaign against the left wing in the city council ended after the national ban of the SPD in June 1933.¹⁶ The Lord Mayor had to accept an NSDAP member, Hans Rudolf Haake, as his deputy after he rejected calls to join the party himself. It is, however, important to note that at this point Goerdeler was still a 'supporter of the system', despite his ill-feeling towards having had Haake imposed on him.¹⁷ He professed to have 'worked completely trustfully with the NSDAP'.¹⁸ The truth of this statement, written in prison in 1944, is doubted by some Goerdeler scholars like Werner Bramke, who questions it on the basis of the rift between Goerdeler and his deputy Haake.¹⁹ Ines Reich on the other hand supports the notion of a 'fruitful cooperation'.²⁰ The truth lies in between both, or rather both views are correct when attributed to the right person amongst the main representatives of the NSDAP in Leipzig. The Lord Mayor indeed initially had a good working relationship with the leader of the NSDAP faction in the city council and later *Kreishauptmann* in Leipzig, Kurt Walter Dönicke.²¹ Deputy Lord Mayor Rudolf Haake, however, pushed for complete party control (even overriding the Lord Mayor's powers) from the outset. An early example of Haake's conduct was the attempt by the National Socialists to fly the swastika flag on Leipzig's town hall in March 1933. Regardless of the fact that the swastika flag was not an official symbol of the state at the time and a consultation in the city government had decided against it, Haake still attempted to plant

¹⁶ Reich, *Carl Friedrich Goerdeler*, p.164. Until 1 May 1935 all *bürgerlich* independent councillors had been removed from office as well. See: Ibid., p. 171.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 27.

¹⁸ 'In den ersten Jahren nach 1933 habe ich mit der NSDAP vollkommen vertrauensvoll zusammengearbeitet', Goerdeler, 'Rechenschaftsbericht', p. 1203.

¹⁹ Bramke, *Carl Goerdeler*, p. 24.

²⁰ Reich, *Carl Friedrich Goerdeler*, p. 116.

²¹ Kurt Walter Dönicke (1899-1945) was an early NSDAP member. In 1925 he joined the party and quickly ascended the ranks. In 1927 he was already at the helm of the Leipzig branch of his party. In 1929 he became a member of the Saxon *Land* parliament and in 1932 of the Leipzig city council. After the takeover of power he briefly served as president of the Saxon *Land* parliament until its dissolution in 1934. See: Josef Matzerath, "Dönicke, Kurt Walter" in: Institut für Sächsische Geschichte und Volkskunde e.V., bearb. von Martina Schattkowsky, *Sächsische Biografie*, Online-Ausgabe: <http://www.isgv.de/saebi/> (accessed 22 May 2009).

the flag on Leipzig's town hall tower (and thereby the highest point for miles).²² The Lord Mayor could only prevent the endeavour by personally obstructing access to the tower.

Goerdeler is often portrayed as an ambivalent historic figure. His eventual resistance does not sit easily with his early endorsement of a *bürgerlich* coalition with the NSDAP and his professed admiration for Hitler.²³ Yet, especially in his disputes with Haake, Goerdeler's *bürgerlich* position and opposition by default to the Nazi party's acts in Leipzig and further afield become visible. The Lord Mayor repeatedly had to enforce his own position by reversing Haake's attempts to usurp power in various fields of the city administration. An example of this was Haake's unauthorized advice that civil servants were not to visit Jewish doctors regardless of any exceptions provided in the National Socialist legislation. Goerdeler could overturn Haake's order by insisting that existing rules were to be followed.²⁴ The Lord Mayor also contested the early retirement of Dr Tittel, the headmaster of St Thomas's School, instigated by the National Socialists in 1933. The headmaster had aroused the party's anger by refusing to allow the absorption of the choir of St Thomas's into the Hitler Youth. Goerdeler managed to defer the enforced retirement until 1935.²⁵

Yet Haake was not alone in rendering Goerdeler's position ever more precarious. The *Gauleiter* of Saxony, Martin Mutschmann, was an even more dangerous opponent. In 1934, Mutschmann attempted to gain control over Leipzig's energy industry. Leipzig had a prominent position in the energy supply of North Western Saxony through four energy companies. Mutschmann tried to break the city's exceptional position and to centralize

²² Stadtarchiv Leipzig, StadtAL, Kapitel 32, No. 103, Band 1, Blatt 35, 8 March 1933.

²³ Goerdeler spoke of Hitler's 'gewinnende Liebenswürdigkeit'. Goerdeler, 'Rechenschaftsbericht', p. 1205.

²⁴ Furthermore, Goerdeler attempted to stand up for Jews within his realm of possibilities. Even small gestures were remembered later on with gratitude. Dr Alfons David, a judge at the *Reichsgericht*, lost his post in the wake of the professional civil service law. Goerdeler made a point of greeting Dr David publicly when he met him by chance. To walk over to David, Goerdeler abandoned his companion, Deputy Lord Mayor Rudolf Haake. Reich, *Carl Friedrich Goerdeler*, p. 126 and Marianne Meyer-Krahmer, *Carl Goerdeler - Mut zum Widerstand: Eine Tochter erinnert sich* (Leipzig, 1998), p. 115.

²⁵ Helen Bluemel, 'The Triad of St Thomas', p.17.

Saxony's energy industry under his control in Dresden. Goerdeler confronted the *Gauleiter's* challenge in a legal dispute lasting from 1934-35 from which Leipzig emerged victorious. However, Goerdeler thereby added the omnipotent leader of Saxony to the list of his National Socialist enemies.²⁶

On a national level, Carl Goerdeler still maintained his standing and was reinstated as Reich Price Commissioner in November 1934. Eager to counteract what he regarded as erroneous economic decisions, he threw himself into the task. In the memoranda he produced whilst in this post he clearly condemned the National Socialist economic strategy as dangerous. He spoke out against the rearmament in the Third Reich based on his notion that it was financially unviable and could lead to a renewed inflation. Moreover, he outrightly voiced his concerns that the anti-Semitic policies were detrimental to Germany's economic development.²⁷ These conclusions were not welcomed by the regime. Goerdeler's views were ignored and he himself sidelined. It must be assumed that Goerdeler's fierce opposition to Mutschmann's demands regarding the energy control in Saxony was linked directly to the insights he gained as Reich Price Commissioner. In keeping Leipzig's special position in Saxony's energy market, he prevented, for the time being, the National Socialists from gaining complete control over this important sector and thus slowed their progress to facilitate autarky. Goerdeler clearly refuted the idea that real autarky was possible and even blamed the attempts of achieving it for heightening the Reich's economic problems. This advice was incompatible with the regime's persuasions that were eventually manifested in the four-year plan of 1936. When Goerdeler realised his lack of power, he did not apply for a renewal of his post as Price Commissioner in 1935.

²⁶ Footnote in Gillmann and Mommsen, *Politische Schriften*, pp. 493-4.

²⁷ See inter al.: Ibid., p. 411.

This experience at the heart of power left Goerdeler deeply disillusioned, frustrated and increased his doubts about the regime.²⁸ Furthermore, in 1935 a reform of local government was passed in the *Städtetag* that went against all of his efforts to procure more autonomy for the city administrations.²⁹ He had fallen out of step with the regime and lost political leverage in the process. Therefore it is hardly surprising that his position in Leipzig became increasingly difficult. By May 1935, the NSDAP had pushed all *bürgerlich* city councillors out, giving a clear indication of their future treatment of *bürgerlich* exponents: the 'struggle of old and new elites in the National Socialist regime had been decided against Goerdeler [that is the *Bürgertum*]'.³⁰

Outside the political arena, Goerdeler had gained considerable standing amongst the population of Leipzig. His social policies reconciled the working classes; his strong leadership endeared him to the middle and upper classes. He also proved a common denominator for the different circles of Leipzig's *Bürger*. Goerdeler was a figure that could unite the different strands of Leipzig's *Bürgertum* and bring together the judges, merchants, university lecturers, musicians and artists who otherwise would have socialised just amongst their own kind. 'Politicians circulated in such [...] circles only on an individual basis. Political manoeuvring and intrigue remained beneath the supposed dignity of cultured members of the social elite. The main exception was Dr Carl Goerdeler who frequented [all] circles.'³¹ Moreover, Goerdeler opened his house to those of Leipzig's *Bürgertum* who found adjusting to the new regime difficult or impossible. Amongst frequent guests in the Goerdeler household were the artistic director of the opera Hans

²⁸ Reich, *Carl Friedrich Goerdeler*, p. 223.

²⁹ He still complained bitterly about the decision to curtail communal self-determination in 1941. In a letter he bemoaned the fact that the city administrations were totally cut off from the people they were supposed to serve as the centralisation of power and abolition of elections meant the complete destruction of self-administration on communal level. Goerdeler to Max Rehm, 15 June 1941 in Gillmann and Mommsen, *Politische Schriften*, pp. 171-3.

³⁰ Reich, *Carl Friedrich Goerdeler*, p. 267.

³¹ Goerdeler's circles were those of 'plutocracy' [that dominated Leipzig's social life] as Friedrich Hund, one of Leipzig's eminent university professors described it. Cassidy, *Uncertainty*, p. 273.

Schüler and the university professor Theodor Litt.³² Hans Schüler, an artistic director of international standing, had remained at the helm of Leipzig's opera after Gustav Brecher, the institution's seminal conductor, was forced out of office by the National Socialists. On Goerdeler's advice he joined the NSDAP after Brecher's departure to prevent 'the opera from falling into the hands of the National Socialists'.³³ In 1935, he became the general manager of the opera and thus fully entrenched his position there.³⁴ Both men's visits in Goerdeler's house were more than superficial calls only owed to his position as Lord Mayor. The contact to men like Schüler and Litt outlasted the war and both offered support to the Goerdeler family after 1945.³⁵

Leipzig's *Bürgertum* in the 1930s was, in the words of one of their own, Erich Ebermayer, 'open to the idea of a "national resurgence" (*nationale Erhebung*), "awakening", economic betterment, a fight against the communists and even, though only to a limited extent, against the Eastern European Jews (*Ostjuden*). [...] but would resist any "cultural revolution" in Leipzig [that is a change to their ways]'. Goerdeler was seen as a man who could guarantee the safety of Leipzig's cultural assets and moreover of the *bürgerliche Lebenswelt*.³⁶ Yet National Socialist ideology encroached more and more into the cherished world of the 'reactionary Leipzig'.³⁷

The final straw for Goerdeler came in 1936. Since the springtime, the NSDAP *Kreisleitung* attempted to force Goerdeler to concede to National Socialist sentiment and remove the Mendelssohn memorial in front of the *Gewandhaus*. Yet Goerdeler refused to

³² For Litt see chapter below 'Leipzig – city of learning'.

³³ StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 1326, Blatt 149, 28 March 1946.

³⁴ Fritz Hennenberg, *Oper Leipzig* (Leipzig, 1992), p.163.

³⁵ See Marianne Meyer-Krahmer, *Carl Goerdeler und sein Weg in den Widerstand: Eine Reise in die Welt meines Vaters* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1989), p. 59.

³⁶ 'Solange er sich als Oberbürgermeister in Leipzig halten kann, dürften der Thomanerchor und das Gewandhaus [und] auch [das] Städtische Schauspiel [...] gesichert sein.' Erich Ebermayer, *Denn heute gehört uns Deutschland...* (Hamburg, 1959), p. 23.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 636.

comply with the local party's demands and even brought the matter to the attention of the special representative for questions of Jewish culture in the Propaganda Ministry, Hans Hinkel.³⁸ Goerdeler evidently felt the need to strengthen his decision with endorsement from the NSDAP, moreover from someone who outranked his local adversaries. Even the Propaganda Ministry issued a statement saying that 'such iconoclasm' was not desired.³⁹ Yet, the power struggle continued, especially deputy Lord Mayor Haake set himself apart in pressing for the removal of the monument. Goerdeler was by now considering moving to private industry, to utilise his economic accomplishment but more importantly 'just get out of this situation with dignity'.⁴⁰ His first choice was to become an economic consultant for the directorate of Krupp, one of Germany's largest companies. The discussions started in late 1935, after Goerdeler's stint as Reich Price Commissioner had ended. In May 1936, Goerdeler wanted to join Krupp. Alfried Krupp sought Hitler's approval before the final decision; Hitler voiced some concern, yet no outright objection.⁴¹ Goerdeler began other probes but also waited for the outcome of his impending re-election by the now fully nazified city council. On 22 May 1936, Goerdeler was confirmed in office, despite his growing distance from the regime.⁴² He was seen as still having 'the *Führer*'s trust'.⁴³ Whereas a re-appointment should have meant a reinvigoration of Goerdeler's position in Leipzig, Haake's affronts continued. Things finally came to a head when Goerdeler travelled to Scandinavia from 8 to 13 November 1936 and Haake promptly used Goerdeler's absence to fulfil his desire to demolish the Mendelssohn monument.⁴⁴

³⁸ Goerdeler to Mutschmann in Gillmann and Mommsen, *Politische Schriften*, pp. 96-102.

³⁹ Reich, *Carl Friedrich Goerdeler*, p. 260.

⁴⁰ Meyer-Krahmer, *Carl Goerdeler*, p. 81.

⁴¹ Joachim Scholtyseck, *Robert Bosch und der liberale Widerstand gegen Hitler 1933-1945* (Munich, 1999), p. 208.

⁴² Goerdeler was re-elected for 12 years. StadtAL, Kapitel 10G, No. 685, Band 1, Blatt 237.

⁴³ Reich, *Carl Friedrich Goerdeler*, p. 242. The 'trust', however, appears to have been more of a not yet outrightly voiced rejection. This was to come in the second half of 1936. See Scholtyseck, *Robert Bosch*, p. 209.

⁴⁴ For details see below: 'Leipzig – city of music'.

Upon his return to Germany, Carl Goerdeler was faced with this *fait accompli* in direct contempt of his orders. He immediately demanded the return of the memorial to its place and threatened his resignation in case this was not implemented. Yet, as has been seen, by 1936, Goerdeler had lost a lot of his leverage in Berlin and the National Socialists in Leipzig's city council felt strong enough to defy him. Goerdeler resigned immediately. This case has been well documented in the historiography. Most publications, especially those concerned with the resistance in the Third Reich, take Goerdeler's resignation as a direct reaction to Haake's insubordination or as open affront to the regime's anti-Semitic policies.⁴⁵ Yet, Reich's argument that Goerdeler's decision had been made even before this act of 'cultural barbarism' and that the monument was more of a catalyst for his choice to leave office, is more persuasive.⁴⁶ Scholtyseck supports this notion by explaining that Goerdeler 'abandoned the fiction to prevent worse by remaining in office'.⁴⁷

Goerdeler's progress from this point onwards is well documented in resistance studies. He was appointed financial advisor in Robert Bosch's company, thus providing the ideal front to disguise the real reasons for Goerdeler's now frequent travels abroad.⁴⁸ Despite taking up work in Stuttgart at Bosch, Goerdeler and his family continued to live in Leipzig, and the Leipzigers continued to revere 'their Lord Mayor'.⁴⁹ When Goerdeler attended a *Gewandhaus* concert after his resignation, he was greeted by 'unbridled applause and elation by the Leipzig *Bürger*' making the concert one of the 'most

⁴⁵ See inter al.: Gerhard Ritter, *Carl Goerdeler und die deutsche Widerstandsbewegung*, (4th edition, Stuttgart, 1984), p. 88 and Horst Mazerath 'Oberbürgermeister im Dritten Reich' in Gerhard Hirschfeld and Lothar Kettenacker, *The 'Führerstaat': myth and reality* (Stuttgart, 1981), pp. 228-54, here p. 248. Others that have produced this argument usually quote Ritter as their source.

⁴⁶ Reich states that Goerdeler's 'Teilopposition' intensified since late 1935. See Reich, *Carl Friedrich Goerdeler*, p. 284.

⁴⁷ Scholtyseck, *Robert Bosch*, p. 210.

⁴⁸ Goerdeler tried to warn foreign governments in Europe and further afield against National Socialism and the threat of war. See Scholtyseck, *Robert Bosch* and Arthur Primrose Young, *The X- Documents* (London, 1974).

⁴⁹ Taxi drivers would refer to Goerdeler's address as that of 'our Lord Mayor. Because he is *still* our Lord Mayor' even in 1939. Meyer-Krahmer, *Carl Goerdeler*, p. 70.

embarrassing hours' for the National Socialists.⁵⁰ Apart from losing a respected municipal leader, Goerdeler's resignation meant also that the last proponent of the *bürgerlich* Leipzig had been removed from the political sphere of the city. This process of replacement of the 'old elite' *Bürgertum* repeated itself all over Germany. It often began as early as 1933 with the exchange of mayors upon the *Machtergreifung*. Goerdeler was succeeded by Kurt Walter Dönicke, Leipzig's NSDAP *Kreisleiter*, as Lord Mayor of Leipzig. The position had been offered on a national scale, yet the principle of 'awarding' old party fighters with significant posts prevailed and Dönicke was thus appointed. Haake had commented on Goerdeler's resignation explaining that he 'had to go' as 'he was no National Socialist and would never become one'. He thereby also outlined that party affiliation was now the foremost qualification of a new candidate.⁵¹ Mutschmann used Dönicke's assumption of office publicly to denounce Goerdeler:

The predecessor of Dönicke has thrown in the towel because he noticed that his 'liberalistic' [*liberalistisch* in the original] ideas would not come to fruition. This Goerdeler might have knowledge and ability as a jurist, but that is not enough in the Third Reich. A cosmopolitan city (*Weltstadt*) like Leipzig needs a National Socialist like *Parteigenosse* Dönicke.⁵²

Dönicke, however, would only survive in office for a year (12 October 1937 to 11 October 1938). He continued to strengthen the party (in continuation of his *Kreisleiter* duties), yet proved otherwise stretched in fulfilling his duties.⁵³ Haake, unimpressed by having been overlooked for the post, plotted against Dönicke.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Meyer-Krahmer, *Mut zum Widerstand*, p. 145.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

⁵² Mutschmann quoted in a letter by Goerdeler to him complaining about this public statement. Mutschmann had continued by alleging that Goerdeler was now travelling 'auf Kosten der Stadt in der Welt herum' giving lectures of content that was not consistent with the National Socialist ideology. For this last statement Goerdeler demanded public rectification. Goerdeler to Mutschmann October 1937 in Gillmann and Mommsen, *Politische Schriften*, pp. 96-102, here p. 96.

⁵³ Karin Kühling and Doris Mundus, *Leipzigs regierende Bürgermeister vom 13. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart* (Beucha, 2000), p. 70.

⁵⁴ Matzerath, "Dönicke, Kurt Walter".

This intrigue and Dönicke's own ineptitude led to his downfall. He managed to incense Hitler over a matter of high culture, an area in which any Lord Mayor of Leipzig should have been proficient. Presenting Hitler with a *print* instead of a *manuscript* of a piece by Richard Wagner, he lost the goodwill of the *Führer*. Hitler deemed Dönicke to be 'an excellent *Kreisleiter*, but a mere cypher as mayor [...] the lowest point [of our municipal administration]' and demanded his dismissal.⁵⁵ With the loss of his mayoral office, Dönicke also lost all his state and party offices.⁵⁶ Haake succeeded Dönicke, yet only for ten months and only in a provisional capacity.⁵⁷ The old party guard failed to convince in their new positions; being just a good Nazi was not sufficient after all.

The old guard was followed by the new elite, able administrators who had proven their allegiance to the regime, often as members of the SS. This was also the case in Leipzig. The man to lead Leipzig through the Second World War was SS-*Gruppenführer* Alfred Freyberg. He, too, had joined the NSDAP in the 1920s, just as Dönicke and Haake. Yet, he set himself apart as an able leader of a political administration securing the first state premiership for the NSDAP through his success in Anhalt in 1932.⁵⁸ He set about changing Leipzig according to his ideas, 'pioneering' anti-Semitic measures, which then were adopted as standard across Germany, as will be seen below. He also took a great interest in the realm of culture. Freyberg knew to use the kudos of Leipzig as city of music to underline his own importance and to ensure the utmost level of self-determination in his city administration.⁵⁹ Yet, his knowledge in the cultural field was limited. He had to rely heavily on his *Kulturdezernent* Friedrich August Hauptmann to explain the details of

⁵⁵ Hugh Trevor-Roper, *Hitler's Table Talk 1941-1944* (New York, 2000), p. 148.

⁵⁶ Despite this, Dönicke remained true to the Third Reich and committed suicide upon its defeat in 1945. Matzerath, "Dönicke, Kurt Walter".

⁵⁷ Kühling and Mundus, *Leipzigs regierende Bürgermeister*, p. 70.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p.72.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

Leipzig's cultural tradition and institutions.⁶⁰ Despite this he followed very ambitious plans, including the substitution of St Thomas's Choir with a school choir from a National Socialist elite music school (*Musisches Gymnasium*) which he founded in the city. The project seriously endangered both St Thomas's existence as well as the reputation of Leipzig as a cultural centre.⁶¹ His plans were so far reaching that even the Reich Ministry for Education and its Minister Bernhard Rust, who was the first to promote the idea of a National Socialist music school, distanced themselves from the project and later refused their support completely, causing it to fail in 1943.⁶²

Freyberg attempted to put his stamp on Leipzig. He had taken office, however, at a time when the Lord Mayor was a mere footnote to the organisation of the Reich. Strictly bound within the party regime and the overall structure of the state's administration, Freyberg was reduced in most politically important fields to a recipient of orders. The city was just another layer in the coordinated structure of the Reich; it had lost entirely the independence of the Weimar years. The only way in which Freyberg could act 'progressively' was to enforce and intensify National Socialist measures beyond the 'letter of the law'. Steffen Held attributes to Freyberg an 'anti-Semitic mindset filled with hatred'.⁶³ The position of Lord Mayor was just the realm in which to act out these sentiments. Leipzig had already suffered the same depletion as other German cities through the ostracism of its Jewish citizens, many of whom had been an integral part of the city's public life both in business and culture. Carl Goerdeler, although privately a critic of the more outrageous acts of anti-Semitism, did not prevent the local NSDAP from seizing

⁶⁰ See inter al.: StadtAL, Rat der Stadt, Kapitel 32, No. 31, Beiheft 2/I, Blatt 167-89 (1939-42).

⁶¹ '...dann allerdings wird es nicht mehr lange dauern und kein Mensch spricht mehr von der Musikstadt Leipzig' Ibid., Blatt 196-7; for the *Musisches Gymnasium* see Werner Heldmann, *Musisches Gymnasium Frankfurt am Main 1939-45* (Berlin, 2004).

⁶² Freyberg complained about the lack of support from minister Rust, but to no avail. Sächsisches Staatsarchiv, Staatsarchiv Leipzig, (SSa Leipzig), No. 21117/3, NSDAP Leipzig, Blatt 27-8.

⁶³ See Steffen Held, *Die Leipziger Stadtverwaltung und die Deportation der Juden im NS-Staat* (Leipzig, 2008), p. 11.

authority in this field. He voiced his opinion in individual cases and acted for the most part only to ease and not to prevent anti-Semitic measures.⁶⁴ Freyberg, rather than merely acquiescing, took an active part in the expansion and intensification of anti-Semitic policies in his city. Thus Leipzig became the first city in the Reich to introduce separate food rationing cards for Jews in 1939. Five separate food stores for Jews were opened; other retail outlets were forbidden to sell to those with a 'J' printed on their rationing cards. Another first was the implementation in 1940 of an unlimited obligation for Jews to work. This measure was so 'successful' that the Leipzig model was later copied throughout the Reich. Freyberg had accomplished his mission to put Leipzig on the National Socialist map.⁶⁵

The Lord Mayor also initiated changes in Leipzig's cultural life. He felt that this outstanding characteristic of his city would serve well to cement his position and maybe further his own standing in the Reich. A special concern of his was the de-Christianisation of culture and thereby public life. Anti-Christian measures were a favourite field of activity of the SS and a certain way to find Himmler's approval.⁶⁶ A 'proper' Germanic belief was to replace Christianity, which had been 'forced upon Germany by Rome'.⁶⁷ Freyberg followed this dictum and tried to 'Germanize' Leipzig's church culture. Of the myriad of examples a very prominent case shall suffice as illustration. In 1942, Freyberg attempted to re-designate the Friday motets of St Thomas's Choir in the church of St Thomas as 'Heroes' Requiems', thereby excluding the Christian element of this weekly institution in the Leipzig cultural calendar. The Cantor of St Thomas, Günther Ramin, was able to prevent the secularization of the concerts by quoting from field post letters of Leipzig

⁶⁴ Steffen Held, 'Carl Goerdeler in Leipzig – Antisemitismus und Kommunalverwaltung 1933-36' in Dan Diner (ed.), *Leipziger Beiträge zur jüdischen Geschichte und Kultur, Volume 1* (Munich, 2003), pp. 283-310.

⁶⁵ Held, *Die Leipziger Stadtverwaltung*, p. 12.

⁶⁶ Wilhelm, *Die Diktaturen*, p. 121.

⁶⁷ Carsten Schreiber, *Elite im Verborgenen: Ideologie und Herrschaftspraxis des Sicherheitsdienstes der SS und seines Netzwerkes am Beispiel Sachsens* (Munich, 2008), p. 60.

soldiers who said that they had been gaining strength at the front from the knowledge that they fought for the great tradition of St Thomas. Thereby Ramin managed to retain the link to Christianity.⁶⁸

Freyberg's 'reorganisation' of public life and especially his interference in cultural matters, particularly in the second and third year of war, succeeded in 'alienating wide circles of Leipzig's population'.⁶⁹ This did not go unnoticed in the city administration whose cultural department, especially the *Kulturdezernent* Hauptmann, had worked to ensure that Freyberg's restructuring advances were blocked or at least neutralised in their impact.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, the mood in the population became more and more reserved towards Freyberg's 'initiatives'.

This change in public opinion aided the establishment of new resistance groups in Leipzig.⁷¹ Carl Goerdeler had been active since his resignation in organising the *bürgerlich* and military resistance to Hitler. His Leipzig house was one of the frequent meeting places of this conservative movement.⁷² The initial resistance by the other side of the political spectrum, both Social Democratic and communist, was thoroughly destroyed at the beginning of National Socialist rule in 1933-34. Covering a wide-ranging spectrum, the left wing resistance was not successful, either in proliferation of their ideas or in securing the safety of the resisters themselves. Once leaflets directed against the NSDAP started to appear in Leipzig, the prominent left wing activists were rounded up and detained. Erich Zeigner, who had been imprisoned for three years following his stint as head of the Saxon Social Democratic and communist government in 1923, was arrested again in 1934 for his

⁶⁸ See Bluemel, 'The Triad of St Thomas', especially p. 43.

⁶⁹ 'Weite Kreise der Bevölkerung stark befremden', this was the verdict on the effect of Freyberg's ideas by the department for culture. StadtAL, Kapitel 32, No. 31, Beiheft 7, Blatt 49, 4 January 1941; Günther Ramin used the public sentiment in his argumentation whenever Freyberg attempted to interfere in St Thomas's Choir's church services. See inter al.: Ibid., No. 54, Blatt 69, 11 April 1942.

⁷⁰ Ibid., Blatt 44-8 and Ibid., No. 54, Blatt 23.

⁷¹ Jürgen Tubbesing, *Nationalkomitee Freies Deutschland – Antifaschistischer Block – Einheitspartei: Aspekte der Geschichte der antifaschistischen Bewegung in Leipzig* (Beucha, 1996), p. 53.

participation in the distribution of these illegal leaflets.⁷³ Yet through his persistent denial that frustrated all police interrogation methods, he was acquitted, unlike most of his fellow conspirators.⁷⁴ At this stage of the Third Reich, all 'escaped' with mere prison sentences. Nevertheless, this blow to the left-wing resistance proved potent enough to neutralise any potential resistance throughout the remainder of the 1930s. This 'failure' of resistance from within Germany – the organised groups of all political persuasions were eventually uncovered and sentenced – focused minds on resistance from the outside.⁷⁵ The sections of the German workers' parties set up in exile were also afflicted by the paralysis of their counterparts back at home. Thus it was a truly external initiative that was to facilitate the decisive resistance in Leipzig.

The founding of the *Nationalkomitee Freies Deutschland* (NKFD) in Russia in July 1943, was the outside incentive needed. The NKFD was created on orders of the Soviet leadership by German exiles in the Soviet Union and German prisoners of war. It was designed as a platform to fight National Socialism and further German resistance. This was especially true for its German officers' branch, which was designed to combat the ideology amongst the German soldiers in Soviet captivity. It soon had branches in other European countries, mostly those under German occupation. Leipzig had its own NKFD, founded in September 1943.⁷⁶

The historiography paints a heterogeneous picture as to the exact nature of the NKFD and its branches. Gerd Ueberschär describes the branches outside the Soviet Union as belonging to an – albeit loosely connected – network, implying that the NKFD was a

⁷² Lothar Pickenhain, 'Goerdeler saß auf dem Boden vor dem Radio' in *Mitteilungen des Thomanerbundes e.V.* (Leipzig, November 2003), pp. 26-8.

⁷³ Hans Dieter Schmid, 'Erich Zeigner und der Widerstand gegen den Nationalsozialismus in den Dreißiger Jahren' in Rudloff, *Erich Zeigner*, pp. 95-105.

⁷⁴ SStA Leipzig, 0233 Zeigner, Blatt 12, Curriculum Vitae by Zeigner.

⁷⁵ Jürgen Faulenbach and Carola Schüller, *Deutscher Widerstand 1933-45* (Bonn, 2004).

⁷⁶ Gerd R. Ueberschär and Sabine R. Arnold, *Das NKFD und der BDO im Kampf gegen Hitler 1943-45* (Frankfurt am Main, 1995).

coherent structure. Heike Bungert by contrast asserts that the NKFD groups outside the Soviet Union were wholly independent from the original organisation. For the NKFD in Leipzig, Edgar Böttcher stated even in the mid 1960s that it only bore the name NKFD because its protagonists had heard about the Moscow organisation on the radio. There had never been any contact with the Soviet original.⁷⁷ Nevertheless, the majority of the NKFD members were communists and Soviet-philés despite the organisation's own remit of uniting all anti-fascist movements.⁷⁸

Freyberg was informed about the formation of the NKFD from the very beginning. In his capacity as *SS-Gruppenführer*, he had also been active in the *Sicherheitsdienst* (SD) and was using these contacts for his office as head of Leipzig's city government. Indeed, it was initially through Freyberg that the SD gained access to the town hall of the city and could operate from such a level, a unique occurrence in Saxony.⁷⁹ Freyberg had the NKFD infiltrated to the extent that he felt it safe to let it continue with its work as he was fully informed about its actions, which amounted mostly to propagating anti-National Socialist ideas by a handful of leaflets, talks and other rather low key operations. However, this *laissez-faire* attitude was to end after July 1944; the entire NKFD leadership was arrested and sentenced to death. No one had anticipated this move, the infiltration was by trusted left-wing activists, therefore the leadership structure was wiped out completely.⁸⁰ Yet, once the shock had been overcome, a new generation of resisters formed another NKFD in late 1944. Members in this new group included the kernel of the forthcoming city administration, most notably Helmut Holtzhauer, one of the new leaders in the NKFD who

⁷⁷ Ibid., Heike Bungert, *Das Nationalkomitee und der Westen* (Stuttgart, 1997) and Edgar Böttcher, *Der Kampf des Nationalkomitees Freies Deutschland rettet Leipzig am Ende des zweiten Weltkrieges vor der Zerstörung* (Leipzig, 1965).

⁷⁸ The historiography is divided on the matter of how homogenous /heterogeneous the left-wing resistance in Leipzig was and how this affected on its impact and post-war development. See Carsten Voigt, 'Kommunistischer Widerstand in Leipzig 1943/44' in *Internationale wissenschaftliche Korrespondenz zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, Heft 2/2002, pp. 141-81.

⁷⁹ Schreiber, *Elite im Verborgenen*, p. 364.

⁸⁰ Tubbesing, *Nationalkomitee*, p. 64.

was later to become mayor for finance in Leipzig. It took, however, until the approach of the American army in April 1945 to organise a considered public resistance against the National Socialist city government.⁸¹ Before, the lion's share of the NKFD's work exhausted itself through organising small branches of the National Committee in the city's quarters and suburbs as well as inside factories. In this the NKFD proved most successful. Upon the American approach, the committee counted 4500 members and 38 sub-branches.⁸² Therefore, the resistance could strike with an orchestrated effort in many areas at once. Their main aim was the handover of Leipzig as an open city. The continuous heavy bombing of Leipzig that had started with the firestorm attack of 4 December 1943 had worn the population down; therefore there was no appetite for a defence until death. Numerous letters to the Lord Mayor exemplified this.⁸³ Freyberg agreed and decided against the defence of Leipzig on 8 April 1945; what happened to 'fortress cities' was shown in Breslau's agonising downfall in the first days of April.⁸⁴ *Gauleiter* Mutschmann on the other hand insisted on holding Leipzig. He had Freyberg virtually deposed by placing him under supervision.⁸⁵ The *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten* newspaper was calling for perseverance in line with Mutschmann. Furthermore, on 12 April 1945 Himmler's order proclaiming that 'no German city will be declared an open city' was published, making acts promoting surrender or just hindering military efforts punishable by death.⁸⁶

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 65.

⁸² Gerhard Steinecke, *Drei Tage im April, Kriegsende in Leipzig* (Leipzig, 2005), p. 22.

⁸³ The Leipziger had a very clear picture of what would happen to their city and themselves should any resistance be encountered by the approaching troops. Letters reached Freyberg pleading: 'Herr Oberbürgermeister! Wir bitten Sie herzlich, Leipzig nicht in Grund und Boden schießen zu lassen. Denken Sie auch als Mensch an alle Frauen und Kinder. Wir flehen Sie an! Lassen Sie uns das Dach über dem Kopf. [...] Lassen Sie Leipzig nicht vernichten, bitte, bitte. Wir wollen am Leben bleiben.' StadtAL, Kapitel 72, No. 114, Band III, Blatt 97, letter by a 'M.P. und Frau'.

⁸⁴ Wolfgang Fleischer, *Kriegsende in Sachsen* (Wölfersheim, 2004); for Breslau: Gregor Thum, *Die fremde Stadt – Breslau 1945* (Munich, 2003).

⁸⁵ Böttcher, *Der Kampf*, p. 43.

⁸⁶ Andreas Kunz, *Wehrmacht und Niederlage*, (Munich, 2007), p. 236.

Freyberg had to reiterate this in a radio address two days later where he urged the population to 'continue with their duties' and reassuring them that he would not leave the city. In his radio address Freyberg was accompanied by the *SS-Brigadeführer* Grohmann, Leipzig's police commissioner, who was at his side. He kept a close watch on Freyberg since his 'indiscretion' about the defence of the town. The hopelessness of the situation was, however, obvious as Freyberg closed his speech with the words 'God save our city'. Anyone who had observed Freyberg's earlier attempts at De-Christianisation would have noted the bitter irony in this public statement.⁸⁷

Indeed the Western front was closing in on Leipzig; Magdeburg, to the north of Leipzig, had been encircled just two days before Freyberg's speech on 13 April. On that day, Jena, to the south of Leipzig, was taken by American troops.⁸⁸ In this situation the NKFD was not impressed by Himmler's order. Who was to punish disobedience given that the Americans were already knocking on the front door? On the day of Freyberg's speech they issued leaflets calling for immediate surrender. Calling for 'Freedom – Peace – Bread' they addressed the main concerns of the public and urged the Leipzigers to mark their buildings with white flags and prevent Germans (civilians, but more importantly military) from resisting the American troops if possible.⁸⁹ In an open letter on 16 April 1945 to both Freyberg and police commissioner Grohmann, they urged an end to the fighting. Leipzig's population did not need much persuasion. Housewives convinced *Volkssturm* and also *Wehrmacht* soldiers to lay down their weapons.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ For the speech see *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten*, 15 April 1945, for Grohmann see: Böttcher, *Der Kampf*, p. 43.

⁸⁸ On 25 April finally, the American and the Russian troops met at Torgau, to the North East of Leipzig, on the Mulde River. Manfred Wille, *Der Krieg ist aus, Magdeburg 1945* (Gudensberg-Gleichen, 2004), Ronald Heinemann, 'Der amerikanische Frühling' in *Einestages 16 May 2005, Spiegel Online*, <http://www.spiegel.de> (accessed 22 May 2009).

⁸⁹ The NKFD slogan was evocative of the old National Socialist rallying cry 'Arbeit – Freiheit – Brot' against the 'bankrupt' Weimar system, and would have probably been received as a sarcastic reminder and blow against the Nazi system that had now been proven bankrupt itself.

⁹⁰ Ursula Oehme, *Alltag in Ruinen, Leipzig 1945-49, Begleitbuch zur Ausstellung* (Leipzig, 1995), p. 10.

Entire quarters of the city would be taken without resistance (Leutzsch, Lindenau, Plagwitz) and the troops of the American 1st Army encountered white flags and flowers. The only heavy fighting took place around the Völkerschlachtdenkmal, which finally ended on 20 April 1945. When the Americans entered the town hall, they found the bodies of Freyberg, his closest colleagues and their families.⁹¹ Suicides in 1945 were not a rarity. Especially amongst high ranking National Socialists this was a common resort to escape the inevitable capture. Hitler, Bormann, Goebbels, but also lesser officials turned to this method in view of the German defeat. Freyberg's erstwhile colleague in the Anhalt cabinet and later *Gauleiter* of Halle-Merseburg, Joachim Eggeling, also committed suicide when faced with the impending occupation of Halle on 15 April 1945.⁹²

Once established in Leipzig, the US military administration under Major Richard Eaton was initially puzzled by the National Committee. They previously had encountered small groups of antifascist activists in the west of Germany (for example in Frankfurt and Hanover), yet none of these had any organisation or influence worth mentioning. The Americans were wholly unprepared for this 'first resistance movement of size and weight'.⁹³ With the NKFD they faced a formidable organisation with a large membership that had proven its efficiency and influence by preventing a full battle for the city as well as organising the arrest of prominent National Socialists. The National Committee had also set up open bureaus from 18 April onwards and thus established a form of city administration on their own. Their self-confidence in the face of the American forces

⁹¹ Steinecke, *Drei Tage im April*, p. 27.

⁹² For an in-depth study of suicides in Germany in the final year of the Second World War see Christian Goeschel, *Suicide in Nazi Germany* (Oxford, 2009), for Eggeling see: *Rudolf Jordan und Joachim Eggeling*, (mdr Documentary 2007), by Ernst-Michael Brandt. Lee Miller took pictures of the dead Freyberg and his family when their remains were found by the Americans entering the town hall. See: Lee Miller Archive, <http://www.leemiller.co.uk> (accessed 22 May 2009).

⁹³ Klaus-Dietmar Henke, 'Die amerikanische Militärverwaltung und das Nationalkomitee Freies Deutschland, Leipzig' in Henke, *Die amerikanische Besetzung Deutschlands* (Munich, 1996), pp. 701-14, here p. 701.

stemmed on the one hand from the considerable success their organising and leafleting actions had, but also from the feeling of responsibility towards those in their ranks who had died for the fight against National Socialism.⁹⁴ Moreover, the NKFD played a vital role in upholding public order. Their resistance became seamlessly a 'network of self-administrative units that regulated the social, political and economic aspects' of Leipzig immediately after the entry into the city of US-troops.⁹⁵

This proved a great difficulty for the Americans. First, they did not expect such a level of self-confident demands of participation and secondly, they could not square this with their own ideas of how to progress. Especially in Leipzig, where the US-occupation was of limited duration, it appears that the American troops were not interested in establishing a strong city administration, which the NKFD would have certainly been.

It is still debated amongst historians if it was this friction that led to the decision to bypass the NKFD's preferred candidate Paul Kloß for the post of mayor in Leipzig.⁹⁶ Instead Dr Hans Vierling was chosen, a National Conservative and former member of the *Stahlhelm*. The Americans thus chose a member of the exact political circles that had helped the Nazi party gain power throughout Germany. Whereas Henke asserts that Vierling was chosen out of a need of the American military government to demonstrate its independence from and priority over the NKFD, others allege that it might have 'just' been tactlessness and ignorance.⁹⁷ Scholars in the GDR naturally saw this choice as an open affront against the 'true' antifascists of the National Committee by the imperialist

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Tubbesing, *Nationalkomitee*, p. 76. The NKFD Leipzig was the largest but not the only antifascist committee. Antifascist committees sprang up throughout Germany in the spring and summer of 1945. These citizens' committees were all involved, to varying extent, in the reconstruction efforts of their towns and cities. For a good overview see Gareth Pritchard, *The making of the GDR 1945-53*, pp. 30-56.

⁹⁶ Paul Kloß was an old cadre KPD member who had spent most of the National Socialist rule in concentration camps. See Michael Schwartz, *Vertriebene und "Umsiedlerpolitik"* (Munich, 2004), p. 207. The head of the German city administration under the Americans was just a mayor, the position of Lord Mayor was temporarily abolished.

⁹⁷ Wilhelm, *Die Diktaturen*, p. 204.

American forces.⁹⁸ In any case, Vierling proved a malleable candidate for the Americans. He was very deferential in his dealings with the military government and also arranged his city government in accordance with American sensibilities. Vierling created an advisory board dominated by Leipzig's industry and trade, whilst the NKFD was completely excluded from his initial administration.⁹⁹

The NKFD was mistrusted by Leipzig's military government on the basis of its socialist leanings. Yet, the calls of the National Committee for a 'socialist republic' had quietened after the end of National Socialist rule; instead the idea of a 'truly democratic Germany' was propagated.¹⁰⁰ At its constitutive assembly on 23 April 1945, the NKFD selected 15 members for its executive committee that included two priests and Saxony's erstwhile Prime Minister Erich Zeigner. The other members were also not all communists.¹⁰¹ Nonetheless, the rifts between the differing strands of the antifascist movement were never fully overcome.¹⁰² This, however, did not hinder the committee from productive work. It still fulfilled its assumed role as organizers of Leipzig's social, economic but also political life. In this it acted mostly independently of the American military government who became increasingly annoyed at the self-confidence of the NKFD. The National Committee proclaimed its measures next to the official notes displayed by the American authorities, implying equal status. The result of this was the eventual ban of the Committee on 28 April, just 10 days after the American arrival in

⁹⁸ Kurt Baller, 'Der antifaschistische Widerstandskampf unter Führung der KPD im Gebiet des ehemaligen KPD Bezirkes Leipzig Westsachsen 1941-45', Diss. (Karl-Marx-Universität Leipzig, 1973).

⁹⁹ Tubbesing, *Das Nationalkomitee*, p. 77.

¹⁰⁰ Wilhelm, *Die Diktaturen*, p. 207.

¹⁰¹ As parties were still banned in Germany, the party allegiances are retrospective: 9 KPD, 2 SPD (including Erich Zeigner), 2 CDU, 1 LDPD, 1 Independent. See Tubbesing, *Nationalkomitee*, p. 79

¹⁰² The extent of the rifts is fervently debated in the historiography. The most outspoken proponent of the idea of a deeply divided movement is Carsten Voigt, Horst Schmollinger on the other hand supports the notion that differences were put aside to work together on the task at hand. Jürgen Tubbesing occupies the middle ground by stating that a rapprochement of opinions occurred within the NKFD after the constituent assembly, yet differences were never fully overcome. See Voigt, 'Kommunistischer Widerstand', p. 141; Horst Schmollinger 'Das Bezirkskomitee Freies Deutschland in Leipzig' in Lutz Niethammer and Ulrich Borsdorf

Leipzig. Although the organisation accepted the ban without revolt, the Americans proceeded to arrest over 300 former NKFD members after the ban with the aid of the not yet denazified Leipzig police. This was the same body of men that had helped the SS round up the first generation of the NKFD in 1944 and who, in the final days of National Socialist rule in Leipzig, had shot 52 political prisoners in a police prison in Leipzig-Lindenthal.¹⁰³ Although all the men detained on US orders were subsequently released again, the incident aroused even more anger amongst Leipzig's antifascists than their choice of a *Stahlhelm* man as mayor. Even General Clay's denazification consultant Walter L. Dorn later rated the measure as 'political idiocy'.¹⁰⁴ This line of action seriously discredited American policy in Leipzig. How was democracy to be established if Nazis were ordered to lock up those antifascists whose politics one found uncongenial?¹⁰⁵ Such action not only evoked uncomfortably recent Nazi practice of locking up opponents without even bothering to find a legal pretext for locking them up, it also recalled in the most unfortunate manner the actions of the Weimar government in using the army to overthrow Saxony's elected left-wing government in 1923. Therefore, for a third time in a generation, left-wing politicians in Leipzig had been locked up by armed units, simply because they were members of the political left and not of the right. This incident served to broaden the distance felt by the majority of the NKFD, not least their communist members, from the occupation power; old sentiments that condemned the 'imperialist' nature of the Americans surfaced again, this time underpinned by the 'political' character of the ban of the NKFD.¹⁰⁶ The result was a strengthening of the far left in the antifascist circles in Leipzig. The National Committee's clandestine successor organization, the *Antifaschistischer Block* (Antifascist Bloc, AB),

(eds.), *Arbeiterinitiative 1945* (Wuppertal, 1976), pp. 219-251, here p. 227; Tubbesing, *Nationalkomitee*, p. 55.

¹⁰³ Böttcher, *Der Kampf*, p. 47.

¹⁰⁴ Dorn cited in Henke, 'Die amerikanische Militärverwaltung', p. 707.

¹⁰⁵ Wilhelm, *Die Diktaturen*, p. 207.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 708.

already showed signs of moving further to the left and strengthening the communist influence.¹⁰⁷ The Antifascist Bloc was criticizing Vierling in open letters, mostly complaining about the lack of denazification of his administration and the general lack of organisation in the city. It might have been this change of atmosphere that swayed mayor Vierling to accept one of the former NKFD executives in his city administration. Erich Zeigner was promoted to the posts of legal counsel and *Kulturdezernent*, albeit 'more tolerated than supported' in these capacities.¹⁰⁸ The grievances of the Antifascist Bloc, however, were not addressed before the changeover of occupation powers. On 15 June, Fritz Selbmann, by now the established leader of the communist strand of the Antifascist Bloc, wrote an open letter addressed to General Eisenhower, pointing again – as the Antifascist Bloc had done previously in the open letters to Vierling – to the fact that the city's administration was 'riddled' with active NSDAP members who had remained in office without problems. Furthermore, a police force made up mainly of National Socialists was supervising 'true antifascists', which struck them as a 'clear sign' that Major Eaton was 'favouring the Nazis'.¹⁰⁹

Despite all the discontent with the American forces there is no doubt that the majority of Leipzig's population regarded them as the lesser evil compared to an occupation by the Red Army. When the rumours of a hand-over to the Soviets gained strength, the issue of whether Leipzig was to 'remain American' or 'become Russian' dominated the mood in the city. All American intelligence services deployed in Leipzig, the Psychological Warfare Division (PWD), the Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC) and the

¹⁰⁷ The Antifascist Bloc came under KPD control on the initiative of Fritz Selbmann, a later leading member of the KPD/SED. See Tubbesing, *Nationalkomitee*, p. 82.

¹⁰⁸ Claudia Lang, ' "Ich bin kein Freund der Diktatur, aber..." Kontinuität und Wandel in Erich Zeigners Wirken als Oberbürgermeister von Leipzig 1945-9' in Rudloff, *Erich Zeigner*, pp. 119-51, here p. 125.

¹⁰⁹ Subsequently, Selbmann was advised by a Soviet officer, who was facilitating the return of forced labourers to their home countries, to go into hiding. There he was to remain until the – by now openly rumoured – switch to the Russian forces had taken place. Fritz Selbmann, *Alternative-Bilanz-Credo* (Halle, 1969); copy of the letter to Eisenhower, pp. 514-22.

Office of Strategic Service (OSS), came to the same conclusion – absolutely nothing surpassed this question in importance and urgency, it ‘overshadowed everyone’s thoughts’.¹¹⁰ The fear of the Soviets was strong enough to persuade substantial numbers to flee to the West; especially members of the NSDAP were quick to leave. The Leipziger Werner Schumann describes how his brother, a rank and file member of the Nazi party, left on the same day he had first heard of the rumours without taking any of his belongings; such was the level of panic.¹¹¹

Therefore, when the Russians took over in accordance with the Yalta agreement on 1 July, they were greeted with caution by most Leipzigers. Women were told to stay at home, shops remained closed, the flowers that had greeted the Americans had not been replaced for the welcome of the Russians.¹¹² As Schumann put it: ‘The difference in the reception was that of day and night. Whereas the Americans had been greeted as victorious liberators, the entrance of the Russians resembled a funeral procession. No one was cheering, there was respectful restraint.’¹¹³ Indeed, the fear of the Red Army was a predominant notion in the city. Yet, the first days after the take over were a ‘positive surprise’ for Leipzig’s population. As one young woman stated:

I had only expected bad things from the Russians. But so far their coming had only positive effects, they have removed all American signs: “Do Not Stop”, “Keep Out”, “Only for Military Personnel”. Curfews have been lifted, public pools and cinemas opened, you can sit again on all benches, public meetings are allowed again. It is just a pity that I can’t do anything with my school English.

¹¹⁰ Henke, ‘Der Abzug aus Sachsen und Thüringen’ in *Die amerikanische Besetzung Deutschlands*, pp. 714-42, here p. 714.

¹¹¹ Werner Schumann, *Die Russen in Leipzig 1945-50, Tagebuch eines Leipzigers, Volume 7* (Dreieich, 1993), p. 7.

¹¹² Even though the full extent was not known (the real figures surpassed by far the feared number), the massive problem of rape that had accompanied the Red Army occupation was well known through the witness reports of refugees from the East who had passed through Leipzig. Hence, it seemed advisable for women to keep out of sight. See inter al.: Norman Naimark, ‘Soviet Soldiers, German Women and the Problem of Rape’ in Naimark, *The Russians in Germany*, pp. 69-140.

¹¹³ Schumann, *Die Russen in Leipzig*, p. 11.

Indeed, with the departure of the Americans the myriad of prohibitions and petty chicaneries that had characterised US-rule disappeared; there was, briefly, a whiff of freedom in the air and public life in Leipzig began to resume.¹¹⁴ Soon, however, the brutal conduct of the Red Army soldiers towards the civilian population that plagued most of the Soviet Zone of Occupation also reached Leipzig; here, violence, looting and harassment of women, even in daylight, continued well beyond 1948. Schumann reports an incident in January 1946 where a drunken Soviet soldier killed fifteen people and injured over thirty by driving his car into a crowd. No charges were brought against the soldier and all public debate was hushed up, a ban was imposed on any reports of the event in newspapers or the radio.¹¹⁵ Hubertus Knabe offers photographic evidence from 1948 of a girl in Leipzig being harassed by two Russian soldiers and robbed of her bicycle. He concludes that the overall conduct of the Red Army in the Soviet Zone left the 'picture of the brutal conqueror in the collective mind' of those living under Russian occupation.¹¹⁶

For Leipzig's city administration this change meant a new military government. Nikolaj Ivanovich Trufanov, a general who had fought both at Stalingrad and in the final battle for Berlin, proved unexpectedly congenial and keen to reconstruct Leipzig and especially its cultural tradition.¹¹⁷ His first orders included the legalisation of the Antifascist Bloc and broadening the area of responsibility and function for the organisation.

¹¹⁴ 'Ich hatte von den Russen nur Schlechtes erwartet. Aber bis jetzt hat sich ihr Kommen nur vorteilhaft ausgewirkt, sie haben alle Schilder der Amerikaner entfernt: Nicht Stehenbleiben, Eintritt Verboten, Nur für Militär. Auch Ausgangssperren wurden aufgehoben, Bäder und Kinos geöffnet, man darf sich wieder auf alle Bänke setzen, auch Versammlungen dürfen wieder stattfinden. Schade nur, daß ich mit meinen englischen Schulkenntnissen nichts anfangen kann.' Diary of Eva Salzer, 6 July 1945 in Oehme, *Alltag*, p. 21.

¹¹⁵ Schumann, *Die Russen in Leipzig*, p. 25.

¹¹⁶ This obviously tainted the reconstruction attempts by the Soviet military administration. Even real efforts to improve the situation by Russian officials were received with suspicion. Hubertus Knabe, *Tag der Befreiung? Das Kriegsende in Ostdeutschland* (Berlin, 2005), photo 9, quote: p. 91.

¹¹⁷ Trufanov (1900-1982) was trying in earnest to alleviate the problems of Leipzig's population as soon as he was given his position by the head of the Soviet military administration in Germany (SMAD) Zhukov. See SStA Leipzig, SED Sammlung Biographien, No. 729, Trufanov.

In the same vein, parties were allowed to form again, as they had been in the rest of the Soviet Zone of Occupation since June. This was in marked contrast to the American Zone where political life remained suspended and political parties had to undergo a lengthy licensing process that only began to get under way in late summer 1945.¹¹⁸ Both the SPD and the KPD had rebuilt their structures soon after the Americans had entered Leipzig, thus the 'foundation' was a mere formality. Now operating in the open, the parties were more inclined to pursue their respective aims rather than work together. The common goal was gradually supplanted by party politics. Before the onset of this development, however, both parties agreed on a candidate suitable to replace the hated Vierling – Erich Zeigner. Zeigner, although a member of the SPD, had shown a readiness in the past to work with the KPD and therefore was deemed suitable by the communists who recognized that they could not push for one of their own against the rest of the antifascist activists in Leipzig. Thus Zeigner was put forward and found the approval of Trufanov. On 5 July, Zeigner was informed that he would be instated as Lord Mayor. His predecessor Vierling was informed on 14 July that he had to step down on orders 'from the SMAD in Berlin' and had to vacate his post by 16 July. Trufanov assured Vierling that it was merely a political decision and that there were no personal objections against him.¹¹⁹ Zeigner was quietly pleased with his new position; he was 'striving for an office of practical power without binding himself too closely to any political direction'.¹²⁰ Yet, he was also aware of potential pitfalls that this position carried.¹²¹ Already on 4 July, Walter Ulbricht had travelled to Leipzig to instruct

¹¹⁸ The Soviets allowed the formation of 'democratic antifascist' parties from June 1945 onwards, the Americans were slower and drew out the process of licensing of political parties into the autumn of 1945. See Hans Woller, *Gesellschaft und Politik in der amerikanischen Besatzungszone* (Munich, 1986), p.167.

¹¹⁹ StadtAL, StVuR (1), No. 3211, Blatt 572, 5 July 1945 (for Zeigner's appointment) and Blatt 548, 14 July 1945 and 550, 16 July 1945 (for Vierling).

¹²⁰ Lang, 'Ich bin kein Freund', p. 123.

¹²¹ He stated: 'I have taken the post as I do not see anyone today, much less so than back then [he means his stint as Saxon prime minister] who is suitable for the position.' StadtAL, Nachlaß Zeigner, No. 466, Blatt 3, 15 July 1945.

the local KPD to concentrate on the city administration.¹²² Zeigner was indeed helpful in this. In his administration he included several KPD members.¹²³ Especially in the realm of culture, the KPD was quick to occupy the crucial positions. Helmuth Holtzhauer became head of the department for *Volksbildung*, Rudolf Hartig was appointed to the helm of the department for culture. Both men were old cadre KPD; Holtzhauer had also been a significant figure in the NKFD. Both Holtzhauer and Hartig strove to assert their power in their respective fields thoroughly and Holtzhauer soon acquired a reputation to usurp responsibilities for his department that lay normally with the Lord Mayor or even further afield.¹²⁴ In a sense, Holtzhauer's conduct was reminiscent of that of Goerdeler's deputy Haake who also attempted to seize power beyond his remit (although Zeigner, unlike Goerdeler, had chosen this assistant). Erich Zeigner had to tread a fine line of cooperation with both KPD men, first to ensure that his own powers were not curtailed and secondly to avert any decisions that would go against his vision for Leipzig.

As Claudia Lang has pointed out, the Lord Mayor had unprecedented powers, with nearly no limitations from the German side. Zeigner held all powers that would have come under the remit of the Reich level. Therefore, he was able to exercise authority over the university, the schools, national banks, local jurisdiction and also the private sector. He enjoyed a good rapport with the city commander Trufanov and thus showed great confidence in dealing with his superiors in the extended Soviet administration. The Soviet military administration in Saxony (SMAS) and its equivalent for the whole zone, the SMAD as well as the newly instated *Landesverwaltung Sachsen* intertwined with each other in a complex interplay of responsibilities, which sometimes led to clashing

¹²² Tubbesing, *Nationalkomitee*, p. 104.

¹²³ Zeigner was the sole decision maker in the distribution of offices, thus it can be safely assumed that he chose his preferred candidates. See Lang, 'Ich bin kein Freund', p. 127.

¹²⁴ Holtzhauer tried to bring the university of Leipzig fully under city control and thereby under the direct authority of his department, thus curtailing the Saxon *Land* government's influence over the institution. See chapter 'Leipzig – city of learning'.

demands.¹²⁵ It was also not always the Soviet side that was pulling the strings, as will be seen in the case of Leipzig's university in the chapters below. The *Landesverwaltung* stressed its power as a virtual 'party headquarters' for the communists with the old cadre KPD member Kurt Fischer in a key position.¹²⁶ Yet, in the beginning the *Landesverwaltung* and Zeigner worked well together, Zeigner's open approach to the KPD surely playing its role in this setup.¹²⁷

Leipzig's Lord Mayor utilized his position to assert his ideas even beyond his original remit. Within his own party, the SPD, he acted regardless of the official party line. His close cooperation with the KPD incurred the wrath of the local SPD, so much so that the SPD leader in Leipzig, Stanislaw Trabalski, threatened him with expulsion.¹²⁸ As early as the beginning of July, after having been informed about his installation as Lord Mayor, he met with representatives of the KPD and assured them of a close cooperation between his party and theirs.¹²⁹ Zeigner had done so, even though he was not a member of the party executive.¹³⁰ It would be helpful at this point to have a closer look at Erich Zeigner as his personal traits may explain many of his decisions.

Erich Zeigner was of *bürgerlich* origin and upbringing. His chosen profession of lawyer was very much in keeping with trends in Leipzig. Yet, already during his studies, he

¹²⁵ Lang, 'Ich bin kein Freund'. The *Landesverwaltung* in Saxony was led by the Rudolf Friedrichs, who beforehand had been appointed by the Soviets as Lord Mayor of Dresden. Friedrichs was a member of the SPD. He joined the SED willingly and was later elected as Prime Minister of Saxony, a post he kept until his death in 1947.

¹²⁶ Kurt Fischer was a member of the *Aktionsgruppe Ackermann*, a group of exiled communists who returned from the Soviet Union with the explicit aim of turning the KPD into the 'state party' ruling the state according to socialist principles. He 'shadowed' the SPD's Rudolf Friedrichs until the latter's early death in 1947, at first as first mayor to Friedrichs' Lord Mayor and then as his deputy in the *Landesverwaltung*. The relationship of both became increasingly conflict prone with suggestions that Fischer might even have contributed to Friedrich's death. See Michael Richter and Michael Schmeitzner, "*Einer von beiden muß so bald wie möglich entfernt werden*". *Der Tod des sächsischen Ministerpräsidenten Rudolf Friedrichs vor dem Hintergrund des Konflikts mit Innenminister Kurt Fischer 1947* (Leipzig, 1999).

¹²⁷ It was only after Fischer's takeover that the climate between Leipzig's city administration and the *Landesverwaltung* in Dresden grew colder as Fischer tried to centralise power around him.

¹²⁸ Lang, 'Ich bin kein Freund', p. 125.

¹²⁹ Matthes, *Erich Zeigner: Eine biographische Skizze*, p. 33.

¹³⁰ Trabalski had every right to be furious with Zeigner; not only did Zeigner exceed his powers, but he thereby went explicitly against Trabalski's conviction that a co-operation with the KPD was ill-advised as he

began to be interested in Social Democracy, an interest he had to keep hidden in the Kaiserreich.¹³¹ When he was able to join the Social Democratic Party after the First World War, he quickly rose through the ranks, first becoming the Saxon minister for justice and then prime minister. Thus he displayed a stern conviction as well as a strong work ethic and intense drive for success. That this drive might have been part of a more than normal compulsion to make his mark is suggested through the psychological appraisal that was provided for his court case in 1924, following his deposition. He was diagnosed as psychopath.¹³² It is not intended here to validate this diagnosis of Zeigner, made in the early decades of psychology. Yet it offers an interesting insight into the evaluation of Zeigner's very focused, overly zealous and non-empathic way of working that caused increasing conflicts for him after becoming Lord Mayor. This office in itself provided an ample workload. Yet, he also wanted to be informed on all aspects of his city's administration and advised his city councillors accordingly. In addition, the far reaching denazification measures introduced in Saxony meant that the city apparatus was altered considerably. The 'Verordnung über den personellen Neuaufbau der öffentlichen Verwaltungen' of 17 August 1945 (order concerning the reorganization of the civil service personnel) originally demanded the dismissal of all NSDAP members from public service, with the exception of irreplaceable experts and merely nominal members. In Saxony this was taken as the basis for all denazification measures. It was the only *Land* in the Soviet Zone of Occupation where this order was subsequently extended to include nominal

had only had negative experiences of communists. Trabalski quoted in Pritchard, *The making of the GDR*, p.74.

¹³¹ Zeigner said it was 'impossible' to be seen to support the SPD as a student, it would have constituted an 'offence' that could have had him excluded from his chosen vocation. Zeigner quoted in *Leipziger Volkszeitung (LVZ)*, 3 August 1948. Even after the end of the *Kaiserreich*, his joining of the party was regarded as "Berufsstandsverletzung". See Rudloff, *Erich Zeigner*, p. 7.

¹³² Corinna Franke, 'Rechtsstaatliches Verfahren oder Rachejustiz? Der Prozeß gegen den sächsischen Ministerpräsidenten' in Rudloff, *Erich Zeigner*, pp. 77-94, here p. 89.

members of the NSDAP.¹³³ Saxony was the 'leader' in the denazification process as its orders were particularly harsh. The Saxon selection on political grounds was not met by any other *Land* in the entire Soviet Zone, let alone anywhere in the Western Zones.¹³⁴ This appears to have been engineered by Saxony's German communists in the *Landesverwaltung* who not only pursued the aim of exchanging the National Socialist elements in the bureaucracy, but tried to 'destroy the entire apparatus' of state administration. Once the old structure had been done away with, a new system – in accordance with communist standards, could then be established.¹³⁵ In Leipzig, this order allowed Zeigner to exert his influence over the entire number of new appointments and thus strengthened his position even further.¹³⁶ Since he insisted that important issues would be presented to him, Zeigner must have been aware of the gradual shift within the Antifascist Bloc towards the KPD, and, indeed its programme to exclude everyone who was not organised in a party (and then preferably the KPD or at least SPD).¹³⁷ Yet, despite the feeling that anyone other than a communist was 'not always desired' in the organisation, the Antifascist Bloc was still too independent for the tastes of the central committee of the KPD under Walter Ulbricht in Berlin.¹³⁸ Throughout the summer of 1945, the founding members of the Antifascist Bloc were transferred into other positions or

¹³³ 'Amtliche Nachrichten der Landesverwaltung, 1, 1945' in Clemens Vollnhals, *Entnazifizierung. Politische Säuberung und Rehabilitierung in den vier Besatzungszonen 1945-1949* (Munich, 1991), pp. 175-180. See also: Helga A. Welsh, *Revolutionärer Wandel auf Befehl?*, p. 50.

¹³⁴ A proud Saxon Prime Minister Friedrichs declared that Saxony was the first and only *Land* to actually have carried out the 'strenge Entnazifizierungsgrundsätze', StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 3211, Blatt 192.

¹³⁵ Saxony's deputy Prime Minister Kurt Fischer cited in 'Zweierlei "Machtergreifung". Der diktatorische Zugriff von NSDAP und KPD/SED auf die sächsische Verwaltung' in Günter Heydemann and Heinrich Oberreuter (eds.), *Diktaturen in Deutschland – Vergleichsaspekte, Strukturen, Institutionen und Verhaltensweisen* (Bonn, 2003), pp. 56-93, here p. 74.

¹³⁶ While he was in agreement with the denazification measures in the political administration, he was more than once at odds with the methods when employed in Leipzig's cultural life. See the chapters below.

¹³⁷ For Zeigner's order see: StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 8423, Blatt 72. By 14 July 1945, the four antifascist parties that were allowed to form under the Soviet administration (LDPD, CDU, SPD and KPD) entered into the 'Bloc of antifascist-democratic parties' where they were to cooperate on 'the big tasks at hand' while maintaining their independence. Thus all four parties should have been represented equally also in the AB. But the local KPD had other plans, the AB was to be established as 'instrument of rule'. Therefore, everyone who did not commit to a party was progressively ousted for not being 'dutiful'. See Tubbesing, *Nationalkomitee*, pp. 98 - 112.

arrested under dubious charges, ensuring that the original NKFD members were torn out of their network in Leipzig.¹³⁹ Thus the NKFD had been persecuted by all, the National Socialists, the American forces and the KPD machinery. In September 1945 finally, the Soviet city command informed Zeigner that the Antifascist Bloc was to be disbanded.¹⁴⁰ The sources do not reveal what Zeigner's position on this move was, however, the dispassionate way in which he announced the end of the Antifascist Bloc to its members suggests that he could not have been too crestfallen.¹⁴¹ Until their dissolution, the Antifascist Bloc was largely working at grass roots level, all *Hausbeauftragte* (persons in charge of an apartment bloc acting as intermediary between the inhabitants and the political authorities) were members. The *Hausbeauftragte* also were responsible for the distribution of food ration stamps and thus held a great level of immediate power. Through this level, the Antifascist Bloc was able to exert considerable influence over the population.¹⁴² With the disbandment of the Antifascist Bloc, Zeigner increased his own control over 'his' city. It appeared, however, that Zeigner's strong urge for control now offended the KPD, which was not gaining as much political ground in Leipzig as the SPD. The Social Democrats, largely due to the outspoken nature of their Leipzig leader Stanislaw Trabalski, had a rapidly growing party membership that surpassed that of the KPD by far.¹⁴³ Zeigner's role as highly respected Lord Mayor and SPD member might have been seen as another contributing factor to this discrepancy between the parties, and thus as a threat for the

¹³⁸ Pritchard, *The making of the GDR*, p. 49.

¹³⁹ The AB, despite having largely become KPD controlled, was too much directed at achieving a democratic reconstruction of Germany. As this went against Ulbricht's plans, Jürgen Tubbesing asserts that it was on the initiative of Walter Ulbricht that the German antifascist movement, especially the AB, was disbanded as he would not tolerate independent initiatives. In Tubbesing's words, 'der Apparat siegt über die Selbstbestimmung', Tubbesing, *Nationalkomitee*, p. 108.

¹⁴⁰ StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 3211, Blatt 415.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., No. 3190, Blatt 198, 21 September 1945 'Der Antifaschistische Block existiert nicht mehr. Es sind nur noch die vier antifaschistischen Parteien zugelassen'.

¹⁴² Tubbesing, *Nationalkomitee*, pp. 112-15.

¹⁴³ As Pritchard states, 'the assertiveness of the SPD towards the Russians did wonders for the party's popularity'. Trabalski, due to his antipathy towards the KPD, felt under no obligation, as did many communists, to support all actions of the Soviet troops. Furthermore, he pointed directly to failings and

KPD. Indeed, the *Kreisvorstand* of the KPD considered blackmailing Zeigner to 'put him under pressure' and rein him in. Yet, these plans were never carried out.¹⁴⁴

It appears that Zeigner never learnt of these deliberations; otherwise he might have been less enthusiastic in supporting a unification of the SPD and the KPD. Yet, he was convinced that the unity of the 'progressive forces' of the working class parties was necessary to keep up the democratic momentum. In this he was closer to Walter Ulbricht's statements than to his own party in Leipzig. In a speech in Leipzig in October 1945, Ulbricht called for the 'Einheitsfront (united front) of the working class to be strengthened and developed further' in order to fight against 'reactionary ideologies'.¹⁴⁵ Zeigner was to repeat this sentiment a few months later, calling the unity necessary to counteract the 'better organised class instinct of the *bürgerlich* reaction'.¹⁴⁶

The SPD in Leipzig, meanwhile, developed into the 'centre of opposition to the unification within the KPD'.¹⁴⁷ Zeigner seemed to have completely ignored this fact and continued to pursue his aim of pressing for unification regardless of other opinions. He engaged his personal aide, City Director Erich Ott (also SPD), in his work for the unification and thus remained at odds with the party's leadership in the city, who were strictly set against a merger. In other parts of Saxony, the mood was completely different.

misconduct. Pritchard, *The making of the GDR*, p. 102. By the autumn of 1945, the SPD had 6620 members to the KPD's 5800 in the city of Leipzig. Tubbesing, *Nationalkomitee*, p. 78.

¹⁴⁴ Zeigner was to be blackmailed with documents that allegedly proved his collaboration with the National Socialists. If what is included in his personal file in the SED Leipzig archive can be seen as an example of this type of documents, then the KPD was counting on far-fetched accusations. The only pre-1945 document in Zeigner's file is a letter written by his manager in 1944 trying to prevent losing its valued accountant: 'Zeigner würde sich unter keinen Bedingungen an irgendwelchen Verbindungen oder Besprechungen gegen den Staat beteiligen...'. See SStA Leipzig, SED Sammlung Kader, 0233 Erich Zeigner, Blatt 3-4, letter by Papierhaus Wölbing, 23 September 1944. For the blackmail debate: Ibid., SED-BPA, Kreisleitung der SED, I/3/5. The tactic of blackmail found its use in other cases. See Pritchard, *The making of the GDR*, p. 114

¹⁴⁵ In Ulbricht's vocabulary anything was deemed 'reactionary' that did not conform with his personal view of politics. For the speech see SStA Leipzig, SED-BPA, Kreisleitung der SED, I/3/7.

¹⁴⁶ Zeigner, cited in Mike Schmeitzner, 'Erich Zeigner – Linkssozialist im Zwiespalt' in Mike Schmeitzner and Michael Rudloff, "...solche Schädlinge gibt es auch in Leipzig". *Sozialdemokraten und die SED* (Frankfurt, 1997), pp. 106-139, here p. 132.

¹⁴⁷ Otto Buchwitz quoted in Michael Rudloff, 'SED-Gründung in sozialdemokratischer Hochburg. Das Beispiel Leipzig', in Werner Bramke and Ulrich Heß (eds.), *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft in Sachsen im 20. Jahrhundert*, (Leipzig, 1998), pp. 371-417.

The leader of the SPD *Landesvorstand* Otto Buchwitz was in favour of the unification and attempted to exert pressure on the SPD in Leipzig, which refused to cooperate.¹⁴⁸

The creation of the Socialist Unity Party (SED) has been a source of great debate amongst historians, not only in the obvious ideological point-scoring during the Cold War but also in the more nuanced debate about the ambiguities present in the formation of this new unified representation of the working class.¹⁴⁹ Whereas a heterogeneous picture remains – with pro-unification SPD groups, more reluctant KPD groups and tales of happy marriages between the two parties – in Leipzig's case the creation of the unity party was forced. Not only were the city's SPD leaders threatened in various ways, the party became a 'semi-illegal' entity by the beginning of 1946. All party events, assemblies, rallies needed to be authorized by the Soviet military administration, which by this time was very much in favour of unification and thus eager to hamper the SPD's efforts wherever possible.¹⁵⁰ Michael Rudloff even goes so far as stating that without the at times violent intervention of the Soviets, the foundation of the SED would have been impossible.¹⁵¹ By March 1946, the Leipzig leadership finally gave in. The unification in the city occurred nearly a month before the official *Vereinigungsparteitag* in Berlin on 21 April 1946.

Zeigner should have been welcomed in the SED due to his support for the unification and his immediate willingness to work with the communists upon resumption of office. Yet, his approach to work was criticised within the SED with growing force. His 'social democratic character' was identified as a weakness and his *bildungsbürgerlich* background only tolerated as 'it would be a crime to take that off him'.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ Tubbesing, *Nationalkomitee*, p. 129.

¹⁴⁹ For a good historiographical overview see Pritchard, *The making of the GDR*, pp. 108-36.

¹⁵⁰ Tubbesing, *Nationalkomitee*, p. 130.

¹⁵¹ Rudloff, 'SED-Gründung'. Apart from being forced, the unification in Leipzig could not even have been disguised as the democratic wish of the majority of future SED members. The SPD had 64,543, the KPD only 23,000 members in the *Bezirk* of Leipzig by March 1946. See Tubbesing, *Nationalkomitee*, p. 128.

¹⁵² SStA Leipzig, SED Sammlung Kader, 0233 Erich Zeigner, Blatt 20-1, Charakteristik 1946.

Nevertheless, he still entered the communal elections in September 1946 as the SED's top candidate for the office of Lord Mayor. Zeigner was well respected in Leipzig's population; he spoke to both the *Bürgertum* as well as the working class. Thus the SED would have been foolish to look for another candidate. Yet, as the results of this election showed, Zeigner's popularity did not translate into a majority for the 'progressive' working class party. The *bürgerlich* camp (CDU and LDPD) gained the majority in Leipzig.¹⁵³ This, however, did not turn into any real shift in the distribution of political power. Zeigner still maintained control over the appointment of offices in the city administration and hence was able to largely exclude the *bürgerlich* representatives from departmental positions, if not the council itself. Indeed he promoted Helmuth Holtzhauer from the department for *Volksbildung* to the politically more influential post of first mayor for finance and economy.¹⁵⁴

Zeigner's urge to control all aspects of his city administration was counteracted by the dire economic situation Leipzig found itself in after the war. Not only was the city severely damaged in the war and needed resources for reconstruction, it also was by far the main contributor to the reparation effort of Saxony. Thus Zeigner was operating under severe economic and political constraints. He was largely dependent on the Saxon *Land* government, having to ask for even small sums.¹⁵⁵ Yet, this was only one aspect of Zeigner's increasing problems. Despite taking over more offices in the SED structure and entering the Saxon diet and its constitutional committee, he was increasingly distrusted in his party. In the wake of the seemingly unending waves of denazification, Zeigner had to

¹⁵³ Lang, 'Ich bin kein Freund', p. 155.

¹⁵⁴ SSStA Leipzig, SED Sammlung Kader, N1011 Helmuth Holtzhauer.

¹⁵⁵ See Lang, 'Ich bin kein Freund', p. 154. Saxony in turn had about 50 percent of the production capacity in the entire Soviet Zone, thus 'nur da gab's was zu holen', Manfred Unger, 'Erich Zeigner und die Sowjetische Militärkommandantur' in Rudloff, *Erich Zeigner*, pp. 151-175, here p. 171.

provide the SED repeatedly with detailed *curricula vitae*.¹⁵⁶ The internal SED profiling became less and less favourable towards him. He was deemed 'to be his own worst enemy, lacking the appropriate skills to evaluate those around him and the rigour needed for his office'.¹⁵⁷ The 'rigour' needed probably refers to a strict adherence to the SED party line, yet, as in the SPD before, Zeigner was not a party soldier. He followed his own ideas, which were a curious compromise between his own *bürgerlich* appearance and socialist mindset.¹⁵⁸ As will be seen in the chapters below, Zeigner by no means condemned the fruits of the *bürgerlich* nineteenth century, especially not in the realm of culture. Furthermore, he was taken by the importance of his office and would not yield to the 'whims' of his subordinates just because they were members of the SED. He also did not share the complete servility to Soviet demands displayed by most of his party comrades.¹⁵⁹ With the increase in power of the SED, behaviour like this was less and less tolerated. Zeigner came under increasing pressure and suspicion. When he undertook a promotional trip for Leipzig's trade fair to the Bizone in 1947, the SED half expected him to abscond and remain 'over there'. Hence he was monitored by the Soviet authorities on a tip off by the SED *Kreisvorstand*.¹⁶⁰ Zeigner, for his part, became more and more disillusioned with his position and the party. He increasingly used Article 36 of the 'Democratic Municipal Code for Saxony' to push his decisions through the city government.¹⁶¹ This in turn

¹⁵⁶ Although he complied at every instance, he also got increasingly fed up with this nuisance formality and pleaded with the *Kreisvorstand* of the SED to exempt him from this task in view of his many other responsibilities. SStA Leipzig, SED Sammlung Kader, 0233 Erich Zeigner, Blatt 6-18.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., Blatt 22.

¹⁵⁸ This will be clearly visible in the chapters below in his attempts to maintain the traditions of the *bürgerlich* cultural institutions of Leipzig but also to implement socialist ideas.

¹⁵⁹ Zeigner rebutted attempts to bring several cultural institutions in Leipzig under direct SED control. See inter al.: StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 8422, Blatt 11; and Ibid., No. 2612, Blatt 3. He furthermore tried his utmost to prevent measures by the Soviet occupation powers that went against the interest of his city (see the case of the *Reichsgericht* library in chapter 3 below).

¹⁶⁰ Michael Rudloff, 'Dr Erich Zeigner und die Gründung der SED' in Rudloff, *Erich Zeigner*, pp. 106-118

¹⁶¹ Lang, 'Ich bin kein Freund', p. 128. Zeigner helped draft the Municipal Code during his stint in the *Landtag* constitutional committee, see Johannes Frackowiak, 'Erich Zeigner und die Sächsische Verfassungsdiskussion 1946/47' in Rudloff, *Erich Zeigner*, pp. 194-201. Article 36 allowed the mayor to take decisions in lieu of the city council under the premise of retrospectively attaining approval. See

strengthened the mistrust in the SED executive, which again bemoaned his 'social democratic schooling, which is well visible in his public appearances and speeches.' He was, however, still deemed to 'view the unity party in a positive light'.¹⁶² The unity party had by now decided to morph into a 'party of a new type'.¹⁶³ The blind obedience now required was not something Zeigner could or wanted to deliver, he was too absorbed in his own *modus operandi*.¹⁶⁴ Therefore, he became increasingly isolated in the party. Even in his city administration, the councillors tried to circumvent him by 'forgetting' to inform him of the dates of their meetings.¹⁶⁵ The internal profiling concluded that Zeigner did 'not embody the functionary the 'party of a new type' required.'¹⁶⁶

Zeigner moved to a stance of opposition to the SED, which manifested itself in small acts towards individuals, rather than open proclamations on a political platform.¹⁶⁷ This might have earned him the goodwill of those who benefited from his actions, but others – those in open opposition, like the CDU's member of the *Landtag* Dr Karl Buchheim – criticised this duplicity: 'Zeigner speaks differently as a private man than as a party man' and thus was not to be trusted.¹⁶⁸

At a time when more and more decisions slipped away from the control of the city administration due to the centralisation efforts of the Unity Party, the SED was still condemning Zeigner's 'one man politics' that 'excluded his colleagues' and were too

'Demokratische Gemeindeordnung für Sachsen' in *Verfassungen Deutschlands*, <http://www.verfassungen.de/de/sac/gemeindeordnung47.htm>, (accessed 22 May 2009).

¹⁶² SStA Leipzig, SED Sammlung Kader, 0233 Erich Zeigner, Blatt 34.

¹⁶³ Despite the outward promotion of the concept of self-administration on communal level, the KPD and then SED were set on organising a centralist rule where the municipal level 'was embedded in the central administration and received its orders therefrom'. In Wilhelm Pieck's words: 'The cadre of the party decides everything.' See Christopher Beckmann, 'Machtergreifung vor Ort' in Heydemann and Oberreuter (eds.), *Diktaturen in Deutschland*, pp. 94-117, here p. 98 and p. 75.

¹⁶⁴ Zeigner was working stringent 16 hour days. Apart from his office as Lord Mayor and member of *Landtag*, by 1947 he had also taken over a lecturing post at Leipzig University (theory of administration) and became the head of the Institute of Communal Studies at the same institution. See Rudloff, *Erich Zeigner*, p. 115.

¹⁶⁵ Lang, 'Ich bin kein Freund', p. 133.

¹⁶⁶ SStA Leipzig, SED Sammlung Kader, 0233 Erich Zeigner, Blatt 34, 1948.

¹⁶⁷ Rudloff, 'Dr Erich Zeigner', p. 115.

¹⁶⁸ Schmeitzner, 'Erich Zeigner', p. 138.

‘conservative and formalistic’. One SED city councillor, Kirmsse, even spoke of a ‘Zeigner system’ that was supposedly reigning in the town hall.¹⁶⁹ Yet, from 1948 onwards, Zeigner was more or less reduced to reacting to measures taken above his head or against his will. He was rebuffed by the Soviet authorities when he insisted that the city administration was not a vehicle of party politics.¹⁷⁰ He had to toe the party line, even if that meant not only that his opinion was passed over but that he personally was also humiliated.¹⁷¹

Zeigner was spared the full onslaught of Stalinisation and its results in the GDR of the 1950s that might have cost him his freedom or worse. After his death in April 1949, Leipzig became a main battle ground for the SED. All opposition was quashed; the SED cleansed from its ranks most erstwhile SPD members under the premise that the city was a ‘stronghold of the Schumacher Ideology’.¹⁷² Since City Director Erich Ott was also amongst those former SPD members to be expelled from the SED, even though Ott was substantial in pushing for the unification of the two workers’ parties in Leipzig, the allegation was transparently dishonest.¹⁷³ The last remnants of *bürgerlich* aspects of Leipzig’s proud cultural tradition had to bow to the needs of the newly emerging *Arbeiter- und Bauernstaat*. Without Zeigner, who attempted the balancing act between *Bildungsbürgertum* and socialism, the latter fully established itself without regards for the distinctiveness of the city of Leipzig.

¹⁶⁹ SStA Leipzig, SED Sammlung Kader, 0233 Erich Zeigner, Blatt 41, 1948 and Blatt 69, 1949.

¹⁷⁰ StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 3211, Blatt 28, Meeting with Soviet city command 11 May 1948.

¹⁷¹ A prime example is the debate over the *Gewandhaus*’s conductor Albert, when Zeigner finally gave up stating: ‘Soll doch die Partei und die Kommandantur machen, was sie wollen.’ Ibid., No. 1324, Blatt 137, August 1948.

¹⁷² Kurt Schumacher (1895-1952) was the leader of the SPD in the British Zone and later all Western Zones. He refused any cooperation with the KPD in the Western Zones. He condemned the unification of SPD and SED in the Soviet Zone and refused any cooperation with the SED. In turn, the SED viewed him (and by extension former SPD members in its own ranks) as enemies. Schumacher’s Social Democracy was denounced as *Sozialdemokratismus* and placed on a par with American imperialism, thus any proponent of Schumacher’s view (or just member of the SPD) was automatically a class enemy. Tubbesing, *Nationalkomitee*, p. 144.

¹⁷³ Schmeitzner, ‘Erich Zeigner – Linksozialist’, p. 313.

In his will, Zeigner stipulated that he did not want a great display after his death: 'I do not lay claim to be lauded after my death after having been so often and iniquitously insulted during my life-time.'¹⁷⁴ The SED nevertheless sang his praises in 1949, only to defame Zeigner in 1953 as reactionary and traitor to the working class.¹⁷⁵

Leipzig's traditional political class, recruited from the conservative *Bürgertum*, underwent a significant change in the first half of the twentieth century. Having coped with the entrance of the workers' parties into the city administration, a natural process given Leipzig's and Saxony's strong working class tradition, it faced a much greater challenge after the takeover of power by the National Socialists. As Leipzig was one of Germany's largest and most important cities, its local political development had importance at Reich level. The process of replacement of the conservative 'old elite' by the Nazi party was slower than in other German cities, mainly due to Carl Goerdeler's prominence and strength of will. But even he did not prevent the onset of anti-Semitic policies, nor the complete takeover of the city administration by NSDAP members. Nearly two years before he left office, all *bürgerlich* city councillors had been substituted by National Socialists. The *bürgerlich* classes discovered too late that their initial welcome of the NSDAP was ill-advised. In the regime's vocabulary, the *Bürgertum* was reactionary, it had to 'step down to make way for the National Socialist renewal'.¹⁷⁶ This renewal meant the replacement of Goerdeler, an able politician and administrator who earned his post in Leipzig by gaining expertise in a number of lesser positions, by an old guard National Socialist whose main qualification was the low number in his party membership book (denoting an early

¹⁷⁴ SSStA Leipzig, SED Sammlung Kader, 0233 Erich Zeigner, Blatt 71.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., Blatt 87-91; in 1953 Erich Honecker complained that FDJ groups were carrying Zeigner's name as he was clearly unworthy of this honour, having been in charge of the Saxon government that prevented a glorious proletarian revolution in 1923. Unfortunately, the date is missing from this protocol, so it is uncertain whether this allegation followed the uprising in June 1953. See Ibid., Blatt 99.

¹⁷⁶ StadtAL, Kapitel 32, Blatt 57-9.

follower of Hitler). Dönicke's case proved that mere party allegiance was not enough to lead such an important city. Even Haake, who as Goerdeler's deputy should have gained considerable insight into the running of an efficient city administration, failed and was dismissed after less than a year. By now it was time to introduce the vanguard of the Nazi regime – the SS in the shape of *Gruppenführer* Alfred Freyberg. Freyberg marked the complete immersion of Leipzig's politics into the National Socialist ideology. Not only did he push for anti-Christian measures so popular in the SS, he also brought Leipzig to the forefront in terms of anti-Semitic policies. The population of Leipzig did not react favourably to the de-Christianisation efforts and most of the proposals had to be buried. Yet, as was the case all over Germany, the anti-Semitic policies aroused less criticism, if any at all. Thus Leipzig became a frontrunner in the escalating persecution of Jews.

The resistance in Leipzig did not overthrow the Nazi regime, but in the final days of the war, it prevented the destruction of the city by organising the surrender of Leipzig without major skirmishes. The NKFD had thus proven themselves as an organisation of considerable influence, yet their offer of cooperation with the American occupation forces was largely ignored and the organisation itself banned. The lack of proper denazification efforts by the US-troops combined with the rejection of the broad antifascist coalition that had constituted the NKFD brought the more radical (left wing) elements in the National Committee to the fore. Once the exchange of occupation authorities had taken place these forces, mainly communist, came into positions of power. Even though an SPD man, Erich Zeigner, was chosen as Lord Mayor, the push for more authority from the KPD was increasingly noticeable, not least in the repeated efforts of Helmuth Holtzhauer to gain influence beyond his remit. Zeigner proved himself compliant with communist ideas. He was an important factor in the forced unification of the workers' parties in Leipzig, this first very clear sign of anti-democratic measures. With the strengthening of the communists

within the SED, all other antifascists were marginalized, not least those with a *bürgerlich* background. Zeigner, albeit of *bürgerlich* origin himself, dismissed anyone as ‘reactionary’ who did not support the ‘progressive’ work of the SED and warned especially against the regaining of strength of the ‘*bürgerlich* reaction’. In this the new leading party, SED, emulated the former state party NSDAP – both dismissed the *Bürgertum* as ‘reactionary’ and broadened this definition to include anyone who did not share their convictions. Furthermore, Saxony’s stringent denazification rules made it impossible to retain the old structures in public life and administration, even if they pre-dated the Third Reich. The purges on racial grounds of the years 1933-35 were now in a sense echoed by the purges on political grounds. After a period of consolidation, the SED in Leipzig, as everywhere else in the Soviet Zone, set out to gain full control over all aspects of public life. That this process had a profound impact on the cultural and intellectual life of the once proud *Bürgerstadt* Leipzig will be shown in the following chapters.

2 Leipzig – City of Music

Music was one of Leipzig's cultural fortes. Numerous composers, instrumentalists and conductors have left their traces in the town and were equally stimulated by the uniquely inspirational atmosphere of the city. It was this spirit that shaped Leipzig's musical tradition and its institutions. The city was home to a number of prestigious musical establishments founded and maintained by the *Bürger* of Leipzig, who prided themselves in creating institutions of excellence otherwise only known to royal enterprises. Amongst them were Germany's first conservatoire, St Thomas's Choir – one of Europe's oldest surviving cultural institutions, the original home of Bach's masterpieces and the *Gewandhaus* – the world's oldest concert hall founded by *Bürger* and the heart of the *Musikstadt*. All this and many smaller professional and lay ensembles made up the singular international standing of the city in the field of music. In the *Gewandhaus* especially, all facets of Leipzig's musical tradition and self-image came to the fore. It also was the arena of Leipzig's society. When Werner Heisenberg first arrived in Leipzig in the late 1920s, his interest in music was nicely matched by the cultural offerings in the city. The young scientist immersed himself into the music scene of the city so much so that his parents 'chided him for leading a life of pleasure.' The reprimand was unwarranted as Heisenberg only adjusted himself to the ways of the Leipzig *Bürgertum*, which provided him with 'a direct entrée into the elite social circles of Leipzig'.¹ The representatives of Leipzig's *Herren der Stadt* met regularly at the Friday motet of St Thomas's Choir, after which a private word with the Cantor of St Thomas's as well as his illustrious audience such as the city councillors was possible. Once Carl Goerdeler had become Lord Mayor of Leipzig, he was a regular attendee of the spiritual concerts of Bach's choir and could be met for a short conversation on the steps of St Thomas's Church. The unrivalled centre stage for Leipzig's

¹ Cassidy, *Uncertainty*, p. 273.

social elite was the *Gewandhaus*. Founded in 1743 by the *Bürger* of Leipzig, it has since been a source of special pride for Leipzig. The *Gewandhaus* directorate accordingly represented a cross section of the city's *bürgerlich* spectrum. The Lord Mayor held the position of *Kurator* (curator) of the *Gewandhaus* and the directorate consisted of university professors, publishers, city politicians and business men. At the beginning of the twentieth century their ranks were also joined by members of the *Reichsgericht*.² The *Gewandhaus* concerts were the quintessence of Leipzig's music life as well as its social centre. In the magnificent foyer of the *Gewandhaus* building 'everyone of distinction' met.³ Beyond their social role, the *Gewandhaus* concerts were also of the highest musical standard. An impressive lineage of conductors threaded through the concert hall's history. The most famous, Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, not only conducted the orchestra but revived the opus of Johann Sebastian Bach, the Cantor of St Thomas's Choir who had largely been forgotten in the late eighteenth century. Through this, he reunited Leipzig and Germany with a composer who was to become the primus of the classical music canon. Moreover, Mendelssohn also established Germany's first conservatoire in the city, thereby firmly rooting Leipzig's claim to national importance in the field of music. The conservatoire and the *Gewandhaus* lived in a symbiotic relationship, with the orchestra's musicians teaching at the college and their students then joining the orchestra. This produced the *Gewandhausklang*, a unique voice to the orchestra, revered nationally and internationally.⁴

The twentieth century had begun well for Leipzig's music scene. The *Gewandhaus* secured Arthur Nikisch as *Kapellmeister*. Nikisch was no stranger to Leipzig, he and Gustav Mahler shared the rostrum in Leipzig's opera in the 1880s. Not only did

² For an overview of the professions of the directors between 1905 and 1940 see: StadtAL, StVuR(I), 8418, Blatt 9 and Ibid., Familiengeschichtliche Sammlung (FS), Familiennachlaß Limburger, No. 174. Although the number of directors varied, all the named professional groups were represented in the directorate-it constituted the informal headquarters of Hund's 'plutocracy'. See chapter 1, footnote 29.

³ Meyer-Krahmer, *Mut zum Widerstand*, p. 92; The *Gewandhaus* building was one of Leipzig's architectural landmarks. It had been built in 1882-84 to accommodate for the orchestra's growing audience. The construction had been funded entirely by Leipzig's *Bürger*. Its grand architecture and its brilliant acoustics sparked a row of copies, most notably the concert hall in Chicago.

⁴ Rat der Stadt, *Leipzig lebt Kultur*.

Nikisch establish a new style of conducting but once *Gewandhauskapellmeister*, he also laid the foundations of the modern repertoire for symphonic orchestras and furthered the reception of Bruckner, Tchaikovsky and other Slavic composers.⁵ Nikisch furthermore was interested in opening up the *Gewandhaus* concerts to a wider audience. From 1915, he championed the idea of *Arbeiterkonzerte* (concerts for workers) to introduce this large section of Leipzig's population to one of the key cultural fixtures. Tickets for these events were sold at a fraction of the normal price. From 1918, these workers' concerts became a regular part of the orchestra's functions.⁶ After Nikisch's death, Wilhelm Furtwängler took over the podium in 1922 and continued to broaden the scope of the time honoured institution. Furtwängler not only succeeded Nikisch in Leipzig but also with the Berliner Philharmoniker. After a while this arrangement became a real problem for the *Gewandhaus* directorate. They demanded that their institution should take priority over any other engagement including Berlin. This, after all, was the *Gewandhaus*! Furtwängler insisted on being allowed to continue in both capacities with his personal stress lying with the orchestra in Berlin. This eventually led to the parting of ways between the *Gewandhaus* directorate and Furtwängler in 1929.⁷ This peculiar case fittingly portrayed the pride and self-confidence of the Leipziger *Bürger* who presided over the *Gewandhaus*. Who was a Furtwängler in comparison to the city's foremost orchestra? Apart from this set-back, the 1920s had been a very successful decade for music in Leipzig. Especially the opera shone. Under the dual leadership of conductor Gustav Brecher and artistic director Walther Brüggemann, the city's opera became a beacon of new musical and aesthetic developments. One particular climax of this development was the world première of Ernst Krenek's opera *Jonny spielt auf!* in 1927. This jazz inspired opus had been rejected by the Hamburger

⁵ With this Nikisch stepped into the footsteps of his famous predecessor Mendelssohn, who had created the modern canon of classical music with German masters at its core. See Applegate and Potter, *Music and German National Identity*, p. 9.

⁶ Jürgen Schebera, *Gustav Brecher und die Oper Leipzig*, p. 83.

⁷ Rat der Stadt, *Leipzig lebt Kultur*, p. 78.

Staatsoper; Leipzig showed less scruples and the piece advanced to one of the greatest opera successes in the Weimar Republic.⁸ Another world première gained equal fame, if not for the same reasons. When the Weill/Brecht opera *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* was premièred in Leipzig in March 1930, it created the greatest scandal of the period.⁹ Even before the actual performance, a sense of riot was palpable. The city centre was disrupted in the afternoon before the show by National Socialist agitators. On the evening itself, there was so much uproar and booing that the music nearly drowned in the noise and Brecher managed only with great difficulty to finish conducting to the end. This was a taste of things to come. With the beginning of the 1930s, the National Socialists began to propagate their cultural ideas in an increasingly violent manner. Even before the ascendancy of National Socialism to the state doctrine, its followers, a noisy minority, almost silenced Brecher.¹⁰ Upon the seizure of power, Brecher faced the full brute force of the new leaders. His last performance of Weill's *Silbersee* was so riddled by SA interruptions that Brecher left the podium prematurely. Shortly afterwards, he lost his position and was ostracised.¹¹

The *Gewandhaus* was spared the intrusion of a politically motivated mob as it ran its concerts under *Anrecht*. This subscription to the concert season harked back to the earliest days of the orchestra. In 1743, sixteen *Bürger* founded the orchestra by each paying for one musician in the ensemble. From then onwards, the *Gewandhaus* orchestra always operated on a 'club' basis. The latest instalment of this system had been the

⁸ The title page of the programme later came to notorious fame again – this time as the poster theme of the Nazis' *Entartete Musik* exhibition. See both *Online Musikmagazin*, <http://www.omm.de> and Jürgen Höflich, 'Jonny spielt auf' in *Musikproduktion Jürgen Höflich*, <http://www.musikmph.de> (accessed 22 May 2009). For a good outline of the wider reception of *Jonny spielt auf*, see inter al.: Glenn Watkins, 'Josephine and Jonny' in Watkins, *Pyramids at the Louvre* (London, 1994), pp. 134-63 and Bernard Gendron, 'Negrophilia' in Gendron, *Between Montmartre and the Mudd Club* (Chicago, 2002), pp. 137-53.

⁹ Georg Friedrich Kühn: *Weill-Dessau*, <http://www.gf-kuehn.de> (accessed 22 May 2009).

¹⁰ It was only in 1930 that the NSDAP gained some footing in Leipzig's political sphere (akin to the party's emergence on a national scale). Before, the party had scrambled around the 1 percent mark in elections. Szejnmann, *Nazism in Central Germany*, p. 222.

¹¹ Gustav Brecher (1879-1940) lost his conductorship in March, even before the law for the restoration of the professional civil service came into force and would have provided a 'legal basis' for his dismissal. He subsequently fled from Germany at the end of 1933 and committed suicide in Ostende in 1940. Jürgen Kesting, 'Auch Freitod kann Mord sein' in *Hamburger Abendblatt*, 26 November 2006.

construction of the new building in 1884, funded completely by Leipzig's *Bürger*, who, if they had contributed sufficiently, would gain an *Anrecht*, a claim to a seat. About 90 per cent of the *Gewandhaus* seats were thus occupied. The *Anrecht* was considered a sacred asset; it could be bequeathed to the family and was even named as enticement in personal ads to show how eligible the – mostly female – candidates were.¹² As the concerts were a fixture in the musical as well as social life of Leipzig, most *Anrecht* holders would make use of it and buy tickets for every concert. The mob was kept out.¹³ Wilhelm Furtwängler had left the year before the *Mahagonny* scandal, thus his successor could not have foreseen the tide turning in Leipzig when taking office. Bruno Walter, again an internationally renowned conductor, gladly followed the call to the *Gewandhaus* in 1929. He regarded the position in 'the oldest and most famous of the German concert institutions' as one to retain until the end of his active career.¹⁴ Walter, too, followed engagements outside his contract with the *Gewandhaus*, yet, he did so seemingly without losing sight of Leipzig's orchestra as his main arena and without alienating the directorate as Furtwängler had done. This, however, was partly due to the changing times. The National Socialist component in cultural matters grew in the following years to the extent that the *Gewandhaus* directorate decided that Walter should have greater freedom to pursue his engagements outside Germany. This even went so far as allowing Walter to follow an invitation to New York for the 1931/32 season that clashed with the *Gewandhaus*' concert calendar. Here, one could assume that the directorate chose this indirect way to rid itself of the presence of a Jewish musician whose exposed position in one of Germany's prime concert halls was clearly perceived as an affront to National Socialist racial ideals. Yet, neither did Walter

¹² The *Anrecht* ranked on par with financial independence in these ads. It was seen as a valuable asset. A typical ad mentioning the *Anrecht* would contain the age, education, financial and *Anrecht* status of the eligible young lady. See numerous ads in *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten*, sample period 1927-29.

¹³ This carries plurivalent meaning. The *Gewandhaus* audience was an elite group and remained so. Even once the orchestra itself opened to the workers' concerts and admitted everyone to the public final rehearsals at discounted prices, yet the *Anrechtskonzerte* remained the mainstay of the house and retained their exclusivity – devoid of political agitators and those 'below' rank.

¹⁴ Bruno Walter, *Thema und Variationen: Erinnerungen und Gedanken* (Frankfurt, 1988), p. 375.

regard it as a polite ushering out of the door, nor were the directorate's later actions indicative of any urge to pacify the National Socialists.¹⁵

The takeover of power brought the mob from the fringes into positions of power. Leipzig's city council – albeit under the leadership of Carl Goerdeler – still was no exception. The NSDAP party stalwarts installed in the city administration included *Kulturdezernent* Hauptmann, who, despite carrying an honest appreciation for the great traditions of Leipzig's cultural heritage, shared the anti-Semitic orientation of the movement. He therefore was among those who called for the immediate dismissal of Jewish musicians from Leipzig's premier establishments. Gustav Brecher was the first to lose his position. In Bruno Walter's case, both the *Gewandhaus* directorate and Lord Mayor Goerdeler as curator of the concert institute refused to oblige.¹⁶ Walter returned in mid-March 1933 to the *Gewandhaus* from an engagement in America.¹⁷ In New York, he had already been notified by the directorate that there had been calls to depose him, but was assured that the *Gewandhaus* would stand behind him. On 16 March, when Walter arrived at the concert hall in the morning for the public rehearsal of the night's performance, he found himself standing in front of closed doors. A note informed him that the rehearsal and the concert were cancelled and he was divested of his post. This incident did not pass quietly. Walter was greeted by a large crowd of the Leipzig audience waiting for entry to the rehearsal, their emotions ranging from protest to disappointment, disbelief to horror. Members of the orchestra stood forlorn and speechless, quietly acknowledging their conductor. Bruno Walter felt disheartened, yet he was not surprised. Days before this event, the board of directors of the *Gewandhaus* had informed him about a threat of closure should Walter continue as *Kapellmeister*. However, they were determined not to bow to

¹⁵ Ibid., 'Die [...] vorgeschlagenen Daten standen natürlich mit meinen Leipziger Verpflichtungen im Widerspruch. Doch [das] Direktorium des Gewandhauses [sah] ein, daß man mir angesichts der bedrohlichen inneren Lage in Deutschland nicht eine Wiederaufnahme meiner Beziehung zum amerikanischen Musikleben erschweren dürfte.', p. 330.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 335.

¹⁷ For Walter's deposition see Ibid., pp. 384-9.

pressure. Even Walter's offer to resign was declined by the directors on the basis that musical tradition was too great a good to be so easily abandoned. They also insisted on maintaining their institution's independence.¹⁸ Notably, the force behind the closure of the concert hall and the removal of Walter from his post were not any of Leipzig's officials (who had their orders from Goerdeler) but the Saxon ministry for the interior under the leadership of the NSDAP's Manfred von Killinger. Leipzig's administration, at that point at least, was still not prepared to sacrifice the integrity of one of its city's proudest institutions.¹⁹ Leipzig's newspapers carried just a short statement that the concert had been cancelled and Bruno Walter had left his post. Only the National Socialist *Leipziger Tageszeitung* spoke of a triumph and called the cancellation of the rehearsal and evening concerts, as well as Walter's dismissal, a matter of course 'as there had been the threat that the majority of the audience would revert to self-administered justice because of this insolence and tactlessness [that is Walter fulfilling his contract and conducting *his* orchestra]'. It was not elaborated whatever form this 'self administered justice' was to take, but the implied threat was unmistakable.²⁰

The removal of musicians, choirmasters and conservatoire lecturers soon followed suit when 'racial' or just political attributes contravened the new order. Painful holes appeared in the previously dense fabric of the *Musikstadt*.²¹ The National Socialist party attempted to gain influence in most of Leipzig's musical establishments, not always successfully but invariably causing damage along the way. Leipzig's opera lost its

¹⁸ The directors might have actually not believed that their renowned institution would be targeted in such a way. Too great was the trust and pride in its international reputation. 'Der Antisemitismus des Hitlerschen Programms [...] wird vor den großen künstlerischen und geistigen Persönlichkeiten haltmachen, schon um sich nicht im Ausland zu blamieren.' It appears that the directors misread not only Hitler's programme but also Brecher's ousting. Ebermayer, *Denn heute*, p. 24.

¹⁹ Walter, *Thema und Variationen*, pp. 386-7.

²⁰ The author, *Musikdezernent* Hauptmann [!], could not have meant the upset and speechless audience who had waited in front of the concert hall. *Leipziger Tageszeitung* 16 and 17 March 1933; both the *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten* and the *Neue Leipziger Zeitung* carried an identical piece of 5 lines stating the facts without giving any explanation or opinion. See both publications 17 March 1933. The Social Democrat *Leipziger Volkszeitung* had already ceased publication by this date.

²¹ Examples include: Leo Schwarz (orchestral leader of the *Gewandhaus*), Günter Raphael (composer, lecturer at the Leipzig conservatoire), Barnet Licht (choir master, conductor and music teacher). See: Joachim Schlesinger, *Leipzig: Geschichte und Kultur 1895-2000, Chronik* (Leipzig, 2003).

formidable international reputation after Brecher's deposition when both the dramatic and musical administration was placed in Hans Schüler's hands.²² The artistic friction of a *duumvirate* that had resulted in the fruitful collaborations of the 1920s and early 1930s was henceforth undesirable; streamlined productions following the aesthetic line of the National Socialist movement were the flavour of the day. The *Gewandhaus* lost its *Kapellmeister* and orchestral leader and remained without permanent conductor until 1934. These were not the only changes to come in the composition of this time-honoured music enterprise. Although subsidised by the city council of Leipzig, the *Gewandhaus* had remained solely in the hands of a board of directors consisting of what the orchestra's statutes called 'musically interested' citizens of the city until the 1930s. The National Socialists forced party members and one of their trusted city officials onto the board of directors, thus exerting considerable political pressure on a previously *Bürger*-run institution.²³ This seemed a tolerable outcome for the *Gewandhaus* directorate, as the *völkisch* mood called for much more radical changes. Rumours had appeared in various papers that the directorate would resign *en bloc*. The National Socialist press picked up on these reports proclaiming elatedly the end of an era when 'the once leading *Bürgertum* step[ped] down to make way for the National Socialist renewal'. The directorate was quick to refute these reports. This left the political agitators wanting as the directorate '[failed] fully to accommodate the will for a National Socialist culture'.²⁴ This 'will' did not stop at the personnel department. The repertoire of the orchestra was 'purged', music by Jewish composers, even the works of the *Gewandhaus*'s former conductor Mendelssohn, were outlawed. Mendelssohn was instrumental in furthering Leipzig's musical reputation in the

²² Schüler, who on Goerdeler's suggestion had joined the NSDAP, tried to keep a low profile to keep the opera and his position off the National Socialists' radar.

²³ It subsequently even had to enshrine these party posts in its institutional constitution. See: *Gewandhaus constitution 17 September 1940*, StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 8422, Blatt 321-6; here it is important to clarify that the original directorate itself had NSDAP party members in its midst who, however, had been appointed due to their interest in music and standing in the Leipzig *Bürgerschaft*, not their political affiliations (which largely were made out of convenience when it became *en vogue* to be a NSDAP member after the takeover of power in 1933).

²⁴ Report on *Gewandhaus* rumours in Ibid., Kapitel 32, Blatt 57-9, 1933.

nineteenth century by forming an environment attracting more musicians and conducive to creativity. None of these facts mattered in the Third Reich, only Mendelssohn's racial background did. Yet, the National Socialists did not content themselves with eradicating Mendelssohn from the performance scene; they also wanted to erase him from the city's landscape. Their next line of attack was directed against the Mendelssohn monument in front of the *Gewandhaus*.

In 1892, a Mendelssohn statue had been erected to commemorate the orchestra's greatest conductor. It was fully funded by *Leipziger Bürger* and therefore could not easily be demolished, since it was *private* rather than *city* property. Carl Goerdeler rebutted the calls from his own council, especially those by his National Socialist deputy Hans Rudolf Haake, to raze the memorial.²⁵ Yet ultimately Haake prevailed. Under the cover of night, he ordered the removal of the Mendelssohn memorial from the main entrance of the *Gewandhaus* in late 1936. Haake had used one of Goerdeler's absences from Leipzig to carry out this plan. It has to be assumed that Haake wanted to set an example, since the act was carried out on 9 November, the anniversary of the Munich putsch. Evidently fearing a public backlash, the 'great deed' was hushed up, the press was banned from reporting anything about the incident and public discussion of the event was quietened. When the head of the *Gewandhaus* directorate replied to an angry accusation of cultural barbarism from Switzerland, clarifying that the statue was removed on the council's orders without knowledge or acceptance of the *Gewandhaus*, he was demoted and could barely sustain a place in the directorate itself.²⁶

As has been seen in the chapter above, Goerdeler would not stand for this 'cultural barbarism' and resigned in late 1936. He eventually left his post in spring of the

²⁵ The *Kreisleitung* of the NSDAP began its campaign in spring 1936 with a letter to Goerdeler claiming that the public of Leipzig could no longer bear a monument honouring a Jew. Ibid. Kapitel 26 A, No. 39, Blatt 43, 8 May 1936.

²⁶ Haake had established before that support for his views from the directorate was not forthcoming: 'Bei der Einstellung des derzeitigen Gewandhausdirektoriums nicht so einfach', see Ibid., Blatt 170, 3 September 1936; The forced change of leadership in the *Gewandhaus* directorate: Ibid., StVuR(I), No. 8418, Blatt 12.

following year. With his departure, other vestiges of cultural independence fell. It was also in 1937 that the Choir of St Thomas's, one of Germany's most formidable boys' choirs and Bach's domain for 27 years, was incorporated into the Hitler Youth. The triad of St Thomas – its school, church and choir – was one of Europe's oldest cultural institutions. And yet, even this time-honoured establishment was not safe from the grasp of the National Socialist ideology. St Thomas's grammar school could only just avert losing its intellectual standard in favour of *völkisch* education. The choir however, due to its considerable national and international acclaim, was less able to remain outside the regime's hold. Lord Mayor Goerdeler, whose two sons were attending St Thomas's, had supported the school's headmaster in refusing the incorporation of the choir into the Hitler Youth. Yet after Goerdeler left his office, the choir had no choice but to bow to the political pressure. It did so, however, a year after the Hitler Youth became 'Staatsjugend' and with a long list of exceptions, which allowed the choir very considerable freedom and independence to pursue its normal proceedings without being 'converted' to the National Socialist cause.²⁷ This did not remain the only politically engineered change in St Thomas's affairs. When Freyberg assumed office as Lord Mayor in 1939, he forced the retirement of the Cantor of St Thomas, Karl Straube, in favour of Günther Ramin. Freyberg hoped to have a more malleable person in Günther Ramin, who had displayed some political opportunism in furthering his musical career up to that point.²⁸ Freyberg wanted to exploit this to gain greater control over one of Germany's most important cultural establishments in order to use the choir to increase his own standing in Germany. He also sought to sever the strong ties of St Thomas's School and Choir with their church.

²⁷ This list included that choir work took precedence over Hitler Youth work and meetings, the choir would not be split into different groups within the Hitler Youth and would be exempted from the compulsory camping excursion (*Zeltlager*). See Helen Bluemel, 'The Triad of St Thomas', especially pp. 30-32. The case of St Thomas's clearly contradicts Kater's sweeping statement that all boys' choirs fell in one swoop and became totally immersed in the 'ideal conversion agency' of the Hitler Youth. Michael Kater, *The Twisted Muse* (Oxford, 1997), p.140.

²⁸ Günther Ramin had accepted National Socialist homage and support for his international tours where he became a successful export for the regime. In turn he had promoted German culture by only playing the German organ repertoire when abroad. See Bluemel, 'The Triad of St Thomas', pp. 24-5.

Ramin, however, proved himself to be a strong guardian of St Thomas's heritage. In the years 1941-43, he refuted Freyberg's attempt to dissolve the triad and thus saved a tradition of more than 730 years.²⁹

Despite all these destructive and bitter incisions, the utmost effort was made by the musical protagonists in Leipzig to retain as much of the city's musical tradition and its institutions as possible. Therefore, it was only natural that the musical life continued with an studied air of normality in spite of the outbreak of war. St Thomas's Choir maintained its Friday motets and Saturday cantatas in St Thomas's Church, the opera continued and the *Gewandhaus* held normal concert seasons. When Goebbels made his *Sportpalast* speech in February 1943, proclaiming the Total War and initiating afterwards the closure of most of Germany's cultural and otherwise entertaining institutions, Leipzig's opera (until its destruction in December 1943), the choir music and the *Gewandhaus*'s concert season continued. The *Gewandhauskapellmeister* Hermann Abendroth gained a special concession allowing the time honoured concert institution to sustain its performance schedule throughout the war.³⁰ The firestorm of 4 December 1943 destroyed St Thomas's School and the *Alumnat* where the boys were living. Thus Bach's choir had to be evacuated to Grimma, 40 kilometres away from Leipzig. The concerts in St Thomas's Church in Leipzig continued despite the evacuation. The weekly programme, however, was shortened to a motet on Saturdays. The *Reichsbahn* provided special trains for the weekly fixtures and thus the Leipziger had the benefit of these concerts until early 1945, when the train lines were just not safe enough anymore. Thereafter the choir continued its performances in the Frauenkirche in Grimma. There they also performed publicly Bach's

²⁹ See *Ibid.*, especially chapter 1 and 3.

³⁰ Thus the *Gewandhaus* was one of only nine cultural establishments to remain open in Germany throughout the war after Goebbels's measures were implemented. See Lucke-Kaminiarz, *Hermann Abendroth – Ein Musiker im Wechselspiel der Zeitgeschichte*. Several sources highlight also the human aspect of Abendroth's achievement: By sustaining the orchestra throughout the war, Abendroth managed to prevent the drafting of most of his musicians. Of 109 instrumentalists in 1939, 96 were still with the institution in 1944. See inter al: Schinköth, *Musikstadt Leipzig im NS- Staat*, p. 254.

Passion of St John for Easter 1945 – without the traditional accompaniment by the *Gewandhaus* orchestra – the only musicians to do so in the entirety of Germany.³¹

It seemed fateful that the *Gewandhaus* survived the firestorm of 4 December 1943, the only one of Leipzig's many concert venues left standing. There was to be only a short reprieve, however. The last concert in the *Gewandhaus* building took place on 13 February 1944. During the American raids of 20 February 1944, the building was hit several times and its famous wooden interior accelerated the destructive force of the fire; the building was gutted. Nevertheless, the concerts proceeded according to programme. The first exile, the partially destroyed operetta venue Drei Linden outside the city's centre only served for a few performances until the end of the season. A larger venue was clearly needed, thus the *Gewandhaus* moved to Leipzig's largest film theatre, the 'Capitol', for its new season beginning in September 1944. The cinema's capacity with 1700 seats was nearly equal to the concert hall's own.³² The orchestra even maintained its custom of radio broadcasts; the last verifiable recording dates from 26 March 1945, just three weeks before the occupation of Leipzig. Thereby, the city of Leipzig retained a largely 'normal' level of musical performances befitting a *Musikstadt* right until the final months of the war. The orchestra's performances continued until the advance of the American troops to Leipzig's outskirts in mid-April 1945. The last concert was played on 12 April; on 18 April the Americans entered the city.³³ This date marked the beginning of the first real intermission in the *Gewandhaus*'s proceedings since the onset of the war. All public entertainment was halted; even music was only allowed in the context of church services. This was unprecedented: neither the Thirty Year War (1618-48) nor the plague had completely

³¹ This traditional Easter concert was not performed anywhere else in Germany due to the war. StadtAL, Thomasschule [ThoSchu], No. 56, Gesangsaufführungen des Thomanerchores (performance log), Blatt 131, 29 and 30 March 1945.

³² Rudolf Skoda, *Das Neue Gewandhaus* (Berlin, 1985).

³³ Claudius Böhm and Sven W. Staps, *250 Jahre Leipziger Stadt und Gewandhausorchester* (Leipzig, 1993).

halted public (and especially musical) entertainment in Leipzig.³⁴ Yet there were attempts to circumvent the American ban. Here the interconnectedness of Leipzig's music scene bore fruit again. Günther Ramin, the Cantor of St Thomas used the church music 'loophole' to incorporate the *Gewandhaus* orchestra in musical services to accompany his choir or even just on its own. In the same way that St Thomas's Choir was able to continue to perform Mendelssohn pieces during the Third Reich, Ramin enabled the *Gewandhaus* orchestra to play – by appropriate labelling. Mendelssohn's pieces were attributed to other composers or to anonymous, the *Gewandhaus*'s concerts became church services. The choir itself moved seamlessly from performances during wartime to performances after Leipzig's occupation. Indeed, the only break in the motet cycle of St Thomas's Choir was a fourteen day gap between concerts during which the American occupation forces vetted Günther Ramin's political credentials. Until the 29 May 1945, the choir remained in its exile in Grimma even though it had already resumed its concert schedule in Leipzig.³⁵

Despite this, the period of American occupation with its performance ban was generally seen as a phase of cultural standstill. Not only did the measure deprive Leipzig's *Bürger* of any form of entertainment and diversion, it also facilitated the hiring away of musicians and artists from Leipzig's cultural institutions by other – already reopened – establishments outside the city.³⁶ This endangered Leipzig's standing as a city of music, a situation its music loving *Bürger* were anxious to change. The *Gewandhaus*'s directorate especially was keen to resurrect Leipzig's musical life. On 7 May 1945, Hellmuth von Hase wrote to Mayor Vierling proposing a resumption of the *Gewandhaus* concerts:

Although [...] more pressing issues than cultural questions are on the forefront, I would like to take the

³⁴ Bernhard Knick, *St Thomas zu Leipzig* (Wiesbaden, 1963).

³⁵ The performance log poignantly even states the time of return of the choir to their Leipzig home: 4 pm on 29 May 1945. StadtAL, Thomasschule, ThoSchu, No. 56, Blatt 133.

³⁶ Several pleas by citizens, cultural institutes and even the city council and Lord Mayor to the American military administration went unheard. See for example: Thomas Ahbe and Michael Hofmann, *Hungern, Hamstern, Heiligabend* (Leipzig, 1996) and StadtAL, StVuR (I) No. 8380, Blatt 8 and 9. For concrete worries about other cities, especially in Thuringia, taking over artists, see: Ibid., No. 7969, Blatt 48, memo of a discussion between Major Eaton and mayor Vierling and legal counsellor Zeigner, 26 June 1945.

liberty to draw your attention to the possibility of the resumption of the musical life that is so meaningful for Leipzig, as a branch of public life that immediately – without strain on municipal offices or claiming public finances – could be resurrected. I am hereby thinking predominantly of the function of the *Gewandhaus*.³⁷

As the performances had taken place in an interim venue before the end of the war, the city would not incur any immediate rebuilding costs but reap the benefits of a renewed cultural life. Von Hase emphasised the importance of the *Gewandhaus* for Leipzig's reputation as *Musikstadt* and its meaning for Leipzig's citizens as a place of relaxation and regalement.³⁸ Vierling welcomed von Hase's approach; however, due to the American stance, he had to postpone immediate action.³⁹ Despite this failure to attain direct results, von Hase's letter was a clear attempt to regain ownership of the *Gewandhaus*'s decision-making process and thus re-establish the *Gewandhaus* as a *Bürger*-led institution. He even pre-empted an official denazification by declaring the party members in the directorate untenable. Nevertheless, his endeavour was rather ambitious. Of the old directorate, there were only four members left in Leipzig: von Hase, Max Brockhaus (a music publisher), Adolphe Meyer (a banker) and Walter Tiemann (a university professor). The head of the directorate Anton Kippenberg (the head of the famous Inselverlag) had been evacuated to Marburg when his flat was destroyed in the final months of the war. Yet, von Hase assured Vierling that as soon as the authorisation

³⁷ Hellmuth von Hase to Vierling: 'Obwohl Sie zweifellos durch Ihr neues Amt auf das äußerste in Anspruch genommen sind und im jetzigen Zeitpunkt dringlichere Aufgaben im Vordergrund stehen als kulturelle Fragen, erlaube ich mir, Ihre Aufmerksamkeit auf die Möglichkeit der Wiederingangsetzung des für Leipzig so bedeutungsvollen Musiklebens zu lenken, als einen Zweig des öffentlichen Lebens, der sofort – ohne Arbeitsbelastung städtischer Dienststellen oder Inanspruchnahme öffentlicher Mittel – wieder aufgenommen werden könnte. Ich denke dabei in erster Linie an die Tätigkeit des Gewandhauses[...]' Ibid., No. 8422, Blatt 1-2, 7 May 1945 – the resurrection of the *Gewandhaus* was so pressing that it could not wait until the official end of the war (Leipzig had been occupied for three weeks at the time, yet Germany had not surrendered in general).

³⁸ Ibid.; Hellmuth von Hase was a typical *Bürger* of Leipzig, enmeshed deeply in the city's economic and cultural fabric. He was the owner and general manager of the printing and publishing house Breitkopf und Härtel, one of Germany's most prolific music publishers. In 1945, he had been a member of the *Gewandhaus* directorate for 24 years, and its chairman for 2 years before the National Socialists ousted him in 1938.

³⁹ Vierling's reply: Ibid., Blatt 4, 8 May 1945.

was given, the directorate could begin its work thoroughly and return to its old form.⁴⁰

This, however, was not to be as von Hase, so far the driving force behind the revival of the *Gewandhaus* directorate, voluntarily followed the American relocation train in June 1945, thus he held his office in abeyance.⁴¹

When the Russians took over occupation command in Leipzig on 1 July 1945, this marked the end of Vierling's term in office. Soon after, Erich Zeigner was promoted from legal council and head of the culture department to Lord Mayor. Vierling had been sympathetic to a once again independent *Gewandhaus*, Zeigner seemed to share this opinion. Initially, he seemed a blessing for the *Gewandhaus* whose curator he had become by taking office as Lord Mayor.⁴²

For the musical life of the city the changeover to Soviet occupation meant that only a week after the arrival of the troops, the *Gewandhaus* gave its first concert with Beethoven's *Egmont* on 7 July 1945. The opera opened on 20 July with Beethoven's *Fidelio* in its interim venue Drei Linden.⁴³ In the beginning, it appeared as if the recovery of Leipzig as *Musikstadt* was well under way. The three main musical institutions, the opera, the *Gewandhaus* and St Thomas's Choir were all performing. However, soon the denazification measures that had slowly begun under the Americans came into full swing and encroached upon the cultural sphere. The 'Verordnung über den personellen Neuaufbau der öffentlichen Verwaltungen' of 17 August 1945 demanded the dismissal of all NSDAP members from public service. As this order was used not just within but most importantly also outside the political administration in Saxony, Leipzig's cultural institutions were also affected. The *Gewandhaus* orchestra fell under this directive,

⁴⁰ Letter by von Hase: Ibid., Blatt 6.

⁴¹ Von Hase's publishing house Breitkopf und Härtel was not on the list of American desirables, thus he had to convince the American authorities to allow him, his family and his most trusted employees to accompany those ordered to move zones.

⁴² The position of curator came automatically with the Lord Mayor's post. It was usually held as an honorary office and ensured that the *Gewandhaus* had an advocate in the city council without, however, having to face an active decision maker. Yet this was exactly the position Zeigner assumed once in office.

⁴³ The pieces were suitably chosen for their subject matter. StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 8384, Blatt 33.

primarily because of its incarnation as *Stadtorchester* (city orchestra). Some musicians, those most seriously implicated, were dismissed immediately, however, it was impossible to dismiss every single party member. About fifty percent of the instrumentalists had been members of the NSDAP.⁴⁴ With the viability of the orchestra at stake, the director for art and culture in the culture department of the city council, Rudolf Hartig, wrote to the Lord Mayor demanding greater flexibility in respect to the cultural institutions of Leipzig.⁴⁵ He warned against a 'transformation happening too fast' thereby endangering the orchestra's quality. Furthermore, he called attention to the damage cultural life in Leipzig would sustain if the decree was followed to the letter. Hartig demanded modifications to the order to suit the 'distinctiveness' of the cultural field and its protagonists. He seemed especially unsettled by the fact that Leipzig was losing high calibre artists and musicians by strictly adhering to the decree, only to see them find new engagements in other cities in the Soviet Occupation Zone, where a more relaxed approach seemed to be prevailing.⁴⁶ Lord Mayor Zeigner acknowledged the problems. However, apart from referring to the special conditions in the order of 17 August that allowed for an exception where 'highly skilled personnel' was involved, he could not find answers to Hartig's concerns.⁴⁷

Yet, the *Gewandhaus's* problems did not end with the unresolved question of whether the majority of its musicians had to leave due to their political affiliations. There

⁴⁴ It appears, however, that most of these party members had joined the NSDAP for opportunistic reasons, rather than conviction. Complaints exist from the late 1930s about the irreverent silence with which the musicians greeted the Hitler salute. This was especially 'embarrassing' at a public rehearsal for the trade fair concert in spring 1938, conducted by Hans Weisbach. That complaint even reached the Reich war ministry: StadtAL, Kapitel 32, Blatt 190-1; The irreverence might have been directed equally at the salute and the saluter as Hans Weisbach's credentials were more ideological than musical. See: Fred K. Prieberg, *Handbuch Deutsche Musiker 1933-45* (Aupres de Zombry, 2004), pp. 7628-37.

⁴⁵ Rudolf Hartig (1893-1962), had been a school teacher and member of the KPD from 1920 onwards. Because of his communist stance, he spent large parts of the 'Thousand Year Reich' in concentration camps. As Hartig had shown a considerable interest and aptitude for music, he was well placed in this office. See SStA Leipzig, SED Sammlung Biographie, No. 925 Rudolf Hartig.

⁴⁶ StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 7969, Blatt 89-90, Hartig to Lord Mayor Zeigner 6 October 1945; Hartig named Abendroth, Stiehler and Fritzsche, (the *Gewandhaus's* conductor, the orchestral leader and the opera's choir master) as being politically implicated but already having found new engagements. For Abendroth especially, see below.

⁴⁷ Exceptional artists who could not be replaced were excluded from the obligatory dismissals. Ibid., Blatt 104.

was also the matter of the repertoire. The orchestra had joined Leipzig's other cultural establishments (the opera, the *Schauspielhaus* [Leipzig's main theatre]) in performing works of artists who had been banned during the Third Reich.⁴⁸ Whilst it was gratifying for the orchestra to be able to play works of its former *Kapellmeister* Mendelssohn, the *Gewandhaus* directorate was less happy to receive demands by Hartig to amend the performance schedule in November 1945. He thereby ventured into the realm of the directorate's responsibilities. The *Gewandhaus* directorate consisted at that point of only two actively working members. Together with conductor Hermann Abendroth, they continued to the best of their ability in the old manner, planning and preparing the concerts and scheduling the programmes. The administrative issues were attended to by the *Gewandhauskanzlei*, the institution's office, which was still fully functioning with dedicated staff.

Therefore, albeit small in size, the ruling body of the institution was still operational. Hence, this encroachment into the directorate's sphere of authority was met with unease. The directorate appealed to the Lord Mayor, as the *Gewandhaus*'s curator, to re-evaluate the *Kulturamt*'s suggestions. Due to their length and gravity most of the proposed works would 'be hardly bearable, even for the greatest of music enthusiasts, and could barely fulfil the intention of providing calming enjoyment so necessary in the current times.' Although this appeared to be a matter of artistic differences, it later became clear that the real concern lay elsewhere: 'We are of course prepared to present our schedules to the *Kulturamt* and receive its wishes and fulfil them if possible. *However, we would like to maintain in principle our independence in these decisions.*' For the directorate this matter of artistic independence was a corner stone in sustaining the reputation of this internationally renowned concert institute.⁴⁹ The Lord Mayor tended to agree with these

⁴⁸ Lieselotte Borusiak and Gertrud Höhnel, *Chronik der Stadt Leipzig I-II* (Leipzig, 1971).

⁴⁹ ' [...]Einige Kulturamtsvorschläge wären [...] [durch den] musikalischen Inhalt und Schwere selbst für die größten Musikenthusiasten kaum ertragbar und würden die schöne Absicht eines entspannten Genusses, der

arguments. Despite honouring the *Kulturamt*'s efforts, Zeigner was leaning towards respecting the conductor's (and by extension the directorate's) judgement. He sought, however, to reserve the right for himself and the *Kulturamt* to veto 'tasteless and politically tactless proposals'.⁵⁰

In other matters, the *Gewandhaus* very willingly followed the city authority's directives, notably in the question of the *Anrecht*. The traditional ticket management was temporarily suspended to allow a free sale of tickets and thus open the concerts to everyone. With the *Gewandhaus* building derelict, the *Anrecht* had for the time being lost its importance and was easily given up in the hope of meeting the demands for a restructured operation without yielding any substantial rights of self-governance.

However, the director of the *Kulturamt*, Hartig, was not at all interested in re-establishing the concert institution in its traditional form. Hartig aimed thoroughly to reform the establishment by turning it into a 'Volkskonzertinstitut' (a people's concert institute).⁵¹ To that end, he instigated the takeover of the *Gewandhaus* by the city.⁵² His first manoeuvre was to discredit the *Gewandhaus* in the city council due to its high maintenance expenses that had to be borne by the city of Leipzig.⁵³ Furthermore, he pointed to the 'privileged' nature of its audience and the inaccessibility of the concerts to the working class as a result of high ticket prices. He therefore demanded the dissolution of the *Gewandhaus* directorate, which, in his opinion, had been incapacitated through the 'desertion' of most of its members. Only if control over the concerts lay with the

doch heute so notwendig ist, kaum noch erfüllen. [...] [Wir] sind selbstverständlich gern bereit, dem Kulturamt unsere Pläne vorzulegen und dessen Wünsche entgegenzunehmen und nach Möglichkeit zu erfüllen. Aber wir möchten uns doch in den Entschlüssen prinzipiell unsere Selbständigkeit bewahren', StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 8422, Blatt 10, letter by the *Gewandhaus* directorate to Lord Mayor Zeigner, 2 November 1945.

⁵⁰ Letter by Lord Mayor Zeigner to Kulturamt, 8 November 1945; Ibid., Blatt 11.

⁵¹ He already harboured these plans when fighting for the exemption of artists from the denazification order in October 1945. Ibid., No. 7972, Blatt 6-12, 2 October 1945.

⁵² Ibid., No. 8422, Blatt 12, Letter by the Kulturamt to Lord Mayor Zeigner, 9 November 1945.

⁵³ The *Gewandhaus* only paid a small proportion of the musicians' salary. The city had to subsidize the entire enterprise, musicians included. They had done so since the late nineteenth century without claiming a stake in the decision-making in the *Gewandhaus*. Hartig wanted to change this.

Kulturamt, would the concerts be widely accessible for the general public.⁵⁴ Since the legal constitution of the *Gewandhaus* as a *private* foundation under civil law might have thwarted his ambitions, he demanded the ‘abolition of the institution of the *Gewandhaus*’. This move was reminiscent of the attempts of takeover by the National Socialists. Indeed, Hartig was not shy to recommend using ‘Goebbels’s methods’ where appropriate.⁵⁵ His drive did not exhaust itself in changing the *Gewandhaus*; his ideas also encompassed St Thomas’s Choir. As a communist, he was naturally highly suspicious of the close relationship of the choir and its church. He acknowledged that the ‘historical function’ of the choir fundamentally could not be changed. The *Bachpflege*, one of the choir’s main duties, had to continue, particularly because of its part in Leipzig’s international reputation.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, the choir ‘had to be urged to apply itself to secular music.’⁵⁷ In a way he echoed Freyberg’s (Nazi) attempts at De-Christianisation in the early 1940s. The new ‘fields of application’ of the choir were to be found in staff canteens of factories, where the boys were supposed to heighten the morale of the workers.⁵⁸ For the *Gewandhaus*, he envisaged an even more extensive change in character. In Hartig’s cultural programme for the year 1946, he laid out his plans for the ‘restructuring’ of the *Gewandhaus*. The foundation was to be dissolved and the ‘exclusivity’ broken. The ‘old *Gewandhaus*’ was an institution that had been built, supported and maintained by a music loving *Bürgertum*. This historical constellation was ‘never to recur again’, therefore the status of the *Gewandhaus* as a ‘special’ institute (*Sonderinstitut*) had to be brought to an end.⁵⁹ In the pursuance of this aim, a conglomerate of overlapping and sometimes conflicting levels of authority emerged. Lord Mayor Zeigner, the *Volksbildungsamt* and the *Kulturamt* (both divisions in the city’s department for Art, Culture and *Volksbildung*) and

⁵⁴ Ibid., Blatt 22, Letter by the Kulturamt to Lord Mayor Zeigner, 5 December 1945.

⁵⁵ Ibid., No. 2133, Blatt 225, 12 November 1945.

⁵⁶ Elfie Rembold, ‘Städtische Musikkultur, Leipziger Bachfeste in den Diktaturen’ in Höpel and Sammler, *Kulturpolitik und Stadtkultur in Leipzig und Lyon*, pp. 201-30.

⁵⁷ StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 7972, Blatt 13-14.

⁵⁸ Ibid., No. 4293, Blatt 56.

⁵⁹ Ibid., No. 8423, Blatt 124 and No. 8418, Blatt 19 and Blatt 52, January 1946.

the Soviet authorities (albeit mostly in the background) all claimed influence in the affairs of the concert hall. Equally, the *Gewandhaus* directorate and its administrative counterpart, the *Gewandhauskanzlei*, insisted on their sole power of representation. The *Volksbildungsamt* fostered the same idea as the *Kulturamt* regarding the dissolution of the *Gewandhaus* directorate, however, not yet with the same finality. Instead of advocating the abolition of the entire institution, it demanded a 'more suitable' and effective directorate.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, the old directorate was not defeated easily. The two remaining active members in Leipzig, Walter Tiemann and Adolphe Meyer, rejected a decision by Lord Mayor Zeigner to put the *Gewandhaus* provisionally under the control of the *Kulturamt*.⁶¹ Rather, they entered into discussions with Zeigner to renew the directorate and enliven the administration. One of the first bones of contention was the question of replacement for *Gewandhauskapellmeister* Abendroth.

Hermann Abendroth's position had already started to become precarious shortly after the takeover of power by the Soviet occupation forces in July 1945. The *Gewandhaus*'s conductor had already been on the black list of the Americans.⁶² However, as no secular concerts of any kind were allowed, this matter did not have any concrete effect on the *Gewandhaus* at that time. Indeed, Abendroth even conducted his orchestra and the St Thomas's Choir in a prayer service for the resistance clergyman Martin Niemöller in the *Gewandhaus* in late May 1945.⁶³

Hermann Abendroth had been the *Gewandhaus* conductor since 1934.⁶⁴ He steered the *Gewandhaus* through the war, having won for the orchestra an exemption from

⁶⁰ Ibid., No. 8472, Blatt 10, Letter by the *Volksbildungsamt* to the *Gewandhaus* directorate, 10 December 1945.

⁶¹ Ibid., No. 8422, Blatt 28, Letter by Lord Mayor Zeigner to Tiemann and Meyer, 10 December 1945.

⁶² Thacker, *Music after Hitler*, p. 43

⁶³ StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 8534, Blatt 7, 27 May 1945.

⁶⁴ Hermann Abendroth (1883-1956) followed Bruno Walter who had been disposed in 1933. According to confidential files of Leipzig's city council, Abendroth had by no means been the first choice: '[...]Da die erste Klasse der Konzertdirigenten Furtwängler, Klemperer, Bruno Walter augenblicklich nicht infrage kommt, wäre Abendroth (als deutscher Mann) vielleicht augenblicklich der geeigneteste Dirigent für die Gewandhaus Konzerte.' StadtAL, Kapitel 32, Blatt 22. This was not the first time Abendroth was under

Goebbels's total war order.⁶⁵ When the *Gewandhaus* building was bombed and eventually destroyed in 1944, he relocated the *Gewandhaus* orchestra to the Capitol cinema and maintained the normal performance cycle.

Abendroth's position had been questioned in Leipzig even though the American black list was unknown.⁶⁶ Thus when the Russians took over and an immediate intensification of the political purging process was noticeable, it was assumed that he had to leave. However, the first denazification laws concerning musicians in *public* service did not explicitly touch his case. On the one hand, he was definitely implicated as a party member, on the other hand, however, he was irreplaceable.⁶⁷ Thus initially, he remained in office, relaying orders of the new city council to his orchestra and organising the new concert cycle accordingly.⁶⁸

Soon, however, his position became untenable with attacks appearing from various fronts. The communists, who gained more and more influence in Leipzig's government, demanded his dismissal, and Günther Ramin, the Cantor of St Thomas resumed his battle for the leadership of the *Gewandhaus* Choir, thereby unwittingly challenging Abendroth's whole position.⁶⁹

Abendroth had begun to look around for alternative employment even before these problems became noticeable. Seeking to fill the gap that his previous (and now

discussion for the position. He had been unsuccessful in his application for the position of *Gewandhauskapellmeister* in 1922, when the competition was not circumscribed by racial considerations. See: Lucke-Kaminiarz, *Hermann Abendroth*.

⁶⁵ Erik Levi's assertion that the *Gewandhaus*'s 'reputation was essentially local' during the period of the Third Reich is unsustainable. Concerts from the *Gewandhaus* were transmitted live by radio to New York, the Mendelssohn monument incident reverberated widely and the fact that the orchestra was exempted from the total war order seems difficult to reconcile with Levi's throwaway comment. See Levi, *Music in the Third Reich*.

⁶⁶ See letter of Dr. Vieweg to Kulturamt 6 June 1945, demanding Abendroth's deposition from office due to his NSDAP membership and 'lack of artistic vision', StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 8382, Blatt 1.

⁶⁷ See footnote no. 15 and 16.

⁶⁸ See letter 14 July 1945, Abendroth is told to keep the next 4-6 concerts outside the *Anrecht* and to arrange for 50 per cent of all tickets to be allocated to the *Antifaschistischer Block*. StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 8380, Blatt 66.

⁶⁹ Ramin had fought for this office throughout the 1930s, especially after his appointment as Cantor of St Thomas in 1939. During that time Abendroth, who had demanded the post in his contract negotiations, kept the upper hand, possibly due to the advantage of being a member of the NSDAP. This party membership now turned into a disadvantage and he lost the choir. See for example StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 8533, Blatt 12-14.

impossible) tour engagements had left, he found an appropriate field of activity as musical director of the German National Theatre in Weimar, Thuringia. Associated with this post came the conductorship of the Weimar *Staatskapelle*, which Abendroth also gladly took over.⁷⁰ Furthermore, in addition to his dormant lecturing post in Leipzig's conservatoire, he found a professorship at Weimar's School of Music, the state conservatoire of Thuringia.⁷¹ Contrary to the common assertion that persons implicated with the National Socialist dictatorship had to move to the Western occupation zones to continue their professions, Abendroth just moved within the Soviet Zone.⁷² Indeed, great support for hiring Abendroth came from Weimar's Soviet command, even though local KPD activists insisted that he could not be hired. His credentials as a musician were clearly considered more important than his political past.⁷³

Nevertheless, Abendroth evidently held his post in Leipzig in high esteem, thus he challenged his dismissal in 1945 and throughout the first half of 1946. The unresolved question of the *Gewandhaus*'s legal status and the competing levels of authority prompted him to contest the decision. After the official date of his removal from office on 15 December 1945, he spoke with the Lord Mayor claiming that the city was in no position to dismiss him as the *Gewandhaus* was a private institution and that the denazification laws for the public sector were therefore not applicable.⁷⁴ Furthermore, the city of Leipzig, even when acting upon orders of the administration of Saxony, could not annul a private contract. The *Volksbildungsamt* under Holtzhauer wanted to disregard the question of

⁷⁰ Weimar was, however, not too far away from Leipzig to make a coordination of all of Abendroth's positions possible.

⁷¹ He took office both at the *Staatskapelle* and the Weimar School of Music in October 1945, a month before he was dismissed from the *Gewandhaus*. In December 1945 he was entrusted by the *Landespräsident* (premier of Thuringia) Dr Paul with the superintendence over the city of Jena's musical life, a position which was broadened to include all of Thuringia in 1946. See Lucke-Kaminarz, *Hermann Abendroth*.

⁷² It was by no means a case of unwitting appointment. Exasperated political officials from Leipzig openly criticized Weimar for employing Abendroth as 'he was clearly unacceptable in Leipzig'. See *Ibid.*, p. 110.

⁷³ Naimark, *The Russians in Germany*, p. 431. Abendroth was not only implicated by his party membership, he had 'only' joined in 1937, but more importantly through his position as leader of the *Fachschaft* of the choirmasters and music teachers in the *Reichsmusikkammer* and several publications he had written in this position. See Prieberg, 'Hermann Abendroth' in *Handbuch deutsche Musiker 1933-45*, pp. 39-49.

⁷⁴ StadtAL, StVuR (I), 1324, Blatt 6, 20 December 1945.

whether Abendroth's contract was for private or public employment and referred the matter to Dresden. '[This issue] will be presented to the *Landesverwaltung*, so that it will be decided there, whether the premier music institution of Leipzig can still be led by Abendroth against all guidelines from the *Landesverwaltung*, regardless of whether it is a private or a public institution.'⁷⁵ Yet, the *Landesverwaltung* did not intervene on the *Volksbildungsamt*'s behalf. Thus the dispute continued with growing vigour until July 1946. Abendroth continued carrying the prestigious title of *Gewandhauskapellmeister*, even though he admitted that he was 'out of engagement'.⁷⁶ The situation was further complicated through the efforts of city councillor Richard Pudor, member of the Liberal Democratic party. Seeing the problems that the *Gewandhaus* suffered after losing Abendroth, he intervened at the Soviet command in Leipzig to have Abendroth reinstated regardless of his former political affiliations. On 30 March 1946, Pudor announced that his attempts had been fruitful and Abendroth was allowed to return. He had already discussed the terms with Abendroth and recruited mayor Sachse of the city council to arrange everything necessary. According to him, the only piece of the mosaic missing was the Lord Mayor's consent.⁷⁷ Zeigner, however, was not obliging. At first, he refrained from positioning himself. This led mayor Sachse to assure him that the whole issue was not directed at 'saving' Abendroth but at maintaining the concert hall's international reputation. As soon as a suitable successor was found Abendroth could be dismissed.⁷⁸ Whilst the Lord Mayor still continued his silence, the other members of the city council were more proactive. The staunch communist Helmut Holtzhauer, then still Leipzig's councillor for *Volksbildung*, even identified the attempt to return Abendroth as a symptom

⁷⁵ 'Ich werde darüber hinaus die Angelegenheit der Landesverwaltung vorlegen, damit dort geklärt wird, ob das entscheidende Musikinstitut Leipzig ungeachtet der Richtlinien der Landesverwaltung weiterhin von Abendroth geleitet werden kann, gleichviel ob es sich in soweit um eine private oder um eine öffentliche Institution handelt.' StadtAL, StVuR(I), No. 8472, Blatt 10.

⁷⁶ Ibid., No. 1324, Blatt 6; Blatt 13-14; Blatt 17-23.

⁷⁷ Ibid., Blatt 7, Letter Richard Pudor to Lord Mayor Zeigner, 30 March 1945.

⁷⁸ Ibid., Blatt 9, Letter Sachse to Lord Mayor Zeigner, 13 April 46: '[...] es geht mir weniger um die Persönlichkeit des Abendroth, als um die Erhaltung des Orchesters als eines international bekannten Klangkörpers'.

of reactionary forces gaining power.⁷⁹ This led Sachse to conclude that the city council was not interested in the further engagement of Abendroth; he informed Pudor accordingly. Finally, Zeigner affirmed the dismissal of Abendroth, he did so not just in his position as Lord Mayor of Leipzig, but as curator of the *Gewandhaus*, demanding the immediate cessation of the use of the title of *Gewandhauskapellmeister* by Abendroth, who finally complied in late July.⁸⁰ In this context, a document unearthed by Toby Thacker in the British National Archive, needs further attention. At a meeting of the four occupying powers in Germany in May 1946, when challenged by the American representative over employing the clearly blacklisted Abendroth, the Soviet delegate pointed to the fact that they had ‘dealt’ with the matter by ‘remov[ing] him from Leipzig to Weimar’.⁸¹ Thacker interpreted the document as a statement of the Soviet strategy. Yet, as has been seen above, the removal of Abendroth from Leipzig was largely based on *German* communists’ efforts. Even in March 1946, the Soviet city command in Leipzig was happy for Abendroth to return, even asking him to ‘stipulate his conditions’.⁸² Abendroth in turn was the initiator of his move to Thuringia, as he stated in a letter to the *Gewandhaus*’s Anton Kippenberg: ‘I thought it right in these changeable political times to have another string to my bow – in agreement with Tiemann and Meyer [...]’.⁸³ What is more, the local Soviet administration in Thuringia supported Abendroth’s engagement against the local German communists.⁸⁴ Thacker may be perfectly correct in saying that the Soviets were more lenient than the Americans, but in a sense that is beside the point. The real issue here is not leniency but agency, for it was German and not Allied hostility that toppled Abendroth in Leipzig. Abendroth’s case very clearly shows the complexity of denazification in the Soviet Zone.

⁷⁹ Ibid., Blatt 10, Letter Holtzhauer to Lord Mayor Zeigner, 24 April 46.

⁸⁰ Ibid., Blatt 17-19; Blatt 21-23.

⁸¹ Toby Thacker, *Music after Hitler 1945-1955* (Aldershot, 2007), p.43, Document in question: The National Archive, TNA/PRO/FO 1005/831.

⁸² StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 1324, Blatt 30, 30 March 1946.

⁸³ Copy of letter Abendroth to Kippenberg 3 December 1945: ‘Dann aber hielt ich es – im Einverständnis mit Tiemann und Meyer – für richtig, in diesen wechsellvollen politischen Zeiten ein weiteres Eisen im Feuer zu haben.’ See: Lucke-Kaminiarz, *Hermann Abendroth*, pp. 112-13.

⁸⁴ Naimark, *The Russians in Germany*, p. 431.

The striking regional variations were not simply due to inconsistencies in Soviet policy, they were due to the fact that the Soviets were not the only players in this game, and that some players, like Kurt Fischer in Dresden, were particularly adept in it. Thacker might have been right in suggesting that the Soviet claim of moving Abendroth '[...] to a less prestigious position in Weimar' was an 'excuse'.⁸⁵ Yet the Soviets were probably not 'evasive' about Abendroth, more so about the actual mechanism of denazification in their zone.⁸⁶

Understandably, this entire episode surrounding Abendroth harmed the *Gewandhaus*'s reputation. The expertise of the *Gewandhaus* directorate in choosing and approaching a suitable successor was no longer valued. The new conductor was to sign a contract with the city rather than just the concert hall. Ironically, the *Kulturamt*, so persistent in removing Abendroth from office, allotted the *Kapellmeister* post to Herbert von Karajan. The sources do not disclose whether Hartig was prepared to ignore Karajan's substantial political involvement in the Third Reich or whether he was actually unaware of Karajan's record. It might be that Hartig just had chosen a known name to demonstrate a competence in the musical field. As Karajan's name was never mentioned again, it is likely to have been an off-the-cuff suggestion.⁸⁷ The *Gewandhaus* directorate advised to await the imminent return of the directorate's chairman Anton Kippenberg before taking any steps.⁸⁸ Only after Kippenberg's resumption of office was a decision to be made, both in the matters of the succession of conductor as well as continuance of the institution itself. However, it took until May 1946 before Kippenberg really positioned himself by declaring Tiemann his locum in Leipzig. By that point the efforts of the different levels of the city government had pushed their takeover bids forward. Lord Mayor Zeigner, a lawyer

⁸⁵ Thacker, *Music*, p. 43.

⁸⁶ As will be seen in the chapters on Leipzig University and even more so that on law in Leipzig, the Soviets were by no means more lenient than any of the other occupation powers.

⁸⁷ It would have been more than strange to substitute Abendroth, who became an NSDAP member in 1937, with Karajan, who even in his fabricated account never joined the party later than 1935 (in fact, he joined in 1933, see Prieberg, *Handbuch deutsche Musiker 1933-45*, pp. 3545-3577).

⁸⁸ StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 8472, Blatt 16.

himself, contemplated which legal means, if any, were open to the city and himself as curator to dissolve the foundation. He recalled Hellmuth von Hase from the directorate, thus definitely excluding him from any further *Gewandhaus* business.⁸⁹ The *Kulturbund*, an organisation for the promotion of culture, also got engaged in the question of the *Gewandhaus*'s future and demanded an opening of the institution to all members of the public and the establishment of a working committee of interested and qualified persons. This committee was to replace the present *Gewandhaus* directorate.⁹⁰ The *Kulturamt* was quick to pick up on the proposal and reiterated its request to place the *Gewandhaus* under city command. Thereafter, the said committee could be created. This idea now became fashionable across the different authorities. The *Volksbildungsamt* favoured a *Gewandhaus* directorate/ working committee with a majority of workers' parties. The Lord Mayor was pondering potential candidates.⁹¹ The initial deliberations between Zeigner, Tiemann and Meyer about a new directorate spiralled into an open debate within the city council through the *Kulturbund*'s intervention. In this climate, the *Kulturamt* attempted yet again to realise its ambition and take over control in the *Gewandhaus*. It tried to place the *Gewandhaus*'s administrative body, the *Gewandhauskanzlei*, under its control in May 1946. Only directives from the *Kulturamt* were to be followed until a final answer was found regarding the future configuration of the concert institution as a whole.⁹² Although Kippenberg had yielded his position operationally to Tiemann, in this matter he stepped in personally and denied firmly the *Kulturamt*'s authority. Instead of issuing *directives* to the

⁸⁹ Ibid., Blatt 21; Zeigner considered whether the *Gewandhaus* foundation could be dissolved according to its own constitution (§ 9 stated that the capital would devolve on the city upon the cessation of the foundation, the assets then could only be used to support other public music enterprises), however, with the *Gewandhaus* orchestra performing according to schedule, the foundation could hardly be considered as lapsed.

⁹⁰ Ibid., No. 8422, Blatt 57 and No. 8418, Blatt 23 – both sources are part of one letter (numbered and dated from 18 January 1946). Blatt 23 contains a list of proposed members of the new committee, mostly from a middle-class background. Whereas the proposal itself was welcomed by the city authorities, the roster was ignored. This might be a reason for the separation of the parts in the filing. The *Kulturbund* was founded as an association for everyone involved in the cultural reconstruction of Germany. Initially planned to be above party lines and zonal divisions, it soon descended into a Soviet Zone-only club that oriented itself on the SED's cultural policies. See: Wolfgang Schivelbusch, 'Kulturbund' in Schivelbusch, *In a Cold Crater Cultural and Intellectual Life in Berlin, 1945-48* (London, 1998), pp. 72-106.

⁹¹ Ibid., No. 8422, Blatt 103 and 105, 18 March and 2 April 1946 respectively.

⁹² Ibid., Blatt 144, letter by Hartig to the *Gewandhauskanzlei*, 14 May 1946.



Gewandhauskanzlei, the *Kulturamt* would have to address its wishes to the *Gewandhaus* directorate.⁹³ Kippenberg's intervention prompted the city council in June 1946 to appeal to the *Landesverwaltung* in Dresden, for advice. A seemingly harmless enquiry about how best to provide for the 'private foundation' insinuated that any other action but complete dissolution and assigning authority to the city council would be irresponsible: 'It is doubtful whether the further development of this institution is secure as a private foundation or if it would not prove more appropriate for the future if the city of Leipzig takes over the artistic and financial concerns of the *Gewandhaus*'. Therefore the *Land* government was urged to use its power and officiate over the disbanding of the *Gewandhaus* foundation.⁹⁴ From that point onwards the city authorities drove a parallel strategy: on the one hand the *Kulturamt* and the *Volksbildungsamt* eagerly awaited the sanction to dissolve the *Gewandhaus* foundation, on the other they relied on the Lord Mayor in his capacity as curator of the *Gewandhaus* to implement their suggestions in the concert institute. Zeigner perceptibly increased his claim to influence over the *Gewandhaus* and took liberties in the decision-making.⁹⁵ The tone towards the *Gewandhaus* directorate changed accordingly; it was treated as defunct and redundant. Hartig and Holtzhauer agreed to petition the Lord Mayor to define the responsibilities of the members of the 'former' directorate, as both Tiemann and Meyer – irritatingly – 'still believed that they could play a decisive role'.⁹⁶ Another proposal in September 1946 called for the establishment of a transitional directorate to stop Tiemann and Meyer from

⁹³ Ibid., Blatt 160, Kippenberg's reply 23 May 1946.

⁹⁴ Ibid., Blatt 174, letter by the city council, office of the Lord Mayor to the Saxony state government's president Dr Friedrichs, 3 June 1946. As parts (those pre-dating the Third Reich) of the civil law in Saxony were still used in proceedings, in this case the state government was the only body that could legally pronounce the dissolution of this private foundation under civil law.

⁹⁵ Whereas he tried before to accommodate the directorate's objections, he now ignored to instate a selected new board of candidates, amongst them mayor Eichelbaum. Ibid., No. 8472, Blatt 44, letter by Kippenberg to Zeigner asking for the appointment of six new directorate members, 8 August 1946.

⁹⁶ Ibid., No. 8422, Blatt 219, 4 September 1946: 'Außerdem wäre es gut, wenn von Seiten des Oberbürgermeisters die Kompetenzen der Herren der ehemaligen Direktion Tiemann und Meyer geklärt würden, nachdem beide Herren, wie es scheint, immernoch glauben, maßgebend zu sein'.

interfering.⁹⁷ This transitional directorate never materialized. Nor did the chaotic struggle for authority in decisions concerning the time-honoured *Gewandhaus* cease. The *Volksbildungsamt* encroached into the day-to-day dealings of the orchestra, without, however, the proper expertise to do so. This was shown in the *Volksbildungsamt*'s selection of sheet music it had ordered for the orchestra's performances without any prior consultations. This sheet music was neither appropriate nor of good quality. Moreover, the *Gewandhaus* directorate had already acquired materials in line with the 'requirements of the new times' – namely Shostakovich's eighth and ninth symphonies. The directorate's choice would allow the *Gewandhaus* orchestra to première these pieces in Europe, thus both connecting to its grand tradition of premières and fulfilling Hartig's demand to embrace the 'politico-cultural' reality and perform modern Russian music.⁹⁸ Therefore, the directorate complained to Hartig in the *Kulturamt*, not to Holtzhauer in the *Volksbildungsamt* about this case. One can presume that the directorate used this further to complicate the struggle for authority between the two offices, presumably hoping to benefit from the division. The *Volksbildungsamt* clearly had neither acted in favour of the *Gewandhaus*'s renown nor according to Hartig's guidelines.⁹⁹ Yet despite the directorate's best efforts to comply with the new rules and simultaneously outmanoeuvre its critics, the city council was adamant that the directorate needed to be finally silenced. Lord Mayor Zeigner was central to this process by pursuing the matter of the dissolution of the foundation with the *Land* government in Dresden. In October 1946, even before Dresden had ruled on the matter, he declared the directorate non-existent.¹⁰⁰ In letters to the

⁹⁷ Ibid., Blatt 230, 25 September 1946.

⁹⁸ Ibid., Blatt 236, when the symphonies were finally performed they were merely German premières. Lukas Neumann, 'Jeder wolle etwas anderes' in *Gewandhausmagazin*, Winter 2003/04, No. 41, pp. 33-7

⁹⁹ Ibid., No. 7969, Blatt 122, 2 November 1945; Hartig called for an education of the people by giving them an understanding of Russian culture. A special week of cultural events with a Russian theme was to fulfil this purpose in the autumn of 1945, yet failed to reach the masses. Thus Hartig demanded a stronger emphasis on newer Russian music and an appreciation of the political necessities. With its choice of music, the *Gewandhaus* directorate had just done this.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., No. 8422, Blatt 240, letter by the Lord Mayor to the Saxon *Landesverwaltung*, 1 October 1946, asking for clarification in the matter of the dissolution of the *Gewandhaus* foundation.

directorate's members, he based his argument on the fact that since the war, the *Gewandhaus* foundation had hardly fulfilled its purpose. Most significantly, the foundation was not in any financial position to tend to its duties and commitments, which already had to be covered by the city. Thus the city council was well in its rights to assign the *Gewandhaus* to its jurisdiction. He thanked both Tiemann and Meyer for their work but made it clear in no uncertain terms that their interference would be no longer tolerated.¹⁰¹ The *Gewandhauskanzlei* was informed by the city council that the directorate had ceased to exist and all issues concerning the *Gewandhaus* would be decided in the *Volksbildungsamt*.¹⁰² The *Gewandhaus* directorate repudiated this fiercely:

We find ourselves unable to share your opinion in this matter, especially with respect to our assumed obligations and responsibilities and in the interest of the musical life of the city of Leipzig, which in essence is closely connected to the existence and work of this world famous creation of *bürgerlich* idealism.

Furthermore, Tiemann and Meyer claimed that any problems facing the directorate were caused by the unwillingness of the Lord Mayor to fulfil his duties as curator and facilitate the rebuilding of a functional institution. Therefore, there were no financial or even 'cultural' motives for the *Kulturamt* to 'attend to the duties of the *Gewandhaus*'. Moreover,

We have always objected to the patronizing and intrusive behaviour of this authority [*Kulturamt*] and, at all times, felt it to be uncalled for and repressive; we only tolerated this in view of the prevailing political arrangements. We would truly appreciate the day that finally allowed us full freedom of action. [...] We have been entrusted with this responsibility not only by the city of Leipzig but the whole musical world.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Ibid., Blatt 250 and 251, 12 October 1946, identical letters by the Lord Mayor to Tiemann and Meyer 'relieving' them from their duties.

¹⁰² Ibid., Blatt 257, 16 October 1946.

¹⁰³ Ibid., Blatt 262-3, Official letter by the *Gewandhaus* directorate to Lord Mayor Zeigner, 20 October 1946: '[...] wir können uns im Hinblick auf die von uns übernommenen Pflichten und im Interesse des Musiklebens der Stadt Leipzig, das im Wesentlichen mit der Existenz und der Wirksamkeit dieser weltberühmten Schöpfung bürgerlichen Idealismus eng verbunden ist, Ihrer Meinung nicht anschließen. Wir haben das Gewandhausdirektorium wieder aufbauen wollen, Sie haben auf Vorschläge nicht geantwortet. [...] Es lag

Despite this most outspoken refusal, the city council's decision was final. The *Gewandhauskanzlei* was permanently placed under the authority of the *Volksbildungsamt*. Lord Mayor Zeigner reiterated this point again in a letter to Tiemann and Meyer, inviting them to a discussion about an interim solution until the *Land* government had decided the future of the foundation. This invitation arose more from Zeigner's legal concerns than any intention to include the old directorate's members or utilize their expertise.¹⁰⁴

After all the efforts to gain control over this most prestigious of concert organizations, the city council and its cultural department were unclear what to do with it. There remained the problem of identifying and implementing a suitable structure to ensure both control over the concert institute as well as the quality of its artistic output.¹⁰⁵ The hopes for progress in the planned consultations with Tiemann and Meyer failed; Tiemann showed passive resistance and cancelled the appointment and Adolphe Meyer missed the proposed dates due to illness and later death. Kippenberg, who had followed the developments from Marburg (in the American Zone), was indignant. He urged Tiemann to 'do his utmost to preserve the fundamental independence of the *Gewandhaus*'.¹⁰⁶

The uncertainty about the shape of the *Gewandhaus*'s legal future was further complicated by the decision of the *Land* government in early 1947 that all foundations in Saxony were to be dissolved and their assets bundled into three large capital reserves under Dresden's control. This would have annulled the *Gewandhaus* constitution and concurrently revoked the city's influence over the institute completely. To avoid this, Zeigner intervened in Dresden. In a consultation with the Secretary of State Geyer, he

also keinerlei wirtschaftliche oder gar "kulturelle" Veranlassung vor, daß sich das Kulturamt der Stadt unserer Aufgaben hätte annehmen müssen. Wir haben die Bevormundung und Einmischung dieser Instanz stets als unnötig und hemmend empfunden und nur aus Rücksichten eines zeitbedingten Einvernehmens ertragen. Wir würden den Tag, der uns wieder volle Bewegungsfreiheit gestattet, aufrichtigst begrüßen [...] uns ist Verantwortung nicht nur von Leipzig sondern auch von der ganzen musikalischen Welt auferlegt.'

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., Blatt 294, letter by Zeigner to Tiemann, 14 November 1946. Zeigner had been eager to seek legal assurance from various sources throughout his dealings in this matter, despite being himself more than qualified to weigh up any implications.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., Blatt 318, letter by the *Volksbildungsamt* to the Lord Mayor.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., No. 8472, Blatt 70.

arranged for the *Gewandhaus* foundation and its related assets to be transferred into the hands of the city of Leipzig. This was possible as there were 'no financial assets worth mentioning'. Furthermore, Geyer did not see any prospect of the *Gewandhaus* (the actual building) being reconstructed 'in the next five to ten years'.¹⁰⁷

The decision of Saxony's *Landesverwaltung* gave the city council control, however, the question remained of how to integrate the unique concert institution into the organizational structure of the city's cultural policy. Despite the repeated calls for a complete absorption into the city's administration, the debate narrowed around the question of whether to re-establish an independent institution (very much akin to the old organization) or to create a foundation dependent on the city. Anton Kippenberg presented his idea clearly:

The *Gewandhaus* does not just belong to the city, it is a concern for the whole of the German people, indeed of the whole world [...] If the *Gewandhaus* is to be municipalized or nationalized, it would become a concert institute like many others and thus lose its nimbus that sets it apart from all the others.¹⁰⁸

The *Volksbildungsamt* agreed that the *Gewandhaus* had to preserve its century old importance in Leipzig's musical life, but it had to accommodate the 'tenor of the times'. Thus it proposed to either retain the *status quo* (that is continued support of the *Gewandhaus* in artistic and financial questions by Leipzig's city council) or to create a subsidiary foundation under the control of the *Volksbildungsamt*.¹⁰⁹ In the latter case the foundation's decision-making body was to consist of the curator (a post still to be held by the current Lord Mayor), the head of the department for Art, Culture and *Volksbildung*, the

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., No. 8422, Blatt 344, minutes of meeting of Zeigner and Geyer on 16 January 1947; the measure was implemented at the end of February after Zeigner had to send a reminder to Dresden, see Ibid., Blatt 359 and Blatt 369, 12 February and 27 February 1947 respectively. However, the decision did not dissolve the foundation, merely transferred it into the city's hands. The question of its future remained open.

¹⁰⁸ 'Das Gewandhaus gehört nicht der Stadt allein, sondern ist Sache des ganzen deutschen Volkes, ja der Welt [...] Würde es verstadtlcht oder verstaatlicht, so wäre es ein Konzertinstitut wie viele andere auch und auch den Nimbus, der es vor den anderen so auszeichnet, würde es verlieren.' Ibid., No. 8472, Blatt 70, 14 March 1947.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., No. 8423, Blatt 124.

principal city councillor, one member of the city council, the leader of the Free Confederation of German Trade Unions (*Freier Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund*, FDGB) in Leipzig and finally three respected members of Leipzig's *Bürgertum*, who had to be suggested each by one of the three political parties. The final decision about whether all the proposed party candidates were accepted, was incumbent on the Lord Mayor.¹¹⁰ Thereby, the influence of the *Bürgertum*, that social stratum which initiated the *Gewandhaus* in 1743, was strictly curtailed. In comparison, in its old constitution, the *Gewandhaus* foundation stipulated that the directorate as its governing body was to be selected by the previous members of the directorate from the *Bürger* of the city. The curator had only the ceremonial duty of instating them into their office.¹¹¹ When NSDAP members were forced onto the *Gewandhaus* directorate in the late 1930s, this had already been seen as endangering the existence of the concert institute. The purpose of the foundation to 'realise musical works of true artistic value for the benefit of the public', was threatened then by political intrusion seeking to exploit the *Gewandhaus* for propaganda reasons. The *Volksbildungsamt*'s suggestion far surpassed the National Socialists' interference. It envisaged a *Gewandhaus* under immediate control and influence of the political rulers.¹¹² Despite Dresden's confirmation that the *Gewandhaus* was now under city control, it still had not transpired which part of the city administration was to take over. The *Gewandhaus* fell clearly within the remit of Hartig and the *Kulturamt*, yet its wide appeal and truly *bürgerlich* origin made it a focus of attention for the *Volksbildungsamt*'s head Helmut Holtzhauer, who continued to comment on the issue even after leaving the *Volksbildungsamt* for his post as Leipzig's mayor for finance in late 1946. Both men were later to become leaders in the early GDR's cultural policy in the *Staatliche Kommission für*

¹¹⁰ Ibid., No. 8418, Blatt 60.

¹¹¹ Cf.: Ibid., No. 8422, Blatt 321-6, Constitution of the *Gewandhaus* foundation, 17 September 1940.

¹¹² Cf.: Ibid., the passage referring to the foundation's mission was taken over from its previous constitution dated 6 March 1873. See *Handbuch der Gewandhaus Konzertdirektion* (Leipzig, 1905) – this private print was only distributed amongst the members of the directorate. See StadtAL, FS, Familiennachlaß Limburger, No. 174.

Kunstangelegenheiten (state commission for artistic issues).¹¹³ The issue of the *Gewandhaus* was a training ground for their political strategy in cultural planning.

If it appeared to have been just a struggle behind the scenes, the conflict about the *Gewandhaus*'s structural future had implications for the orchestra itself. Abendroth's departure at the end of 1945 left the post of *Gewandhauskapellmeister* vacant. Different deliberations about a suitable successor failed for various reasons. Hasty proposals like the suggestion of Karajan were not to be taken seriously. Other attempts to procure Hermann Scherchen were futile as the conductor could not be located or refused to answer the city's letters. Scherchen would have been an ideal candidate. An internationally versed conductor and clear and outspoken critic of National Socialism with communist leanings would have satisfied everyone. But communications could not be established.¹¹⁴ After a concert season with guest conductors, finally Herbert Albert was chosen to fill the vacancy in 1946. This new conductor was not quite of the same calibre as his predecessors. The *Gewandhaus* now failed to attract the vanguard of the conducting profession and even the merely adequate did not value the position as much as their predecessors as will be seen in Albert's case.¹¹⁵

Albert came to this conductorship through two guest appearances in the *Gewandhaus*, which were eagerly received by the audience. The problems surrounding the procurement of other conductors quickly led to a two year contract with a view to renewal after this period. Albert made good contact with the musicians in the orchestra and refreshed the repertoire. Amongst the pieces he performed were many Leipzig premières of modern pieces neglected or banned under the previous regime. The works of Hindemith,

¹¹³ Toby Thacker, ' "Anleitung und Kontrolle": Stakuko and the censorship of music in the GDR, 1951-53' in Beate Müller (ed.), *Censorship and Cultural Regulation in the Modern Age* (Amsterdam/New York, 2004), pp. 87-108.

¹¹⁴ Scherchen was asked by Wilhelm Furtwängler to share the Berliner Philharmoniker conductorship by partaking in guest concerts in 1939; Scherchen's political position made this impossible. Prieberg, 'Hermann Scherchen' in *Handbuch deutsche Musiker*, pp. 6073-84.

¹¹⁵ The times of Bruno Walter's admiration for the 'oldest and most famous of all German concert institutions' were over. See Walter, *Thema und Variationen*, p. 330.

Shostakovich (the eighth and ninth symphonies obtained by the directorate), Mussorgsky, Britten, Khatchaturian and Stravinsky were amongst those premières, giving the Leipzig audience a welcome breath of fresh musical air and broadening their previously forcibly narrowed musical view.¹¹⁶ Yet, more ominously, Albert's Leipzig premières also included works by Max Trapp and Hans Pfitzner. Both composers were not only favourites in National Socialist repertoires but also, in Trapp's case, even in combination with party offices, active in their support for and promotion of the ideas of the Third Reich.¹¹⁷ Albert's programme planning in this respect was even remarked on abroad.¹¹⁸ The city administration, however, did not object. Even Lord Mayor Zeigner who had so ardently insisted on a right to veto 'politically tactless' programmes did not protest.¹¹⁹ It seems Albert was given relative free reign, the city was happy just to have a conductor. Yet, the hopes placed on Albert's appointment were soon frustrated. Only one year after taking office, just after the city council had finally seized control over the *Gewandhaus*, difficulties surfaced. Albert was by no means committed to the *Gewandhaus* first and foremost, but saw it as secondary to his commitments in Bamberg (in the American Zone), so much so that he lured the best members of the *Gewandhaus* orchestra away to join that ensemble.¹²⁰ Albert left no doubt of his disregard for the *Gewandhaus* by handing in his notice in January 1948, knowing perfectly well that the lack of a successor would put pressure on the city council to offer him more preferable conditions to keep him. Indeed, Albert's subsequent proposal for a new contract included passages allowing him more

¹¹⁶ Albert received ovations from his audience, the critics in the newspapers were also full of praise. The première of Khatchaturian's piano concerto was commended as 'Kunststück an Geschmeidigkeit'. See *Leipziger Zeitung*, 14 March 1947.

¹¹⁷ Prieberg, 'Max Trapp' and 'Hans Pfitzner' in *Handbuch deutsche Musiker*, pp. 7226-31 and pp. 5193-5243 respectively.

¹¹⁸ Copy of an American article on the *Gewandhaus* programme 1947/48 in the files of the Lord Mayor's office. The author remarks in particular on the inclusion of Pfitzner's works. StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 8423, Blatt 232.

¹¹⁹ There is nothing in the files that suggests a debate about the programming. The following problems with Albert never touched upon the topic of music selection.

¹²⁰ StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 1324, Blatt 29-30, 7 December 1947. This problem therefore came to the attention of the city council just a month before Albert handed in his notice.

freedom to perform outside Leipzig, a reduced number of concerts he had to give with the *Gewandhaus* and an increased salary. Furthermore, he now openly defied the requirement to establish permanent residence in Leipzig.¹²¹ This exemplified how rapidly the standing of the *Gewandhaus* had decreased. Even just adequate conductors such as Albert felt qualified to treat the institution with this level of disrespect. The city council acted accordingly: Albert was only to be given a renewed engagement if he committed himself completely to the *Gewandhaus* and the city of Leipzig.¹²² However, its outrage did not solve the remaining problem: a permanent conductor was needed to maintain and rebuild the body of the orchestra after the continuous dismissals of politically implicated members and the exit of several highly qualified musicians to ensembles in the Western Occupation Zones. Despite the lukewarm reception of Albert's first contract proposal, he even increased his demands for a salary in March 1948.¹²³ Rudolf Hartig became involved and introduced two other aspects into the equation. Firstly, the *Gewandhaus* audience would not understand another change of conductor 'yet again'.¹²⁴ Secondly, he pleaded for waiving the residence requirement as from a political point of view, Leipzig and the *Gewandhaus* had to keep Albert. High profile departures from the Soviet Zone to the Western Zones of Occupation were already a problem; Albert's leaving would be a propaganda disaster.¹²⁵ In the climate of the increasing Cold War tensions this was not shedding a good light on Leipzig or on the Soviet Zone. Hartig's fears were justified: on 20 April 1948, the *Mainecho*, a newspaper in the American Zone, published the

¹²¹ Zeigner alleged that Albert's real reasons lay in his desire to move permanently into the American Zone. Albert's residence demand seemed to confirm this notion. See *Ibid.*, Blatt 44-5 (Lord Mayor Zeigner to City Councillor Lang). For the details of Albert's contractual demands: meeting minutes Lang and Zeigner, 20 February 1948, *Ibid.*, Blatt 66-7.

¹²² 'Albert mißversteht offenbar völlig die Situation.' Albert was already in breach of his old contract by refusing to relocate his residence from Stuttgart (Western zones) to Leipzig. In the opinion of the city council, this was a main prerequisite for any further cooperation. *Ibid.*, Blatt 69, 24 February 1948.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, Blatt 79.

¹²⁴ 'Es ist ja sonst kein anderer da, auch will das Publikum nicht schon wieder einen neuen Dirigenten.' The *Gewandhaus* audience was used to having a *Gewandhauskapellmeister* for a long time, the conductor put his stamp on the sound of the orchestra. The previous 'quick' changes, Wilhelm Furtwängler after 8 years, but especially Bruno Walter's forced departure after only 4 years had caused considerable disturbances. See letter by Rudolf Hartig, 12 April 1948, StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 1324, Blatt 84.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, Blatt 84-6.

announcement that Albert was to move to the Western Zones. The reason given was the alleged interference of Leipzig's Soviet city command in his concert programming, demanding the inclusion of at least one Slavic composer in every performance.¹²⁶ The city council was outraged. Yet, despite this renewed affront, the city could not just terminate dealings with Albert. The Soviet city command became involved in the spring and refused to allow a departure of the conductor and ordered a new contract to be drawn up according to Albert's terms. This went directly against the declared wishes of the SED in Leipzig, yet the Soviet commands had to be obeyed.¹²⁷ Therefore Lord Mayor Zeigner sent Albert his new three year contract in early June 1948. He also instructed his colleagues in the city council that the role of the occupation power in this whole endeavour was to be kept quiet when the information about Albert's new engagement was made public.¹²⁸ However, by August 1948, it became apparent that in spite of all concessions, Albert was not interested in remaining in Leipzig and the Soviet Zone. Whether the Berlin Blockade and the now openly developing Cold War influenced his decision, or whether he was already determined to leave beforehand cannot be ascertained from the sources. On reception of a letter from Leipzig's *Kulturamt* concerning the distribution of guest conductor concerts of the *Gewandhaus* (the number of which had increased due to Albert's insistence on more 'artistic freedom'), he claimed that the allocation of all of the concerts to Joseph Keilberth constituted a breach of his agreement.¹²⁹ Therefore he withdrew from his post and the contract and even refused to ever return to Leipzig. Leipzig's city council tried to argue

¹²⁶ Ibid., Blatt 91, Article from the *Mainecho* dated 20 April 1948; nothing of this dictate can be found in the actual *Gewandhaus* programme in the archive. Besides, the programming had been in the hands of the conductor, first with the input of the *Gewandhaus* directorate and later with that of the cultural department of the city council. The Soviet authorities were not at all involved in scheduling and planning performances. Ironically, the only interference of the Soviet city command was to intervene in favour of Albert. Ibid., No. 3211, Blatt 32-3, 1 April 1948.

¹²⁷ Ibid., No. 1324, Blatt 93, 14 May 1948.

¹²⁸ Ibid., Blatt 128, 11 June 1948.

¹²⁹ Ibid., Blatt 132, 10 August 1948. Another reason for Albert's decision to remain in the American zone might have been the actual choice of guest conductor. Albert resented Keilberth as Lord Mayor Zeigner had attempted to procure Keilberth for the post of *Gewandhauskapellmeister* in 1946 and only settled for Albert as second choice. See Neumann, 'Jeder wolle etwas anderes' for Zeigner's favourites in 1946.

that legally there was no breach of any terms.¹³⁰ The Soviet command pressed the Lord Mayor to arrange for Albert to stay. Zeigner resigned himself to carry out his duty, not without emphasising his unwillingness: 'I will keep my opinion to myself from now on, the city command and the party leadership can do as they please, I will not take the blame if everything just works out exactly as I said it would'. His best attempts to retain the conductor were to no avail.¹³¹ Things turned out as he predicted. Albert stated curtly that any further negotiations with him were futile as he would not set foot into Leipzig again. He remained with his orchestra in Bamberg.¹³²

During the concert season 1948/49 there was no *Gewandhauskapellmeister*. The *Gewandhaus* was from now on dependent on guest conductors. One of whom was no stranger: Professor Abendroth, the once 'unacceptable Nazi-musician', now comfortably installed in various posts in Thuringia, returned to Leipzig.¹³³ In addition to his guest appearances, he took over the conductorship of the *Gewandhaus*'s rival, the *Rundfunksinfonie* Orchestra Leipzig whilst still keeping his positions in Weimar.¹³⁴

Abendroth's reappearance also shed a light on another great difficulty for the *Gewandhaus*: the lack of a proper concert hall. When Abendroth resurfaced in Leipzig in 1948, he could refer to his newly re-erected *Nationaltheater* in Weimar. The *Nationaltheater* had been razed to the ground during the war (only the front remained standing) and the reconstruction was thus a great feat. Yet by August 1948, the *Nationaltheater* opened as the first rebuilt theatre in Germany. Abendroth's *Staatskapelle* had a suitable new/old home.

¹³⁰ StadtAL, StVuR(I), No. 1324, Blatt 133; The contract did not contain any requirement for the *Gewandhaus* or the city to consult Albert on the allocation of the guest concerts (six in total). Moreover, the terms of the agreement included Albert's conditions stipulating that he could remain in Stuttgart and travel to Leipzig for his engagements.

¹³¹ Ibid., Blatt 137; Blatt 139. Zeigner only reluctantly followed the Soviet command's orders. In his opinion, any discussion was pointless. However, despite this, he had to continue - as supplicant - the increasingly humiliating negotiations with Albert.

¹³² Ibid., No. 8443, Blatt 191, Albert on 31 August 1948.

¹³³ Ibid., No. 8423, Blatt 326.

¹³⁴ Prieborg, 'Hermann Abendroth' in *Handbuch deutsche Musiker*, pp. 38-49, here p. 39.

Until 1947, the *Gewandhaus* orchestra performed in the Capitol. This cinema was situated in the centre of town, making it not only the *Gewandhaus*'s interim but also one of the busiest movie theatres. Hartig advised the Capitol's licensee in early 1946 that the *Gewandhaus* concerts were a 'cardinal necessity and important part of the public cultural life, for their facilitation every Leipziger would do anything. The public interest is self-evident, so that I can take it for granted that you too, will support the cause'.¹³⁵ In 1947, however, the circumstances changed. The Capitol had become too important for its superior, the Soviet film distribution company SovExport, to risk damage to the screen by constant removal for the accommodation of the orchestra musicians. Thus the *Gewandhaus* had to move to the *Kongreßhalle* (a congress centre) next to Leipzig Zoo. The acoustics in the building were unsuitable for an orchestra.¹³⁶ The immediate proximity to the zoo and its restaurant and ballroom meant that there was often outside noise interrupting the rehearsals during the day and even the performances at night. Furthermore, the *Kongreßhalle* was also used for the *Schauspiel* theatre, during the trade fairs and for political rallies. This changing occupancy of the concert room led to clashes in schedule, interruptions and relocations of the rehearsals without notice or the provision of alternative rooms in the complex.¹³⁷ This was a less than desirable situation. Besides, the *Gewandhaus* building was a representation of Leipzig itself, the visible symbol of the achievements and cultural endeavour of its *Bürger*. Therefore, a high calibre committee was founded to rebuild the *Gewandhaus*.¹³⁸ This reconstruction had been in the minds of the old directorate (including Kippenberg) and now took shape with the resolute leadership of

¹³⁵ Ibid., No. 8422, Blatt 47: 'Im Allgemeinen darf gesagt werden, daß ja die Gewandhauskonzerte als äußerste Notwendigkeit und wichtiger Teil des öffentlich kulturellen Lebens zu betrachten sind und für ihre Ermöglichung von jedem Leipziger alles getan werden wird. Daß ein öffentliches Interesse hier vorliegt ist selbstverständlich, so daß ich es auch von Ihnen als selbstverständlich betrachten darf, die ganze Sache zu unterstützen.' Letter by Hartig, 5 January 1946.

¹³⁶ The move had already been considered after it became increasingly difficult to make arrangements with the Capitol in August 1946, see Ibid., Blatt 216.

¹³⁷ Ibid., No. 8423, Blatt 243.

¹³⁸ The *Wiederaufbaukomitee* included amongst others: Erich Zeigner, Anton Kippenberg, Max Brockhaus, Günther Ramin, Bruno Walter, Herbert Albert and Wilhelm Furtwängler, Ibid. No. 8502, Blatt 8.

Erich Zeigner. The Lord Mayor, who up to this point was instrumental in obstructing the *Gewandhaus* directorate's room to manoeuvre and thus any reconstruction efforts, showed great passion for this project. However, he made it clear right from the beginning that the rebuilding of the *Gewandhaus* was entirely separate from the still unresolved question of the *Gewandhaus* foundation's continuance.¹³⁹ Despite the enthusiasm of its members and the urgency to stop further deterioration of the building, the committee made no fast progress. This was partially due to unrealistic ideas such as the statement that a peace agreement was imminent after which 'a call to the world' was to be issued asking for funds and material to reconstruct the *Gewandhaus*.¹⁴⁰ Initially, the only maintenance work agreed upon was the restoration of the roof. For this purpose the city pledged considerable funds immediately.¹⁴¹ However, the implementation was not immediate. The Saxon *Landesverwaltung* refused its approval of the reconstruction plans.¹⁴² This meant that no construction permission was given, which severely complicated the procurement of building material.¹⁴³ Zeigner initially refuted the claims of the *Landesverwaltung* that a reconstruction was only allowed if the *Land* agreed, as contravening the Democratic Municipal Order.¹⁴⁴ When this was of no avail, he personally assumed responsibility for the pressing ahead of the reconstruction effort in spite of the *Landesverwaltung*.¹⁴⁵ The question of sufficient funding was now paramount. There was considerable disagreement as to how to approach the issue. Kippenberg favoured a 'appeal to the world', whereas Zeigner thought this problematic. Max Brockhaus offered the suggestion that an

¹³⁹ Ibid., Blatt 2, August 1947.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., Blatt 8, Minutes from the founding meeting of the *Gewandhaus* reconstruction committee on 15 October 1947: '[...] nach Friedensschluß einen Aufruf an die Welt erlassen, Mittel und Material zum Wiederaufbau des Gewandhauses zur Verfügung zu stellen [...]']'.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.: 'Die Stadt kann sofort 200 000 Mark zur Verfügung stellen.'

¹⁴² Ibid., Blatt 17, 12 December 1947.

¹⁴³ Ibid., No. 5034, Blatt 1. Two years after the end of the war, building material was still very scarce, without the right documentation it was legally impossible to obtain provisions.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., Blatt 19. Zeigner's appeal was valid as the code stated: 'als Selbstverwaltungsangelegenheiten sollen die Gemeinden auf wirtschaftlichem, sozialem und kulturellem Gebiet alle Aufgaben übernehmen, die geeignet sind, das Wohl der Einwohner der Gemeinde zu fördern.' The rebuilding of the *Gewandhaus* clearly fell under this. See: 'Demokratische Gemeindeordnung für Sachsen', Article 4.

¹⁴⁵ Christoph Kaufmann, *Von einem Abriß wird abgeraten: Das Gewandhaus zwischen 1944 und 1968* (Beucha, 1996).

international fund should be created – independent from the city, so as to not cause problems for Zeigner, who still feared the reaction to such a course of action not just for the international reputation of Leipzig (which was rather metaphysical) but also from the SMAD, which was very real.¹⁴⁶ Therefore, a subscription appeal was drafted and distributed in Germany calling for aid as this ‘reconstruction is necessary to continue a great tradition and [...] maintain the high level of musical culture in Leipzig’.¹⁴⁷ The city itself continued to provide means for the immediate securing of the building but was relying on the success of the appeal. Yet, this was not to be. Of course, the war had left many people ruined, who might have been interested in participating in the reconstruction effort. The real reason for the slow trickling of funds, apart from all smouldering East-West wrangling that might have dissuaded those in the Western Zones from supporting the effort in Leipzig, was the *Gewandhaus*’s new situation as a mere municipal institution devoid of its independent status. As one recipient of the subscription form in Leipzig replied:

I would really like to participate in the reconstruction of the *Gewandhaus*, if I knew that the *Gewandhaus* would be once again an institution outside the city administration. As it is now the case that the city administration has taken over control, it is the administration’s call to provide the necessary finances.¹⁴⁸

This sentiment was widespread, as a report from 1949 states: ‘the original building was funded by the efforts of the *bürgerlich* circles. It is doubtful whether one

¹⁴⁶ StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 8502, Blatt 19-22, 2 January 1948.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., Blatt 33.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., No. 8423, Blatt 229: ‘Ich danke für freundliche Übersendung des Zeichnungsscheines, muß leider ablehnen, diesen Schein auszufüllen, da die Zustände im Gewandhaus wirklich nicht ermutigen, sich an dem Wiederaufbau des Gewandhauses zu beteiligen [...] ich würde mich wirklich gern an dem Wiederaufbau des Gewandhauses beteiligen, wenn ich wüßte, daß das Gewandhaus wieder eine Einrichtung würde, welche außerhalb der städtischen Verwaltung steht. Nachdem nunmehr aber die städtische Verwaltung die Gewandhausorganisation übernommen hat, muß auch die städtische Verwaltung sehen, wie sie die entsprechenden Geldmittel bekommt.’ This letter is even more remarkable when one takes into account that its writer, Wilhelm Victor, was a city councillor himself. Thus rather than a latent aversion against the new order, his views were informed by direct insight into the city administration’s working from one of its members.

could expect any contributions from this side any more'.¹⁴⁹ The *Gewandhaus* had ceased to be a symbol of Leipzig's *Bürgertum* and thus the *Bürgertum* severed its ties with the institution.

The *Währungsreform* of 1948 nearly wiped out the funds that had been collected up to that point and the growing Cold War tensions made contributions from the Western Zones, let alone those from abroad, increasingly unlikely. With Erich Zeigner's death finally the reconstruction committee was tacitly disbanded. Isolated attempts at addressing the issue, such as a preliminary survey by the city's construction authority in 1949 did not result in any actual construction efforts.¹⁵⁰

Leipzig's music venues were largely destroyed in the war and any immediate reconstruction efforts failed due to lack of resources and political will. Leipzig's opera was rebuilt only in the 1950s as the SED leader Otto Grotewohl deemed it necessary that a big trade fair city such as Leipzig had 'an opera: the city owed it to the visitors'. As his ideas for the 'distribution of duties' in the GDR, however, ranked Leipzig as 'trading and industry town', any further rebuilding efforts, especially those for an erstwhile *bürgerlich* symbol like the *Gewandhaus* were hardly worth including in his planning.¹⁵¹ The opera was seen as a necessary commodity, a staple in the cultural offerings of a trading town. The days of dominance in the operatic world in the 1920s, however, were long gone for Leipzig's opera. Since Brecher's forced departure, the most remarkable aspect that came to mind when speaking about the opera house in Leipzig was that it had the largest stage in Europe.¹⁵² For an institution that had led the world in performance it was surely a regression to only lead it in stage size. Furthermore, that last bit of celebrity sank into

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., No. 8418, Blatt 84, report by city councillor Lang, 3 March 1949: '...es werden zum Beispiel für den Wiederaufbau des Gewandhauses kaum noch erhebliche Mittel aus den Kreisen der Bürgerschaft zu erwarten sein, während das frühere Haus aus den Mitteln der Bürgerschaft errichtet worden ist.' Ibid., No. 8418, Blatt 84, report by city councillor Lang, 3 March 1949.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., No. 5035, 'Voruntersuchung zum Wiederaufbau des Gewandhauses 1949'.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., No. 3178, Blatt 34-35, Minutes of discussion at the SED Central Committee in Berlin, 7 December 1949, Grotewohl's idea for the main cities of the GDR was such: 'Berlin als politischer Schwerpunkt, Leipzig als Wirtschafts- und Industriestadt, Dresden als Musik- und Weimar als Kulturstadt'.

¹⁵² Ibid., No. 2268, Blatt 231.

rubble during the night of 4 December 1943. Hans Schüler had remained at the helm throughout the entire Third Reich. This post, secured with his membership in the NSDAP, came with the price of diminished artistic endeavour. Having witnessed the destructive force of Nazi agitators in the auditorium, Schüler concentrated from 1933 onwards on more conservative, 'safe' performances. A glimpse of past glory came in 1943, when Schüler commissioned Mary Wigman to choreograph a performance of Orff's *Carmina Burana* at the opera.¹⁵³ Not only was the piece well received, but it was a reminder of the house's more daring days. Mary Wigman had fallen from favour with the National Socialists by 1941.¹⁵⁴ Through an old friend with suitable influence, the artistic director Hanns Niedecken-Gebhard, Wigman was still able to teach at Leipzig's conservatoire and realise *Carmina Burana* with Schüler. When the bombing raids destroyed the institution's building in 1943, the opera moved, like the *Gewandhaus*, to the Drei Linden operetta building. There it remained until the war finally forced its closure. Schüler was briefly imprisoned in the wake of 20 July 1944, but although he had supported Goerdeler, he was not proven guilty and hence survived the purge. He continued to direct the opera after its re-opening in 1945 (still in the Drei Linden) but soon became caught up in the denazification process. Schüler could prove his antifascist credentials (and the fact that his party membership was a front); by March 1946, his denazification had been processed and Schüler was exonerated.¹⁵⁵ Yet, the SED continued to press for his dismissal and even declared a 'political battle' over the issue.¹⁵⁶ Schüler's *bürgerlich* background, rather than any perceived or real Nazi entanglement brought about his downfall in Leipzig. Schüler's removal was of course indicative of the increasingly vicious policy towards any

¹⁵³ Mary Wigman (1886-1973) was a German choreographer and dancer. She established the *Ausdruckstanz* (Modern German Dance). See: Mary Ann Santos Newhall, *Mary Wigman* (New York, 2009).

¹⁵⁴ Wigman's speciality, the *Ausdruckstanz*, was banned by the regime as not complying with 'ballet traditions and National Socialist values.' This was a marked shift from the days of Wigman's performance at the 1936 Berlin Olympics, where her dance on the opening-night was accompanied by eighty background dancers. Newhall, *Mary Wigman*, pp. 53- 58.

¹⁵⁵ StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 1326, Blatt 149, 28 March 1946.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., Blatt 193, Kreisleitung SED to Zeigner, 21 February 1947: 'Die Sache Schüler ist nun ein politischer Kampf, man muß alle Register ziehen, ihn von dieser Position zu entfernen.'

protagonist of *bürgerlich* culture in Leipzig.¹⁵⁷ Yet the lengthy procedure also showed something else: the standing of Leipzig's opera had deteriorated to an extent that no urgency was felt in resolving the matter.¹⁵⁸ Opera had become a commodity in the cultural planning of Leipzig. Seen as a staple of high art, it was made available to all, with reduced prices, but also a programme that was easily accessible to anyone. This lowered the artistic standard to the extent that even students of the conservatoire explicitly asked to be only used in *Gewandhaus* concerts but not for any 'Operndienst'.¹⁵⁹

The only location of Leipzig's rich music tradition that had survived the war was St Thomas's Church. Its choir was able to return to Leipzig and continue its performance schedule. Yet, the wider future of the institution as triad of church, school and choir was less secure. The school building was beyond repair and teaching had to move into other premises – without having been allocated a permanent school building until 1946. St Thomas's School officially became Primary School Number 41 in September 1946. Far from being an independent school, it now had to follow the city's policies on admission and more importantly curriculum. These policies were in accordance with the idea of the 'new school', the symbol of complete change in the educational system of the Soviet Zone. The overriding aim now was to provide an anti-fascist and democratic schooling, with equal access to all. St Thomas's had been a fee-paying grammar school. Thus the school's make-up had been predominantly *bürgerlich* with some workers' children attending on scholarships. Two criteria were employed to select studentship candidates – an academic and a musical ability test. All boys who qualified for the choir were gladly admitted

¹⁵⁷ Hans Schüler's case is fascinating and offers an insight into the extent of the cultural remodelling efforts of the SED. Schüler merits a detailed study as an example of the ousting of *bürgerlich* proponents from the cultural sphere in the Soviet Zone. The city archive Mannheim holds an extensive collection of Schüler's personal papers enabling the necessary research, which, however, would have exceeded the framework of this present study.

¹⁵⁸ Whereas the vacancy in the *Gewandhaus* had caused embarrassment and swift action, the Schüler case was discussed publicly and at length without any regard for the reputation of the opera house. StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 1326, Blatt 174-177, 1946.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., No. 16319, Blatt 62, 64, 66, 67, letters of conservatoire students offering their services for the *Gewandhaus* orchestra, 1948.

without too close an inspection of their academic credentials.¹⁶⁰ For the academic scholarship only those who proved outstanding abilities came into consideration. Everyone else had to pay tuition fees. In the new system, schooling became free and open to all. St Thomas's only managed to hold onto its special status for the choir boys. The choir still remained a part of the school and the choir boys were receiving tuition in accordance with their choir practice. The curriculum, however, followed the same principles in all schools; the *bürgerlich* education monopoly that offered better education to those who could afford it was not to be re-instated after the war. The new system, of course, was not fully established when schooling commenced in the Soviet Zone on 1 October 1945. By then it had only been achieved to plan for new school books (indeed these were amongst the first books to be printed in the Soviet Zone) and organise school rooms. Often, the pupils' first weeks or even months were spent not learning but clearing their school buildings of rubble. Nonetheless, the principles of the 'new school' were fleshed out over the following months and then impacted fully on St Thomas's.¹⁶¹

By 1 December 1945, Russian became the compulsory first foreign language for all pupils of secondary school age. This caused a problem in St Thomas's School. Latin had been the first foreign language in the school and was crucial for the education of the choir boys, who needed the language tuition to understand their repertoire. Günther Ramin intervened at the Lord Mayor's office. The choir needed the 'foundation of the humanistic education [including the Latin language]' fully to 'comprehend' its task.¹⁶² The Lord Mayor forwarded the issue to the *Volksbildungsamt*, the responsible authority for the

¹⁶⁰ That, however, is not to say that pupils were kept in St Thomas's who were unable to follow the curriculum at all. Yet, choir candidates did not have to score the highest marks in the academic tests to be admitted into the school.

¹⁶¹ Benita Blessing offers a comprehensive and well written study of the 'new school' in the Soviet Zone of Occupation. Her book examines the theory behind the new schooling concepts as well as its practical successes and shortcomings in the lead up to the establishment of the GDR. As a detailed discussion of the new schooling system in the Soviet Zone would go beyond the scope of this study, it only touches upon those areas that are of particular impact on St Thomas's and their especially on the choir's development. See Benita Blessing, *The Antifascist Classroom: Denazification in Soviet-occupied Germany, 1945-1949* (New York, 2006).

¹⁶² StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 10226, Blatt 48.

schooling administration of the city. The *Volksbildungsamt* acted according to Ramin's wishes and ordered that members of the choir of St Thomas would receive Latin tuition instead of Russian lessons.¹⁶³ The *Bildungsbürgertum* had prevailed for the time being.

Despite the new schooling methods, St Thomas's Choir began the post-war period with a continuation of its traditional church music performances. Yet, whereas the choir was able to avoid being incorporated into a larger cultural policy during National Socialist rule, it now was open to a full onslaught of political intervention. The *Kulturamt* set out its plans for the cultural landscape of Leipzig as early as in autumn 1945. Of course, St Thomas had always been a mainstay in the city's cultural calendar, but remained so on its own terms. Now Hartig was allocating the roles and tasks for the choir. First and foremost was the continuation of the *Bachpflege*, yet, the focus had to shift from *musica sacra* to secular music. The choir was to take a greater part in the cultural efforts of the city by taking part in rallies and performing on the outskirts of the city.¹⁶⁴ Thus, it was now used in official events such as charity concerts for 'resettlers' (the SED euphemism for those driven out of their homes in the post-war ethnic cleansing of the old German East) and special performances for official visitors from the Soviet Union. Secular concerts for the working population also became part of the choir's remit.¹⁶⁵ Zeigner showed a great interest in the choir, he was one of the protagonists of the idea of 'branching out' and putting the choir on the stages of the Capitol and the Drei Linden to promote their mastery to a wider audience. He meant this not just in an ideological sense. The traditional concerts of the choir on Fridays and Saturdays were so packed that the city felt it necessary to post police at the entrances of St Thomas's Church.¹⁶⁶ The Lord Mayor was also anxious to

¹⁶³ Ibid., Blatt 49. After the establishment of the GDR, St Thomas's lost this language privilege.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., No. 7972, Blatt 14 and Blatt 54.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., No. 10226, Blatt 110, Concert in the framework of the 'Neue Heimat-Neues Leben' event; Ibid., No. 1344, Blatt 223. 'Weltliche Konzerte für die arbeitende Bevölkerung'; Borusiak and Höhnel, *Chronik I*, 13-14 October 1946: 'Sonderkonzert für Gäste'; in 1950, the choir was used for the 'popularisation' of the election. StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 8533, Blatt 195.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., No. 8534, Blatt 10: the police was ordered to arrive 1 hour before the start of the concert, at the very latest; Ibid., Blatt 15: 'Man sollte den Thomanerchor auch im Capitol und den Drei Linden auftreten lassen

ensure better clothing and rations for the boys.¹⁶⁷ That Zeigner's interest in St Thomas was not merely one of political concern and ideological utilization is highlighted in a letter he sent to Cantor Ramin in the autumn of 1945 asking for a larger font in the small textbooks that accompanied the motets: 'Would you please provide larger motet texts. My eyes are not as strong any more and I would like to follow properly.'¹⁶⁸ Despite his socialist leanings, Zeigner still wanted to follow the church service in all its aspects.

The concert tours that had founded the choir's international fame were slowly starting again. In September 1946, the choir went to Berlin on its first major tour since the Second World War. From early 1947, copious requests for performances in the Western Zones reached Ramin's desk. The Cantor thus enquired in the *Kulturamt*, if this would be something to consider. Ramin himself had refused the requests so far, but felt now that he was running out of excuses. He asked Hartig to sound out the possibilities with the Soviet military command.¹⁶⁹ The reply followed promptly four days later; the SMAD welcomed 'Westreisen' and ordered Ramin to begin the necessary preparations.¹⁷⁰ The choir was happy to represent Leipzig and the SMAD saw it as chance of using the choir as an advertisement for its region. At the end of the year, the choir finally travelled to Hamburg and Lübeck. Whereas the tour itself was a great success and the choir was received rapturously at every concert, the aftermath was less positive. Rumours started circling in the newspapers of the Western Zones that the choir was going to relocate to the West.¹⁷¹ Not only were these false claims a nuisance in themselves, they also had an air of Cold War animosity. If true, it would have been yet another case of artists leaving the Soviet

[...]man soll bei den Parteien und dem Kulturbund die Werbetrommel rühren, damit Hörer in tunlichst großer Zahl ein künstlerisches Erlebnis mit nach Hause nehmen können.' Zeigner to Hartig, 29 October 1945.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., Blatt 17, 17 September 1945: 'Könnten Sie bitte für größere Motettentexte sorgen. Mein Augenlicht ist nicht mehr so gut und ich möchte doch folgen können.'

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., No. 8533, Blatt 98, 15 February 1947.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., Blatt 100, 19 February 1947.

¹⁷¹ See: *Rheinischer Merkur*, 17 December 1947 and *Freie Presse*, 1 January 1948.

Zone, a trend that was causing already great propaganda problems for the Soviets.¹⁷² Despite the immediate denial, the story continued to run. Ramin received letters from a cousin in Lübeck, who eventually discovered the source of the reports. A former teacher of St Thomas's School had apparently attempted to detach the sixth formers amongst the *Thomaner* to form his own choir in Lübeck.¹⁷³ Ramin then informed Lord Mayor Zeigner about these findings, who had been inundated with questions regarding the rumours.¹⁷⁴ By now, however, there were tales from all over the Western Zones. A youth hostel in Coburg, Bavaria (just a few kilometres from the border to the Soviet Zone), claimed to have been ordered by the Americans to keep a certain section of its establishment closed off to facilitate the accommodation of the choir.¹⁷⁵ Other reports spoke of the choir 'wandering the Bizone'.¹⁷⁶ Ramin was anxious to ensure that the choir could still continue its touring activities, thus he issued a statement declaring that if the choir was to leave Leipzig, it would cease to exist:

A 740 year old tradition binds the *Thomanerchor* to St Thomas's Church, whose genius loci Johann Sebastian Bach has given it its special character and the choir is absolutely dependent on this. Should the choir part from this, it will be merely a [...] boys' choir as there are many in Germany, nothing more.¹⁷⁷

Yet, it was not only the reputation of Leipzig that suffered from these rumours, Ramin himself now came under close supervision, his movements were observed for signs of a planned departure. Even nine months after the rumours had been dispersed, the *Landesverwaltung* Saxony still urged Zeigner to ensure that the choir would not leave Leipzig, and most importantly the Soviet Zone when on tour. Zeigner replied that there had been no signs of any manoeuvres in that direction despite ample opportunity on both

¹⁷² StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 8424, Blatt 76.

¹⁷³ Ibid., No. 8534, Blatt 36.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., NEZ, Blatt 37, 30 January 1948.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., Stadtverordnetenversammlung, Rat der Stadt, StvV, No. 8537, Blatt 6.

¹⁷⁶ Borusiak and Höhnel, *Chronik I*, Februar 1948: '[...] der Chor irrt in der Bizone herum.'

¹⁷⁷ StadtAL, Stadtverordnetenversammlung, StvV, No. 8537, Blatt 26.

private trips by the Ramin family as well as further tours of the choir to the Western Zone.¹⁷⁸

In spite of having proved 'faithful' to the Soviet Zone and having accommodated most of the changes in the new school system, St Thomas's came under yet more scrutiny. The *Volksbildungsamt* complained about the 'undemocratic' habit of saying grace in the *Alumnat* and ordered the immediate stop of the practice. Even though this resembled verbatim an order the choir had been given by the National Socialists in 1943, the headmaster of St Thomas was obliging.¹⁷⁹ The choir, however, was not. As the *Alumnat* was where the choir lived, rather than learned, Ramin refused this renewed intrusion, the law guiding 'democratic schooling' did not apply to living quarters. Furthermore, as the choir's main application was the *musica sacra*, Christian traditions were as necessary for the understanding of the choir's work as Latin.¹⁸⁰ As in the case of Latin, the leeway granted because of this explanation ceased with the establishment of the GDR. In 1950, the proud head of the school authority announced that St Thomas 'had lost the odium of being a reactionary throng inside our republic.'¹⁸¹ Whereas the choir could maintain, within limits, its traditions, the remainder of the school lost its *bürgerlich* classical curriculum. The socialists had gone even further than the Third Reich had, St Thomas's was now 'gleichgeschaltet'.

In both cases, the *Gewandhaus* and St Thomas's, the takeover by the Soviet forces and the German communists proved far more incisive than the National Socialist rule, whilst the opera just continued its descent that had started in 1933. While musicians of international standing were removed during the Third Reich on racial grounds, in the aftermath of the Second World War, they were forced out by denazification rules and

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., NEZ, Blatt 47 28 September 1948 and Blatt 48 1 October 1948.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., StVuR (I), No. 10226, Blatt 126, 22 February 1949.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., Blatt 129, 26 February 1949.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., No. 10227, Blatt 234, 17 April 1950: '[...]das Odium einer reaktionären Herde in unserer Republik'.

political interventions. This led to the demise of the hitherto well-regarded *Gewandhaus* that subsequently struggled even to attract suitable candidates as the political climate became less and less favourable. The assumption of control by the city administration furthermore caused the fall of the *Gewandhaus* from a proud independent *bürgerlich* establishment to a mere municipal concert institution, which found its clear expression in the failure to rebuild the concert hall that had once been a magnificent symbol of Leipzig's *Bürgerstolz*.

The Triad of St Thomas suffered equally through the standardisation of schooling and cultural life. The distinctive position, which the institution had fought so hard to maintain during National Socialist rule, was lost in the integration of its components into the Socialist cultural policy. The city of music had lost its unique institutions and thus largely its international appeal.

3 Leipzig – City of Books

Buchstadt Leipzig was one of the proud titles of Saxony's largest city. The city's status as a *Buchstadt* was based on its huge printing and publishing capacity, its famous book fair, the world's largest trading space for published works, and the fact that all German publishers either had their headquarters or at least a branch in the city. Indeed, most of Germany's famous publishing houses were founded there. Pillars of the cultural Germany such as Brockhaus, Insel and Reclam had their home in Leipzig. Accordingly, the book trade's main organization, the *Börsenverein der deutschen Buchhändler* (German Publishers and Booksellers Association), was founded and had its seat in Leipzig. The city held one of the largest publishing quarters in Europe, devoted to publishing houses, paper making and printing factories, many of which were producing unique and highly specialised merchandise. A college specialising in book printing and design attracted many students both nationally and internationally and ensured a steady flow of new talent in the printing business.¹ The city could boast many firsts in the field, the world's first daily newspaper, which was published in the city in 1650, the world's first publishing house for music founded in 1719 (Breitkopf und Härtel), the first edition of Germany's seminal dictionary, the Duden in 1872, and the first German specialist publisher of art books (E.A. Seemann Verlag).

It was on the initiative of the *Börsenverein* that the *Deutsche Bücherei* was founded in Leipzig in 1912. A joint project of the *Börsenverein*, the Kingdom of Saxony and the city of Leipzig, the institution was envisaged to be Germany's National Library. It was designed to collect and catalogue all literature that was printed in the German Reich (both in German and other languages) and all foreign literature printed in the German language from 1 January 1913 onwards. Thus it constituted Germany's first and only

¹ Brandsch and Herzog, *Das literarische Leipzig* (Leipzig, 1995).

copyright library, whose duties, besides collecting and cataloguing, soon encompassed the publishing of a national bibliography.

The *Deutsche Bücherei* emerged as a symbol of the *Buchstadt* Leipzig, the institutional manifestation of the city's claim to predominance in Germany. Both were closely interlinked and had a symbiotic relationship. The *Deutsche Bücherei* would not have been established if Leipzig had not been the unchallenged centre of the German book trade and the existence of the library meant that Leipzig's paramount status was cemented. These close ties, however, meant that each would become vulnerable if support from the other were to fall away.

After the takeover of power by the National Socialists in 1933, the *Deutsche Bücherei* became subject to the *Gleichschaltung* process. From February onwards, that is before the introduction of the *Berufsbeamtengesetz*, local NSDAP members demanded the sacking of the library's Jewish staff. Moreover, despite the institution's remit to collect all works of German and German language output, demands were made to exclude 'undesirable' authors from the collection.² In June 1933, the institution came under the jurisdiction of the Propaganda Ministry. From then onwards, the National Socialists used the resources of the library to compile and extend their blacklists of literature including Jewish but also German dissident authors. These blacklists were patchy to say the least. A most curious case was that of Erich Ebermayer, a Leipzig jurist and writer. Whilst Ebermayer's father, the former *Oberreichsanwalt* Ludwig Ebermayer, was being wooed at the time by the Reich Ministry for Justice to participate in the restructuring of the penal code, his son's books were banned. Erich Ebermayer was also the cousin of *Reichsleiter* Philipp Bouhler, who later also worked in the *Reichsschriftums-* and *Reichspressekammer* (Reich chambers for literature and the press), and of Fritz Todt, the mastermind behind the

² See Steffen Held, 'Bibliothekar Uhlendahl und die Verbotslisten' in *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, 4 July 2008.

German *Autobahnen*. The ban on his works (which did not extend to all of his publications) was peculiar.³ Furthermore, he himself did not see how the distinction between his allowed and his banned books was made. Indeed, he continued to be able to publish in the Third Reich and to work on many theatre and UFA film projects directly under Goebbels's nose. The Ebermayer case, however, highlighted another, more sinister detail. Despite the fact that not all of his books were on the blacklist, one of his publishers – the renowned Reclam Verlag – removed all works by Ebermayer from its portfolio, including two of the books not on the list of banned titles.⁴

The Reclam Verlag did not act on its own; the *Börsenverein* was well aware of the blacklists and indeed supported its members, publishers and book traders alike, in removing works that were to be regarded as 'nationally corrosive'.⁵ The *Börsenverein* also engaged in a self-motivated campaign of purging 'undesirable' contacts from its books. The address list of book traders, the most comprehensive compendium of the German book trade, was 'relieved' of communists, Jews, Social Democrats – starting well before the *Reichstagsbrand*, the *Berufsbeamtengesetz* and the ban on the SPD in June 1933. The *Börsenverein* also integrated nicely into the National Socialist machinery. It became a sub-organisation of the book trade department of the *Reichsschriftumskammer*; its headquarters – the *Buchhändlerhaus* – became the seat of this branch of the Reich chamber. The register of members enabled the confiscation of Jewish publishing houses as all necessary details were listed, thereby rationalising the process tremendously.⁶

³ It clearly went against the racial ideas of the National Socialists – Ebermayer was not only 'blaublond' (blond and blue-eyed), but also had the aforementioned strong family connections.

⁴ 'Der Verlag Phillip Reclam hat die Beziehungen zu mir abgebrochen. Er hat, ohne dazu genötigt zu sein, auch meine beiden Bände [...], die nicht verboten sind, aus der Universal-Bibliothek entfernt [...] und ersucht mich, ihm umgehend [...] den Kontorest [...] zu überweisen.' Ebermayer, *Denn heute*, pp. 77-87, quote: p. 85.

⁵ Announcement by the *Börsenverein* in *Neue Leipziger Nachrichten*, 11 May 1933. On 14 May 1933, the *Börsenverein* published the list of the now forbidden books. See *Ibid.*, 14 May 1933.

⁶ Otto Seifert, 'Aspekte des geistigen Klimas für die "Arisierung" und die Folgen für die Buchstadt Leipzig in Monika Gibas (ed.), *'Arisierung' in Leipzig – Annäherung an ein lange verdrängtes Kapitel der Stadtgeschichte der Jahre 1933 bis 1945* (Leipzig, 2007), pp. 72-98.

Shortly after the *Deutsche Bücherei* had come under the authority of the Propaganda Ministry, its head, the reputed librarian Dr Heinrich Uhlendahl was taken into 'Schutzhaft (protective custody) on political grounds' on 17 June 1933.⁷ He had attracted the ire of the local NSDAP for not following their demands regarding staffing and book collection. He was held until the 20 June and able to return to his office on 1 July. Yet, the *Kreisleitung* of the NSDAP was still not content. On 4 July it published a newspaper announcement calling for Uhlendahl's removal:

[...] Even though the accusations against him have not been proven in their entirety, the process of investigation has also not provided the NSDAP with any reason to trust Dr Uhlendahl in any way. We still oppose him as unreliable for the purposes of the National Socialist revolution and will continue to work towards the day when we can be fully in charge of the cultural treasure of the German people as deposited in the *Deutsche Bücherei*.⁸

Somewhat shaken by this experience, Uhlendahl then retreated into his profession and refrained from political comment. He did not join the NSDAP, but through his previous membership in the *Stahlhelm*, he was automatically enrolled as an SA member until 1938 when he resigned from this organisation.⁹ He had to accept that the *Reichssicherheitsdienst* (SD) opened a *Schrifttumsstelle* (office for literature) in the *Deutsche Bücherei* premises. The SD also utilized the library's vast expertise to compile its propaganda lists of literature that was to be banned and authors that had to be observed. It

⁷ Dr Heinrich Uhlendahl (1886-1954), was one of Germany's foremost librarians and co-founder of the International Library and Bibliography Committee. He became head of the *Deutsche Bücherei* in 1924. See Gerd Simon, *Chronologie Heinrich Uhlendahl* (Universität Tübingen, 2006 – available online: <http://homepages.uni-tuebingen.de/gerd.simon/ChrUhlendahl.pdf>). 'Vorrübergehend in Schutzhaft', *Neue Leipziger Zeitung*, 21 June 1933. The National Socialist 'Schutzhaft' was a euphemism for arbitrary arrest.

⁸ 'Wenn sich auch die gegen ihn vorgebrachten Anschuldigungen nicht in vollem Umfange bewahrheiten, so hat andererseits der Verlauf der Untersuchung für die NSDAP nicht die geringste Veranlassung gegeben, Dr Uhlendahl irgendwelches Vertrauen entgegenzubringen. Wir lehnen ihn nach wie vor als im Sinne der nationalsozialistischen Revolution unzuverlässig ab und werden unentwegt darauf hinarbeiten, den in der Deutschen Bücherei niedergelegten Kulturschatz des deutschen Volkes einwandfrei ihrer alleinigen Obhut zu unterstellen.' Ibid., 4 July 1933.

⁹ Simon, *Chronologie Heinrich Uhlendahl*.

also employed the holdings of the *Deutsche Bücherei* to issue personal assessments of any writer who was considered for an office or award in the Third Reich.¹⁰

For the day-to-day work of the *Deutsche Bücherei* this had few immediate repercussions, as neither the SD office, nor the Propaganda Ministry interfered directly in the routine proceedings. The library had to remove some of its stock in line with the blacklists, but could prevent the destruction thereof under the premise of storing it out of reach. The national bibliography was curtailed into excluding 'objectionable' works of print on its main list. The denial of these works, however, did not mean that they were not catalogued. A separate list of 'restricted works' was published from 1939 to 1944. In 1942, the scope of the library's collection was widened to include German works translated into foreign languages, printed works in a foreign language about Germany and music collections.¹¹ However, the various Nazi agencies did not stop the *Deutsche Bücherei* from pursuing its original duty of collecting all German works printed at home or abroad. Thus, works by exiled German writers continued to find their way into the library's collection.¹² A list of all *Works that were not allowed to be indicated 1933-1945* was eventually published after the end of the Second World War.¹³

The impact of National Socialism on the make up of the *Buchstadt* Leipzig was considerable. The confiscation and closure of many well-established Jewish publishers and book traders, Henri Hinrichsen of the renowned music publisher Edition Peters shall be named here as *pars pro toto*, as well as the ban on left-wing publications and their proprietors and purveyors robbed the city of vast sections of its former spectrum. On an international scale, these measures led to the isolation of the German book trade and to a

¹⁰ Werner Schroeder, '...eine Fundgrube der Schriftumsinformation. Die Leipziger Arbeitsstelle für Schriftumsbearbeitung beim Sicherheitshauptamt und die "SD- Verbindungsstelle an der Deutschen Bücherei"' in Gibas, 'Arisierung' in Leipzig, pp. 116-151.

¹¹ Kathrin Ansorge, *Die Deutsche Bibliothek Leipzig, Frankfurt am Main, Berlin* (Frankfurt am Main, 2005).

¹² Gottfried Rost, 'Die Deutsche Bücherei – Gesamtarchiv des deutschsprachigen Schrifttums seit 1913' in Brandsch and Herzog, *Das literarische Leipzig*, pp. 272-76.

¹³ Deutsche Bücherei Leipzig, *Deutsche Nationalbibliographie. Ergänzung I, Verzeichnis der Schriften, die 1933-1945 nicht angezeigt werden durften* (Leipzig, 1949).

progressive marginalisation of Leipzig. The restriction of book trade and production in the wake of the total war declaration further contributed to the demise of the *Buchstadt's* national and international standing.¹⁴

The *Buchstadt*, as well as Leipzig as a whole was surprised by the bombing raid of the night of 4 December 1943. As no one had expected a bombing attack – Saxony and Leipzig had even taken in numerous refugees from other bombed German towns – no precautions had been taken for this case. This lack of preparation proved fatal for Leipzig's book trading and printing facilities. Libraries and bookshops were hit. About 80 per cent of Leipzig's printing quarter was levelled by the bombing raid. This included buildings, streets, machinery, transport vehicles and vast amounts of paper and books. The extent of destruction was compared by one observer to the burning of the library of Alexandria; just in terms of already finished books around 50 million volumes were burned. The destruction to the scarce resource of paper as a whole was even greater. Some of Leipzig's most prestigious publishing companies (for example the Brockhaus Verlag) were almost completely razed. The distinguished Insel Verlag alone lost over one million books.¹⁵ The remaining factories still capable of production were hit by the War Economy Authority's order that all reconstruction efforts had to aid Leipzig's air armament industry, which meant that 3,500 workers were removed from their workplace in the printing factories, leaving insufficient staff to carry out repairs, let alone continue orderly production.¹⁶ In addition to all the other destruction endured, the *Deutsche Bücherei* building was partially struck and 50,000 volumes of collected journals turned into cinders. Therefore, in early

¹⁴ Seifert, 'Aspekte des geistigen Klimas', p. 90.

¹⁵ For the Alexandria comparison see Heinz Sarkowski, 'Von Ost nach West' in Egel, *Neuanfang 1945*; for figures on the destruction of the city and the publishing quarter see Volker Titel and Sabine Knopf, *Der Leipziger Gutenbergweg* (Beucha, 2001) and Frank Uwe Schulz, 'Demontagen in Leipzig' in Rainer Karlsch and Jochen Laufer, *Sowjetische Demontagen in Deutschland 1944-49: Hintergründe, Ziele und Wirkungen* (Berlin, 2002), pp. 403-47.

¹⁶ Olaf Groehler, *Bombenkrieg gegen Leipzig 1940-45* (Leipzig, 1994); the air armament industry was on the outskirts and surrounding areas of Leipzig and suffered comparatively less than the culturally rich inner city and the printing quarter.

January 1944, the *Deutsche Bücherei* closed to the public and removed its remaining stock of over 1.6 million books to several rural sites in Saxony and Thuringia.

The lack of reconstruction of Leipzig's civilian facilities, the closing down of public and cultural life, the increase of bombing raids and lack of German retaliation in addition to the haemorrhaging of German forces on the Eastern Front convinced the city's population by early 1944 that the war was lost.¹⁷ An apt footnote to this was provided by *Kulturdezernent* Hauptmann. There had been an ongoing debate between the Leipzig city council and the Propaganda Ministry about a representational work promoting the *Buchstadt* Leipzig since late 1942. The city was eager to commend itself especially because of the constraints of war. Yet the consent of the Propaganda Ministry was needed to release the allocated paper for the production. The approval came eventually, but the project was no longer relevant. As Hauptmann dryly remarked: 'after the destruction of nearly all important cultural institutions – beginning with the old city centre, the university, the *Gewandhaus*, the opera to the book trade industry', the volume would only highlight that 'next to nothing was left'.¹⁸

The American occupation was welcomed at first with the hope of a re-establishment of Leipzig's institutions that had suffered in the previous years. The transitional nature of the American occupation may not have been known to the public, yet the policy inconsistencies, the astonishing ignorance of local conditions and indeed the palpable lack of interest displayed by the Americans soon became all too obvious in the notorious decision of the US authorities to allocate to the Herfurth Verlag the printing and publishing of the *Amtliche Nachrichten*, a paper charged with broadcasting American

¹⁷ Ibid., p.9.

¹⁸ 'Ich möchte [...] zu bedenken geben, daß ein solches Werk nach der Zerstörung fast aller bedeutsamen Kulturstätten, angefangen bei der Altstadt über die Universität, dem Gewandhaus, dem Neuen Theater bis zum Buchhandel und der Wirtschaft, doch wohl beim Außenstehenden, der zu werben ist, kaum mehr Anklang finden dürfte, eben weil von alle dem nur noch verschwindend wenig übrig ist [...]', StadtAL, Kapitel 6, No. 103, Blatt 17, 22 March 1944.

orders. Herfurth had previously been responsible for the *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten*, a newspaper notorious for its National Socialist propaganda.¹⁹ This assignment seemed even more remarkable as all other printing of papers, journals or books was prohibited pending the results of denazification questionnaires distributed by the US authorities. The book trade was definitely in need of a political investigation, yet the questionnaires never made it back to the American authorities – there was no enforced request for returns in the period of American occupation. Thus a rekindling of the book trade or production did not occur throughout the period of late April to the end of June 1945.

The mounting disagreements with the Soviets meant that it was not in the American interest to facilitate the reconstruction of anything the Russians would lay their hands on. The printing and publishing industry was just one of these fields better left in disrepair.²⁰ Rather, acting in the framework of 'Project Paperclip', Leipzig was systematically ransacked for valuable resources that could be carted off to the Western American Zone.²¹ As everywhere else in US occupied Saxony and Thuringia, this meant that valuable companies and distinguished academics were 'encouraged' to move to the Western American Occupied Zone. This move was to include the academics' documents and research materials and in the case of the companies, their staff, valuable machinery and patents. During the course of this process the book trade in Leipzig received special attention, too.²² The leading publishers together with their families and important documents, as well as the large parts of the *Börsenverein's* assets, were taken to Wiesbaden and Frankfurt am Main a fortnight before the Soviet takeover on 1 July 1945. The discussions for this had been taking place from early May onwards. Thus the curious

¹⁹ StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 3895, Blatt 95: 'Die Verhaftung an Militarismus und Nazismus ist dokumentarisch und stadtbekannt.'

²⁰ Titel and Knopf, *Der Leipziger Gutenbergweg*.

²¹ 'Project Paperclip' is best known for the transfer of the Peenemünde rocket scientists to America. The 'evacuation' of academics, company managers and valuable patents, machinery and financial means from the territory that was to become the Soviet Occupation Zone is less well known as it presented an early case of American breach of agreement with their Soviet Allies. These were uncomfortable facts in the Cold War. See Henke, *Die amerikanische Besetzung Deutschlands*.

²² Thomas Bille, 'Buchstadt ohne Filetstücke' in Egel, *Neuanfang 1945*, pp. 36-41.

situation emerged where a leading member of Leipzig's *Bürgertum* such as Hellmuth von Hase, the manager of music publishers Breitkopf und Härtel, was planning the re-opening of the *Gewandhaus*, while he was well aware that his departure was, if not imminent, at least to be expected soon.²³ With hindsight, one of the *Buchstadt*'s 'resettlers', Friedrich Michael – deputy head of the Insel Verlag, called this measure 'wise and insightful'. He gladly followed the 'friendly invitation by the Americans.'²⁴ It is interesting, however, to note that in the official histories of the publishers involved, this process is either not mentioned or dismissed as a 'normal' procedure. The American involvement and partial coercion that some of the evacuees suffered is not referred to; rather it is portrayed – if at all – as a business decision.²⁵

This 'evacuation' did, as will be also seen in the case of the university, remove some of Leipzig's most eminent *Bürger*, thereby ripping a hole in the fabric of this social stratum. The book trade had been one of the mainstays of Leipzig's *Bürgertum*; *bürgerlich* tradition was closely linked to the *Buchstadt*. Renowned publishers had been the fulcrum of *bürgerlich* society in the city, uniting the intellectual and artistic strands of the *Bildungsbürgertum*. The 'decency' of the old publishing dynasties represented 'fine *bürgerlich* culture'.²⁶ With them gone, Leipzig was left in a more difficult position in the reconstruction effort, materially and intellectually.

²³ The *Zeitzeugenprojekt* reported about meetings to initiate the transfer of pivotal representatives of the book trade to the Western American Zone in early May. This is the clearest indicator in the literature that the Americans were well-aware of their imminent departure, or at least definitely set on securing vital parts of industry and academia for their own use in their 'undisputed' area of Germany. Volker Titel and Thomas Keiderling, *Geschichte der Buchstadt Leipzig, Zeitzeugenprojekt*: <http://www.zeitzeugenprojekt.de> (accessed 22 August 2008). For details on von Hase and the *Gewandhaus* see chapter above 'Leipzig – city of music'.

²⁴ Friedrich Michael, *So ernst wie heiter: Betrachtungen, Erinnerungen, Episteln und Glossen* (Sigmaringen, 1983), p. 327 and p. 341 respectively. In Michael's book a clear anti-Soviet stance can be observed, written as it was during the period of the German partition his coloured view of the past is easily explained, moreover as he enjoyed a fruitful career once in the American Zone. The enforcement of the evacuations did not affect the book traders much. In consideration of the utter destruction of their erstwhile work place, a new beginning, especially as favoured 'guests' of the Americans surely seemed appealing. See chapter 'Leipzig – city of learning' for the more sinister side of the American transports.

²⁵ Insel Verlag: http://www.suhrkamp.de/verlagsgeschichte_71.html (accessed 22/05/2009), Georg Thieme Verlag: <http://www.thieme.de> (accessed 22 May 2009).

²⁶ Ebermayer, *Denn heute*, p. 23.

Most scholars describe the American conduct as a deliberate decision to preempt the change of power and thus of the political and economic system, and transfer the entire organisational structure of the German book trade to their own zone.²⁷ However, the claim that the Americans alone ‘dismantled the *Buchstadt* Leipzig’ is too simplistic.²⁸ The process took longer than the period of the US occupation in Leipzig, and was not exclusively the work of the Americans as will be shown below.

The transition from the US to the Soviet occupying forces went more smoothly than feared by Leipzig’s population. The Russian authorities almost immediately moved to re-establish the cultural life so important to the self-conception of the Leipziger, stressing the intention of rebuilding.²⁹ The efforts to revive Leipzig’s cultural identity offered glimpses of hope to the population, suggesting a reconstruction of their lives was possible.³⁰ Leipzig was also to be revived as a city of books.

The Minister for Culture of the Soviet military administration, Solotuchin, visited Leipzig in late July 1945. In a meeting with Lord Mayor Zeigner, the director of the *Deutsche Bücherei* Heinrich Uhlendahl and Heinrich Becker (a board member of the *Börsenverein*), Solotuchin expressed the need for Leipzig to regain its leading cultural role:

Leipzig as a city of books and the seat of the *Deutsche Bücherei* is called upon to lay the foundations for the intellectual life in the new Germany. The city has the special obligation to assume the leading role in the intellectual fight against Nazism and militarism.³¹

²⁷ Brandsch and Herzog, *Das literarische Leipzig*; Titel and Knopf, *Der Leipziger Gutenbergweg*.

²⁸ Christian Lenhardt cited in Schulz, ‘Demontagen in Leipzig’, p. 411.

²⁹ The Russian takeover has been described as ‘Schock angenehmer Überraschung’, see Henke, *Besetzung*, p. 748.

³⁰ ‘[...] man darf wieder [in] die Kinos [...]’, see: Diary of Eva Salzer, 6 July 1945, in Oehme, *Alltag*, p. 21; see also: StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 8382, Blatt 1, Letter to the Kulturred Leipzig: ‘[Kultur] scheint die Möglichkeit, das Vertrauen der Welt am ehesten zurückzugewinnen’.

³¹ Ibid., No. 8852, Blatt 34, 27 July 1945, excerpt from a transcript of the meeting: ‘Leipzig als Buchstadt und als Sitz der Deutschen Bücherei ist berufen, die Fundamente für das geistige Leben im neuen Deutschland zu legen. [Die Stadt] habe die besondere Aufgabe, im geistigen Kampf gegen Nazismus und Militarismus an führender Stelle zu stehen.’.

This promise, however, also had ominous undertones. A veiled Soviet desire to control the entire ideological outlook of Germany was suggested here. This intellectual renewal, in the Soviet Zone at least, required a thorough denazification of the book trade and the publishing companies.³² The first step was the revocation of the assignment to print and publish the *Amtliche Nachrichten* from the Herfurth Verlag on 9 July 1945. On 10 July, the city's department for culture called for a list of all publishers and book traders situated in Leipzig, including a political evaluation of those registered. Finally, four days later, on 14 July a commission charged with the examination of the book trade was established. The commission extended the dispersion of the denazification questionnaires requested by the US troops. It was now to include all executive staff of the companies, not just their directors and owners, as required by the Americans.³³ The guidelines published by the commission demanded the exclusion of anyone who had been a member of the NSDAP or one of its sub-organisations from a leading position in the publishing houses, printing factories and book traders. Companies whose owners fell into that category were to be closed down. However, exceptions existed for those who could prove themselves to have been active antifascists. Furthermore, owners were able to sell their companies' assets even after a closure order.³⁴ These ostensibly liberal measures, however, soon became superfluous in a wave of sequestrations and dismantling.

The denazification procedures were not the only obstacles preventing the swift restart of the book trade. War damage resulted in a very limited capacity for new production. Furthermore, any newly printed materials required permission from the Russian authorities, who could veto the production process at any stage. In addition, any publishing house wanting to resume its activities had to apply and wait for a licence to do

³² The American transport included anyone from a renowned publishing house that was not too 'nazistisch anrühig', a proper denazification did not take place. See Michael, *So ernst wie heiter*, p. 336.

³³ StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 8852, Blatt 1- 6, 9-14 July 1945.

³⁴ Ibid., Blatt 69: 'Anordnung zur Säuberung des Buchhandels innerhalb der SBZ Deutschlands von faschistischen und reaktionären Elementen'.

so.³⁵ Due to these circumstances the focus fell on the existing stock that most sellers and publishers had been relocating to safety in rural locations during the last years and months of the war. These inventories, however, were seized by the Soviet authorities. The pretext given was the necessity to locate and eliminate any literary material containing National Socialist, racist, militaristic or reactionary ideas.³⁶ The obvious problem in this undertaking was the lack of any binding guideline explaining which works were deemed to fall into these categories. Therefore, all of the publishers and book traders' inventories remained confiscated. The measure was broadened also to include any stock still stored in Leipzig. This stirred unrest among the book traders, but even more so within the *Börsenverein*. In a meeting of the executive council of the association on 24 July 1945, the need for accelerated purging measures was stressed. The retrieval of the relocated stock had been named already as the most important and pressing issue in an internal memorandum over a month before. The *Börsenverein*'s representations, however, were ignored.³⁷

An information leaflet was issued on 1 August, informing the city's population of a ban on National Socialist literature. It contained a list of books with the warning that any sale or hire thereof was prohibited and liable to prosecution. Moreover, it also included a disclaimer stating that the list was not exhaustive.³⁸ Thus it did not present the book traders with precise information with which to work. It was not until April 1946, when a bibliographical commission of the *Deutsche Bücherei* published a list specifying all 'objectionable' books, that a reliable foundation for any future trade existed.³⁹ Despite these problems, the industry did not reach a complete standstill as new state publishing companies were created.

³⁵ This at least was the official line. As will be seen below, the Soviet authorities were not interested in granting licences to private publishers at all.

³⁶ StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 8852, Blatt 34.

³⁷ Meeting of 24 July 1945: Ibid., No. 9156, Blatt 41. Memorandum of 22 June 1945: Ibid., Blatt 46. The *Börsenverein* was yet to be officially recognized, thus its weight in the discussion was negligible.

³⁸ Ibid., No. 8856, Blatt 1, 1 August 1945.

³⁹ For the second time in less than 15 years, the *Deutsche Bücherei* was used to create lists of censored books. The content might not have been the same as the Nazi lists, the process, however, was similar.

These new publishing companies were designed for a special purpose. Leipzig's role as a spearhead in the Soviet fight for a 'new Germany' was also directed at the reorganisation of the education system. Solotuchin's idea of cultural leadership involved measures to redesign the schooling of German children.⁴⁰ Thus on 12 October 1945 the Verlag Volk und Wissen, specialising in school textbooks, was founded. The Soviet authorities envisaged producing schoolbooks for all of Germany, providing a source of intellectual reconstruction and direction for the war depleted nation. Yet the distribution of the Volk und Wissen literature was only ever achieved in the Soviet Occupation Zone; Leipzig's role as leaders in education for the whole of Germany was reduced to a uncertain one within its own zone. This also appears to have occurred in the other field Solotuchin had predestined Leipzig to lead: the city's status as *Buchstadt*. As this did not express a new ambition but merely the reconstitution of Leipzig's 'natural' standing, the failure to achieve this was even more obvious than in the case of the text books. The occupying authorities might have proclaimed their inclination to re-establish the city of books; however, their conduct unmasked these declarations as mere lip service. Although Leipzig was to regain its position as leading location for publishing and book trading, the licensing of the established publishers was not in the interest of the Soviet administration. Rather, its interests lay in the nationalisation of existing, and the creation of new state-owned publishing houses. The department for book trade and libraries in Leipzig's city administration warned Lord Mayor Zeigner in January 1946 that Leipzig was already falling behind all other zones in Germany.⁴¹ This left Leipzig's status as centre of the book trade vulnerable to attacks from rival cities waiting on the horizon such as Frankfurt am Main, Munich or the Austrian capital Vienna. Even more alarming, however, was the stream of authors emigrating to the Western Zones, looking for new publishers and thereby

⁴⁰ StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 8852, Blatt 34.

⁴¹ Both in terms of number of licensed publishers and book production. See Ibid. No. 8856, Blatt 34, 12 January 1946.

hollowing out Leipzig's 'cultural assets'. A committee of the city's culture department had already concluded that private publishers were vital in maintaining a creative and thriving book market. The conclusion that in a collectivised system creativity and freedom of expression would falter was to prove prophetic.⁴² Zeigner was trying to find a way around the obvious unwillingness of the authorities to revert back to the established system of private publishers and to prevent the nationalisation of, at least, the most important houses. He did eventually achieve the licensing of a marginal number of private companies.⁴³ Another problem for the book trade was the fact that although the *Börsenverein* still existed and voiced itself from time to time, it had not been officially reinstated. Thus the lobbying power of this formally powerful association was now virtually non-existent. Only on Lord Mayor Zeigner's instigation was the association allowed to resume its operation on 6 August 1946.⁴⁴ Its first director was Ernst Reclam, head of the distinguished Reclam Verlag, who had declined the American 'offer' to transfer his business to the West. He thereby had demonstrated his strong determination to aid the re-establishment of Leipzig as an important centre of book trade and publishing. At the point of his assumption of office, however, a first wave of expropriations had already hit Leipzig's book trade companies. Prestigious enterprises such as the Bibliographisches Institut and the Leipziger Verlagsdruckerei were among those that were nationalised. The problem of nationalisation was also deemed the reason for Reclam's resignation from office and eventual emigration to Stuttgart (in the American Zone) in 1947.⁴⁵

The *Börsenverein*, however, still strove to improve the situation for publishers and booksellers in Leipzig. Although the confiscated stocks had been released, a normal sales

⁴² Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek Archiv, No. 46 A-63: Arbeitsgemeinschaft Buchhandel im Kulturausschuß 'Über die Unentbehrlichkeit der Privatverlage für den Neuaufbau des deutschen Kulturlebens', manuscript 1945.

⁴³ The awarding of these licences was a slow process, it was heralded as a great milestone when 5 long-established and leading publishing houses finally received their licences in February 1947[!]. The process gained pace after that, however in 1948 the number had only risen to 37 of formerly over 300 publishers; see: Borusiak and Höhnel, *Chronik I*.

⁴⁴ Titel and Knopf, *Der Leipziger Gutenbergweg*.

⁴⁵ See Reclam's company history: <http://www.reclam.de> (accessed 22 May 2009).

procedure could not be established until October 1946, as most of the remaining inventory was still located outside the city and transport very hard to come by. The *Börsenverein* eventually obtained transport from the city authorities, not just to retrieve the stock but also to procure books produced in other cities. The sales aspect had become the major focus of Leipzig's efforts, as its own printing production remained low. Therefore, the turnover of books was the city's sole stake in the book trade as a whole.⁴⁶

However, the destruction caused by the bombing soon ceased to be the main reason for the city's production shortfall. The major cause was the continuous dismantlement of the printing machinery and the companies' buildings.⁴⁷ The looting of German property started well before the war had ended. After the capitulation, it was the failure to reach an agreement about reparations at the conference of Potsdam that prompted the Soviet authorities to extract as much as they could from their zone.⁴⁸ Saxony was the Soviets' main target due to its widespread industrialisation. The initial focus lay on the dismantlement of complete factories, including not only the machinery but also the buildings themselves.⁴⁹

In Leipzig, the armament factories were the first point of call, but the Soviets also soon turned their attention to the printing quarter; machinery was removed and entire buildings disassembled. Workers were also required to swiftly clear the remaining factories and prepare for production. The Soviet idea of cultural leadership of Leipzig thus found its translation in book production for reparation purposes. This production was controlled according to planned economic principles thereby already altering the economic

⁴⁶ See StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 8852, Blatt 78, 30 September 1946.

⁴⁷ In the assessment of one contemporary observer: 'Das weltbekannte Leipziger Buchdruckgewerbe [mußte durch die Demontagen] beträchtliche Einbußen hinnehmen'. In view of the destruction already incurred through the war, it is a strong statement to place the 'extensive losses' at the door of the occupation power. See: Gustav Wilhelm Harmssen, *Am Abend der Demontage: 6 Jahre Reparationspolitik* (Bremen, 1951).

⁴⁸ Naimark, *The Russians in Germany*.

⁴⁹ The plans outlining the Soviet and communist conduct in Saxony were drawn up by the KPD exiles before the end of the war. See Winfried Halder, 'Verhängnisvolle Wirkungen und empfindliche Lähmungen im Wirtschaftsablauf' in Karlsch and Laufer, *Sowjetische Demontagen in Deutschland 1944-49*, pp. 447-71.

procedures of an industry, which the Soviets claimed they wanted to 'reinstate'.⁵⁰ The commissioning of this production was enthusiastically honoured by the Soviet propaganda as 'generous reconstruction aid'. It was a continuous source of employment for the printing workers, yet it deprived Leipzig of its competitiveness. The utilization of over 90 percent of the available printing factories for the reparation assignments hindered any production for the normal market significantly. Thus, in terms of production, there was very little that could distinguish Leipzig in the German book trade. This situation in the publishing field barely altered until well beyond 1948.⁵¹

In 1946, the reparation demands of the Soviets suddenly increased and previous agreements were thrown out. The first sign was the dismantlement of the HASAG buildings. This armament factory had been on the original dismantling lists; however, Leipzig's city administration had procured the buildings to house printing facilities, therefore the disassembly went directly against these agreements. In addition, more printing companies appeared on the lists of the dismantling divisions. These developments prompted the head of the municipal planning department to exclaim: 'Any hopes for a swift and sizeable rise of the graphical industry have to be discarded'.⁵² Indeed, the renewed intensification of dismantlement in Leipzig lacked logic. Dismantling orders were issued at short notice, thereby interfering directly with any ongoing production. Factory workers were employed to disassemble the machinery, thus acting as 'their own gravediggers'.⁵³ Moreover, many workers complained about maltreatment and beatings, especially those who were members of the workers' parties.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ See: StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 8852, Blatt 5, 14 July 1945, '*Planungen zur Wiederbelebung des Buchhandels*'.

⁵¹ See Schulz, 'Demontagen in Leipzig'; Titel and Keiderling, *Zeitzeugenprojekt*; Brandsch and Herzog, *Das literarische Leipzig*.

⁵² 'Alle Erwartungen auf einen baldigen und großen Aufstieg des graphischen Gewerbes in Leipzig sind gegenstandslos geworden'. StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 11054, Blatt 32, 21 March 1946.

⁵³ This sentiment was widely shared among Leipzig's workers. See Ibid., Blatt 28–30, March 1946.

⁵⁴ These men had a doubly hard time, amongst their fellow workers they were blamed for the dismantling measures, yet still as all German workers were labelled 'fascists and capitalists' by the Soviet guards, they were beaten by those soldiers. See Ibid., Blatt 29, March 1946.

The dismantlement included specialised factories, a circumstance that only compounded the lack of comprehension in Leipzig for the measures of the Soviet authorities. How was the city supposed to regain its status as unchallenged centre for graphics and printing if unique companies, that set it apart from the competition, were removed? A particularly baffling case was the order of complete disassembly of the Leipziger Chromo und Kunstdruckpapierfabrik AG. It was the most important factory in the entire Soviet Zone for the production of high quality papers. Fifty percent of the pre-war production capacity had already been regained with the support of the Soviet authorities for the rebuilding effort, when the dismantlement order appeared in March 1946. Not only did this render the reconstruction efforts meaningless, it also had a long-lasting effect on the production of other companies who lost their production materials. This is not to mention the paper factory's workers who became unemployed.

This dismantlement of specialised companies, particularly those that had clearly never been involved in the Nazi war effort, caused widespread alarm among Leipzig's population.⁵⁵ It prompted Leipzig's authorities and especially Lord Mayor Zeigner to get involved and attempt to revert or at least ease removal orders. On 25 April 1946, Zeigner personally explained to Leipzig's Soviet Military Commander Borrissov that the total removal of distinguished companies, in this case the Brockhaus Verlag, could not be allowed if Leipzig was to retain any significance beyond a local level. He obtained the concession that a total dismantlement was to be avoided.⁵⁶ Although Borrissov was rather non-committal regarding the removals in general, this small success inspired self-confidence in Leipzig's administration. The Lord Mayor went so far as to question the legality of ever-changing dismantling lists and insisted that the disassembly of factories had to take the sustainability of Leipzig's economy into account.⁵⁷ The issue was also

⁵⁵ Ibid., Blatt 28, March 1946.

⁵⁶ Ibid., Blatt 72, 25 April 1946.

⁵⁷ Ibid., Blatt 92, 4 November 1946.

brought to the attention of representatives of the Soviet military administration in Berlin. Leipzig's City Director Erich Ott pleaded for an end of the dismantlement of entire printing factories as this interfered with the reparation production. Moreover, he referred to Leipzig's 'tireless' efforts to facilitate the printing of millions of books for the Soviet Union. Therefore, to conduct an orderly reparation production, a stop of the removals had to be effected. If that was not possible, at least 25 per cent of the machinery and equipment had to be retained. Ott phrased his demand quite frankly: 'Our achievements give us the right to ask for the maintenance of the means of existence of the companies in question.'⁵⁸ Ott was subsequently given verbal assurance that Leipzig was to receive full support. However, this support did not materialise.⁵⁹ He nevertheless propagated decisive measures against the increasingly absurd dismantling orders. In one case he instructed a company to defy Soviet orders. The printing factory Brandstetter had been given orders to release their entire standing type to the Soviet officials. The standing forms were to be melted down to provide metal to meet the material targets of the particular dismantling squad in question. The company's standing type largely consisted of scientific books, most of them international standard works. In effect, highly specialised knowledge was to be turned into scrap metal. A similarly destructive order reached the Reclam Verlag. The order threatened the *Universalbibliothek*, a compendium of classical works of world literature. It was almost as though the Soviets were trying to prove Goebbels posthumously right about the threat to European culture from 'Asiatic' barbarism. Ott immediately informed Leipzig's military commander and the officials in Berlin; he achieved the retaining of the standing type by Brandstetter in exchange for metal of the same weight. In the case of Reclam, the complete dismantling of the publishing house was also prevented for the time being.⁶⁰ A major source of irritation to Leipzig's city officials was not only that the very companies needed

⁵⁸ 'Unsere Leistung gibt uns das Recht, die Bitte auf Erhaltung der Existenzgrundlagen der betroffenen Betriebe auszusprechen'. See: Ibid., Blatt 93, 16 November 1946.

⁵⁹ Ibid., Blatt 94.

⁶⁰ Ibid., Blatt 95, 21 November 1946.

for a swift reconstruction – the distinguished houses – were to be dismantled completely, but that the measures also included companies that had been nationalised or belonged to the Socialist Unity Party. Again, a reversal of the removal orders proved highly difficult in these instances. The Universal printing company, property of the SED, only received an adjournment of its disassembly because it was in the process of preparing a volume on Lenin.⁶¹

In general, the Soviet decisions regarding the factories that were to be removed proved more and more arbitrary as the dismantlement progressed. Any mitigation achieved by Leipzig's administration tended to be very limited, often only reducing the amount to be removed or offering a suitable substitute. Any small success in obtaining concessions, however, was usually soon frustrated by the Soviet authorities going back on their word.⁶² Ott concluded that the removals had intolerable consequences for Leipzig, especially as it was perceived as a great injustice among the population: 'The dismantling measures are out of all proportion to the capacities still available in the Zone as a whole. [...] Big Nazi companies [...] are able to continue working without disruption, while [...] antifascist firms in Leipzig are being disassembled.'⁶³ The conduct also exposed the argument of denazification (used as explanation for the choice of company to dismantle) as fraud.

In the light of the vast amounts of German property removed everywhere in the Soviet Zone, the damage to Leipzig's printing quarter may seem no worse than the fate of most towns in the Soviet Zone. However, it is not only the material value but, more importantly, also the cultural meaning of the dismantled factories and companies that has to be taken into account. Leipzig had been given the assignment to lead the cultural renewal in Germany through the reconstruction of its book production and trading

⁶¹ Ibid., Blatt 96, 22 November 1946.

⁶² Ibid., Blatt 31.

⁶³ 'Die Demontagen stehen in keinem Verhältnis zu den noch vorhandenen Kapazitäten in der gesamten Zone. [...] Große Nazibetriebe [...] können unbehelligt arbeiten, während [...] antifaschistische Firmen in Leipzig abgebaut werden.' Ibid., Blatt 99, 2 January 1947.

facilities. Yet, the same authorities that demanded this feat worked against its realisation. Schulz assessed that the city administration's reasons for their fierce intervention were both the cultural as well as the political importance of these companies.⁶⁴ The removals furthermore jeopardised the reparation production, which proved totally incomprehensible to the Leipzig population. Not only were the Soviets thereby diminishing their own gains, they also destroyed what had already been achieved in terms of reconstruction. This was felt by the workers who saw their efforts negated in an instant. In addition to seeing their achievements, sometimes literally, destroyed, the workers also experienced hardship through the following unemployment.⁶⁵ These circumstances, coupled with the mistreatment many workers had to endure during the dismantling procedures, discredited not only the Soviets but also the Socialist Unity Party, thereby alienating a large proportion of the population from their new rulers. This problem was not limited to Leipzig, but apparent everywhere in the Soviet Zone.⁶⁶

These developments did not take place in a vacuum. Whereas Leipzig found itself fighting on several fronts to rebuild its graphic and printing facilities and thus regain its status as *Buchstadt*, other cities grasped the opportunity of Leipzig's weakness to stake a claim to the title of book trading centre. Munich, Vienna, Wiesbaden and Frankfurt am Main were the key players in this dispossession of Leipzig.⁶⁷ A Viennese newspaper already proclaimed in September 1945: 'Leipzig's position in the German book trade can be regarded as having been annihilated.'⁶⁸ The article concluded that Vienna's budding printing industry would be more than perfect to fill the gap. However, the cities with the greatest potential to rival Leipzig were Frankfurt am Main and Wiesbaden. Having profited

⁶⁴ Schulz, 'Demontagen in Leipzig', pp. 418-9.

⁶⁵ Schulz stated that the result of all dismantlement in Leipzig was an obvious deterioration of working and living conditions for a considerable time. See *Ibid.*, p. 430.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, StadtAL StVuR (I), No. 11054, Blatt 31 and Naimark, *Russians in Germany*.

⁶⁷ Apart from the Austrian capital all other 'candidates' happened to be in the American Zone.

⁶⁸ 'Die Stellung Leipzigs im deutschen Buchhandel kann aber [...] als vernichtet angesehen werden.', *Wirtschaft* No. 1, 30 September 1945.

from the American 'relocation' of key figures in Leipzig's book trading and printing repertoire, these two cities collaborated to build a completely new structure in Germany's book trade. The Leipziger publishers and book traders had to re-establish their companies in and around Frankfurt. On 15 October 1945, they founded a new association for book traders, declaring themselves a branch of the *Börsenverein*. This was nearly a year before work in Leipzig was allowed to recommence. All zones subsequently established their own associations of publishers and booksellers. Yet, it was the Frankfurt branch of the *Börsenverein* that challenged the position and the legality of the headquarters in Leipzig and was eventually to take over the *Börsenverein*'s duties in all three Western Zones.⁶⁹

The unwillingness of the Soviet authorities to grant licences to publishers and the fact that most of Leipzig's capacity was taken up by reparation production accelerated Leipzig's decline. The wave of expropriation and nationalisation eventually brought most of Leipzig's distinguished names to the American Zone. Authors, editors, graphic designers and print workers were leaving the Soviet Zone in droves. With most of its renowned publishers and traders gone, Leipzig began to fall behind its rivals even within the Soviet Zone. In 1947, East Berlin had twice as many licensed publishers as Leipzig. The figures for the Western Zones were even greater.⁷⁰

In February 1947, a trade exhibition 'Deutsches Buchschaffen 1945/46' took place in Bielefeld and demonstrated aptly how much not only Leipzig but also the entire Soviet Zone were trailing behind the developments in the West. The fraction of East German books among the exhibits was minute. In addition, Frankfurt's ambitions to usurp Leipzig's status were openly voiced.⁷¹ Lip service was paid by representatives from the

⁶⁹ The establishment of the *Börsenverein* in Frankfurt had been planned already in Leipzig (see below). The Soviet authorities explicitly allowed the Leipzig *Börsenverein* to work in all four zones once it had been re-instated. Thus Frankfurt's claim that a *Börsenverein* seated in Leipzig was legally unable to represent the other zones was false. See: StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 8901, Blatt 6, 11 June 1947.

⁷⁰ Brandsch and Herzog, *Das literarische Leipzig*, p. 121.

⁷¹ 'Die Bestrebungen des Frankfurter Kreises [...] deuten darauf hin, daß die buchhändlerische und graphische Vormachtstellung Leipzigs zerstört werden soll.'; See: StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 9289, Blatt 142, 17 February 1947, Letter by Georg Petermann (*Börsenverein* Leipzig) to Lord Mayor Zeigner.

other zones to the demands of the delegates of East Germany assuring them that any measures taken in Frankfurt (for example the foundation of a *Börsenverein* branch) were merely temporary and would be reverted as soon as Leipzig's situation improved.⁷² However, these agreements and promises were soon forgotten. In the case of the *Börsenverein*, the claim that it was a mere 'provisional' entity was an outright lie. Kurt Georg Schauer, the main protagonist in the establishment of the Western branch of the *Börsenverein*, had already proclaimed the Frankfurt branch to be a permanent institution when he was aiding the American efforts in Leipzig to confiscate material for the move of the association. He spoke of a 'parallel' institution.⁷³ The divide in Germany's book trade became more and more apparent. Another call for unity in the trade was made at the spring book fair in Leipzig in 1947. A forum called 'German unity and the book trade' drew an audience of book trade representatives, members of political parties and also representatives of all four occupation powers. In his address Lord Mayor Zeigner emphasised the abilities and opportunities of Leipzig as a centre for book trade and declared that Leipzig was committed to its tradition as *Buchstadt*. Further speeches evoked the unifying spirit of the written word and warned against sectionalism for the sake of Germany's intellectual and cultural, as well as the book market's, wellbeing. However, the speeches had an air of whistling in the dark and probably even failed to convince the speakers themselves.⁷⁴ By 1947, the German book trade was already divided into two camps and Leipzig's status as the national book trading centre was broken. Already by Easter 1946, a Leipzig book trader complained that Leipzig had lost its position as centre

⁷² Ibid., Blatt 143, 17 February 1947.

⁷³ Ibid., Blatt 148, 26 March 1947. The agreements were valid for less than two months. For Schauer see: Bille, 'Buchstadt ohne Filetstücke?', p. 38.

⁷⁴ Börsenverein Leipzig, *Die Deutsche Einheit und der Buchhandel, Ansprachen* (Leipzig, 1947)

of the German book trade to Frankfurt and that 'we are written off by them, although we all are Germans and should stick together.'⁷⁵

This was not due to Leipzig's low production for the market, as that would change after the reparation contingents were finished. Nor did the move of the big names deliver the fatal blow; most nationalised companies still retained their old name, thereby continuing to carry the prestige associated with the houses.⁷⁶ The decisive factor was the establishment of a second national library, a Western rival to the *Deutsche Bücherei*.

The *Deutsche Bücherei* had been a symbol for the German book trade as a whole. All German publishers had to send two depository copies of each of their books to the library, so that the entirety of German book trading output could be catalogued and made accessible to the public. The library's *Nationalbibliographie* was the definitive account of the German bibliography. Therefore it marked the place that was the heart of German publishing. As long as the *Deutsche Bücherei* retained its position, Leipzig would as well. This was also known in the Frankfurt circle, which eagerly pursued the city's ascent to the title of Germany's premier *Buchstadt*.

The establishment of a second German copyright library in itself need not have been a contentious issue. Other European countries have several of these institutions. Yet, the establishment of what became the *Deutsche Bibliothek des Westens* was a tool to engineer the demise of Leipzig's importance. Furthermore, the split in the German book trade foreshadowed the division of Germany as a whole, a second national library catering for an embryonic second state.

Three months after the Soviet takeover in Leipzig, the head of the Soviet military administration in Berlin, Marshall Zhukov, issued an order on 7 September 1945

⁷⁵ '...wir von dort aus abgeschrieben sind, dabei sind wir doch alle Deutsche und sollten zusammenhalten.' Letter by Gertrud Käuffert, copy of document in Monika Estermann and Edgar Lesch, *Buch, Buchhandel und Rundfunk 1945-49* (Wiesbaden, 1997), p. 46.

⁷⁶ This led to a curious phenomenon of duplication: Brockhaus, Insel, Reclam, Thieme and others appeared both in East and West German editions.

instructing the restoration and re-opening of the *Deutsche Bücherei*.⁷⁷ In Leipzig, this command was understood to be a step following Solotuchin's vision of Leipzig's intellectual leadership role; especially as the means for the reconstruction were solely to come from the city's budget.⁷⁸ Therefore, Leipzig's administration hoped for some support from the occupation officials to accomplish this feat, in particular in the matter of transport. The instructions stipulated that all relocated stock of the library had to be returned by 1 October 1945. Thus 1.6 million books and volumes of collected journals had to be brought back to Leipzig. However, the Soviets provided neither means of transport nor fuel. As most of Leipzig's own transport (buses, cars) had been confiscated, this posed a great problem and delayed the whole process.⁷⁹ In addition, an inspection by library employees of the stored relocated inventory revealed that one repository had been emptied in the meantime by Soviet military officials, allegedly to transfer the contents to Berlin. The seized items included the library's stock overview (92 books) and twenty chests containing the Book and Print Museum's most valuable exhibits.⁸⁰ The removal took place on the 22 September, more than two weeks after Zhukov's order, through the use of force. Both these circumstances indicated an unauthorized action. This suspicion was verified when neither Leipzig's Soviet Military Commander Trufanov nor Solotuchin in Berlin confirmed the existence of any official order to that effect. It was even alleged that the Russian officials had used false names to gain access to the repository. Miraculously, the stock books at least were returned to the *Deutsche Bücherei* three weeks later, the exhibits of the Book and Print Museum eventually surfaced as trophies in the Lenin library in Moscow.⁸¹

⁷⁷ StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 9289, Blatt 14, 'Befehl der Sowjetischen Militärregierung in Deutschland Nr. 12, 7.9.1945'.

⁷⁸ Ibid., Blatt 65.

⁷⁹ Ibid., Blatt 16-20.

⁸⁰ The Book and Print Museum (Buch und Schriftmuseum) had been a part of the *Deutsche Bücherei*.

⁸¹ StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 9289, Blatt 21, 27 September 1945; Blatt 22, 28 September 1945; Blatt 26, 2 October 1945, Blatt 27, 4 October 1945; Blatt 32, 9 October 1945; Blatt 33, 13 October 1945. The problem

These were not the only difficulties encountered before the re-opening of the library. Leipzig's administration were mistaken in thinking that the Soviets intended the library to re-open to the general public. The Soviet communists favoured more exclusive arrangements. The *Deutsche Bücherei* was to open initially for use by the Soviet Army and administration only. This gave rise to a great commotion as it thwarted the library's original mission.⁸² Furthermore, a change of command in Leipzig's military administration saw Trufanov replaced by Borrissov in November 1945. The new commander-in-chief demanded repeated confirmation that the opening ceremony had Berlin's authorisation, threatening its cancellation and further delays in the process. Yet, finally, on 24 November 1945, the *Deutsche Bücherei* was re-opened. The event was later celebrated in GDR literature as a great accomplishment by the people of the Soviet Zone. The triumphant claim that it was 'the first of Germany's academic libraries to re-open', however, neglected to mention the fact that it was only open for Soviet use and to those German academics accredited by the Soviets.⁸³ Contemporary accounts were also keen to portray the event as milestone:

The re-opening of the *Deutsche Bücherei* is to be seen as an important step in the process of the reconstruction of our entire political, economic and cultural life. [...] The library shall be an element in the fight to maintain German unity.⁸⁴

Although the library was only accessible to officials of the Soviet military administration, it still continued its bibliographical work. The ban on National Socialist

of Soviet removal of the library's stock was not limited to the period before the institution's re-opening. Twice, both times without the knowledge of Leipzig's Soviet administration, books and journals were removed. The first removal, in early 1946, was carried out so rapidly, that it did not even allow for a proper cataloguing of everything that was taken. See Ibid., Blatt 97-101, 1946 and Blatt 159, 31 July 1947. For the whereabouts of the stolen books see: Deutsches Buch und Schriftmuseum, *Geschichte*, <http://www.ddb.de> (last accessed 22 May 2009).

⁸² StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 9289, Blatt 29, 5 October 1945.

⁸³ Borusiak and Höhnelt, *Chronik I*, p.98. The library was closed to the public until 21 September 1947.

⁸⁴ 'Die Wiedereröffnung der Deutschen Bücherei ist als eine wichtige Etappe im Prozeß des Neuaufbaus unseres gesamten politischen, wirtschaftlichen und kulturellen Lebens anzusehen. [...] [die Bücherei] soll ein Element sein im Kampf um die Erhaltung der deutschen Einheit.' *Volksstimme*, No. 65, 27 November 1945, 'Die Deutsche Bücherei wiedereröffnet'.

works and literature containing 'reactionary' ideas had been in place since the end of the war in all four occupation zones. The Soviet Zone in particular experienced a very strict interpretation of this directive as has been shown above. It was also on Soviet orders that the *Deutsche Bücherei* began to establish a definitive list of works that were to be banned.⁸⁵ When the inventory was returned to the *Deutsche Bücherei* before its re-opening, the bibliographers started to catalogue all National Socialist literature. Thus it was possible to publish an intermediate list in February 1946, succeeded by a final list containing over 38,700 titles on 1 April.⁸⁶ This list was adopted in all four occupation zones in Germany, once more demonstrating the importance of the *Deutsche Bücherei* for the entire country.⁸⁷

However, in the course of 1946, it became clear that Frankfurt aspired to open its own copyright library. A small circle of intellectuals around the head of Frankfurt's city and university library, Professor Hanns Wilhelm Eppelsheimer, began to draw up plans for this new *national* library. Initially, it began as a duplicate to Leipzig; yet, it soon asserted itself to take over Leipzig's rights and duties. The first choice of name was an indicator: *Deutsche Bücherei des Westens*.

In Leipzig, both the head of the *Deutsche Bücherei* as well as the city's administration were alarmed by this development. In July 1946, Leipzig's city council wrote to the Lord Mayor of Frankfurt am Main expressing its concerns over a looming creation of a Western equivalent to the library. Special attention was drawn to the fact that such an action would mean 'to acquaint oneself with the thought of a divided Germany'. This was not simple alarmist rhetoric. A duplication of a national institution would undoubtedly lead to a weakening of German cohesion, intellectually and otherwise.⁸⁸ Over the following months the head of Leipzig's library, Dr Heinrich Uhlendahl tirelessly

⁸⁵ StadtAL, StVuR, No. 9289, Blatt 85, 26 January 1946.

⁸⁶ Borusiak and Höhnle, *Chronik I*.

⁸⁷ Brandsch and Herzog, *Das literarische Leipzig*, p. 97.

⁸⁸ '... sich mit dem Gedanken der Aufspaltung Deutschlands vertraut zu machen', StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 9289, Blatt 95, 11 July 1946.

corresponded with Frankfurt to avert the establishment of a rival institution there. In September, he again involved Leipzig's Lord Mayor Zeigner as the situation had deteriorated further. Frankfurt had ordered the Western Zone publishers to send their two depository copies to its institution rather than honour the obligation they had to Leipzig. Furthermore, Frankfurt would only agree to send one copy to Leipzig in exchange for a copy of a book printed in the Soviet Zone.⁸⁹ This completely went against any agreements in the German book trade. This is even more remarkable given the fact that the Frankfurt library had not even formally come into existence. The demand for a trade-off in books was also designed to undermine Leipzig, as the book production in the Soviet Zone had fallen far behind the combined output of the three Western Zones (the production of the American Zone alone exceeded that figure). In addition, a pamphlet about the *Deutsche Bücherei* emerged in Frankfurt, written by Georg Kurt Schauer.⁹⁰ Schauer had been instrumental in helping the American effort of relocating much of Leipzig's *Börsenverein*'s assets to Wiesbaden and Frankfurt.⁹¹ He was known to be 'no friend of Leipzig' and appears to have relished the opportunity to work against the city.⁹² Schauer, himself an author and expert in the book trade, knew that the agreement of US officials was essential in establishing a national copyright library. In order to sway the Americans he was distinctly economical with the truth in his pamphlet. He began by claiming that the *Deutsche Bücherei* started its collection of German literature 'in 1933 [sic]'. He thus was using an illusory Nazi link to justify a marginalisation of the institution. Furthermore, he

⁸⁹ StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 9289, Blatt 102, 8 September 1946. Even the Americans considered Schauer's tactics to verge on blackmail. See: Georg Kurt Schauer, 'Erinnerung an meine Börsenblattzeit 1.6.45 bis 1.10.1948' in Historische Kommission des Börsenvereins, *Buchhandelsgeschichte* 2/5 (Frankfurt, 1980), pp. 267-75, here p. 270.

⁹⁰ Georg Kurt Schauer (1899-1984) was a Frankfurter who had worked as writer and publisher in Leipzig. His strong advocacy of Frankfurt as new Buchstadt seem to suggest not only a shrewd business mind but also a certain degree of local patriotism.

⁹¹ Schauer had been authorized to not only 'sack' the material resources of the *Börsenverein*, but he also pressed for information and demanded the association's contact lists and all important documents. See Thomas Bille, 'Der Börsenverein der deutschen Buchhändler zu Leipzig 1945-48' in Leipziger Arbeitskreis zur Geschichte des Buchwesens, *Leipziger Jahrbuch zur Buchgeschichte* (Wiesbaden, 1992), pp. 165-209.

⁹² See Bille, 'Buchstadt ohne Filetstücke?'.

alleged that Leipzig's library had ceased its collection efforts at the end of the war and ever since had remained inactive. Schauer went on to claim that he had been given the green light by Leipzig for his scheme, thereby crossing the fine line that separates the mildly misleading from the blatant lie.⁹³ Zeigner responded to these machinations with a forceful letter to Frankfurt's Lord Mayor Kolb which categorically excluded any possibility of the use of the *Deutsche Bücherei's* name by a rival venture. Furthermore, calling a spade a spade, he demanded a public renunciation of Schauer's 'lies'.⁹⁴ Zeigner only succeeded in so far as the institution that was created on 4 November 1946 in Frankfurt am Main carried the name of *Deutsche Bibliothek*.

Kolb only replied to Zeigner's letter after this *fait accompli*. He outlined how the publishers in the Western Zones demanded a second copyright library, that the 500g limit on interzonal postal items made honouring the obligations to Leipzig impossible and that it was not Frankfurt's aim to divide the German book trade. The city merely provided the premises for the library so much needed by the trade.⁹⁵ It became clear at the Bielefeld meeting in February 1947 that Frankfurt was best positioned in the emerging division in the trade. Petermann, Leipzig's representative, was told that the American occupation authority forbade the supply of books to the Soviet Occupation Zone.⁹⁶ The truth of this claim and the reason for any such order still need to be researched. If found to be correct, a possible involvement of the Frankfurt circle in the decision-making would also demand investigation.⁹⁷ Indisputably, Schauer was key in aligning the publishers of the Western

⁹³ StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 9289, Blatt 113-115.

⁹⁴ Ibid., Blatt 109-112, 30 September 1946.

⁹⁵ Ibid., Blatt 132, 21 September 1946. The 500g limit for postal items existed since 26 October 1945, however, the *Deutsche Bücherei* had reached an agreement with the publishers that books were to be sent in parts as a temporary measure.

⁹⁶ Ibid., Blatt 145, 17 February 1947.

⁹⁷ The Americans trusted Schauer, thus his opinions might have had an influence on their decision making. However, it was the Americans who initiated the relocation of Leipzig's major publishers in order to create a new centre for the German book trade, therefore their decision could have been the result of their endeavours in this direction. See Brandsch and Herzog, *Das literarische Leipzig*.

Zones to send their depository copies to the Frankfurt institution.⁹⁸ It is clear, however, that the Americans wanted to create their own system of control over the book trade, completely autonomous from Leipzig, hence their urgency in procuring not only 'material' (publishers and their company documents) but also 'infrastructure' (the *Börsenverein's* address lists, trade information and documentation).⁹⁹ Indeed, it has even been suggested that the Americans, through the efforts of the Information Control Division, wanted to establish a book trading centre in Frankfurt to entirely substitute for Leipzig.¹⁰⁰ In connection with the growing political tensions between the Western and Eastern occupation powers, the fight over supremacy in Germany's book trade was most probably an early manifestation of the looming Cold War. This would explain why, despite precise orders by the Allied Control Council in March 1947, the *Deutsche Bücherei* encountered persistent problems obtaining its depository copies during the course of the year.¹⁰¹ These problems often materialised due to animosities directed at the Soviet Zone in general.

It also emerged that the city of Frankfurt not only provided the premises for the *Deutsche Bibliothek*, it also paid for the staff. In fact, the library became a municipal institution.¹⁰² The Frankfurt branch of the *Börsenverein* assumed its leadership role in the Western Zones shortly after the foundation of the *Deutsche Bibliothek*, thus completing the partition of the book trade in Germany. Schauer's previous *Börsenblatt* announcement regarding the depository copies could now proudly be followed up with the promised address: 'To all publishers in the Western Zones! Don't forget to send two copies of all

⁹⁸ This had been prepared from the outset. Schauer published an appeal in the very first issue of the *Börsenblatt* (the *Börsenverein's* publication) printed in the American Zone (on Leipzig's paper) in 1945 that publishers should keep their depository copies. The *Börsenverein* (Schauer's Western branch) was to advise them about a new address to send them to. See *Börsenblatt des deutschen Buchhandels* [West], 1/6 October 1945.

⁹⁹ Schauer, 'Erinnerung'.

¹⁰⁰ Bernd Gruschka, 'Re-Education als US-Verlagspolitik' in Egel, *Neuanfang*, pp. 60-64. Although tempting, an investigation of the ICD's policies in the *Buchstadt* Frankfurt would have exceeded the scope of this chapter.

¹⁰¹ StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 9289, Blatt 155, 25 April 1947; No. 8901, Blatt 1, 4 June 1947; Blatt 6, 11 June 1947.

¹⁰² Ibid., No. 9289, Blatt 150.

new publications to the *Deutsche Bibliothek* in Frankfurt am Main.’¹⁰³ Thereby Frankfurt had become the *Buchstadt* it had aspired to be.

Of course, the demise of the *Deutsche Bücherei* in Leipzig was not exclusively caused by Frankfurt’s ambitions. Soviet conduct towards the library’s stock, as well as the lack of support shown in the reconstruction efforts, were clearly important factors. Indeed, Soviet meddling with the library’s bibliographical output compromised the institution’s position even further.¹⁰⁴ However, the persistence with which Frankfurt pursued the establishment of its own copyright library coupled with the efforts to stop Leipzig obtaining its depository copies aided and speeded up the process. It was the creation of the *Deutsche Bibliothek* that added weight to the Frankfurt *Börsenverein*’s claim that their city had become the new German *Buchstadt* offering greater resources and a less restricted environment.

It is interesting to note in this context that the existing literature has thus treated the subject of the fate of the *Deutsche Bücherei* with a surprising lack of interest. The recent official account of the history of the *Deutsche Bücherei* merely stated that Leipzig’s institution lost its status as sole copyright library due to the zonal division of Germany. The creation of the Western equivalent is described matter-of-factly. As both institutions merged after the reunification of Germany, the omission of the contentious part of the creation of the *Deutsche Bibliothek* is understandable.¹⁰⁵ However, most other accounts also neglect Frankfurt’s agency. The emergence of the *Deutsche Bibliothek* is described as a ‘natural’ product of the increasingly difficult situation for publishers in the Soviet

¹⁰³ ‘An die Verleger der westlichen Besatzungszonen! Vergessen Sie nicht, von allen Neuerscheinungen zwei Exemplare an die Deutsche Bibliothek in Frankfurt am Main zu senden.’ *Börsenblatt des deutschen Buchhandels* [West] 23-24/ 31 December 1946.

¹⁰⁴ The library produced updates of its list of banned literature. The second list published in March 1947 already had the Soviet censor’s signature: it contained books by Trotsky. See Brandsch and Herzog, *Das literarische Leipzig*, p. 97.

¹⁰⁵ Ansorge, *Die Deutsche Bibliothek*.

Zone.¹⁰⁶ Even the GDR literature paid almost no attention to the creation of a parallel institution as Frankfurt's library was driven by capitalist notions and thus could not be regarded as an intellectual equal.¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, the literature applauding the creation of the *Deutsche Bibliothek* is more extensive. By and large written by the proponents of the institution, these accounts are classic pieces of Cold War literature. They exude in every line loathing for the Soviets and by extension the *Buchstadt* Leipzig that found itself in the Soviet Zone after 1945. Both Schauer and Eppelsheimer portray themselves as the saviours of German publishing and the copyright library. Speaking with hindsight at the height of the Cold War, they interpret Leipzig's role as that of a mere puppet in the Soviet plans of progressively painting Germany red.¹⁰⁸ Others join them in praising Frankfurt's library as nothing less than a 'lesson in a democratic way of life'.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, Frankfurt's advocates dispute the status of the *Deutsche Bücherei* as national library and deny responsibility for destroying national unity of Germany in this important area.¹¹⁰

These claims have to be put into perspective. By 1946, the policies towards printing, publishing and bibliographical archiving in the Soviet Zone had not yet been set in stone. The process was still developing, indeed as shown above, German agency was able to alter Soviet ideas. The plans for the *Deutsche Bibliothek*, however, were well under way by that time. The most obvious indication that the Frankfurt circle had their own careers at the forefront of their minds as much as any high moral considerations for 'true democracy and freedom' is the contradiction between Eppelsheimer and Schauer with regards to the creation and shape of the Frankfurt institutions – both *Börsenverein* and

¹⁰⁶ Brandsch and Herzog, *Das literarische Leipzig*.

¹⁰⁷ Röttsch, *Die Deutsche Bücherei*.

¹⁰⁸ See inter al: Schauer, 'Erinnerungen'; and Hanns W. Eppelsheimer, 'Ansprache' in *Deutsche Bibliothek and Börsenverein des deutschen Buchhandels, Drei Ansprachen*, pp. 29-35.

¹⁰⁹ Paul Hübiger, 'Ansprache' in *Ibid.*, pp. 7-18, here p. 10: 'eine Lektion in demokratischer Lebensweise'.

¹¹⁰ See Eppelsheimer: '[...]in Deutschland [...] wo man sich nicht entschließen konnte, eine Nationalbibliothek zu eröffnen', Hanns W. Eppelsheimer, *Die Deutsche Bibliothek in Frankfurt am Main, Ein Bericht* (Frankfurt, 1950), p. 13; also: *Ibid.*, 'Die Deutsche Bibliothek, Erinnerung an eine Gründung' in *Börsenverein, Bibliographie und Buchhandel* (Frankfurt am Main, 1959), pp. 57-75, here p. 60: 'Wir wußten daß eine zweite Bibliothek ein Land nicht zerreißen würde'.

Deutsche Bibliothek. Whereas Eppelsheimer tirelessly repeats the mantra of ‘attempts at compromise’, calling the *Deutsche Bibliothek* ‘just a transitional entity, a bridge’, Schauer clearly states that his aims were from the outset a ‘division of the stream of tradition’ and ‘independence from Leipzig’.¹¹¹

More importantly, the argument that the *Deutsche Bücherei* was ‘by no means’ a national library, cannot be upheld in the light of the evidence. The statutes of the *Deutsche Bücherei* of 1912 clearly outline the character of the institution as the ‘central archival library and national bibliographical centre’. Furthermore, when this document was amended in 1919, the Reich minister of the interior signed and validated the charter, surely a sign that even the Reich government recognized the library to be a national institution.¹¹² Moreover, the memorandum of Erich Ehlermann of 1910, the paper that initiated the *Deutsche Bücherei*, clearly had called for a ‘Reichsbibliothek’. This intention was implemented as was clearly acknowledged in 1927: ‘[...] these thoughts developed then by my friend Ehlermann [...] were realised later on, the memorandum has to be seen as the root of the *Deutsche Bücherei*.’¹¹³

Another supporting argument for the *Deutsche Bücherei* having been the national library of Germany was the fact that the institution held and still holds, as one of its special collections, the Reichsbibliothek of 1848. This collection of nearly 5000 books was compiled by the national assembly in Frankfurt’s Paulskirche as the seed corn for a national library, a Reichsbibliothek, as later also envisaged by Ehlermann.¹¹⁴

These facts sit ill with both Schauer’s and Eppelsheimer’s accounts. It is nevertheless revealing that both felt the need to be so defensive in their accounts. Even more intriguing is the fact that although in contemporary accounts the division of the book

¹¹¹ Schauer, ‘Erinnerung’, p. 269 and 271.

¹¹² StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 9289, Blatt 3-10, ‘Satzung der Deutschen Bücherei 1912’, with amendments of 1919.

¹¹³ See preface of Erich Ehlermann, *Eine Reichsbibliothek in Leipzig, Denkschrift 1910* (Leipzig, 1927).

¹¹⁴ See: Reichsbibliothek, *Geschichte*, <http://www.ddb.de> (accessed 22 May 2009).

trade was equated to a division of Germany, the literature on the institution in Frankfurt does not reflect this. The establishment of the *Deutsche Bibliothek* was the creation of a second *national* library, therefore clearly indicating the emergence of two state-like entities well before 1948, traditionally seen as the date of partition and the beginning of the Cold War.¹¹⁵

The developments in Germany during 1948 were also noted in the sphere of Leipzig's book trade. The visitors from the Western Zones decreased considerably at Leipzig's book and trade fairs as did the orders from the West. A pronounced anti-Soviet mood was evident among the Western visitors, colouring their impressions of Leipzig.¹¹⁶ By August 1947 the dismantlement had finally stopped, thus providing the printing quarter with the opportunity to reconstruct. Enormous production increases were achieved, albeit still used largely for reparation purposes. The licensing procedure for private publishers gained pace and Leipzig could again present 752 book trading and publishing companies in the directory of the German book trade.¹¹⁷ The foundation of two separate German states in 1949 cemented the demise of Leipzig's importance for publishers in the Western Zones. Yet, it also allowed the city to reassert itself as the leading *Buchstadt* in the German Democratic Republic.

The call for Leipzig to lead the intellectual reconstruction of Germany was taken at face value by the Leipzigers. However, it soon emerged that a re-establishment of Leipzig's status was not to mean a reinstatement of the pre-war Leipzig. The Soviets aimed at a complete transformation of Leipzig's economy and in particular of its book trade and publishing facilities. Waves of expropriations, coupled with the unwillingness to license Leipzig's publishers, contradicted the expectations for a revival of Leipzig as a *Buchstadt*,

¹¹⁵ Titel and Knopf, *Der Leipziger Gutenbergweg*; Borusiak and Höhnel, *Chronik I*.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Brandsch and Herzog, *Das literarische Leipzig*, p.101.

despite the propaganda by Soviet officials. So did the orgy of dismantling that occurred in the city and especially in the printing quarter. The city's administration tried to avert or at least alleviate the destruction, but the limited success of these attempts and the brutal and absurd nature of the disassembly orders created a lasting resentment of the Soviet authorities among the population and especially the workers. Another battlefield was the struggle to retain the *Deutsche Bücherei* in its capacity as national library. Soviet propaganda praised the re-opening as a new chapter in Germany's intellectual development. In reality, the library remained closed to the public until late 1947 and its holdings were depleted by substantial and repeated looting. Against this background, Frankfurt's ambitions to succeed Leipzig in its position as centre of the book trade gathered pace. The foundations for this were laid by the Americans, who evacuated most of Leipzig's distinguished publishers westward in 1945. This group then acted as a gravitational centre for everyone in the trade who left the Soviet Zone in the following years. The establishment of a library akin to the *Deutsche Bücherei* was a consequence of these developments and, in turn, cemented the division in Germany's book trade. Moreover, it heralded the partition of Germany through the duplication of a national institution. Leipzig continued to fight for its position and status, however, the continuous problems with both the Soviet occupiers and the competition in the Western Zones meant that it was fighting a losing battle. By 1949, Leipzig lagged behind in terms of licensed publishers and in terms of book production and the city's monopoly on the German bibliography had been broken. In the end, all Leipzig could hope for was to become the publishing capital of the GDR. Four-fifths of the German book-buying public now looked elsewhere.

4 Leipzig – City of Law

For centuries, the city of Leipzig had a special connection with the legal profession. The city had grown into Germany's most important seat for jurisdiction and the theory and development of law. Leipzig was able to maintain and expand this position until the beginning of the Third Reich. In the course of the twelve years of National Socialist rule, the German judicial system was perverted and undermined so that it became necessary after the fall of the Reich to set up an entirely new justice system. Due to its location in the Soviet Zone of Occupation, Leipzig was unable to play any part in the creation of the new legal institutions of the embryonic Federal Republic in the Western Zones. In the Soviet Zone meanwhile and subsequently in the German Democratic Republic the new ideologically driven justice policy negated the *bürgerlich* origin of German law, thereby depriving Leipzig of its standing in German legal discourses.

Leipzig had boasted a long history of law and jurisprudence. In 1263, a hundred years after the foundation of the city, the *Bürger* were granted the power to decide their own legal disputes.¹ The *libertas*, a law that allowed them to answer any charges in front of a panel of peers from the city, was the first step in Leipzig's legal emancipation from its feudal overlords. The jurisdiction in the city from then on lay in the hands of its *Bürger*. Furthermore, a city court was founded (Leipziger Schöppenstuhl) whose influence quickly spread. Soon legal disputes from across the territory of Central Germany were decided in the Schöppenstuhl and from 1325 onwards even the king of Bohemia referred legal disputes to the court. When Leipzig's university was founded in 1409 with the strong

¹ For the development of jurisprudence in Leipzig and Saxony see Steffen Heitmann, 'Rechtsgeschichte als Gerichtsgeschichte – Leipzigs besonderes Verhältnis zur Justiz' in Dieter Grimm, *Leipziger Juristische Vorträge – Das Reichsgericht in Wendezeiten* (Leipzig, 1997) pp. 13-19 and Karl-Heinz Blaschke, 'Vom Stadtbrief zum Reichsgericht' in Sächsisches Staatsministerium der Justiz, *Sächsische Justizgeschichte – Leipzig Stadt der Rechtssprechung* (Dresden, 1994) pp. 7-30.

support of Leipzig's *Bürger*, the faculty of law was one of the founding departments and a uniquely fruitful interplay of legal theory and practice ensued.² This found its institutional form in 1483 with the establishment of the Supreme Court of Justice for Saxony (Sächsisches Oberhofgericht). This autonomous court took over the legal powers of Saxony's sovereign as supreme judge. The feudal right of jurisdiction was thus transferred to a legally versed council, whose chair was concurrently the dean of the university's law faculty. The city further expanded its legal influence when the bench for family and marital law, which was normally under the rule of the church consistory, was transferred to Leipzig in 1550. It was also in Leipzig, that an independent German jurisprudence first emerged in the early 1600s. Benedikt Carpzov, who continued the practice of combining the position of Leipzig law professor with one as judge at both the Schöppenstuhl and the Oberhofgericht, amalgamated his practical experience and academic research into compendia of Saxon jurisdiction, which soon acquired legal authority throughout the German lands.³

The next addition to Leipzig's legal empire came in the wake of the industrialisation in the nineteenth century, which had increased the city's economic importance in Germany. With increased trade had come increased trade disputes, ultimately requiring a new specialist court to hear such cases. When such a court was set up for the then German Confederation (Deutscher Bund), Leipzig was chosen as the city where the new institution should reside. With the establishment in 1869 of the Bundesoberhandelsgericht (Supreme Federal Trade Court), Leipzig had thus acquired for the first time a nationwide reach within a branch of German law. The court began hearing cases in 1870 and was renamed a year later Reichsoberhandelsgericht (Supreme Reich

² The exodus in 1409 of German professors and students from Prague's Charles University in a dispute over representation brought many of them to Leipzig. The *Bürger* of Leipzig bought a building in the city centre and placed it at the academics' disposal to found a new institution. See, Inter al.: Ulrich v. Hehl (ed.), *Sachsens Landesuniversität in Monarchie, Republik und Diktatur* (Leipzig, 2005).

³ Ulrich Eisenhardt, *Deutsche Rechtsgeschichte* (Munich, 1984).

Trade Court) with authority vested in it to deal with trade disputes throughout the newly unified Reich. In the course of the efforts to unify the Reich not just by proclamation but in practice, several new imperial institutions were founded culminating in a Supreme Court (*Reichsgericht*). The location for what would be the most important institution next to parliament and government was hotly debated. To reflect the federal character of the new Reich the preference was for somewhere other than Berlin. Yet, the Prussian led government under Bismarck advocated the Reich capital. The topic was hotly debated in the justice committee of the *Reichstag* where especially Prussia's Justice Minister Leonhardt strongly advocated Berlin, to ensure that Bismarck's government was able to intervene in the *Reichsgericht*'s deliberations, should the need arise. But this motion was narrowly outvoted in the *Reichstag*. Instead it was decided to award the court to the city that already hosted the *Reichsoberhandelsgericht*, namely Leipzig. As Schubert states, it was Leipzig's status as 'deeply *bürgerlich* city' that swayed the majority of the *bürgerlich* parliamentarians' votes in favour of the city.⁴ In 1879 the court was established concurrently with the Reich justice laws. It was the court of ultimate resort both in civil and criminal law cases of imperial Germany. It consisted of three criminal senates and five civil senates dealing with revisions in their respective fields. Furthermore, the *Reichsgericht* was the immediate and final court for all cases of treason and high treason making it the guardian of the imperial laws and constitution. Not only did it decide court cases, it also acted to ensure uniformity in jurisdiction for the whole of Germany.

In the late nineteenth century, Leipzig had thus reached the climax of its judicial development and became the first city of law in the German Reich. The imposing structure that was built to house the Supreme Court aptly underlined this fact. This building with neoclassical and historicist features resembled the *Reichstag* in Berlin with its grand cupola

⁴ The justice committee of the *Reichstag* voted 30 to 28 votes for Leipzig, this decision then passed the *Reichstag* only in the second reading. Werner Schubert, *Die Deutsche Gerichtsverfassung 1869-1877, Entstehung und Quellen* (Frankfurt, 1981), p. 179

and the pillared front. A great square ran along the entire front of the *Reichsgericht* guaranteeing that the grand vista was not obstructed. It also ensured that the court building served as impressive backdrop for rallies, a fact that later the National Socialists knew to utilise with great effect. The architecture reflected the court's position in the Reich as well as its status among the great Reich institutions. In Leipzig itself the location of the building mirrored both its significance and the pride of the Leipziger. The building was in the heart of the city adjacent to both the *Gewandhaus* and the main university library and diagonally across from the new town hall. All institutions were within less than five minutes' walk from each other. The law faculty too, could be reached within five minutes. It was situated just behind the new town hall thus, making it easy for judges and lawyers to hang their robes in their *Reichsgericht* office and walk to their lectures and seminars in the 'Collegium Iuridicum'. Being the seat of the *Reichsgericht* created an immense pull. By the end of the nineteenth century, both the quality of Leipzig's law faculty and the nimbus of the *Reichsgericht* attracted so many lawyers and aspiring jurists that the city had the greatest concentration of lawyers of any city in Germany.⁵

Leipzig and the *Reichsgericht* represented German jurisprudence on the international stage in frequent international law congresses. In Germany the city manifested its prominent position with the yearly German jurists' convention (Deutscher Juristentag) that was held in the premises of the *Reichsgericht*.⁶ Furthermore, in the field of establishing law Leipzig and later the *Reichsgericht* played an important role. Leipzig's jurists – practitioners and academics alike – were substantial contributors to the Saxon Civil Code (*Sächsisches Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch*), a law compendium that came into force in 1865 in the kingdom of Saxony.

⁵ Michael Schäfer, *Bürgertum in der Krise. Städtische Mittelklassen in Edinburgh und Leipzig, 1890-1930* (Göttingen, 2003), p. 30.

⁶ The Deutscher Juristentag was an event of the *Bund Deutscher Juristen*, an independent association of jurists.



3 A view from above in 1909, the *Reichsgericht* in the midst of Leipzig's *bürgerlich* institutions.

1 – The New Town Hall

2 – The *Reichsgericht*

3 – The *Gewandhaus* (destroyed 1943)

4 – The University Library (rebuilt 1992-2002)

5 – Collegium Iuridicum (destroyed 1943)

6 – University Main Building (damaged heavily 1943, finally demolished 1968)

7 – St Thomas's Church

Source: *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, 29 January 2009

Building on this expertise, they later also contributed to the Civil Code of Germany (*Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch*) which became law in 1900, the first comprehensive statute book regulating all of Germany. The *Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch* remains the basis of German civil law to this day.

The geographic distance from Berlin did not shield the *Reichsgericht* from political developments in the early twentieth century. Once the end of the First World War had brought about the abolition of the monarchy, the administration of law found itself in a different environment faced with new challenges. Parliamentary rule in the new republic was one of them. During the Weimar Republic, the *Reichsgericht* followed, like many other courts in Germany, a conservative line. This conservatism had leanings towards the reactionary; an anti-republican bias was part of the moral and intellectual make up of most judges at the time. The members of the *Reichsgericht*, lawyers, attorneys and judges had all been socialized in Wilhelmine Germany and continued to hold the values and traditions they had become accustomed to in that period. A certain uniformity in views and principles had been based on the selection process for prospective students. Both the length and the expenses of the legal education pre-determined the financial background of the aspiring jurists, their dependence on their superiors ensured their allegiance to the existing ideas of the Kaiserreich.⁷ The adherence to these ideas remained unchallenged in the Weimar system as the principle of ‘independence of judges’ paired with their status as irremovable and non-transferable remained intact. This meant that at least in the area of justice, the *ancien régime* continued nearly unchallenged.

As the Social Democratic politician and journalist Erich Kuttner noted in 1921:

‘The great majority of judges had remained in the service of the republic, even though

⁷ Mueller states that the majority of the judges sided with the right-wing of the National Conservative Party and kept their distance from the new republic. Ingo Mueller, *Furchtbare Juristen* (Munich, 1989). For the *Reichsgericht*, Karl Kaul provides statistics, which place all its members in the middle class, with over half coming from families with an academic background. Karl Friedrich Kaul, *Geschichte des Reichsgerichts, 1933-1945, Band 4* (Berlin, 1971), p.51. Erich Zeigner declared that he had to hide his affinity for the SPD during his law studies and his first junior positions, otherwise his superiors would have ensured his exclusion from the judicial community. Zeigner in LVZ, 13 August 1948.

being inwardly hostile to it.’⁸ Despite having to guard the laws of the new republic, the court’s relationship to the new parliamentary democracy was ambivalent. In practice, this meant that the state was seen as different from the country – the republic (a ‘hopefully’ transient occurrence) and the fatherland (the eternal structure that had to be preserved) became two separate entities. This is exemplified by the differing judicial response to attacks on the new state from the anti-democratic fringes. The decisions tended to favour defendants of right-wing persuasions, whereas leftist radicals were prosecuted harshly – in line with the conservative stance of the *Reichsgericht*. This prejudiced interpretation of existing laws rewarded the right-wing claims of ‘love for their fatherland’ and punished the ambition for the ‘international rule of the working class’.⁹ The fact that both positions threatened the existing democratic state order was regarded as largely irrelevant as the continuation of this order was not the utmost priority of the *Reichsgericht* members.¹⁰ The jurisprudence of the *Reichsgericht*, once an element in the furtherance of the development of the German state, had become a hindrance in the effective establishment of Weimar democracy. The political comfort zone of the judges came to be a goalpost in their decision making and the rule of law began to decline.¹¹

Internationally, the *Reichsgericht* came to prominence in the 1920s through the so-called ‘Leipziger Prozesse’, the court cases against war crimes committed by German

⁸ ‘Die große Masse der Richter ist also im Dienst der Republik geblieben, obwohl sie ihr innerlich feindlich gesinnt ist.’ Erich Kuttner cited in Heinrich and Elisabeth Hannover, *Politische Justiz 1918-1933* (Frankfurt, 1966), p. 22.

⁹ Dieter Grimm, ‘Das Reichsgericht in Wendezeiten’ in Grimm, *Leipziger Juristische Vorträge*, pp. 21-45.

¹⁰ As Ernst Fraenkel noted: ‘Das gesamte Beamtentum des alten Regime war monarchistisch [...]. Der Richter außerdem [...] aus innerer Notwendigkeit. Kein Zweig des Beamtentums hat sich daher auf die neuen Verhältnisse schwerer umzustellen vermocht als die Jusitz.’ Therefore, the new republic and its democratic system were hardly deemed to be valuable commodities in the eyes of the jurists. See Fraenkel, *Zur Soziologie der Klassenjustiz* (Berlin, 1927), p. 12.

¹¹ As Heinrich and Elisabeth Hannover put it: ‘[...]das Prinzip der “Unabhängigkeit der Richter” [...] wandte sich nach [...] 1918 gegen das zum Souverän des Staates gewordene Volk. [...] Es ging ganz einfach um die Durchsetzung bestimmter höchst fragwürdiger Machtinteressen, denen die in der Verfassung festgelegten demokratischen Freiheitsrechte mündiger Staatsbürger weichen mußten, weil eine im autoritären Denken befangene Richterschaft es so wollte.’ Hannover, *Politische Justiz*, p. 33. Although Hannover’s harsh views on judges have been put into perspective by Klemmer, even he concedes that an inherent bias corrupted the ‘objective’ establishment of truth in court cases. Markus Klemmer, *Gesetzesbindung und Richterfreiheit* (Baden Baden, 1996).

soldiers during the First World War. The prosecution of war criminals stipulated in the Versailles treaties came under the authority of Germany's highest court. Some of these cases indeed led to convictions; for the most part however, they ended in abatement of action, acquittals or in lenient sentences, which subsequently were abrogated.¹² In the final months of the Weimar Republic, on a proposal by the NSDAP, the *Reichsgericht* president was made proxy of the Reich president Hindenburg. This was a first clear indication of the politicization of the judiciary that was to come.

Justice was a part of the state machine transformed piecemeal by the National Socialists after the takeover of power. This development is exemplified in the *Reichsgericht*; the downfall of Germany's Supreme Court mirrors the downfall of the German justice system in the Third Reich, aptly labelled by Eisenhardt as the 'darkest chapter of German legal history'.¹³ The first sign of things to come were the events after the *Reichstagsbrand* (the arson attack on the German parliament), when personal rights as well as the authority of the *Länder* governments were severely restricted, thus preparing the centralisation of political power necessary for the *Gleichschaltung*. Additionally, following the introduction of the *Heimtückeverordnung* in March 1933, *Sondergerichte* (special courts) in all districts of all regional jurisdiction came into being. These courts dealt with all crimes the National Socialists deemed 'malicious', thus removing those cases from the normal legal procedures, and creating a parallel justice system devoid of

¹² Recent appreciations of the processes condemn the low rate of guilty verdicts. See, inter al: Gerd Hankel, *Die Leipziger Prozesse. Deutsche Kriegsverbrechen und ihre strafrechtliche Verfolgung nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg* (Hamburg, 2003); Harald Wiggenhorn, 'Eine Schuld fast ohne Sühne - Erinnerung an die Leipziger Kriegsverbrecherprozesse vor 75 Jahren', in *Die Zeit*, 16 August 1996. Erich Ebermayer, however, as observer of his father's work as chief prosecutor in the trials at the *Reichsgericht* draws a different picture. He describes how the low sentences were negotiated between his father and the legal representatives of the victorious powers. 'Nach stiller Übereinkunft der führenden Juristen [...] nur eine Farce.' Ebermayer, *Denn heute*, p. 349.

¹³ Eisenhardt, *Deutsche Rechtsgeschichte*, p. 371.

preliminary hearing or proper representation of the defendants.¹⁴ This severe encroachment upon the legal system was closely followed by the 'law for the restoration of the professional civil service' (*Berufsbeamtengesetz*, 7 April 1933) that expelled many law practitioners on political and racial grounds. The *Reichsgericht* was affected as well, even though it 'only had baptised Jews' whom *Reichsgerichtspräsident* Bumke mistakenly considered to be safe.¹⁵ When it became clear that the *Reichsgericht* was not beyond reach, Bumke did nothing to support his institution's members. His inaction eased the National Socialists' way into the institution.¹⁶

The former *Reichsoberstaatsanwalt* Ludwig Ebermayer had already urged Bumke to vacate his seat at the takeover of power by the NSDAP, feeling that real justice could no longer be upheld under a National Socialist government.¹⁷ Yet Bumke remained in office. Only when confronted with the forced dismissal of the *Reichsgericht* senate president Dr Alfons David, is Bumke said to have considered his resignation. But he later refrained, claiming that his true reasons (opposition to the treatment of Jews in the civil service and especially the justice apparatus) would be concealed and the *Reichsgericht* brought under 'real' National Socialist control. David was deeply hurt by his dismissal and even tried to assure the new government of his devotion in a letter to Hitler asking for 'forgiveness' should he have somehow offended and pleading for a 'chance to prove his loyalty to the new regime.'¹⁸ David was one of those German Jews who felt entirely German and thus

¹⁴ Decree for the Protection of the National Socialist Movement against Malicious Attacks, 21 March 1933, RGBl. I, 21 March 1933, p. 135.

¹⁵ Bumke was 'für das Reichsgericht ohne Sorge.' In this he shared the opinion of most of Leipzig's *Bürgertum* that 'assimilated' Jews were considered 'safe' and should remain in their positions. Yet he and his fellow *Bürger* had a rude awakening. Ebermayer, *Denn heute*, p. 24.

¹⁶ Bumke was not alone in this kind of apathy. Rather than outright support, the key elements in allowing the National Socialists to gain ground in the sphere of justice, were inaction and opportunism. Until the onset of war, the membership of the NSDAP grew amongst jurists, however, far from being caused by political persuasion it largely was founded on opportunistic reasons. The guarding and furthering of one's career took precedent over regard for the 'unfortunate few'. See Hermann Wentker, 'Justiz in der SBZ/DDR und im 'Dritten Reich' in Heydemann, Oberreuter, *Diktaturen in Deutschland*, pp. 188-218.

¹⁷ Ebermayer, *Denn heute*, pp. 76-7.

¹⁸ Letter by David addressed to Hitler in Meinecke, 'Conflicting loyalties', pp. 121-2. For Bumke's reaction: Dieter Kolbe, *Reichsgerichtspräsident Dr Erwin Bumke – Studien zum Niedergang des Reichsgerichts und der deutschen Rechtspflege* (Karlsruhe, 1975), pp. 224-5; David later emigrated with his family to the US

could not place themselves outside their nation, neither intellectually nor emotionally. In total, the *Reichsgericht* lost besides David six *Reichsgericht* court councillors (*Reichsgerichtsrat*) and one *Reichsanwalt* (senior public prosecutor) directly through the application of that law. One lawyer, a member of the SPD – indeed the only Social Democrat at the institution – resigned just a day before the law became effective, thereby safe-guarding his pension.¹⁹ It became obvious that the politicisation of the judiciary or more precisely, the conversion of the legal system into a tool for the National Socialists was clearly underway. This transformation could already be observed as early as 1933. The *Deutsche Juristen Zeitung*, one of the main journals of legal practice and an outlet for debate about legal matters as well as the legal profession, carried in its January edition (published 1 January 1933) an outraged call to stop political influence in the courts. The judge Dr Baumbach demanded a clear detachment of the judiciary from the political sphere: ‘Justice is [...] not a weapon of any political tendency or class.’ By October of the same year, these standards of judicial independence were deemed antiquated. Another judge, Dr Kern, even questioned whether the ‘old’ legal order had any longer any bearing on the new times: ‘It is doubtful, whether it makes any sense at all [...] to judge the events with the rules of the old legal system.’²⁰

It is in this light that Bumke’s actions need to be understood. Both Ebermayer, as Bumke’s contemporary and close acquaintance, and Kolbe, the most thorough student of Bumke’s career, portray the man as desperately holding on to whatever he could preserve

where he survived the war. See: Wolfgang M. Schwiedrzik, *Lieber will ich Steine klopfen: Der Philosoph und Pädagoge Theodor Litt in Leipzig* (Leipzig, 1996), p. 17.

¹⁹ Lothar Gruchmann, *Justiz im Dritten Reich 1933-1940: Anpassung und Unterwerfung in der Ära Gürtner* (Munich, 2001). The *Reichsgericht* hence lost eight of a total of 110 judges and lawyers through the law. They had to retire but in most cases at least, through some engineering of Bumke but mostly Goerdeler, were granted their full pensions. Gerhard Pauli, *Die Rechtsprechung des Reichsgerichts in Strafsachen zwischen 1933-45 und ihre Fortwirkung in der Rechtsprechung des Bundesgerichtshofes* (Berlin 1992), p. 14.

²⁰ See Dr Baumbach, ‘Umkehr’ in *Deutsche Juristen Zeitung*, 1/1933, columns 67-70, here column 70 and Dr Kern, ‘Die Grenzen der richterlichen Unabhängigkeit’ in *Ibid.*, 10/1933, columns 656-70, here column 657.

of the old legal system and rule of law by making concessions to the new regime.²¹ It soon, however, became clear that these concessions were destroying the very core of the rule of law as it traditionally existed. The German Jurists' Congress in October 1933 not only marked the takeover of the hitherto independent *Bund Deutscher Juristen* into a National Socialist institution, it also set out the new understanding of law according to National Socialism. Hitler himself called for an end to the difference between law and morality (obviously corresponding to his view of morals) and the congress's participants also agreed on the notion that 'justice and law do not necessarily amount to the same thing'.²² In other words, the objective assessment under the terms of the law was giving way to a subjective (National Socialist) view of what constituted justice.

The first, very public taste, of what was to come was one of the most notorious criminal cases in the early years of National Socialist rule. Equally, it proved to be a final show of *Rechtsstaatlichkeit* on such a prominent level for the remainder of the 'Thousand Year Reich'. The trial against the alleged perpetrators of the *Reichstagsbrand* was to be a show case for the regime, a stage where it could prove a communist conspiracy to overthrow law and order in Germany and thus legitimize the government's illegal and brutal actions against these political opponents. Marinus van der Lubbe, a Dutch left-wing activist, the German communist Ernst Torgler and three of his Bulgarian comrades, Georgi Dimitroff, Wassil Tanew and Blagoi Popov were charged with starting the fire in the parliament building. The *Reichsgericht* was, as Germany's highest court, chosen as a suitable setting for this showcase trial. This was a first test of the institution's power to uphold law in the face of the expectations of the new rulers and preconceived judgements. The National Socialists demanded the death sentence for all of the defendants. Under German law effective at the time this was impossible as arson did not carry the death

²¹ Ebermayer, *Denn heute*, pp. 23-4 and Kolbe, *Reichsgerichtspräsident* p. 214.

²² 'Recht und Gesetz müssen nicht gleichbedeutend sein.': 'Deutscher Juristen Tag', Report and Hitler's speech verbatim in *Deutsche Juristen Zeitung* 20/1933 columns 1313-24, here column 1320.

penalty. To facilitate the call for the death sentence and abide the wishes of the National Socialists a fundamental rule of justice (the first of many to come) was overridden: *nulla poena sine lege* (no punishment without a law). Subsequently named *lex van der Lubbe*, the arson attack of the *Reichstagsbrand* was declared punishable by death. However, in exchange for abandoning *nulla poena sine lege*, Bumke wrested the right from the National Socialists for the *Reichsgericht* to conduct the trial freely.²³ The subsequent result upset the regime deeply.²⁴ Van der Lubbe was sentenced to death; however, his four co-defendants were all acquitted by the *Reichsgericht*.

Scholars to this day are divided about the real course of events during the *Reichstagsbrand*; there is not even agreement on van der Lubbe's role. Hence their interpretations of the sentence and conduct of the case vary widely. Whereas Engelmann alleges that the court acted in utter obedience to the government's wishes (including the claim that the acquittals were sanctioned by the regime), others portray this trial, albeit with reservations, as upholding the rule of law. Erich Ebermayer, as close observer and jurist himself, reports the fury of the National Socialist government at this outcome and rates the acquittals as unexpected bravery on behalf of the court, euphorically exclaiming that 'there is still justice in Germany.'²⁵ Hitler even was said to have contemplated abolishing the *Reichsgericht* completely, but was dissuaded by Bumke.²⁶ This is hardly a sign of a judgement in line with the regime's wishes. The suspension of *nulla poena sine lege* is obviously an indicator of a serious infringement of the rule of law. However, it is clear that the outcome of the case did not deliver the proof of a communist conspiracy that was so eagerly sought by the National Socialists.

²³ Kolbe, *Reichsgerichtspräsident*, p. 217.

²⁴ 'Die Nazi Presse schäumt vor Wut', Ebermayer, *Denn heute*, p. 225.

²⁵ Ibid.: Ebermayer was positively elated: 'Unser wackeres Reichsgericht [hält] sich doch noch an die Strafprozeßordnung', '[...] der Mut und die Kraft zu einem Freispruch der vier Mitangeklagten [...]', (both quotes p. 221) and 'Die vier Kommunisten sind freigesprochen [...]. Es gibt also doch noch Recht in Deutschland!', p. 226.

²⁶ Bumke had to bring his full diplomatic skill to bear in stopping Hitler from this course of action. Ibid., p. 221, p. 225 and p. 296.

The official abolition of *nulla poena sine lege* did not happen overall until 28 June 1935 when the ‘law for the change of the penal code’ (*Gesetz zur Änderung des Strafgesetzbuches*) came into force. From then on judges were allowed to sentence deeds that were, if not in themselves criminal, analogous to chargeable offences. Law was thereafter dependent on subjective analogies.²⁷ The absolute certainty of the letter of the law, the basis for the rule of law, was lost.

Even though Bumke had avoided the closure of the institution in his charge, the *Reichsgericht* lost considerable leverage after the *Reichstagsbrandprozess*. The authority over any form of treason was taken away and given to the newly established Berlin *Volksgeschichtshof* (People’s High Court) in April 1934. At once, the *Reichsgericht* was ‘dethroned’ and lost all legal hold on political decisions. The *Oberreichsanwalt* (the highest public prosecutor) was rendered into a ‘dummy’; the *Volksgeschichtshof* got its own *Oberreichsanwalt*.²⁸ The *Volksgeschichtshof* had senates of five members of whom only the minority were regular judges-, the three lay judges were party activists sure to act according to National Socialist principles.²⁹

It might have been this loss of power coupled with the threat of complete dissolution that from then onwards informed the sentencing decisions of the *Reichsgericht*. Far from trying to uphold the rule of law, the court now pre-empted rulings of the National Socialists. This was especially noticeable in the adjudications regarding family law.³⁰ Even before the Nuremberg laws of 15 September 1935, the *Reichsgericht* ruled marriages

²⁷ *Gesetz zur Änderung von Reichsgesetzblatt 28 Juni 1935*, RGBI. I 1935, p. 844.

²⁸ ‘Was für uns “alte“ Juristen ebenso komisch ist, wie wenn ein Kalb zwei Köpfe hätte.’ Ebermayer, *Denn heute*, p. 296.

²⁹ *Gesetz zur Änderung von Vorschriften des Strafrechts und Strafverfahrens 24 April 1934*, RGBI. I 1934, p. 345.

³⁰ Eva Schumann attributes to the *Reichsgericht* a ‘conscious and active role’ in creating the National Socialist family law. The civil law was always more open to interpretation and thus bending according to prevailing ideas. See Eva Schumann, ‘Die Reichsgerichtsrechtsprechung in Familiensachen von 1933 bis 1945’ in Bernd-Rüdiger Kern and Adrian Schmidt-Recla (eds.), *125 Jahre Reichsgericht* (Berlin, 2006), pp. 171-214.

unlawful that did not comply with the racial ideas of the state. The 'requirements of today's state' were mentioned in the reasons for the judgements:

If there is the possibility that one marrying party is of an alien, especially the Jewish race, then this is a characteristic that according to the common view of life, especially from the National Socialist point of view, will very likely prevent the other party [...] from marrying this person.³¹

Bumke had 'fallen prey' to Hitler's 'fishing for souls' and subsequently enlisted in the services of National Socialist propaganda and complied with the racial ideas of the state.³² Despite all this, he was still convinced that he was upholding as much as possible of the laws and morality in the penal justice system of the Germany before 1933. Thus he decided not to retire but extend his term in office twice after 1939.³³ This saw him getting increasingly entwined with the system of injustice in the Third Reich. Under the cloak of wartime exigencies, the National Socialists accelerated their programme of annulment of the constitutional justice system. As early as 1934, the regime had proven that it simply could suspend the legal system and have Hitler declare himself 'des deutschen Volkes oberster Gerichtsherr' (the highest judge of all Germans) without any objection.³⁴ By 1940, with the introduction of the *Nichtigkeitsbeschwerde* (invalidating appeal) and the *außerordentlicher Einspruch* (extraordinary appeal), the National Socialists obtained the

³¹ '...die Anforderungen des heutigen Staates', *Entscheidungen des Reichsgericht in Zivilsachen (RGZ)* 146, 241-44, 20 December 1934 and 'Liegt bei einem Eheschließenden die [...] Möglichkeit vor, daß er [...] einer fremden, insbesondere der jüdischen Rasse angehört, [so ist dies ein Verhältnis], das nach allgemeiner Lebensauffassung, zumal vom Nationalsozialistischen Standpunkt aus, sehr wohl geeignet scheint, den anderen Teil [...] von der Eheschließung abzuhalten.' In *RGZ* 148, 193-196, 22 August 1935.

³² Both Kolbe and Ebermayer describe the personal meeting of Bumke with Hitler in April 1933 as a turning point in the *Reichsgericht* president's estimation of the Reich chancellor. It was, however, not until 1935 that he publicly acted as advocate for National Socialist ideology. See Ebermayer, *Denn heute* and Kolbe *Reichsgerichtspräsident*. Bumke was not alone in falling for Hitler's charms. Other critics of National Socialism experienced the same effect. Goerdeler had spoken of his 'gewinnende Liebenswürdigkeit' as did Arnold Brecht who described how 'Hitler hat seinen Magnetismus wirken lassen'. See Goerdeler, 'Rechenschaftsbericht', p. 1205 and Arnold Brecht, *Mit der Kraft des Geistes, Lebenserinnerungen zweite Hälfte* (Stuttgart, 1967), p. 267.

³³ In July 1939, Bumke turned sixty-five and had thus reached retirement age. At this point he would have had the opportunity to withdraw from active office without having to fear repercussions for disloyalty towards the state.

³⁴ Government declaration by Hitler on the *Röhmputsch* (13 July 1934), radio transmission quoted in Ebermayer, *Denn heute*, p. 345.

tools fully to control the legal process.³⁵ Any sentence deemed 'not harsh enough' was returned by the *Oberreichsanwalt* (who had been briefed accordingly) for 're-evaluation' and re-trial with a predetermined outcome to the *Reichsgericht*. Next to this the police and SS carried out their own 'justice' by sending defendants who had been acquitted or 'too mildly sentenced' to concentration camps or simply shooting them upon their release.³⁶ Yet, the *Reichsgericht* tried and succeeded in turning down invalidating appeals aimed at a death sentence.³⁷ This and other 'misdemeanours' of the courts prompted an outburst by Hitler in 1942 about judges who had not realized the demands of the times. These judges, he proclaimed, would be removed from their office should they not fall in with the demands of the age. In the same speech, Hitler finally declared himself Germany's highest judge and thus above any law.³⁸ With this proclamation the National Socialist contempt for the justice system had reached its climax, any freedom judges might have held in their decisions was eliminated. The scope of the *Sondergerichte* was broadened; the swift condemnation of criminals (perceived and actual) became the decisive element in sentencing.

The *Reichsgericht*'s penal senates still attempted to avert death sentences, yet by 1944 their efforts had come to an end. Unlike most of Leipzig's other institutions, the *Reichsgericht* was able to continue proceedings despite the heavy air raids of December 1943 and 1944. After the attempt on Hitler's life in July 1944, the ruthlessness of the National Socialist persecution intensified and the *Reichsgericht* lost even the semblance of

³⁵ Arno Buschmann, *Nationalsozialistische Weltanschauung und Gesetzgebung* (Vienna, 1999), p. 217. The *Nichtigkeitsbeschwerde* is a judicial tool common in European jurisdiction, the extraordinary appeal, however, is particular to National Socialism. Both were designated for revision purposes, yet soon became tools of jurisdiction in their own right. The extraordinary appeal came to trial in front of the special senate (*Sondersenat*), which because of its sentencing practice became known as the 'Senat des Führers'. See Bernd Engelmann, *Rechtsverfall, Justizterror und das schwere Erbe* (Cologne, 1989), p. 165 and Pauli, *Die Rechtsprechung des Reichsgerichts*, p. 17.

³⁶ Karl Kroeschell, *Rechtsgeschichte Deutschlands im 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen, 1992).

³⁷ Kolbe, *Reichsgerichtspräsident*, p. 407. Heiko Weidenthaler has produced a detailed study on the penal senates of the court where he found a great variety in the way the invalidating appeal was dealt with in the individual senates. He concludes, however, that there had been 'Lichtblicke' in all penal senates of the *Reichsgericht* when appeals had been thrown out or the proposed death sentence avoided. 'Die Strafsenate des Reichsgerichts', p. 208.

³⁸ *Beschluß des Großdeutschen Reichstages, 26 April 1942*, RGBl. I (1942), p. 247.

independence. On 1 October 1944, the second penal senate of the *Reichsgericht* was abolished on the basis of having been ‘too lenient’ in its sentencing. The third penal senate (under Bumke’s leadership) was brought into line with the threat of deportation of its members to concentration camps.³⁹

The arrival of the Americans in April 1945 ended the proceedings in the *Reichsgericht*. Anticipating his arrest by the American troops, the institution’s president Bumke committed suicide on 20 April, ironically on Hitler’s birthday.⁴⁰ The *Reichsgericht* did not dissolve nor was it immediately abolished by the Allied forces; rather it existed in limbo, with a number of its judges still in office, yet without function. The *Reichsgericht* was included in the ‘temporary suspension of [...] courts’ proclaimed by Law Number 2 issued by the military government’s Supreme Commander shortly after the Americans had occupied Leipzig.⁴¹ The term ‘suspension’ prompted the judges and barristers at the *Reichsgericht* to present their institution to the Allied Forces and declare their willingness to ‘cooperate in [...] the new foundation of a deeper consciousness of what is right’. They were clearly anticipating a mere transitional closure.⁴² Through Mayor Vierling, Hermann Weinkauff and C.G. Ruland as representatives for the judges and barristers at the court respectively, passed a letter to the American authorities designed as visiting card and recommendation for their speedy reinstatement. The jurists demonstrated an astonishing level of self-confidence vis-à-vis the American occupation forces by claiming that a ‘self-administered, independent Supreme Court for the entirety of the German territory was a necessity for the German people’, thereby both demanding no interference in their institution and declaring it and thereby themselves indispensable.⁴³ They also used it to rewrite the history of the years 1933-45 and the part they had played in it. The letter

³⁹ Meinecke, ‘Conflicting loyalties’, p. 214.

⁴⁰ The Americans were on the outskirts of Leipzig gaining ground from the 16 April onwards. By the 20 April it was clear that Leipzig was occupied. Bumke, who had lost both his sons on the front, the youngest just in the last days of the war, took his life. It is accidental that he decided to do so on Hitler’s 56th birthday.

⁴¹ StadtAL, StVuR (I) No. 7943, Blatt 1-6.

⁴² Ibid., Blatt 7-9, here Blatt 8, 17 May 1945.

⁴³ Ibid.

included a short history of the institution stating that 'it was understood [that] it was independent and impartial in its jurisdiction [until 1933]'. Furthermore, the representatives of the *Reichsgericht* spoke of a 'secondary and revocable authority' of the institution in the justice system of the Third Reich, emphasizing the pure revision court mandate and finally portraying the *Reichsgericht* and its members as innocent victims of the times. The entire piece is extraordinary in its complete lack of acknowledgement of any responsibility for their actions.⁴⁴ At first, their audacity even seemed to pay off. On 22 May 1945, the Americans established a Commission for the concerns of the *Reichsgericht*, charging three members (the senate presidents Brandis and Frings, and the barrister Schneidewind) of the *Reichsgericht* with the task of ensuring the cataloguing and preservation of the property of the institution. The commission members regarded this as first step for the reconstruction not only of the building but also the institution.⁴⁵ They were not to be disappointed. On 6 June, the American control office for the *Reichsgericht* was established under Major Donald White.⁴⁶ The control office and the commission worked closely together and expanded the commission's remit; it amounted to 'nearly all duties of the *Reichsgericht*, apart from the actual jurisdiction'.⁴⁷ Furthermore, there were assurances from the Americans that the re-opening of the *Reichsgericht* was to happen shortly.⁴⁸ Even after the arrival of the Soviet forces, this belief endured. The commission continued its work, and was officially approved by General Trufanov on 6 August 1945. The General assured the commission that he was anticipating the re-opening, with the final decision lying in Berlin with Zhukov.⁴⁹

This situation, however, changed rapidly just weeks later. The commission's Brandis and Frings were arrested on 24 August 1945 together with senior members of the

⁴⁴ Ibid., Blatt 8.

⁴⁵ Ibid., Blatt 17.

⁴⁶ Ibid., Blatt 35.

⁴⁷ Ibid., Blatt 31.

⁴⁸ Ibid., Blatt 35.

⁴⁹ Ibid., Blatt 31.

Reichsgericht (judges and lawyers) who had remained in Leipzig (about a third of all senior staff at the court).⁵⁰ The arrests were rather arbitrary in nature. All senior staff were targeted, but those who were not encountered when the arrests were carried out, remained unharmed, even later on.⁵¹ There was also no distinction made between party members and those without political affiliations, criminal or civil senate members. None of the detainees were given a reason for their arrest nor told where they would be taken. They were transported via various stations to a former prisoner of war camp in Mühlberg/Elbe and kept there in appalling conditions. Any attempt at flight was circumvented by the threat of harm to their families. Weakened by illness and malnutrition the vast majority of their number perished there. Schaefer kept an account of who died. In 1946 alone, 19 former *Reichsgericht* members died, amongst them the *Reichsgericht* commission's Brandis and Frings.⁵² The survivors were then transferred in 1948 to Buchenwald, the former National Socialist concentration camp turned political prison by the Soviets. Of over thirty-five judges only four lived to see their release in the 1950s. None of these detainees were ever charged, nor had their families been informed of their arrests, whereabouts and death. Indeed, Schaefer was told as early as 1946 that there was nothing held against him, but even so he was only released in 1950 as the first of the small number of remaining detainees. The last one had to wait until 1955.⁵³

The *Deutsche Justizverwaltung* (German Justice Administration) in East Berlin proclaimed on 20 September 1945, answering an enquiry from the *Reichsgericht* commission, that the *Reichsgericht* had ceased to exist with the end of the Third Reich.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ One of the survivors, August Schaefer, described his experience in 'Das große Sterben im Reichsgericht' in *Deutsche Richterzeitung*, 35/1957, pp. 249-250.

⁵² Ibid., p. 249.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 250. See also: GUR, 'Sie wirkten wie Geister. Das Ende des Reichsgerichts' in *Die Welt*, 26 August 2002.

⁵⁴ The German Justice Administration was one of the Central administrations that the SMAD created through order No. 17 of 27 July 1945. It had the main authority over all public prosecution departments, courts and judicial bodies. Tobias Schmid, *Die Bedeutung der Deutschen Zentralverwaltung für Justiz, für die Entwicklung der Strafjustiz in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone in Deutschland 1945-1949* (Berlin, 2001).

The *Reichsgericht* commission 'was never intended' as a precursor for a re-establishment of the institution, but it was merely a tool in retaining the material assets of the court.⁵⁵ This view was understandably not popular in Leipzig. The retired *Reichsgericht* judge Dr Otto Weipert urged the Lord Mayor to take a stand against this view of the 'Berlin Justice Administration'.⁵⁶ Yet, as if to emphasize the point of the *Justizverwaltung*, the *Reichsgericht* was officially closed on 8 October by the Leipzig police.⁵⁷ The remaining employees, amongst them the *Reichsgericht* commission's Schneidewind were ordered to leave and barred from the premises.⁵⁸ Some confusion ensued about the origins of the closure order. The *Reichsgericht* employees were sure that it came from the Soviet secret police and informed Zeigner accordingly. Yet the Leipzig police stated that its orders came from the Saxon *Landesverwaltung* and Soviet military administration.⁵⁹ The arrests of the senior *Reichsgericht* members may have informed the opinions of the institution's remaining employees as to the source of the closure orders. Those arrests were not carried out by the regular occupation authorities but the Soviet secret service. The Soviet city command was not even informed about the whereabouts of the *Reichsgericht* members, let alone the reasons for their arrest. It did know, however, that any enquiries about the arrested were not wanted and indeed dangerous: Zeigner cited in his minutes of talks with the commander the following order: 'Even if the arrested members of the *Reichsgericht* are harmless people or even democrats, one should not get involved let alone champion their

The German Justice Administration was also crucial in the centralisation of the justice system in the Soviet Zone that preceded and facilitated the GDR. See Ibid., especially p. 173.

⁵⁵ Ibid., No. 7943, Blatt 38-40, Eugen Schiffer, 9 September 1945.

⁵⁶ Ibid., Blatt 27-9, Weipert to Zeigner, 6 October 1945, here Blatt 29.

⁵⁷ The police were now fully denazified and increasingly controlled by the KPD.

⁵⁸ Ibid., Blatt 32, 8 October 1945.

⁵⁹ Ibid., Blatt 50. There is a file on the closure of the *Reichsgericht* that contains details of the proceedings as well as a list of the *Reichsgericht* members who were arrested on 24 August 1945. Unfortunately, in accordance with the privacy policies of the Saxon Archives, the city archive in Leipzig declined to authorize a viewing of its contents. However, the content description speaks of the 'Schließung des Reichsgericht im Auftrag der GPU', thus the *Reichsgericht* employees might have been correct in their assumption as to who was the origin of the closure order. Ibid., No. 17506 [GESPERRT].

case. The military administration does not know of the whereabouts either.’⁶⁰ Thus even those who were known to be innocent were best forgotten. Therefore the question of who gave the order to close the *Reichsgericht* loses its importance. Through the physical destruction of most of its members, the institution had been annihilated regardless of any cosmetic work done by the rump *Reichsgericht* commission. What Hitler had threatened, the Soviet occupation forces had turned into reality – inconvenient judges were deported. It is a bitter irony that they even ended up in the former concentration camp Buchenwald.⁶¹ Unsurprisingly, the *Reichsgericht* was not re-instated.⁶² It appears that none of the other occupation powers showed much interest in the *Reichsgericht*, let alone its members. A Supreme Court was not envisaged in any of the Allied Control Council’s plans and thus it was left to the Soviets to deal with the issue as they pleased. As Zeigner stated in a belated reply to Weipert’s letter: ‘It is not dependent on the position of any German authority whether or not the *Reichsgericht* will be re-opened. It is solely at the discretion of the occupation powers [plural in the original].’⁶³ Thereby, he conveniently washed his hands of the problem. Even though Zeigner was aware that some of the arrested *Reichsgericht* members were innocent, he kept his silence and referred all responsibility to the occupation forces. Looking the other way had also been very popular during the Third Reich.

The *Reichsgericht* did not stand alone in shaping Leipzig’s legal landscape and jurisprudence. The fusion of practice and theory that had informed Leipzig’s rise to Germany’s centre of law had continued in the first half of the twentieth century. The

⁶⁰ Ibid., No. 3211, Blatt 173, 9 February 1946: ‘Selbst wenn es sich bei den verhafteten Reichsgerichtsräten um harmlose Menschen oder sogar Demokraten gehandelt hat, so soll man sich nicht damit befassen oder gar parteinehmen. Die Kommandantur ist auch nicht über den Verbleib informiert.’

⁶¹ The parallels with the National Socialist regime did not even end there. In 1950, the *Leipziger Volkszeitung* was invited to a tour of the Buchenwald camp and presented with well-dressed, well-nourished prisoners. The resemblance to the Nazi propaganda of parading similarly well-kept prisoners of Dachau concentration camp to the press is striking. Schaefer still recalls his amazement at seeing his ‘fellow prisoners’ clothing and physical well-being. Schaefer, ‘Das große Sterben’, p. 250.

⁶² Ruth-Kristin Rössler, *Justizpolitik in der SBZ/DDR 1945-1956* (Frankfurt, 2000), p. 72.

⁶³ StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 7943, Blatt 30, 31 October 1945.

Reichsgericht did not only administer law, its members largely also wore the hat of law professors at Leipzig University. The celebration for the opening of the *Reichsgericht* was held with great occasion in the university's assembly hall, the festive setting underlining the close links between the two institutions.⁶⁴

Whereas the *Reichsgericht* had continued its work after a fashion right until the occupation of the city by Allied forces, the university's law department was closed when the university stopped all teaching in the summer of 1944. Large parts of the institution had been damaged in the 4 December 1943 attack, yet most departments were set to continue when two large bombing raids destroyed most of the remaining facilities in February 1944. The lack of teaching room was now compounded by the obliteration of the departmental libraries, eradicating the basis of teaching and learning.

The law department of Leipzig University with its strong links to the practical concerns of the *Reichsgericht* had also been one of the leading law faculties in Germany. The members who survived the racial purges in the 1930s were largely indifferent to the regime's ideology and thus attempted to continue teaching jurisprudence according to their own, old standards. The alignment to the new state doctrine happened passively and reluctantly, albeit also without open opposition. Members of the department would concentrate on classic topics, whereas National Socialist concepts and principles of law were mainly taught by *Privatdozenten* – untenured academics.⁶⁵

Leipzig had the third largest and one of the most distinguished universities in Germany. It was one of the higher education institutions immediately re-opened after the outbreak of the Second World War and thus a magnet for students from all over Germany. The law school was a leading department in its field in the whole of Germany continuing the long tradition of the study of law intrinsic to Leipzig. Distinguished theoreticians such

⁶⁴ For a detailed analysis of Leipzig University as a whole, see the chapter below 'Leipzig – city of learning'.

⁶⁵ Bernd-Rüdiger Kern, 'Die Geschichte der Leipziger Juristenfakultät' in Sächsisches Staatsministerium der Justiz, *Leipzig Stadt der Rechtsprechung: Prozesse, Personen, Gebäude* (Dresden, 1994), pp. 53-85.

as the Roman law historian Wieacker, the civil and penal law specialists Weber and Gallass and the renowned constitutional law historian Huber all taught in Leipzig's law school during the 1930s and 1940s, as well as former and present practitioners from the *Reichsgericht*.⁶⁶ Within the state of Saxony, Leipzig was indisputably the best university. This might have been the reason why *Gauleiter* Martin Mutschmann, otherwise notorious for his anti-intellectualism, started to show a keen interest in the proceedings of the university and the law department in particular. For the summer semester of 1941, three positions of *Ordinarius* (a full professorship) became vacant as Leipzig law lecturers followed calls to other German universities. The formal procedure of sending a list with proposed candidates to the Reich Ministry of Education for approval became a political issue. Leipzig University submitted the list in the early autumn of 1940 to the *Gau* administration of Saxony in Dresden, which after a formal preliminary check should have forwarded the list to the Reich ministry in Berlin. Despite the clear urgency of the situation (only a few months were left until the beginning of the semester), the list never reached Berlin. Dresden had taken offence at the proposed appointment of a lecturer from Göttingen University, Professor Smed, a renowned jurist and an ideal candidate for the vacant position in Leipzig. Upon enquiring about the reasons, the dean of Leipzig's law department was told that Professor Smed was Jewish and therefore could not take up a post in Leipzig. Since Jewish life by that time had all but ceased to exist in Germany, the notion that a Jewish professor should still have been able to teach in Göttingen seemed wholly fantastical.⁶⁷ Indeed, the only 'Jewish connection' of Professor Smed was his wife who 'had some Jewish blood', a fact that was well known in Göttingen and Leipzig and should have presented no obstacle to his appointment.⁶⁸ Rather, in the law school's estimation, the real reason was that Professor Smed had neglected to become a party member. In 1935, he

⁶⁶ Ibid.: List of professors, p. 74.

⁶⁷ The first wave of mass dismissals of Jews in 1933 was followed by two more in 1935 and 1938 by which time all public institutions would have been fully 'aryanised'.

⁶⁸ StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 4550, Blatt 128.

had been demoted from a post in Berlin to Göttingen and his call to Leipzig was seen as 'attempt of rectification', which, of course, was not in order.⁶⁹ After yielding to Dresden's demand to refrain from appointing Smed, Leipzig still was kept waiting. A senior civil servant, *Regierungsdirektor* Lohde, disclosed to the university's *Rektor* (Vice-Chancellor) Professor Breve that Mutschmann had prohibited the entire list from being passed on to Berlin as 'he wished not to have any more *Rechtsverdreher* in his *Gau*'.⁷⁰ At this point, the summer semester was nearly over and the positions were still vacant. Mutschmann's office informed the Reich Ministry for Education that the *Gauleiter* did not wish to see any further appointments of jurists being made in his *Gau*. Berlin then tried to circumvent Mutschmann by incorporating the law school into a combined law, politics and business department. The teaching of law, 'so hated by the *Reichsstatthalter*' would fade into the background.⁷¹ This time Leipzig objected and the dean of the law school tended his resignation, which was rejected. By now, the whole situation had become farcical. Another initiative by Berlin, to send lecturers from the university in Berlin to provide temporary teaching cover was met by Mutschmann's announcement that any professor coming to Leipzig with the intention of teaching law would be arrested as soon as he got off the train.⁷² Yet, the perseverance of Leipzig's university and the personal contact of Professor Breve with the Reich Ministry for Education ensured that the law school could not be dissolved completely. It cannot be gleaned from the sources why Mutschmann finally had a change of heart. In February 1942 (a year after the professors were required), he suddenly ordered Leipzig's university *Rektor* to Dresden. In the ensuing discussions, Mutschmann declared that he had nothing against filling the vacant positions; his only requirement was that the candidates had to be excellent jurists worthy of a great university

⁶⁹ Ibid., Blatt 129.

⁷⁰ *Rechtsverdreher* is a very derogative term for lawyer implying that law is turned into its opposite by the efforts of this person. '...der Gauleiter wünsche keine Rechtsverdreher mehr in seinem Gau.' Ibid., Blatt 130

⁷¹ Ibid., Blatt 134: This so-called 'golden bridge' plan was neither favoured by the university nor Mutschmann.

⁷² Ibid., Blatt 132.

such as Leipzig.⁷³ However, Mutschmann's sudden support does not appear to have been genuine. In July 1943, he attempted again to sabotage the law department. He tried to get three members of the law department called up for military service. The law department at that time only consisted of six remaining members, a loss of three would have 'paralysed' the whole department.⁷⁴

In the night of 4 December 1943, the law school lost all its buildings and large parts of its library, yet it showed enormous will to continue teaching. Even after the second massive air raid of 20 February 1944, the dean of the law department reported back to the university's *Rektor* that teaching could resume as long as rooms were found in which to teach.⁷⁵ Yet by the summer of 1944, the university concluded that the destruction was too heavy to continue teaching any subject.

The Third Reich marked a period of rapid decline for jurisprudence in Leipzig. The initial reluctance and objection to the new regime soon gave way to accommodation or, notoriously in the case of *Reichsgerichtspräsident* Bumke, enthusiasm for National Socialist ideas. Whatever the private motivations of the Court's members may have been, the effect of the conduct was unmistakable. The *Reichsgericht* presided over the steady erosion of the rule of law. *Gauleiter* Mutschmann shared the common National Socialist disregard for and aversion to the justice system and even attempted to 'rid his *Gau*' of its renowned law department. In many respects, Mutschmann even surpassed many of his fellow party members in his contempt for jurisprudence and academia, traditionally associated with the social elites. As a factory owner, albeit not a successful one, Mutschmann had been a member of the upper middle class. However, he held the customs and values of this social stratum in contempt. His dislike of learning and high culture

⁷³ Ibid., Blatt 135.

⁷⁴ One of the men on the list was completely ineligible for military service due to his physical condition. Ibid., Blatt 137.

⁷⁵ Universitätsarchiv Leipzig (UAL), Bestand Rektorat, Rep I/III 128: 'Aufrechterhaltung des Unterrichts und Institutsbetriebs während des Krieges', Blatt 4, letter from the law school to the *Rektor*, 3 March 1944.

stemmed from his own insecurity and obvious ignorance. His attack on Leipzig's law school thus represents a mixture of common Nazi traits and personal flourishes.⁷⁶

On 20 September 1945, the Allied Control Council issued Law number 1, which declared all National Socialist laws and all laws aimed at racial discrimination invalid.⁷⁷ The restructuring of the German justice system did not, however, stop there. Individual orders followed in the respective zones of occupation. The SMAD order number 49 stipulated that no members of the NSDAP would be allowed to work as judges or prosecutors, regardless of their status as active or nominal members.⁷⁸ This tightened yet again the measures taken under the order of the *Landesverwaltung* in Saxony of 17 August 1945 – even if jurists were deemed 'irreplaceable', they were now removed from their posts. A considerable shortage of jurists followed that continued into the following years. Following the *Landesverwaltung* order, only 240 of 1000 judges and state attorneys in Saxony remained in their posts, 30 per cent of whom were still former members of the NSDAP. The SMAD order then led to a 'catastrophic' shortage of jurists that was still unresolved by late 1947. Hundreds of judges and prosecutors were needed to ensure 'even the most basic judicial operation'.⁷⁹ This situation was to be counteracted by the introduction of *ad hoc* laymen courts on village and town level.⁸⁰ Yet, the scarcity of juristic professionals also prompted the temporary appointment of old NSDAP members who had undergone their denazification process. The SMAD meanwhile was focused on

⁷⁶ Martin Mutschmann (1879 – 1947) distinguished himself as particularly brutal and ruthless Anti-Semite. He was one of the 'old fighters' and had been made *Gauleiter* of Saxony as early as the mid-1920s. He had a strong disregard for 'high-culture' and saw it as an 'alien' element in his preferred *Volkskultur* (culture of the people). Similarly, his 'vulgarity' was a strong deterrent for the traditional elites, especially in the academic sphere. See Schreibner, *Elite im Verborgenen*, p. 41, and Szejnmann, *Nazism in Central Germany*, p. 207.

⁷⁷ The Allied powers were, of course, perfectly content to permit discrimination on the grounds of gender or sexual orientation, which they themselves all practised. European Navigator, *Law Number 1 from the Allied Control Council*, <http://www.ena.lu> (accessed 22 May 2009).

⁷⁸ SMAD order of 4 September 1949, see Ministerium für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten der DDR, *Um ein antifaschistisch-demokratisches Deutschland: Dokumente aus den Jahren 1945-49* (Berlin, 1968), pp. 142-3.

⁷⁹ See Julia Pfannkuch, *Volksrichterausbildung in Sachsen 1945-1950* (Frankfurt am Main, 1993), p. 5.

⁸⁰ StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 7953, Blatt 3.

the creation of a new body of jurists. Soon they devised a project to create '*Volksrichter*' (people's judges). These were to be the new generation of law practitioners, on the one hand to ease the shortage of jurists and on the other to 'resolve the alienation of *Volk* and justice [...] and to break the *bürgerlich* privilege of education'.⁸¹ This sounded remarkably similar to National Socialist diction. On orders of the SMAD, the *Deutsche Justizverwaltung* in East Berlin devised courses according to Soviet example.⁸² In Saxony, an appeal in newspapers and other publications called for young anti-fascists who would be interested in a position as *Volksrichter*. The only educational requirement was to have graduated from the *Volksschule* (ten years of school education).⁸³ Saxony was the first of the Soviet occupied *Länder* to start the courses; the old centre of German jurisdiction was to lead the way for the new justice system.⁸⁴ On 1 February 1946, the first course began, four days before the university in Leipzig was allowed to re-open. In the beginning these courses were to last only six months from enrolling to passing the judge's exam. This term, however, proved too short and was subsequently lengthened to twelve months' tuition.⁸⁵ The *Volksrichter* courses were the clearest expression of the desire in the Soviet Zone to create a completely new system of justice and jurisdiction, beyond the collective decisions of the four occupying powers. The thereby created split foreshadowed the German division.⁸⁶ The Allied Control Council had issued a proclamation and order in October

⁸¹ Schmid, *Die Bedeutung der Deutschen Zentralverwaltung*, p. 210 and p. 225 respectively.

⁸² Heike Amos, *Justizverwaltung in der SBZ/DDR, Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Rechts in der DDR*, Volume 1 (Cologne, 1996).

⁸³ Aufruf in *Tägliche Rundschau*, 2 November 1945.

⁸⁴ The declared aim of the re-structuring of the justice system in the Soviet Zone was 'nicht lediglich den Rechtsstaat wiederher[zu]stellen, den die Nationalsozialistische Schreckensherrschaft so grausam zerstört hat, sondern einen neuen, und zwar demokratischen, Rechtsstaat [zu] schaffen'. The idea of democracy was that of a 'höherer Typus der Demokratie' as opposed to the 'formale bürgerliche Demokratie'. The old *Rechtsstaat* was equated to that lesser *bürgerlich* democracy. See 'Einleitung' in *Neue Justiz* 1/ 1 January 1947 and Schmid, *Die Bedeutung der Deutschen Zentralverwaltung*, p. 27. The *Neue Justiz* was to become the central jurists' journal in the Soviet Zone and later the GDR.

⁸⁵ Helmut Anders, *Die Demokratisierung der Justiz beim Aufbau der antifaschistischen demokratischen Ordnung auf dem Gebiet der DDR 1945-49*, Karl-Marx-Universität Diss. (Leipzig, 1972).

⁸⁶ This creation of a new justice system happened 'nach sowjetischem Vorbild'. It was 'von der Sowjetunion übernommen bzw. aufoktroiert'. See Wentker, 'Justiz in der SBZ/DDR', p. 198; and Friedrich Christian Schroeder, 'Die Übernahme der Sowjetischen Rechtsauffassung in ihrer Stalinistischen Ausprägung in der

1945 that stipulated that the status of law before 1933 had to be re-established (yet the *Volksrichter* were no part of German pre-1933 German jurisdiction). This proclamation included the denazification measures in the justice system with the special provision that only those Germans who agreed with the fundamentals of democracy were allowed to become judges.⁸⁷ This would have allowed for jurists who had not been party members to continue their work or return to their profession respectively. In the Soviet Zone, however, existing judges and state prosecutors were replaced as swiftly as possible by graduates from the *Volksrichter* courses.⁸⁸ By 1947, *Volksrichter* course graduates were granted the same status as academically educated judges.⁸⁹ Even though the *Volksrichter* courses sprang from the genuine need for prosecutors and judges, the actual juristic education soon became secondary to the ideological schooling of the attendees.⁹⁰

The work of the other source of law education, the law faculties, was generally restricted by the authorities in the Soviet Zone. Lecturers were under the general suspicion of teaching *bürgerlich* law, thus negatively influencing their students and undermining the authorities.⁹¹ The *bürgerlich* jurisdiction before 1933 had proven partiality against the German left-wing. Thus, it was perhaps understandable that the Soviets and their East German protégés would seek to alter the ethos of the legal profession. Yet, this new foundation was to be laid with lectures in Russian law. Various subjects (both in penal and

SBZ/DDR' in Der Deutsche Bundestag, *Materialien der Enquete Kommission 'Aufarbeitung von Geschichte und Folgen der SED-Diktatur'* (Baden Baden, 2001), pp. 11-18.

⁸⁷ See Allied Control Council Proclamation No. 3 (20 October 1945) and Order No. 4 (30 October 1945), in Karl-Heinz Schöneburg, *Geschichte des Staates und des Rechts der DDR 1949-61*, (Berlin, 1984), pp.224-6.

⁸⁸ In the Soviet Zone, denazification procedures did not mean rehabilitation, at least not for jurists. Anyone who had been even a nominal member could not return permanently to the profession. 'Der Unterschied zur Entnazifizierung in den westlichen Besatzungszonen lag für den Bereich der Justiz [...] in der konsequenten Verweigerung jeglicher Rehabilitationsmöglichkeiten.' Schmid, *Die Bedeutung der Deutschen Zentralverwaltung*, p. 208.

⁸⁹ SMAD order 193 of 6 August 1947 in Schöneburg, *Geschichte des Staates und des Rechts*, p. 230.

⁹⁰ A constantly increasing ideologization of the *Volksrichter* courses can be seen both in the number of lessons in political education as well as the dismissal of juristic teachers who refused to toe the party line of the SED. See Pfannkuch, *Volksrichterausbildung in Sachsen*, p.140.

⁹¹ Nikitin, *Zwischen Dogma und gesundem Menschenverstand. Bürgerlich justice was deemed 'reaktionär und volksfeindlich'*, see inter al.: Schmid, *Die Bedeutung der Deutschen Zentralverwaltung*, p. 225.

civil law) became obligatory. Given the record of the Soviet legal system under Stalin the whole exercise might be described as a glaring example of 'mote and beam'.⁹² Nevertheless, much effort went into the planning of these new courses. In Leipzig the admission of these new subjects into the lecturing schedule happened half a year before the university opened.⁹³ The law school in Leipzig only operated on a provisional basis throughout the years after the end of the war as constant staffing shortages and political interference interrupted the teaching. This lack of teaching staff, mainly caused by the systematic ousting of the old elites of professional jurists (all *bürgerlich* in origin), was unfortunate for the students, yet followed the SED's idea of a complete re-organisation of the justice system. This casting out of the 'old elite' was distinctly reminiscent of policies in the Third Reich.⁹⁴ Furthermore, compounding the lack of teaching staff, was the acute shortage of teaching materials. The law faculty's library had been lost to Allied bombs. Thus Zeigner, an alumnus of Leipzig's law school concerned with its interests, contacted the *Reichsgericht* commission in August 1945 in an attempt to grant future students of the faculty access to this vast resource. The commission was more than accommodating, but then in May 1946, the Soviet administration suddenly ordered the city to provide boxes for the transport of the entire *Reichsgericht* library to the Soviet Union.⁹⁵ Zeigner was alarmed by this development and did his utmost to prevent this mindless measure. Eventually, after delaying the manufacture of boxes and refusing to pay for the costs of the transport, he

⁹² Schroeder rightly identifies that the legal concepts that had to be followed in these new course were 'im bedrückendsten Stadium, dem Stalinismus'. Schroeder, 'Die Umwandlung der Rechtsauffassung', p. 12.

⁹³ StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 4537, Blatt 192, 13 September 1945.

⁹⁴ Ibid., No. 17648, Blatt 133. 'Bis Ende 1949 waren alle Professoren der alten Elite, die nicht der NSDAP angehört hatten, im Zuge eines an politische Kriterien gesteuerten Personalaustausches von der Leipziger Juristenfakultät verdrängt.' See: Siegfried Hoyer, 'Der Leipziger Oberbürgermeister und die Wiedereröffnung der Universität Leipzig in 1946' in Rudloff, *Erich Zeigner*, pp. 176-87, here p. 187. According to Wentker, this removal of the old elites was key in the 'Instrumentalisierung der Justiz'. Wentker, 'Justiz in der SBZ/DDR', p. 194.

⁹⁵ StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 7943, Blatt 53, 26 May 1945.

succeeded in keeping the library in Leipzig.⁹⁶ By this time, however, the access to books was not the greatest worry for future jurists.

The prospects of studying for a law degree worsened for the students consistently during the late 1940s. Academically taught jurists, despite having undergone a long education and obligatory internships, were less likely to gain an appointment from the German Justice Administration than *Volksrichter* who attended a year of basic legal education and ideological tuition.⁹⁷ Hilde Benjamin, a crucial member of the German Justice Administration stated: 'If the universities are unable to teach progressively according to the needs of the new time [i.e. education according to the ideological requirements], we will not recognize the graduates of these universities as an essential factor in the creation of a new system of justice.'⁹⁸ This was in line with the ideas of the deputy president of the *Justizverwaltung*, Ernst Melsheimer, who proclaimed in *Neue Justiz*: 'Those who want to continue being 'apolitical', cannot be part of the new justice system.'⁹⁹ The beginnings of the 'war against *bürgerlich* objectivism', which will be discussed in more detail in the chapter below, are clearly visible in this. The new understanding of justice was one where 'every judgement was also a political deed.'¹⁰⁰ Until the complete ideologization of the universities, their graduates would naturally fall

⁹⁶ For the details of his struggle see *Ibid.*, Blatt 54-75, the confirmation that the library was to remain in Leipzig came on 19 December 1946, *Ibid.*, Blatt 76.

⁹⁷ Helmut Anders, *Die Demokratisierung*.

⁹⁸ Hilde Benjamin (1947) quoted in Anders, *Die Demokratisierung*; Hilde Benjamin (1902-89) was a leading protagonist in the development of the justice system in the Soviet Zone but especially later in the GDR. She began in the personnel department of the German Justice Administration and was masterminding the dismissal and imprisonment of non-communist jurists. Later, as vice president of the Supreme Court of the GDR she was responsible for many show trials against opponents of the regime. In 1953 she became justice minister in the GDR and entered the Central Committee of the SED a year later. Interestingly, she was the sister-in-law of Walter Benjamin, the philosopher whose works became highly influential in West Germany's 1968 movement. See: Deutsches Historisches Museum, *Biographien: Hilde Benjamin*, <http://www.dhm.de> (accessed 22 May 2009).

⁹⁹ 'Wer fürderhin unpolitisch sein will, kann nicht Glied der neuen Justiz sein.' Ernst Melsheimer 'Aufgaben' in *Neue Justiz*, 2/1 February 1947, pp. 25-7, here p. 26.

¹⁰⁰ 'Wie auch in den anderen Ländern [muß erkannt werden], daß jeder Richterspruch auch eine politische Tat ist.' See 'Entschließung der Juristenkonferenz des Landes Thüringen zur weiteren Demokratisierung des Justizwesens' in Ministerium für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten der DDR, *Um ein antifaschistisch-demokratisches Deutschland*, p. 678.

behind these targets. Having just emerged from twelve years of political justice, law in the Soviet Zone turned again into a servant of political ideology.

Leipzig's law school had lost, like the other four law faculties of the Soviet Zone, its importance in qualifying the law practitioners of the post-National Socialist area. When the thought was briefly entertained of centralising all academic law tuition in Berlin Leipzig was not even considered as an alternative location.¹⁰¹ Law faculties did not regain the monopoly in educating the practitioners of law until several years after the establishment of the GDR. Only in 1954 did the universities retrieve authority in law tuition, by which time Leipzig's law faculty was a part of the highly politicised Karl-Marx-Universität in Leipzig.¹⁰²

Leipzig had been the German centre of law. Not only had the city been the seat of Germany's Supreme Court, but it had facilitated the development of German law both in theory and practice ever since its foundation. The Leipzig law faculty had been internationally renowned and was leading in Germany. Yet the combined efforts of the National Socialists and then the socialist authorities (both Soviet and German) had eradicated the *Reichsgericht* and reduced the law faculty to a mere shadow of itself.

The denazification measures in the justice system were much harsher in the Soviet Zone than in any of the Western Zones where most jurists were taken over by the new courts, despite the Control Council orders. Thus many of the *Reichsgericht* members who had fled to the Western Zones before the changeover of occupation powers succeeded in continuing their careers.¹⁰³ The most prominent example has to be Hermann Weinkauff. In 1950, he became the first president of the Bundesgerichtshof, West Germany's New

¹⁰¹ Nikitin, *Zwischen Dogma und gesundem Menschenverstand*, p. 49.

¹⁰² Engelmann, *Rechtsverfall*, p. 274.

¹⁰³ The initial suspensions were gradually revoked, as the desire to establish a working justice system outweighed that for a thorough denazification. At first a piggy-back system was employed where a politically implicated jurist was only employed when partnered with a politically 'trustworthy' person who then had to vouch for his 'partner'. Pauli, *Die Rechtsprechung des Reichsgericht*, p. 26.

Supreme Court in Karlsruhe.¹⁰⁴ Weinkauff had been a judge at the *Reichsgericht* from 1935 onwards and was able to return to his profession as president of the *Landgericht* Bamberg in April 1946.¹⁰⁵ The continuation of careers by the existing legal elite went largely unchallenged in West Germany after 1945.¹⁰⁶ Gerhard Pauli asserts that the restoration of the justice system in the Western Zone occurred with the 'old workforce'.¹⁰⁷ The tradition of the *Reichsgericht* thus was continued in the new Supreme Court in Western Germany, 'the continuities between the *Reichsgericht* and the *Bundesgerichtshof* clearly prevailed.'¹⁰⁸ These links were not just inherent. The protagonists were well aware of these circumstances. On their fiftieth anniversary, the club of the lawyers at the *Bundesgerichtshof* noted the great tradition of their association that included some founding members who had already been lawyers at Germany's first Supreme Court 'and tied [their new positions] in with their experience at the *Reichsgericht*, both in form and matter.'¹⁰⁹ Form and matter of Leipzig's importance in German jurisprudence (and the understanding of justice in the Soviet Zone/GDR) on the other hand altered utterly. With the *Reichsgericht* the city had lost its leverage in German jurisdiction and its prestige as centre of German law. The general de-professionalization of the justice system in the Soviet Zone and later the GDR, both caused by the ousting of the traditional elite and their substitution by *Volksrichter*, cemented the downfall of this erstwhile first city of law.

¹⁰⁴ For a comprehensive list of those working in both the Third Reich and West Germany see Engelmann, *Rechtsverfall*, p. 166ff.

¹⁰⁵ Bamberg was a small town in the American Zone of occupation. Daniel Herbe, *Hermann Weinkauff, Der erste Präsident des Bundesgerichtshofes* (Tübingen, 2008). Weinkauff himself sought to marginalise the involvement of Germany's jurists in the Nazi regime. In his book *Die deutsche Justiz und der Nationalsozialismus* (Stuttgart, 1968), he argues that German jurists were bound to follow the laws and thereby were not active protagonists but rather 'defenceless' against the letter of the law which they had to follow.

¹⁰⁶ West Germany's uncomfortable relationship with remnants of the National Socialist legal apparatus also includes the case of Wolfgang Fränkel, an assistant at the *Reichsgericht*, who after the war became first *Bundesanwalt* and then Attorney General in 1962. Only now a closer look was taken at his pre-1945 career and it was decided that he should retire. See inter al: Engelmann, *Rechtsverfall*, p. 169.

¹⁰⁷ Pauli, *Die Rechtsprechung des Reichsgericht*, p. 27.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 244.

¹⁰⁹ '[...]und knüpften in der Sache und in der Form an ihre Erfahrungen beim Reichsgericht an', Verein der beim Bundesgerichtshof zugelassenen Anwälte, *Fortitudo Temperantia – Die Rechtsanwälte beim Reichsgericht und Bundesgerichtshof, Festschrift* (Munich, 2000), p. 40.

5 Leipzig – City of Learning

Leipzig has one of Germany's oldest universities. By the beginning of the twentieth century, it had grown to be the country's third largest institution for higher education with internationally renowned academics researching and teaching in Leipzig, furthering the kudos of the institution. The takeover of power by the National Socialists constituted an incision into the university's tradition of world-class research. Due to the politically motivated dismissals following the *Berufsbeamtentumsgesetz*, the university lost forty-four of its academics, amongst them the subsequent Nobel prize winner Felix Bloch and renowned academics such as the psychologist Felix Krueger and the educationalist Theodor Litt.¹ Yet, the university managed to remain one of Germany's best, and was among the select group of institutions allowed to stay open in wartime.² It has been argued that it was one of Germany's least politicised institutions, employing academics on their scientific merit rather than their party political achievements, but the university could not of course escape the increasing limitations of life in the Third Reich.³ The example of the Nobel prize winner Werner Heisenberg exemplified this. Called to Leipzig University in 1927, Heisenberg was substantial in forging Leipzig's international reputation in the field of physics. His department and his science suffered through the racial policies (purges of colleagues) of the National Socialist regime and the increasing international isolation. Furthermore, by 1942, Heisenberg's research into nuclear physics became so important for the regime that he was moved to Berlin where he was given a professorship at Berlin's

¹ Ronald Lambrecht, *Politische Entlassungen in der NS-Zeit: Biographische Skizzen von Hochschullehrern der Universität Leipzig* (Leipzig, 2006).

² Leipzig was amongst the nine universities that were to open again immediately after the outbreak of war. The Reich Ministry for Education had ordered the closure of all higher education institutions, but withdrew this order for Leipzig, Vienna, Berlin, Munich, Jena and four others just four days later. Other universities were not so quick to follow. See Uwe Dietrich Adam and Wilfried Setzler, *Hochschule im Nationalsozialismus, Die Universität Tübingen im Dritten Reich* (Tübingen, 1977), p. 188.

³ Both Grondin and Eller elaborate on this point. Indeed Hans-Georg Gadamer was an example of this appointment practice, gaining a post despite other candidates having more substantial Nazi credentials. See Jean Grondin, *Hans-Georg Gadamer: Eine Biographie* (Tübingen, 2000) and Rudolf Eller, 'Musikwissenschaft im NS Staat' in Schinköth, *Musikstadt Leipzig im NS Staat*, pp. 261-271.

university and became the head of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Physics. In Berlin he worked on the uranium project of the *Heereswaffenamt* (the German army's ammunition development agency). Thereby Leipzig University lost even more academic importance, both through the international isolation and through the hiring away of its most prominent scientists by the regime itself.⁴

Nevertheless, Leipzig's university continued 'normal' business until 4 December 1943 when the firestorm hit most of the university's buildings and destroyed two thirds of them.⁵ As it was not anticipated that Leipzig would be a main target, the libraries and research facilities had not taken any precautions and suffered tremendous losses. The devastation was such that the *Sicherheitsdienst* recommended the closure of the university and the allocation of the professors to other institutions.⁶

The university was barely functioning when the Americans occupied Leipzig. All teaching activities in the university had ceased in summer 1944, yet some professors undertook make-shift lectures and seminars in their private flats using their own libraries. Until April 1945 conferrals of doctorates were signed by the Lord Mayor as contact with the *Land* administration in Dresden had obviously ceased after Saxony's capital was obliterated in February 1945.⁷ Even after the arrival of US forces, the authority of the *Rektor* (Vice-Chancellor of the university) over the academics was unbroken. When the Americans scheduled an official funeral for 300 foreign workers who had been murdered in the final hours of Nazi rule, the *Rektor* advised his professors to attend as he deemed it 'urgently necessary that a high number of representatives of Leipzig's population' should be present at such a ceremony.⁸ The university and its academics still sought to act as the

⁴ Cassidy, *Uncertainty*.

⁵ Borusiak and Höhnel, *Chronik*.

⁶ Universitätsarchiv, UAL, Bestand Rektorat, Rep I/III 128, Blatt 1, SD Report 12 January 1944.

⁷ StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 4537, Blatt 35.

⁸ UAL, Bestand Rektorat, R 379, Band 1, Blatt 1. The foreign workers had been working in the Abtnaundorf labour camp, a satellite of Buchenwald concentration camp on Leipzig's fringes. They were killed when it became clear that Leipzig would be occupied. The funeral took place on 26 April.

‘face of the city’.⁹ After the invasion of the Americans, the institution harboured hopes that ‘normal’ proceedings would soon resume. These were fuelled after an election of a post-war *Rektor* was permitted by the American military authorities on 16 May 1945.¹⁰ By early June, plans were made not only to demand the old autonomy universities in Germany had enjoyed before the National Socialists, but also a strategy to cooperate with universities all over Germany and reignite academic exchange.¹¹ These initial positive signs of a return for Leipzig to its pre-war and pre-Third Reich strength were negated on 22 June 1945. ‘Project Paperclip’ had reached Leipzig University. Leading members of the university’s science departments (amongst them the deans of the medical school and the physics, chemistry and physiology departments) were advised by the American troops to prepare for evacuation the following morning. They were instructed to arrive with their scientific assistants, their families and minimal luggage. Despite being worded as a request and claiming to be in the best interest of the scientists, it was clear that this was an order. The thinly veiled threat ‘We will know to find you’ cleared questions about a possible non-compliance. Those who objected, like Professor Wolf, were simply arrested.¹² The university’s administration and the *Rektor* were not informed by the Americans and only learnt from their staff about the transport. Apart from threatening forcibly to remove university members from their homes, the request also stated that a transition of occupation power to the Soviet forces was imminent (the 24 June was quoted as date of the handover). The urgency of the measure was further underlined by the allegation that it was taken to prevent the imminent imprisonment of the scientists by the Russian troops. This explains why some university

⁹ StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 2126, Blatt 62.

¹⁰ Wolfgang Wilmans, an agriculturalist, was followed by Bernhardt Schweitzer, an archaeologist.

¹¹ UAL, Bestand Rektorat, R21 Band 1-R47, Blatt 47.

¹² It was called a ‘voluntary measure’; however, anyone who was not compliant would be found and taken by force (‘wir werden Sie zu finden wissen’). See for example StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 2126, Blatt 93; See Henke, *Die amerikanische Besetzung Deutschlands* p. 762. Professor Wolf, however, managed to return to Leipzig on his own accord. Schweitzer even speaks of ‘at his own peril’, which suggests flight. See Schweitzer’s report in Helga A. Welsh, ‘Entnazifizierung und Wiedereröffnung der Universität Leipzig 1945-1946 – Ein Bericht des damaligen Rektors Professor Bernhardt Schweitzer’ in *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 2/1985, pp. 339-72, here p. 365.

staff not included on the Americans' list asked to be taken as well. Yet there were also cases of academics refusing to comply and going into hiding. One professor of medicine, despite insisting on having done no war-relevant research, was told in no uncertain terms that he had to follow the order. Even his wife went to protest at the CIC office, but to no avail. Under the threat of violence they finally bowed to the pressure and agreed to the 'evacuation'. This caused them to lose most of their possessions as they could only take the barest minimum.¹³ In another case, a family was taken from their home despite the person on the list not being accounted for and it was only decided at the departure point that it would be 'more humane' to leave them in Leipzig.¹⁴ Some academics, such as the renowned physicists Friedrich Hund (who had worked with Heisenberg before his departure to Berlin) and Walter von Brunn, eluded the forced 'evacuations' by going into hiding. Professor Robert Döpel, a nuclear scientist and former colleague of Heisenberg's evaded arrest by hiding at a friend's house. The sources allow an insight into Döpel's motives as he himself reported at length about his decision process. Döpel stated that on a purely personal level, a move to the American sphere of interest was desirable. His wife had died in the war and his personal belongings as well as his scientific equipment were largely destroyed in the air raids; furthermore, most of his friends and colleagues were to be found in the Western Zones. His decision to stay was based on political considerations:

Europe has to be united. America possesses the means to achieve this, however, Russia is the only state truly called to attain a real order in Europe. America would, at best, regard Germany as a bulwark against the East. Therefore I made my decision for Russia without second thoughts on political grounds.¹⁵

¹³ The case can be found in Henke, *Die Besetzung Deutschlands*, p. 762.

¹⁴ Gerhard Wiemers, 'Zwangsumsiedlung von Wissenschaftlern nach Weilburg/Lahn' in *Universität Leipzig*, 1995/5, pp. 19-21.

¹⁵ 'Europa muß geeinigt werden. Die USA hat die Mittel, jedoch ist Rußland der einzige Staat, der zur wirklichen Ordnung Europas gerufen ist. Amerika wird Deutschland allenfalls als Bollwerk gegen den Osten betrachten. Ich habe mich aus politischen Gründen rückhaltlos für Rußland entschieden.' StadtAL, StVuR (I), 7966, Blatt 33. Professor Robert Döpel was one of the scientists who was sent to Russia at the end of July 1945 to work on the Russian nuclear programme. He only returned to Germany (the GDR) in 1958 and took up a post at the university of Illmenau. See for example: Akadii Kruglov, *The History of the Soviet Atomic Industry* (Taylor and Francis, 2002).

Döpel's statement shows that the disagreements between the war-time Allies were already visible and the tension palpable at this early stage.

Both the city government and the university itself were outraged by the forced evacuations. Erich Zeigner, at the time still legal counsel to Mayor Vierling, strongly recommended filing a protest with the American military authorities. He was especially concerned that this 'sweeping' removal of a large number of senior university staff would 'destroy the university's fabric in an incomprehensible way'. The city had strongly to object, 'in spite of potential dangers', and attempt to stop these measures:

What is happening here in Leipzig cannot be reconciled with international law. It destroys the last chance of a reconstruction of an economic and cultural life in our city. The benefit for the Americans has no relation to the immense damage this causes us. [...] Protest is urgently required [...] [this is] a political question of fundamental social and national importance.¹⁶

Rektor Schweitzer tried to get clarification from the American city administration, which replied that it had no information on the entire issue and that Schweitzer's letter was the first time it had heard of the events. Although it agreed that the university should be consulted on actions directly concerning the institution, they also conceded that there were military groups at work in Leipzig 'over whom the city's military administration [had] no authority'.¹⁷ These other 'groups' were namely the Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC) who masterminded the larger 'Project Paperclip' in which the Americans 'harvested' scientific and economic potential all over Germany and thus in Leipzig, too.

¹⁶ 'Was hier in Leipzig geschieht ist unmöglich mit dem internationalen Recht vereinbar, es zerstört die letzten Voraussetzungen eines Wiederaufbaus des wirtschaftlichen und kulturellen Lebens unserer Stadt. Der Nutzen für die Amerikaner steht außer allem Verhältnis zu dem Schaden, der uns zugefügt wird [...] [es ist] unbedingt geboten, Rechtsverwahrung einzulegen [...] [dies ist] eine politische Frage von grundsätzlicher sozialer und nationaler Bedeutung.' StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 4537, Blatt 55, 27 June 1945.

¹⁷ Ibid, No. 2126, Blatt 93, 24 June 1945.

Mayor Vierling tried to impress on the Americans the catastrophic impact of their actions:

Leipzig's university, its trade and industry were built in centuries through the efforts of generations of merchants and industrialists. This is the basis of the city's importance both economically and intellectually within Germany and internationally. It is to be feared that through the evacuation the standing and welfare of the city and thereby of its population will be gravely damaged.¹⁸

The Americans were deaf to all entreaties, and Leipzig and its university had to resign themselves to the loss of the scientists. Together with the academics, most of their laboratory equipment, their scientific reports and papers and university held patents were also 'evacuated' to the American Zone. To evaluate the American actions one has to question the motivation. It might be assumed that the Americans wanted to secure 'valuable' human resources. However, hardly any of the Leipzig academics would play a significant role in research for the Americans, thus the notion of procuring 'useful' human material is disproven. Most of the academics were startled by the discrepancy between the statements of the Americans before the transport and the reality during and after the evacuation. Having left most of their personal belongings in Leipzig, the scientists found themselves housed initially in empty barracks once used by foreign workers. These erstwhile symbols of Nazi criminality could hardly portray the Americans who sent the academics to these barracks in a positive light. Even improved housing conditions later were substandard compared to what the professors had to leave in their bombed out home town. None of the promises of 'full compensation of losses' and treatment according to their status as renowned scientists was honoured. Instead of finding new laboratories in which to continue their studies, they were ordered to do manual labour in the fields for

¹⁸ 'Die Universität Leipzigs, sein Handel und seine Industrie sind in jahrhundertelanger Arbeit, durch das Streben und Mühen von Generationen Industrieller und Kaufleute geschaffen worden. Sowohl wirtschaftlich als auch geistig beruht darauf die Bedeutung der Stadt im Reich und darüber hinaus im internationalen Leben. Es wird befürchtet, daß durch die Abwanderung die Bedeutung und das Wohlergehen der Stadt und damit ihrer Bevölkerung aufs schwerste Schaden erleidet.' Ibid., No. 4537, Blatt 63, 30 June 1945.

instance picking Colorado beetles off potato plants and dropping the insects into brown paper bags. Furthermore, the modality of the whole process led them to believe that by 'agreeing' to the transport they would lose, or had already lost, their rights as professors and forfeited any chance of returning to Leipzig. Nevertheless, some regarded the circumstances as dire enough to attempt a 'struggle home' – provided the Americans would not prevent them from so doing.¹⁹ In fact, only one Leipzig academic found his way to the United States: the head of Leipzig's radiology department Willy Baensch. Baensch was subsequently able to continue his work at Georgetown University. The others were largely left to their own devices. Professor Heinrich Schmitthenner, an internationally renowned geographer, tried until April 1946 to facilitate his return. Yet, the university could not guarantee his re-employment and respective enquiries were left unanswered. It had, however, become abundantly clear that the Americans lost interest in the academics soon after abducting them.²⁰ Contrary to the common historic narrative that the Americans supported German reconstruction and refrained from the vengeful behaviour mostly associated with Soviet conduct in Germany, this forced evacuation of Leipzig's academics and those of other universities that were to come under the Soviet Zone of Occupation, suggest a less rose-tinted interpretation. The division between good and bad occupiers becomes futile in this case. In Leipzig the transport of the academics was viewed as the destruction of an academic apparatus which had been the 'result of a careful, responsible intellectual selection process over generations' and left the city and its university utterly debilitated.²¹ The Americans oriented themselves, however, on the Osenberg list rather than the Morgenthau Plan. The Osenberg list was a register of scientists that the National Socialists had compiled in early 1943 in the hope of turning the war through the use of

¹⁹ Ibid., Blatt 85, 24 July 1945, Report by Dr Erich Blume about letters from the evacuees to their former colleagues. Professor Reschke is here cited as attempting 'sich mit Frau und Sohn wieder nach Leipzig durchzuschlagen'. Also: letter from Professor Heinrich Schmitthenner (one of the 'evacuees') printed in Wiemers, 'Zwangsumsiedelung von Wissenschaftlern nach Weilburg/Lahn'.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ StadtAL, StVuR (I), 4537, Blatt 55, legal councillor Zeigner to Vierling.

technology rather than military manpower. Following this list, the German army had recalled scientists from the front or drafted them as civilians into their weapon development programmes. Therefore, the specialists the Americans were procuring had the stamp of approval of being strategic assets.²² They were scientific capital the US forces were eager to secure. More importantly, it removed valuable intellectual reparations from their supposed allies, the Russians. In Feige's perception this was the main reason for the whole American exercise in Leipzig – it had the purpose of removing as many intellectual resources from the Soviets as possible rather than deploying these resources themselves.²³ This lack of real interest in using their 'assets' is manifested in the willingness of the US authorities to allow the return of some scientists just a few months later. In October 1945, the American military administration sent a list to Leipzig's Lord Mayor of professors who had been 'evacuated' and now wished to come back. The university, glad at the prospect of an improvement of their staff figures, then requested the SMAD's approval for the repatriation of its members. However, the SMAD did not act on this request.²⁴ By November 1945, the denazification practice in Leipzig had become so strict that many of the scientists could not have returned to their old positions or indeed any work at the university at all. By not supporting the repatriation, the Soviet authorities on the one hand prevented possible lengthy denazification procedures and on the other weakened the old structure of the university.²⁵ This allowed for a fundamental restructuring of the institution as will be seen below.

²² See for example: Clarence G. Lasby, *Project Paperclip, German Scientists and the Cold War* (New York, 1971) and John Gimbel, 'US Policy and German Scientists: The early Cold War' in *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 101, No.3 (1986), pp. 433-51.

²³ Feige, 'Vor dem Abzug'.

²⁴ StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 4557, Blatt 1, October 1945 and No. 17648, Blatt 20, 17 December 1945. See also Feige 'Vor dem Abzug', pp. 1306-7.

²⁵ A directive of 8 August 1945 stated that anyone who went 'without being forced' to the Western Zones was never to be allowed again to work as 'Kopfarbeiter' and would only find work in underground construction or mining. This regulation further complicated a potential return of academics. Being faced with an uncertain denazification procedure and having to prove their 'forcible' removal [most were frightened enough by the threat of force, did this already constitute an 'enforced move'?] would have kept some scientists from applying for return in the first place. StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 2126, Blatt 85.

A number of the evacuees eventually found new employment in universities in the Western zones over the following years. Especially notable in this context is the fate of those academics who were formally arrested in May 1945 for active support of National Socialist ideas.²⁶ Even though these arrests were covered by the agreements between the Allies, the removal of these scientists from Leipzig to the American Zone of Occupation was not as 'it removed them from the jurisdiction of the Soviet forces under which they came from the 8 May 1945'.²⁷ Moreover, despite their obvious entanglement with the Nazi regime the academics were all freed in 1946, at the latest, and allowed to pursue their professions.²⁸ A prominent example was the former head of Leipzig's eye clinic, Professor Dr Adolf Jess, a member of the SS, who was among the ten men arrested in May 1945. In November 1946, he was assigned the chair in the University of Mainz's newly opened eye clinic. In 1952, he became dean of the entire medical school in Mainz and continued to hold both posts until his retirement in 1957.²⁹

The Anglo-American historiography portrays these events in the light of the onset of the Cold War and the importance of the scientists (those who were actually employed in American projects) in furthering the Western aims, especially with regards to the later space race.³⁰ The German historiography, both past and present, has been less inclined to ignore the inconvenient truth. The East German judgement of the situation was one of criminal, imperialist behaviour and a targeted, large-scale dismantling of the intelligentsia and thereby very critical.³¹ Whilst the East German historiography was naturally scathing,

²⁶ An initial arrest of 10 academics was undertaken by the Americans before they assigned further denazification efforts to the authority of the university. See Konrad Krause, *Alma Mater Lipsiensis* (Leipzig, 2003).

²⁷ Feige 'Vor dem Abzug', p. 1304.

²⁸ Ernst Engelberg, et al (eds.), *Karl Marx Universität Leipzig 1409 – 1959*, Volume 2 (Leipzig, 1959).

²⁹ Interestingly, both histories of the eye clinic in Leipzig as well as the one in Mainz ignore Jess's 'unusual' transition from one post to the other. See for Leipzig: <http://augenklinik.uniklinikum-leipzig.de/geschichte.php> (accessed 20 November 2008) and for Mainz: http://www-klinik.uni-mainz.de/Augenklinik/htmger/kl_geschichte.htm (accessed 20 November 2008).

³⁰ See Lasby, *Project Paperclip*; Gimbel, 'US Policy'; John Gimbel later included the more problematic aspects of the operations in his book *Science, Technology and Reparations: Exploitation and Plunder in Post-war Germany* (Stanford, 1990).

³¹ See inter al.: Selbmann, *Alternative, Bilanz, Credo*, p. 402.

the West German and post-unification historiography is normally very reluctant to criticise the actions of the Western powers. Yet the criminal nature of the operation was so obvious and the dishonesty so blatant even the post-unification German historiography highlights the problematic nature of this issue. Henke depicts the personal hardship of forced removal, loss of property and uncertain future of the academics. Feige emphasises the detrimental effect on the workings of the university, by not only causing obvious staffing problems in the short term but also hampering the development of the university by blocking important positions whilst there was still hope of a return. Yet, most publications relativise the events in the light of the changes to the university inflicted by the second, Soviet, occupation power. Even Feige ignores the wider implications for the city of Leipzig that were so clearly voiced by the university and the German city administration.³² The forced evacuations deprived the university of a significant part of its *Bildungsbürgertum* fundament through removing the most senior staff; a development that was to repeat itself and accelerate under Soviet rule.

When the Russian forces took over control in Leipzig in July 1945, they immediately turned their attention to the university. The Soviets were not behind the Americans in terms of removal of scientific equipment and research from the universities in their zone. They too, committed scientists to work for them in the Soviet Union.³³ Beyond this, the policies of the SMAD towards higher education institutions were largely unstructured.³⁴ This became very clear in the denazification policies directed at the universities.

³² Feige, 'Vor dem Abzug'; Henke, *Die amerikanische Besetzung Deutschlands*, chapter VI, part 5, pp. 742-76. Of course, a relativisation might be in order, but then no one has ever pretended that the Soviet Union was anything other than a dictatorship, whereas the US claimed to be a nation based on the rule of law.

³³ *Order Number 3 of the Supreme Commander of the SMA*, 15 June 1945 regarding the 'handover of weapons, [...] research institutes, laboratories, [...] documents, patents and other paperwork concerning military use'. Natural Sciences in general were regarded as 'of military use'. In: Roland Köhler and Gottfried Handel (eds.), *Dokumente der Sowjetischen Militäradministration in Deutschland zum Hochschul- und Fachschulwesen* (East Berlin, 1975), p.1; see also: Krause, *Alma Mater Lipsiensis*.

³⁴ Nikitin, *Zwischen Dogma und gesundem Menschenverstand*, p. 27. Nikitin states that the SMAD was largely without concept until 1947 with regards to the universities in their zone.

In Leipzig, the denazification efforts had begun whilst the city was still under American command. *Rektor* Schweitzer was given great autonomy in the process; self-purging by the university was the method of choice of the Americans. It can be assumed that the transitional character of the American occupation played a role in this lenient approach. The university understood this as 'moral obligation to rid the faculties of National Socialist elements.'³⁵ Bernhard Schweitzer was, however, also very intent on preserving as many of the university's staff as possible. Each case was to be investigated individually and dismissals were only a last resort.³⁶

Initially, this continued under the new Soviet administration. On 19 July, Colonel Plantanov told Lord Mayor Zeigner that the 'old' Leipzig University had a very good reputation amongst academics in Russia. He explained that it was the intention of the military administration to support the scientists of the university. A first token of this was the decision that members of the university staff should have their food rations doubled.³⁷

The SMAD had founded its own section for *Volksbildung* on 10 July 1945 in Berlin, which under the leadership of Lieutenant General Pjotr V. Solotuchin and Major Pjotr I. Nikitin as permanent secretary was responsible for higher education and the universities.³⁸ Under Solotuchin's leadership, the Soviet officials aimed to maintain the centuries old traditions of the German universities placed under their control.³⁹ Thus the re-opening of the universities in their zones was speedily prepared. In Leipzig, the city's commander Trufanov explained in a meeting on 4 August, that the question of the purging of the university staff had to be carried out 'not too rigorously and schematically, the

³⁵ Schweitzer's report in Welsh, 'Entnazifizierung und Wiedereröffnung', p. 357.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ 'Ein Wissenschaftler kann nicht arbeiten, wenn er Brotsorgen hat', StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 3190, Blatt 81, 19 July 1945

³⁸ Professor Pjotr Vassilijevitch Solotuchin was a historian who had been the Rektor of Leningrad university before the war. He thus understood the territory of higher education very well. Dr Pjotr I. Nikitin (later Professor Nikitin) was a mathematical physicist who had just completed his viva at the beginning of the war and then worked in the seventh department – the propaganda division of the Red Army.

³⁹ See both: Interview with P. I. Nikitin in Alexandr Haritonow, *Sowjetische Hochschulpolitik in Sachsen 1945-49* (Weimar, 1995) and P. I. Nikitin, *Zwischen Dogma und gesundem Menschenverstand*.

number of lecturers, most of them irreplaceable specialists, should not be decimated without need'. The 'spirit of National Socialism' had to be removed, yet this was either possible by removing the 'bearer of the spirit' or the 'spirit from the bearer'. Most importantly, he called for university members to be given time to adjust to the new times and see the error of their ways; every case was to be looked at individually without applying a template. The procedure of denazification was to be undertaken in agreement with the German authorities (the city commander did not, however, specify who exactly these authorities were). Where disputes arose, Trufanov would take the final decision.⁴⁰ This lenient perspective, very much in tune with Schweitzer's own view, was not shared by the German authorities. Although Fritz Selbmann had characterized Leipzig University as possessing '[...] a body of academics of good, internationally renowned scholars and scientists' that prevented the institution from becoming a 'Rosenberg University', it still was not deemed appropriate by all German communists (especially not those in charge in Leipzig and Saxony).⁴¹ On 17 August 1945, the *Land* administration of Saxony published a directive outlining the new employment regulations in public administrations. It called for the dismissal of all NSDAP members. Exceptions could be made for nominal members of the party and essential specialists.⁴² This was directly binding for the university in Leipzig as it was as *Landesuniversität* subject to the *Land* administration.⁴³ Further qualification of the pre-requisites for the re-opening of the universities came with the SMAD order number 50 regarding the 'preparation of universities for the beginning of teaching' of 4 September 1945. This order required universities to remove all National Socialist and militarist

⁴⁰ StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 4537, Blatt 99, 4 August 1945.

⁴¹ Fritz Selbmann, *Aufbruch des Geistes: Zur Frage der neuen deutschen Volkskultur* (Leipzig, 1945), p. 20f.

⁴² Amtliche Nachrichten der Landesverwaltung, 1, 1945 in Clemens Vollnhals, *Entnazifizierung. Politische Säuberung und Rehabilitierung in den vier Besatzungszonen 1945-1949* (Munich, 1991), pp. 175-180; despite the fact that similar directives came into force in all Länder and provinces of the Soviet Zone, in Saxony it soon became custom to ignore the exception of nominal party members and request their dismissal as well thereby establishing the strictest denazification policy in the entire Soviet Zone. See Helga A. Welsh, *Revolutionärer Wandel*.

⁴³ Zeigner already detected that the university would be 'gefangen zwischen Landesverwaltung und Sowjetischer Militäradministration.' StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 3211, Blatt 451.

doctrines from the education of students and provide lists of their academic staff, their denazification results and their enrolment procedures for approval by the SMAD.⁴⁴ On this basis, the SMAD department for *Volksbildung* developed 'road maps' for the individual universities to facilitate re-opening. Responsible for the correct completion of the order were, apart from the universities themselves, the mayors of the university towns, the *Länder* governments and the newly created German Central Administration for *Volksbildung* in Berlin (under the leadership of Paul Wandel, operative in the Soviet Zone) and its SMAD counterpart. The final decision lay with the supreme commander of the SMAD, Marshall Zhukov.⁴⁵

This order prompted a meeting in Leipzig between Solotuchin and Colonel Morosov as representatives of the SMAD *Abteilung für Volksbildung* and Schweitzer and Lord Mayor Zeigner on 8 September 1945 to discuss Leipzig University's road map. In this meeting Solotuchin stressed that only nominal party members were allowed to remain in their positions; these, however, were to be treated 'like any other citizen'.⁴⁶ This meant that Schweitzer's reference to unique expertise of some of his more heavily implicated members of staff had lost its validity.

On 14 September, Trufanov issued an official order to Zeigner enforcing the SMAD order.⁴⁷ Yet, the required lists were not forwarded to the SMAD *Abteilung für Volksbildung* as instructed by order number 50, possibly because most of the NSDAP members (nominal and otherwise) amongst the university's staff had remained in their posts at Schweitzer's behest. Bernhard Schweitzer is often described as not very

⁴⁴ Köhler and Handel (eds.), *Dokumente der Sowjetischen Militäradministration*, p. 21.

⁴⁵ Nikitin, *Zwischen Dogma und gesundem Menschenverstand*. The *Deutsche Zentralverwaltung für Volksbildung* was one of the administrations created by the SMAD in July 1945 to oversee the development of the Soviet Zone. The head of the German administration for *Volksbildung*, Paul Wandel (1905-1995), was a German communist who fled from Nazi Germany to the Soviet Union and managed to survive the Stalinist purges. The 'qualities' necessary for this were translated into an uncompromising stance in his offices once back in Germany. In the GDR he became Minister for *Volksbildung* in 1949 and from 1953 also Secretary for Culture and Education in the Central Committee of the SED. See Manfred Heinemann and Alexandr Haritonow, *Hochschuloffiziere und Wiederaufbau*, p. 8.

⁴⁶ StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 4537, No. 179, Protocol of meeting 8 September 1945.

⁴⁷ Köhler and Handel (eds.), *Dokumente der Sowjetischen Militäradministration*, p. 18.

cooperative with regards to the Soviet authorities and their German counterparts.⁴⁸ His conduct was denounced in the GDR historiography as reactionary and anti-democratic.⁴⁹ These accusations have been rectified in recent works, mostly by re-evaluating his conservative stance and to a lesser extent through a re-evaluation of his actions.⁵⁰ Yet these actions need to be seen in their context. Schweitzer began his chancellorship with the promise of re-instatement of university autonomy and was given authority over the denazification process in his institution. He had to experience the removal of his most senior staff, eminent scientists who were a great asset to the university, by the Americans. Following the orders of Trufanov, he did his utmost to balance denazification and the needs of the university to remain functional. It must have seemed to him that the unending stream of orders and directives from different authorities were designed fully to undermine the control of the university over its own affairs by moving the goalposts at every step of the way. This also shows the difficult nature of the term denazification. Those who acted against it were automatically Nazi sympathisers or apologists, even if their reasons, as in Schweitzer's case, were completely devoid of such motives. The occupation powers did not only invoke the term where it suited them, it also was a convenient cover for political interference. For *bürgerlich* Germans that must have conjured up memories of Nazi political interference. On 2 September 1945 (that is before SMAD order number 50), Zeigner instructed the *Antifaschistischer Block* to investigate the university on behalf of Solotuchin. Instead of coordinating this enquiry with Schweitzer, Zeigner suggested an investigation with the aid of the wardens of the lecturers' apartment houses or other 'politically even better educated functionaries'.⁵¹ Despite the explicit order by the

⁴⁸ Nikitin, *Zwischen Dogma und gesundem Menschenverstand*.

⁴⁹ See for example Dietmar Keller, 'Die Universität nach der Zerschlagung des Faschismus bis zum Aufbau der entwickelten sozialistischen Gesellschaft' in Lothar Rathmann, *Alma Mater Lipsiensis* (Leipzig, 1984), pp. 273-75 and Feige, 'Zum Beginn'.

⁵⁰ Siegfried Hoyer, 'Der Weg zur Wiedereröffnung der Universität Leipzig' in *Neues Archiv für Sächsische Geschichte*, Band 68/1997.

⁵¹ StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 4550, Blatt 115. The *Hausbeauftragte* (house wardens), as already seen above, were members of the *Antifaschistischer Block* and mostly politically active in the KPD.

Antifaschistischer Block in July 1945 that the house wardens were not to spy like the *Blockwarte* during the Third Reich, here there was an obvious parallel between the two.⁵² The 'investigation' did not yield much as the political allegiances could not be established, yet those reporting were still happy to cast verdicts on the characters of those under investigation. Someone who might have been made suspicious by having his neighbours questioned, and who subsequently refrained from private contracts with them was easily labelled as an 'unsocial reactionary'. Indeed the growing practice of 'progressive' parties, first and foremost the KPD, to dub adversaries 'conservatives' and 'reactionaries' is clearly visible in these 'evaluations'.⁵³ This can also be seen in the statement made by the KPD city councillor Holtzhauer to Schweitzer regarding the aim of the denazification process: not only to 'render innocuous the Nazi activists [...] [but also] the conservative and reactionary parts of the lecturing staff'.⁵⁴ In the light of these developments it is only understandable that Schweitzer was at pains to avoid situations in which his approach would be questioned.⁵⁵ He felt, however, confident enough in mid-September to ask the *Landesverwaltung* to approach Zhukov to apply for a re-opening of the university. The *Landesverwaltung* shared Schweitzer's view that the university was ready and sent the request on to the SMAD.⁵⁶ Permission was not granted outright but an order concerning the re-opening of all universities in the Soviet Zone was issued by Zhukov in early October. It reiterated that only nominal members of the NSDAP were allowed to teach at the universities. The responsibility for the selection of lecturers and students was fully

⁵² The central committee of the Antifaschistischer Block issued a set of guidelines stating the role of the *Hausbeauftragte*. It clearly outlines that the *Blockwarte* and their spying activities were not to be copied. This, however, was still in July. By September 1945, the arrests and transfers of the Antifascist Bloc members (as seen in chapter 1) had changed the organisation, by the end of the month it was disbanded. For the order see: Tubbessing, *Nationalkomitee*, p. 115.

⁵³ StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 4550, Blatt 237 and 238.

⁵⁴ Ibid., No. 4537, Blatt 200.

⁵⁵ Nikitin states that it was very difficult to meet with Schweitzer at this time, 'one was under the impression that he was consciously avoiding contact with any representatives of the occupation power'. Nikitin, *Zwischen Dogma und gesundem Menschenverstand*, p. 65.

⁵⁶ Hoyer, 'Der Weg zur Wiedereröffnung', p. 258. Hoyer cites a document from the estate of the head of Saxony's Administration for Science, Art and Education.

placed on the shoulders of the vice chancellors. These then had to transfer their selections for review to the *Landesverwaltungen* who in turn had to send them to both the German Central Department for *Volksbildung* and the SMAD department for *Volksbildung*. Solotuchin gave his approval in principle for the plans in Leipzig, if Schweitzer could produce lists in accordance with the requirements. He would then recommend to Zhukov the re-opening of the institution.⁵⁷ The date of 31 October 1945 was the envisaged day for the re-opening of Leipzig's university.

On 4 October 1945, Zeigner declared the official dissolution of the university. As the financier of the university, the city had to assume full control of the proceedings, thus this official closure allowed a clean cut. A commission was to be founded to prepare the for re-opening.⁵⁸ Alongside these measures, Schweitzer was also forced to accept a commission made up of all parties in the *Block antifaschistischer Parteien* who were to observe the denazification. It seemed that Schweitzer's *laissez-faire* approach had gone far enough. The heat in the denazification debate had intensified and Schweitzer's approach did not meet the altered requirements.⁵⁹ Yet, the efforts for the scheduled opening date continued. The first higher education institution in the Soviet Zone to open was Jena's Friedrich Schiller University on 15 October 1945. The opening did not mean the beginning of lectures as denazification issues had not been fully resolved. Nevertheless, it showed what could be achieved. The denazification commission in Leipzig decided on the same date to issue dismissals to forty lecturers who had so far been protected by Schweitzer as 'specialists'.⁶⁰ Schweitzer then wrote a letter to Zhukov officially asking for the re-opening on 31 October and he included the new lists of lecturers, in hoping to have met the approval of the SMAD. However, he ignored the proper channel prescribed in Zhukov's order of early October; neither the German Central Administration for *Volksbildung* nor

⁵⁷ Nikitin, *Zwischen Dogma und gesundem Menschenverstand*.

⁵⁸ StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 4537, Blatt 206.

⁵⁹ Hoyer, 'Der Weg zur Wiedereröffnung'.

⁶⁰ Feige, 'Zum Beginn'.

the SMAD department for *Volksbildung* had received and reviewed the respective lists. Schweitzer's exact reasons for choosing this path cannot be deduced from the sources. Yet it is highly probable that he tried to avoid the piecemeal approach both to speed up the process and prevent an intermediary body from stopping his proposal on – what he would deem – further incomprehensible grounds. The letter to Zhukov was forwarded to both the German Central Administration for *Volksbildung* and the SMAD department for *Volksbildung* and they agreed that a re-opening would not be possible under the circumstances.⁶¹ However, this was not communicated to anyone in Leipzig. Instead, the city's military commander assured both Lord Mayor Zeigner and *Rektor* Schweitzer on 16 October that the order for the re-opening of the remaining universities in the Soviet Zone would come within ten to fourteen days. Details of the re-opening ceremony were discussed, including guest lists, speeches and the choice of music.⁶² The preparations for the re-opening ceremony in the university church, St Paul's, were under way with the political parties announcing who would attend on their behalf, city councillor Holtzhauer advising which representatives of the city's factories were to be invited, and the programmes were being printed. Even the catering had already been organised.⁶³ However, even if the department for *Volksbildung* of the SMAD had approved the re-opening, the submitted lists would have been out of date. On 27 October, the Soviet military administration in Saxony published its order number 294, which called for the removal of all former NSDAP members, regardless of their active or nominal status.⁶⁴ On 29 October, Schweitzer was informed that the re-opening had been postponed for an indefinite period of time.⁶⁵ By 15 November, order number 294 forced sixty more lecturers out of their posts. On 8 May 1945, the university still retained 187 professors (at the beginning of the

⁶¹ Nikitin, *Zwischen Dogma und gesundem Menschenverstand*, p. 68.

⁶² StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 4557, Blatt 1.

⁶³ Ibid., Blatt 7, 26 October 1945 and Blatt 6, 27 October 1945.

⁶⁴ Heinemann and Haritonow, *Hochschuloffiziere und Wiederaufbau*, p. 40.

⁶⁵ StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 4557, Blatt 9.

war in 1939, it had been 255). New appointments were very difficult and thus few and far between. At the end of November 1945, the university was left with forty-nine professors across the entirety of its departments.⁶⁶ There were simply not enough academics left to teach.⁶⁷ Nikitin admitted that by now there was only twenty percent of the required capacity of lecturers available in Leipzig.⁶⁸ Both he and Solotuchin, however, encouraged Schweitzer with the advice that nominal party members would soon be allowed back in.⁶⁹ The fact that other *Landverwaltung* in the Soviet Zone were acting more leniently than the Saxon *Landesverwaltung* was also a cause for hope that Saxony would soon revert to its neighbours' course. Thus Schweitzer continued his quest for a re-opening of his institution. As he had lost already most of his academic staff there was no need for him any longer to avoid the authorities. When Nikitin visited Leipzig in December 1945, Schweitzer positively sought and beleaguered him to find out whether a date had been set yet. Schweitzer obviously considered Nikitin's support necessary to achieve this aim. Major Nikitin had at this point already prepared all necessary documents and assured Schweitzer that the order for the re-opening of Leipzig's university would be published in January 1946.⁷⁰ The commitment of the *Rektor* to his institution did not go unnoticed by Nikitin who, despite Schweitzer's disregard for some orders by the occupation power, recommended Schweitzer to Solotuchin for the renewal of this contract.⁷¹ However, due to pressure from the German authorities (the Central Administration for *Volkshbildung* was integral in this and the *Landesverwaltung* refused to support Schweitzer against the Central Administration's Wandel), Schweitzer resigned at the end of 1945.⁷² Partly due to his own

⁶⁶ UAL, Bestand Rektorat, R236 Band 1.

⁶⁷ A SMAD commission sent to investigate the situation found that Leipzig's medical school had no teaching staff at all. See Hoyer, 'Der Weg zur Wiedereröffnung', p. 267.

⁶⁸ Nikitin quoted in Köhler and Schulz, *Erinnerungen sowjetischer Hochschuloffiziere*, p. 22.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁷⁰ Nikitin, *Zwischen Dogma und gesundem Menschenverstand*, p. 68.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

⁷² Details in Welsh, 'Entnazifizierung und Wiedereröffnung', pp. 351-53. Schweitzer's insistence on keeping valuable members of staff even though they were politically implicated clearly clashed with Wandel's plans of creating a 'neue deutsche Intelligenz'. Wandel cited in Hoyer, 'Der Weg zu Wiedereröffnung', p. 268.

actions, partly through machinations of his adversaries, Schweitzer had been manoeuvred into a position where his dismissal was imminent. He chose to forestall the inevitable by withdrawing from office. This resignation, instigated by the German authorities in Saxony and the German Central Administration for *Volksbildung* was met with surprise by the SMAD department for *Volksbildung*.⁷³ Schweitzer's letter of resignation explained his motives and reasons in detail, not without spelling out his grievances and placing blame at the right doorsteps. It is worthwhile to quote it at length:

One has to look further, plan ahead to ensure the survival of German *Wissenschaft* (academia) and of this university, which is so closely linked to this science, for a distant future. The ranks of productive researchers and academics have already been decimated alarmingly over the last decade. Future generations will hold us to account demanding to know whether we have understood to use this precious intellectual aptitude and the scientific talent [...] economically, as these times of destitution dictate. I am afraid that a future German *Wissenschaft* will not be able to function out of its own capabilities. Rather it will only be able to serve humanity as a satellite of foreign science.

Of course, it was the aim of all occupation powers to weaken Germany for the foreseeable future. In the academic field the forced evacuations and removals took their toll and reduced German academia to a 'satellite' of those powers who were now ruling Germany.

Yet Schweitzer seemed to regard the inner-German interference as even more destructive:

The reason for my resignation is that a circle outside the university [that is in the German Administration for *Volksbildung*] and a neither politically fully authorised nor factually competent section of the public has misinterpreted my attempts to maintain this university [...] undamaged for the future as clinging to the old. My efforts have been misconstrued as reaction. [...] I therefore want to ensure that the opening of the university is not delayed through my person.⁷⁴

⁷³ Nikitin, *Zwischen Dogma und gesundem Menschenverstand*, p. 65. Nikitin and Solotuchin only learnt of the resignation a week after the event on 5 January 1946. Paul Wandel on the other hand had been following the 'Schweitzer case' and came to the conclusion in early December 1945 that the Rektor had to be removed immediately. In the months before, Wandel had already advised the city administration about a possible successor. See Welsh, 'Entnazifizierung und Wiedereröffnung', here p. 352.

⁷⁴ StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 4564, Blatt 15-6, 'Man muß weiter blicken, längerfristig planen, das Weiterleben der deutschen Wissenschaft und der eng mit dieser verbundenen Universität auch für eine fernere Zukunft

The university relayed Schweitzer's reasons (in diluted form) to the *Nachrichtenamt* of the city for publication. Lord Mayor Zeigner issued a swift reply stating that it could only be printed as fact, as any explanation 'would only embarrass Schweitzer'.⁷⁵

The order to re-open Leipzig University on 5 February was indeed given in January 1946.⁷⁶ The date alone, however, did not solve the problems of the university. Leipzig was still without a *Rektor* since Schweitzer's departure.⁷⁷ The Lord Mayor grew concerned when an election for a new head was prohibited on 17 January 1946. Leipzig was by now the only university without an elected *Rektor*, a rather unfortunate situation for an institution supposedly about to re-open within weeks.⁷⁸ By 21 January, an election was finally allowed and Professor Gadamer became the new head of Leipzig's university. In consideration of the circumstances he accepted the election under the premise that 'fruitful conditions' would exist for his administration.⁷⁹ Part of this 'fruitful' cooperation was the

sichern. Die Reihen der produktiven Forscher und Gelehrten sind in Deutschland schon vor einem Jahrzehnt beängstigend dünn geworden. Von unserer Generation werden künftige Geschlechter einmal Rechenschaft darüber verlangen, ob sie es verstanden hat mit dem so kostbar gewordenen Geistesgut und den zum Neuaufbau bereiten wissenschaftlichen Talenten des deutschen Volkes so haushälterisch zu wirtschaften, wie es die Not erfordert. Ich habe die Befürchtung, daß eine künftige deutsche Wissenschaft nicht mehr aus sich heraus sondern nur als Satellit ausländischer Wissenschaft ihren Dienst an der Menschheit verrichten kann. [...] Der Grund der Niederlegung des Amtes ist folgender: außerhalb der Universität und in einem bestimmten, weder sachkundigen noch politisch voll autorisierten Kreis der Öffentlichkeit wurde mein Bestreben, die in der Vergangenheit zu bedeutender Höhe entwickelte Universität möglichst ohne vermeidbaren Schaden der Zukunft zu erhalten als Festhalten am Alten mißdeutet. Es wurde als Reaktion verkannt. [...] Ich will mit meiner Person nicht den Befehl zur Wiedereröffnung verzögern.'

⁷⁵ Ibid., Blatt 16, Blatt 17 and Ibid., No. 17648, Blatt 42. Schweitzer left Leipzig for the Western Zones where in 1948 he found a new position in Tübingen, which he held until his retirement in 1960.

⁷⁶ Ibid., Blatt 49, SMAD Order No. 12 to re-open Leipzig University, 15 January 1946 with specifications containing enrolment of students, employment of lecturers and the responsibilities of the *Landesverwaltung* towards the SMAD.

⁷⁷ Ibid., The *Rektor* was made solely responsible for the employment of all lecturers and students. With the position being vacant, the university was unable to fulfil the pre-requisites for the re-opening as stated in the order. In this context it is worthwhile to note that Hoyer ('Der Weg zur Wiedereröffnung') used the wrong date for the issue of order number 12 (in his version: 18 January). He therefore misses the problems surrounding the Rektor election completely. Why he was mistaken is unclear as his source (Handel and Köhler, *Dokumente*) states the 15 January. The same date can be found on copies of the order in the university archive: UAL, Bestand Rektor, R 236, Band 1, Blatt 11 and *ibid.*, R 50, Band 2, Blatt 1.

⁷⁸ StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 17648, Blatt 53. In the light of the order to prepare the re-opening, this crippling measure aggravated the dire situation in Leipzig. A possible explanation for the ban of an election was that the SMAD was set not to accept another Rektor who could display more certainty and instinct in political questions than Schweitzer who was 'immer unsicher in diesen Fragen.' See: Ibid., No. 4557, Blatt 52.

⁷⁹ Professor Hans-Georg Gadamer was a student of Heidegger and himself an internationally renowned philosopher. His election and acceptance: Ibid., No. 17648, Blatt 59.

establishment of a 'political advisory committee' for Gadamer, founded by Holtzhauer and the Soviet city command. This committee was to advise Gadamer to prevent him from falling into the same pitfalls as the 'politically unsure' Schweitzer.⁸⁰ This had echoes of the Nazi practice of providing a National Socialist 'adviser' to ensure 'political correctness'.

The re-opening took place in the largest hall of Leipzig's foremost cinema, the Capitol. The initial plan to hold it in St Paul's church, which had been the university's assembly hall from 1545 to 1836, was abolished after Zeigner was informed that the Soviets would not welcome this location. The De-Christianisation of public life had also reached the university's realm. At the ceremony, Lord Mayor Zeigner gave a speech in which he underlined the importance for complete renewal: 'Not only the outer shell of the university is destroyed but also its inner form. The spirit of the university will have to be rebuilt over the coming years. Its face will have to change completely. Its academic staff will have to be democratic and antifascist.' Thus Zeigner pointed to the fact the staff shortage was probably not going to be alleviated by the return of the former members of staff.⁸¹

Next to the staff shortage, the question of student selection was imperative.⁸² The SMAD had outlined strict rules for matriculations. As Leipzig University had remained open throughout the war, it had a considerable number of students hoping to resume their studies as soon as possible. They were joined by students who had returned from the front eager to finish their courses. Additionally, many school pupils were hoping to start at the university. All of these had to be brought in line with the ideas of the occupation power to create a more 'equal' system of higher education and allow more working-class children

⁸⁰ According to the Soviet city command, the committee was founded in agreement with Gadamer. Unfortunately, no sources could be found that reveal the extent of the advice given, or if it indeed was necessary for Gadamer to consult or be advised by it. Ibid., No. 3211, Blatt 220.

⁸¹ 'Nicht nur der äußere Bau der Universität ist zerstört, sondern auch die innere Gestalt. Das geistige Leben unserer Universität wird in den nächsten Jahren neu aufgebaut werden müssen. Ihr Lehrkörper wird antifaschistisch und demokratisch sein müssen.' Speech by Zeigner 5 February 1946, Copy of Document in Rudloff, *Erich Zeigner*, pp. 188-93, here pp. 188-9.

⁸² The *Landesverwaltung* urged the university to start matriculations immediately after the order for re-opening was given, to wait until opening day was not an option. StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 4557, Blatt 53.

into the universities. Leipzig's existing students had shown their assertiveness at student meetings in the run-up to the re-opening. The first on 25 October was conducted with calm. Speakers presenting a socialist point of view were met with rejection, yet orderly behaviour was largely observed. The second meeting, however, on 29 November, took place in the already heated atmosphere of the indefinitely postponed opening of the university. It is not surprising that the majority of the students attending the meeting were, at best, disappointed about the delay and anxious to get more concrete information on the progress of their university. The title of the gathering was sufficiently topical, thereby explaining the rush to the assembly: 'When will the university re-open?'. The main speaker on this occasion was Dr Morenz, an archaeologist at Leipzig University.⁸³ He turned the original question of the evening into 'Why is the university not being re-opened?' thereby addressing the real issue of interest for the students.⁸⁴

Dr Morenz's speech pointed to the discrepancies between the approach of the *Landesverwaltung* in Saxony and its denazification requirements and those of other *Länder* administrations namely that of Thuringia and the province of Saxony (subsequently renamed Saxony Anhalt). In both their universities, Jena and Halle, NSDAP members were allowed to remain in the teaching staff and still the institutions opened before Leipzig. Morenz further explained that the strict policy of Saxony surpassed even what the Russian authorities had ordered. All of this added to the students' anger, which erupted in the overcrowded room in jeers and heckling during other speeches stressing the need for a 'democratic rebuilding'.⁸⁵ The city council, especially Ott and Holtzhauer were outraged

⁸³ Ibid., No. 4565, Blatt 4 Protocol of student meeting, 29 November 1945.

⁸⁴ Students of the university had been integral to the clearing of rubble on campus and in the city of Leipzig itself. The main motive for students was a promise that their commitment would ensure a place at their university (social engagement was a pre-requisite for a successful university application). Lecturers and university staff were obliged to do clearing work if they had been NSDAP members. Age and health were not regarded as obstacles to this service. Ibid., No. 4537, Blatt 106, Blatt 109 and Blatt 114.

⁸⁵ Ibid., No. 4565, Blatt 4.

at the students', but also Morenz's, behaviour.⁸⁶ Their evaluation of the event is symptomatic of the increasingly assertive and aggressive manner in which the city's 'progressive' elements reacted to criticism.⁸⁷ The students were 'nihilistic' and 'immature' and unable to cope with the requirements of the time. Their behaviour was dominated by 'bürgerliche Untergangssehnsucht' (bourgeois longing for destruction). Morenz on the other hand was nothing but a 'puppet of Schweitzer's' whose reactionism was once more apparent. Overall, they concluded that the subversive and nihilistic attitude of the student body, consisting in the majority of members of 'faschistische Gesellschaftsschichten [sic]' (fascist social classes), was a main obstacle to the re-opening of the university as a whole.⁸⁸

The students had been subject already to selection procedures akin to those of the denazification process of the university's staff. Their selection had been arguably even stricter. The guidelines stipulated that no person was allowed to enrol whose parents had been active members of the NSDAP, whose family members had left with the Americans and whose parents and/or siblings had been imprisoned on political grounds by the occupation power.⁸⁹ The order for re-opening further outlined the criteria for matriculation of students stating that members of the NSDAP, and activists and leaders of the Hitler Youth were excluded from applying for a place to study.⁹⁰ This was in tune with a directive issued by the Allied Control Council on 23 January 1946. Nominal members of the Hitler Youth were able, in principle, to enrol. However, each of these cases was to be investigated in detail and only after a positive verdict was an application considered.⁹¹ It

⁸⁶ Holtzhauer, as a prominent KPD member would of course object to any questioning of the policies of the *Landesverwaltung* that had been appointed by the SMA in Saxony. Erich Ott was a member of the SPD, yet very left-leaning and in favour of a unification of the workers' parties. Hence his views mirrored that of his KPD counterpart.

⁸⁷ Through Zeigner's support, the KPD – among them Holtzhauer – was increasingly asserting itself in view of dissent although it was not yet the strongest force in the city.

⁸⁸ Ibid., Blatt 3, Report about the student meeting and discussion in the city council.

⁸⁹ Ibid., No. 4560, Blatt 45, 5 October 1945, 'Richtlinien für die politische Überprüfung der Studenten'

⁹⁰ Ibid., No. 17648, Blatt 49.

⁹¹ Heinemann and Haritonow, *Hochschuloffiziere und Wiederaufbau*, p. 42.

soon emerged, that nominal members won hardly any places as the demand was greater than the supply of places.⁹² The universities across the Soviet Zone in general had to limit the student intake due to restrictions on their resources. In Leipzig the damage to the university's departments and libraries but especially the lack of teaching staff compounded the problem. Of 2500-3000 applicants for places in Leipzig (as per 8 September 1945) Solotuchin felt 1500 to be a more realistic figure. This was before the mass-dismissals of staff that were still to come after September 1945, which intensified the problem further.⁹³

Whereas the exclusion of those who were entangled with the National Socialist regime was understandable, students were by and large outraged at the demands of proving their antifascist convictions. Many found it difficult to provide references from officials of the antifascist parties in their home towns and prove their 'social engagement' and 'democratic and antifascist' mind set, especially those who had often been away for years during their (involuntary) service in the *Wehrmacht*.⁹⁴ It soon transpired that political qualifications were more important than educational ones. As Zeigner stated in his re-opening speech: 'The question of who is allowed to study is a political question. And as such there can only be a political answer.'⁹⁵ The authorities in the Soviet Zone, both Soviet and German, followed the mantra that the privilege of higher education would best be broken by positive discrimination in favour of children of working class and peasant backgrounds.⁹⁶ Students could enter the university without matriculation exams if they could prove experience in their chosen subject area or passed an 'exam discussion' in which the main focus was the potential not knowledge.⁹⁷ These candidates were then given preference over those who had graduated from secondary schools who mostly had a

⁹² In any case, the number of places allocated to nominal NSDAP members was limited to ten percent of all free positions.

⁹³ StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 4537, Blatt 181.

⁹⁴ Krause, *Alma Mater Lipsiensis*.

⁹⁵ 'Die Frage wer studieren darf [...] ist eine politische Frage und auf eine politische Frage kann es keine andere Antwort geben als eine politische', Zeigner speech, 5 February 1946, p. 190.

⁹⁶ Nikitin indeed states that this was one of the early means for the transformation of the entire higher education system. See Nikitin in Heinemann and Haritonow, *Hochschuloffiziere und Wiederaufbau*, p. 209.

⁹⁷ Ibid., No. 4554, Blatt 1.

bürgerlich background. For these *bürgerlich* applicants a *numerus clausus* was in place thus limiting their access further. The procedure then changed through the establishment of *Vorstudienanstalten* (pre-study institutions) in 1946, where the necessary qualifications for the entry to higher education could be obtained.⁹⁸ Graduates of these institutions were then sure to gain a place at university. This again was seen by other students as an unfair advantage.⁹⁹

The apolitical stance of the majority of students was a thorn in the side of the German authorities; especially the SED demanded more political engagement. The foundation of the *Freie Deutsche Jugend* (FDJ) on 7 March 1946 and moreover the creation of the SED affiliated *Arbeitsgemeinschaft demokratischer Studenten* (working group of democratic students) in Leipzig University in August 1946 were set to change the political indifference. Yet, it appeared that the majority of members of the FDJ and SED student groups only held nominal membership. The affiliation with the FDJ and the party was seen as a fast track course towards a place in the university. Nikitin observed that sixty percent of students from 1946 onwards stated that they were members of these organisations in their university application. However, of those only thirty percent actually registered with their organisation at the university and only half again actually attended meetings and events.¹⁰⁰ Despite its initial small following, this active minority was able, through its affiliation, to voice its views very publicly and create problems for the university. The first major upheaval in Leipzig was created over the issue of the reinstatement of professors who had been nominal members of the NSDAP, to ease the staffing shortage and facilitate the return to normality in lecturing.

⁹⁸ The attendees of these institutes worked hard to obtain their qualifications which were comparable to final exams in the secondary schools. See comment by Ewald Späth about his time in the *Vorstudienanstalt* Leipzig in Heinemann and Haritonow, *Hochschuloffiziere und Wiederaufbau*, p. 215.

⁹⁹ Krause, *Alma Mater Lipsiensis*.

¹⁰⁰ Interview with P.I. Nikitin in Haritonow, *Sowjetische Hochschulpolitik*.

In January 1946, the Allied Control Council issued Directive Number 24 that further specified the circle of persons who would be excluded from public office and responsible positions.¹⁰¹ Nominal members of the National Socialist party were thus allowed to work in universities. This would have alleviated the staffing problems of Leipzig University. To meet initial needs the university had to recall retired professors, many of them in their seventies and eighties. Thus the number of professors went up from 49 to 64 with additional lecturing delivered by 137 tutors and scientific assistants. To compare the figures: in 1939, the university had 255 professors and 66 tutors; the teaching therefore was firmly based on senior lecturing staff.¹⁰² Some subjects could not be taught because of lack of facilities (the entire section for veterinary medicine was flattened as were many laboratories and hospitals for the teaching of medicine and natural sciences), others because there just was no one to teach them. A call to the *Landesverwaltung* Saxony to allow nominal party members back into teaching was met with a negative reply.¹⁰³ Further constraints appeared when the *Landesverwaltung* halved the university's budget in February 1946. The resulting cuts in staffing were substantial: the humanities lost nineteen posts, and the sciences lost twelve. In total fifty professorships were cut in the budget. This did not always matter very much in practice, however. Even after the cuts, more than half of the remaining professorships were still vacant.¹⁰⁴ Yet, this budget had reduced Leipzig to the smallest university in the whole Soviet Zone.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, the signal this sent out damaged the university's prestige. In 1946, many universities in the Western Zones had been re-established and commenced teaching. The Western occupation powers also proved to be more lenient in their denazification efforts in the higher education sector, thus the

¹⁰¹ Directive No. 24, see: <http://www.verfassungen.de/de/de45-49/> (accessed 20 November 2008).

¹⁰² By 1946, the malaise of only 49 remaining professors (in 1945) had been eased, yet the ratio of senior lecturing staff to tutors and assistants had been reversed and was still 120 lecturers short of pre-war levels. This inverted state remained reality in Leipzig into the 1950s. UAL, Bestand Rektorat, R 236, Band 1, Blatt 11.

¹⁰³ StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 17648, Blatt 138, 21 March 1946.

¹⁰⁴ UAL, Bestand Rektorat, R 216, Blatt 12.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., Blatt 20.

problems that accompanied understaffing were less severe and the universities better positioned. These universities were now courting Leipzig's remaining eminent academics. The university feared that the cuts would sway their decision.¹⁰⁶

When the re-employment of nominal party members was discussed again in the second half of 1946, the *Arbeitsgruppe demokratischer Studenten* flexed its muscles.¹⁰⁷ It published a severe criticism and attack on the deliberations in the university in the name of 'students for a democratic university', calling all students to boycott any 'fascist' lecturers and organise a protest against these anti-democratic measures. The *Rektor* was to be presented with this resolution and the demand to support the students' 'democratising' efforts.¹⁰⁸ This implied that the *Rektor* was not yet doing his utmost to democratise the university and even more controversially, was propagating an anti-democratic course of action. As the 'fascist' professors would continue to teach their opinions, the university would be hindered in its progress towards democratisation. Under the Allied Control Council Order Number 208, anyone engaging in National Socialist, militaristic or anti-democratic propaganda was to be dismissed from a higher education institution. It further stated that the same applied to anyone who either supported or tolerated said propaganda. A *Rektor* was surely facilitating these acts by appointing 'fascist' professors.¹⁰⁹ Gadamer was indignant at being publicly denounced and offered his resignation (in unison with the deans of all departments). The *Landesverwaltung* did not accept his resignation nor was he charged with an offence under the Control Council Order. The student body subsequently

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, Blatt 21. Indeed in Gadamer's case there were several universities offering positions (amongst them Jena, Heidelberg, Freiburg, Frankfurt and Marburg), see Grondin, *Hans-Georg Gadamer*.

¹⁰⁷ The consideration only concerned six to seven professors. StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 2268, Blatt 19, 9 August 1946.

¹⁰⁸ 'Resolution der Studenten für eine demokratische Universität' in *Leipziger Zeitung*, 2 November 1946.

¹⁰⁹ Allied Control Council order 208 in Dimitrij N. Filipovich, 'Die Entnazifizierung der Universitäten in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands', in Heinemann and Haritonow, *Hochschuloffiziere und Wiederaufbau*, pp. 35-52, here p. 44.

offered its full support to the *Rektor* proving that the *Arbeitsgruppe* was in the minority. Yet, this experience sealed Gadamer's intention to leave Leipzig.¹¹⁰

In December 1946, denazification commissions were established in the universities throughout the Soviet Zone of Occupation. This was the beginning of an attempt to unify all denazification measures including the re-employment of former NSDAP members.¹¹¹ By 1947, the situation in the university had by no means eased. In January, Gadamer had to issue a public statement clarifying several misleading reports in the press. Despite the beginning of the semester being announced in the newspapers, several departments were still closed as rooms could not be heated due to lack of fuel and war damage. In others the lack of teaching staff was preventing lectures from beginning. In the school of medicine several subjects were not taught at all, amongst them such fundamental courses as physiology and anatomy. By mid-1947 the dean of the medical school simply applied for closure of his section claiming that it was utterly impossible to teach medicine when the basics were left out due to a lack of teaching staff.¹¹² Therefore, despite the problems in the previous year, the university quietly started re-employing nominal members of the NSDAP in 1947. By May, Leipzig University had to produce another comprehensive list of its entire teaching staff. Of 293 teaching staff (only sixty-five of whom were full professors) thirty-three were classified as nominal NSDAP members.¹¹³ However, this did not herald the end of vacant lecturing posts. By 1947, the SED had gathered sufficient strength to widen its influence in the universities. Higher education became a 'main party focus'. If the previous ideological 'call to arms' had been directed against former National Socialists (even if just nominal party members), it now

¹¹⁰ In his discussion with Grondin, Gadamer admitted that the 'Resolution' made him lose 'his last illusions' that a democratic renewal of Leipzig's university was possible. Grondin, *Hans-Georg Gadamer*, p. 284.

¹¹¹ A full alignment of denazification measures was only achieved in August 1947 with the SMAD order number 201. See Welsh, *Revolutionärer Wandel*.

¹¹² Volker Caysa and Helmut Seidel, *Universität im Aufbruch, Leipzig 1945-56* (Leipzig, 2001).

¹¹³ UAL, Bestand Rektorat, R 236, Band 1, Blatt 12, 23 May 1946.

extended to everyone deemed reactionary and conservative.¹¹⁴ What Holtzhauer had already expressed in September 1945, now became a doctrine in the Soviet Zone. Professors and lecturers who had preserved their *bürgerlich* outlook throughout the Third Reich and favoured the traditional right to self-administration at the university were clearly contravening the SED's ambition to shape a new societal order. As 'educational matters were matters of power', the universities had to be brought in line with socialist ideas.¹¹⁵ In Leipzig this led to an 'exodus' of *bürgerlich* academics, many felt that their efforts to work on a rebuilding of the university as a free institution dedicated to teaching and research were futile. In the Third Reich they were forced to retreat into 'academic circles' to voice themselves openly, now they simply left for the Western Zones to avoid similar constraints. Gadamer accepted a call to Frankfurt while still in the office of *Rektor*, the staunch antifascist Theodor Litt went to Bonn as he faced the beginnings of a marginalisation akin to that he had experienced under the National Socialist regime. Even professors who were members of the SED, proclaiming their will for 'modern reconstruction' through this party membership, were not excluded from the number who left Leipzig. The physicist Professor Paulsen also followed a call that took him away from Leipzig, yet as a SED member he did not leave the Soviet Zone. Paulsen relocated to Jena (in Thuringia) where he could continue his studies without unwanted political interference. However, he felt obliged to bid farewell to his party comrade Erich Ott. The city director upbraided Paulsen fiercely: 'In my opinion, the German of today does not have the right to act just according to his wishes. I acknowledge the adversities you faced in Leipzig, but I doubt that you therefore can deduce the right to leave the city and seek an easier and more pleasant working environment.' Apart from the startling cynicism, Ott showed that the city administration had no intention to address the grievances of the academics of Leipzig

¹¹⁴ Mechthild Günther and Bernd Rabehl, 'Wissenschaft und Universität als Ideologie' in Peter Erler and Klaus Schröder, *Geschichte und Transformation des SED Staates: Beiträge und Analysen* (Berlin, 1994), pp. 180-210, here p. 193.

¹¹⁵ Hoyer, 'Der Weg zur Wiedereröffnung', p. 251.

University but instead attempted to shame them into staying on. Paulsen replied that his new post 'on the contrary has more challenges than my professorship in Leipzig. Yet I will take it as I am excluded from all scientific research outside my department in Leipzig. Even party comrades are constantly placing stumbling blocks in my way.'¹¹⁶ All these men had been internationally renowned specialists in their subject. Theodor Litt was a fierce antifascist, who had risked not only his position and occupation but his well-being resisting the Nazi regime, during which he was harangued and threatened and eventually barred from teaching.¹¹⁷ These departures only intensified, especially after the SED fight against 'bürgerlich objectivism' had gathered pace in the late 1940s. The idea that science was to be independent and apolitical, a principle that many academics had fought to preserve throughout the twelve years of National Socialist reign, was increasingly deemed unsuitable for a 'modern' university in the Soviet Zone and later the GDR. 'Science must not be apolitical' became the new directive and anyone who disagreed, soon felt it better to leave.¹¹⁸ The universities were seen as a 'focal point' for a re-structuring of society. Therefore, to ensure the 'correct' political outlook in the universities was to ensure the same in the wider society, true to Lenin's notion that 'only if we change the area of education completely,[...] will we be able to achieve the creation of a society that does not resemble the old one in any shape.'¹¹⁹

Scholars of this area of Soviet Zone/GDR history assert that the domination of the universities was crucial in the process of gathering support for the SED in the Soviet Zone as a whole. Feige describes the equation of the term 'objectivism' with 'reactionism' and

¹¹⁶ Paulsen's case is interesting as he did join the SED and still faced interference and challenges because of his 'reactionary beliefs'. StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 4565, Blatt 75-80, May 1947.

¹¹⁷ Theodor Litt, an eminent pedagogue, had been the Rektor of Leipzig University until 1933 when he was ousted from his office by the National Socialists. He continued teaching only to be banned from public lecturing in 1936. His antifascist credentials therefore are clear. Schwiedrzik, *Lieber will ich Steine klopfen*.

¹¹⁸ Such as in Litt's case, who from his anticommunist standpoint could not condone the communist tainting of education. See Ibid.; The directive was issued by Helmuth Holtzhauer, who since 1948 had been the Minister for *Volksbildung* in Saxony. SStA Leipzig, BPA Leipzig, I 3/3, Blatt 82.

¹¹⁹ Caysa and Seidel *Universität im Aufbruch*, p. 465; Lenin cited in Heinemann and Haritonow, *Hochschuloffiziere und Wiederaufbau*, p. 2.

thus explained the ostracism of the word and concept.¹²⁰ Caysa and Seidel identify the campaign against the *bürgerlich* objectivism as akin to that previously fought against National Socialist ideas. By placing objectivism in the same category as National Socialism, it became easier to reject, and harder to defend. Both conclude their analysis with the view that the ensuing politicisation of the university under the SED was analogous to that in the Third Reich.¹²¹ Whereas this argument is persuasive, a full equation of the Soviet Zone and the Third Reich in this point is not quite correct as the aims of the politicisation were different. National Socialism was content with academic passivity where support was not forthcoming, while the SED demanded active support.¹²² Overall, the campaign against *bürgerlich* objectivism was directed at a 'radical exchange of elites' to facilitate the thorough establishment of SED rule in the Soviet Zone and later the GDR.¹²³

The immediate result of this 'campaign' in Leipzig was the departure of even more academics, amongst them were again scientists of international standing such as Bonhoeffer and de Boor, who followed their colleagues and left the city (mostly for the Western Zones and later for West Germany).¹²⁴ Their exodus left Leipzig University bereft of some of its greatest assets, yet it also paved the way for the complete takeover of their old university by 'progressive' (i.e. socialist) cadres. Likewise, Leipzig was prohibited from appointing professors from other universities in the Soviet Zone, due to the extremely strict political selection in Saxony. These cases included the social economic scholar Professor Hellmann and the mathematician Professor Bruckmann, although both were

¹²⁰ Feige, 'Die SED und der bürgerliche Objektivismus' in *Deutschland Archiv*, 10/1995, pp. 1074-83.

¹²¹ 'Das Primat der Politik bis in die Lehr- und Forschungsinhalte hinein prägte sowohl den Nationalsozialismus als auch die SBZ/DDR.' Caysa and Seidel, *Universität im Aufbruch*, p. 457.

¹²² Wentker, 'Justiz in der SBZ/DDR', p. 194.

¹²³ See Ralph Jessen, *Akademische Eliten und kommunistische Diktatur* (Göttingen, 1999), p. 277.

¹²⁴ Hans-Otto de Boor was one of the last of Hoyer's 'old elite jurists' in Leipzig, with him the last *Ordinarius* of Leipzig's law faculty left. Hoyer, 'Der Leipziger Oberbürgermeister'.

lecturing without problems in their respective universities in Halle and Rostock.¹²⁵ This incoherence in political evaluations of candidates caused great dismay in Leipzig.¹²⁶

A similar aggravation occurred in the student body. It had already become clear through the actions of the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft demokratischer Studenten* that socialist ideas were supposed to dominate the discourse amongst the students. So far, however, the *bürgerlich* orientated students remained in the majority. In December 1946, the SMAD ordered the establishment of *Gesellschaftswissenschaftliche Fakultäten* (GeWiFa).¹²⁷ The task of these was to educate a new generation of civil servants for the Soviet Zone. Therefore the new departments were not subject to control by the universities but directly under the German Administration for *Volksbildung*. The GeWiFa only gave places to students who could prove one year of 'democratic voluntary work' in a political, social or civil organisation.¹²⁸ In return all students received a scholarship that lay well above that which was granted to other students. Some students were becoming more equal than others. The GeWiFa was teaching according to Marxist principles (subjects included dialectic and historical materialism) to create the cadres of a future socialist administration. Leipzig was graced with the presence of the philosophical consultant of the secretariat of the central committee of the SED, Harich, as one of the professors in the newly established faculty.¹²⁹

Despite this new influx of students who by and large would have favoured the SED student organisations, the first free elections for the student council led to a comfortable majority for the candidates of the *bürgerlich* parties.¹³⁰ Their leader and then

¹²⁵ UAL, Bestand Rektorat, R216, Band I, Blatt 67 and 79, February 1948.

¹²⁶ Ibid., Blatt 103. The appointment policy was soon taken over completely by political authorities, notably the Ministry for *Volksbildung*. Caysa and Seidel, *Universität im Aufbruch*, p. 450.

¹²⁷ The translation 'social science faculty', albeit literally correct, loses the political connotation the name of these institutes had. 'Normal' social science translates into German as *Sozialwissenschaft*.

¹²⁸ This 'democratic engagement' normally included voluntary work in reconstruction, social care or party political work (and there preferably in the 'progressive' parties, i.e. the SED and its predecessors).

¹²⁹ Nikitin, *Zwischen Dogma und gesundem Menschenverstand*, p. 80.

¹³⁰ The election was called for February 1947. Student councils did not exist, at least not on an official basis, before that date. The SMAD had no concept of student councils, which in Germany had a long standing

elected head of the student council of Leipzig University was Wolfgang Natonek. A student of philosophy, Natonek stood for the Liberal Democrats (LDPD) and won the absolute majority in coalition with student representatives from the Christian Democratic party (CDU). He had been stateless ever since his Jewish father's books were burnt by the National Socialists. His antifascist credentials were thus beyond reproach. Natonek believed in the idea of democratic renewal and was keen, as a native Leipziger, to support the efforts of Leipzig University to return to its high level of academic achievement. He also welcomed the efforts of the rectorate of the university to build the body of teaching staff on the basis of expertise not political affiliations. Moreover, he criticised the incremental discrimination of students from a *bürgerlich* background, which laid more importance on the provenance than ability of students. He famously warned during a student meeting against a return of student selection criteria based on the family tree of the applicant: 'There has been a time when he who had a non-Aryan grandmother was prevented from studying. We do not want a time when those who have no proletarian grandmother are prevented from studying.' The parallels of Aryan and proletarian, as well as the parallels in the selection policy itself, were noted by the audience.¹³¹ His attempts to create a student parliament and thus a truly democratic representation of the students clashed with the ideas of the SED student body that was backed by the socialist authorities.¹³² Natonek earned nationwide respect amongst students due to a speech given at a ceremony marking the 100th anniversary of the German revolution of 1848, which was

tradition. Therefore, they could only decide on the matter after thorough investigation. The result of this investigation was a directive given to the German Central Administration for *Volksbildung* to facilitate elections for these councils. See Nikitin, *Zwischen Dogma und gesundem Menschenverstand*, pp. 85-6.

¹³¹ 'Es gab mal eine Zeit, in der der verhindert war zu studieren, der eine nicht arische Großmutter hatte. Wir wollen nicht eine Zeit, in der es dem verhindert wird, zu studieren, der nicht über eine proletarische Großmutter verfügt.' Wolfgang Natonek cited in letter from the FDGB Kreisvorstand to University Rektor Dr Jacobi, 8 December 1947. In the German the likeness of Aryan and proletarian is even more pronounced, the similarity was well received by the attendees of the student meeting where Natonek made the statement: 'Nicht arische Großmutter und Prolet-arische Großmutter.' The FDGB representative was outraged by the comparison. See: Gerald Wiemers, *Studentischer Widerstand an der Universität Leipzig 1945-49* (Leipzig, 1998), p. 15 (for copy of letter see pp. 101-2).

¹³² Wolfgang Natonek in Heinemann and Haritonow, *Hochschuloffiziere und Wiederaufbau*, pp. 227-29.

attended by students from all four zones of occupation. It became clear that Natonek was a force to be reckoned with. His second election result was even better than his first. When his third term approached in 1948, he received warnings and calls for him to step down or at least refrain from standing for election again. He did not bow to the pressure and was subsequently arrested in November 1948 as an 'American spy'. Over 20 other non-SED students were detained as well.¹³³ This was not yet the end of the campaign against the *bürgerlich* students. Natonek's party group with over 600 members was dissolved and the students lost their scholarships. Furthermore, when the third election for the student council took place, the CDU and LDPD students were not allowed to vote (should they attempt to defy this order any of their candidates voted in would lose his or her mandate). Thus the SED was able to takeover leadership in the student council ending any official influence *bürgerlich* students held in the university.¹³⁴ Nevertheless, the student protest in the university continued. Having been banned from the student council, clandestine meetings and leafleting campaigns still allowed for the *bürgerlich* students to voice their opinion about the political situation concerning their university and life. However, many of these students ended up in East German prisons, while others were abducted to the Soviet Union where they vanished in the gulags or were simply murdered.¹³⁵ Schweitzer observed the increasing discrimination of students from a *bürgerlich* family background from the Western Zones. His later conclusion was damning: 'With the barring the children of a whole section of society from any form of higher education the future of countless families

¹³³ Natonek was sentenced to 25 years of forced labour in 1949 and transferred to Bautzen, the most notorious prison of the GDR. There he was released prematurely in 1956 and relocated to the German Federal Republic. See: Waldemar Krönig and Klaus-Dieter Müller, *Anpassung, Widerstand, Verfolgung: Hochschule und Studenten in der SBZ und DDR 1945-61* (Cologne, 1994).

¹³⁴ Hans-Uwe Feige, 'Die Leipziger Studentenopposition 1945-48' in *Deutschland Archiv*, 9/1993, pp. 1057-68.

¹³⁵ Around 100 students of Leipzig University were arrested in the period 1945-55. For a detailed description of the student resistance, especially after Natonek, see Wiemers, *Die Leipziger Studentenopposition* and Jens Blecher and Gerald Wiemers, *Studentischer Widerstand an den mitteldeutschen Universitäten 1945 bis 1955* (Leipzig, 2005).

is destroyed while a new privileged class is created.'¹³⁶ The exchange of elites was in full swing.

The increasing political problems in the university, such as the Natonek episode, but also the previous upheaval caused by Gadamer's attempt to slowly re-employ nominal NSDAP members (who were allowed to work in universities according to both SMAD and Allied Control Council orders), called the city administration into action. It proposed the establishment of the position of *Kurator* for the university as a bridge between the university and the *Landesverwaltung*.¹³⁷ Gadamer recognized the creation of the post as political measure by the *Landesverwaltung* to gain control within the university via the city and its proposed 'representative'. Yet, the *Rektor* hoped in turn to influence the *Kurator* and thus obtain an advocate for his institution. Gadamer was not to experience the results as *Rektor* himself. He followed a call to a university in Frankfurt am Main when politics took over the administration of the university and left his successor to try his luck with the *Kurator*.¹³⁸

Gadamer's successor was Erwin Jacobi, a jurist who began his office with the best intentions. Jacobi had to face the results of the increasing student conflict and was unable to do anything to stop the arrest of Natonek or indeed the forced takeover of the student council by the SED student group. Feige declares that Gadamer's successors had hardly any room for independent manoeuvre in the university's concerns.¹³⁹ Martin Otto equally

¹³⁶ Schweitzer drew this conclusion in a speech he gave in Tübingen in honour of the 550 year anniversary of the foundation of Leipzig university in 1959. Bernhard Schweitzer, *Die Universität Leipzig 1409 - 1959 : Festvortrag anlässlich der feierlichen Immatrikulation am 4. Dezember 1959* (Tübingen, 1960), p. 23 'Dort [wird] in den Kindern eines ganzen Bevölkerungsteiles, indem sie von jeder höheren Bildung ferngehalten werden, auch noch die Zukunft zahlloser Familien gewaltsam versperrt und dafür eine neue privilegierte Schicht herangezuchtet.'

¹³⁷ The *Kurator* (literally curator) was a position created by the city as mediator between the university and the political authorities. However, it soon transpired that the *Kurator* had become a political observer in the university. Hans-Uwe Feige, 'Die Gesellschaftswissenschaftliche Fakultät an der Universität Leipzig 1947-51' in *Deutschland Archiv*, 5/1993, pp. 572-84.

¹³⁸ Grondin, *Hans-Georg Gadamer*, pp. 286-90. After Gadamer's departure, the *Deutsche Zentralverwaltung für Volksbildung* issued the statement that 'politisch neutrale Hochschuldirektoren sind nach den Erfahrungen mit Gadamer u.a. fortan unerwünscht'. See Marianne and Egon Erwin Müller, "...stürmt die Festung Wissenschaft" *Sowjetisierung der mitteldeutschen Universitäten seit 1945* (Berlin, 1953), p. 160.

¹³⁹ Hans-Uwe Feige, 'Die Gesellschaftswissenschaftliche Fakultät', p. 580.

states that Jacobi was merely used as ‘internationally renowned, *bürgerlich* progressive figure-head’ for an otherwise anti-*bürgerlich* procedure to create a ‘socialist university’.¹⁴⁰ Thus the installation of the *Kurator* Erich Eichler at the university finally ended any possibility to regain self-administration of the institution. The inauguration of the *Kurator* on 15 October 1948 was accompanied with a speech by the *Rektor*. Jacobi had already decided to leave the chancellorship and thus might have felt freer to speak out – he only had two more weeks left in office. He called Leipzig University a ‘*Volksuniversität*’ (people’s university), thereby highlighting its fallen level of academic standard in teachers and students. Saxony’s new Minister for *Volksbildung*, Leipzig’s old city councillor Helmut Holtzhauer, was present at the ceremony. He clearly noticed the thinly veiled accusation and disapproval of Jacobi. When Holtzhauer subsequently spoke at the changeover of *Rektors* on 31 October 1948, he repeated Jacobi’s claim and stated that Leipzig was ‘of course’ a *Volksuniversität* and this was what a university should be. Freedom of science only existed in the proper societal context and was not an end in itself. ‘We can witness a fight between existing beliefs and new insights. The university is the arena of these ideological struggles. It should neither be the university of enlightened despotism, nor ‘free’ in the sense of the Free University in West Berlin, but only a *Volksuniversität*.’¹⁴¹ With this Holtzhauer framed in words what Schweitzer, Gadamer and Jacobi had fought against and what still had come to pass: the demise of Leipzig University as an institution of international standing and excellence. By the end of the 1940s, Leipzig University had lost many of its most renowned scientists (most of them left the Soviet Zone completely), it was still fighting to rebuild, and it functioned as a mere

¹⁴⁰ Martin Otto, ‘Erwin Jacobi’ in Traugott Bautz (ed.), *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon*, Volume 19 (Nordhausen, 2001), columns 763-767. Erwin Jacobi was forced out of both his positions at the *Reichsgericht* and the university due to the racial policies of the National Socialists, thus his election should have been compensation not just mere ‘window-dressing’.

¹⁴¹ ‘Wir beobachten den Kampf zwischen bestehender Anschauung und neuer Erkenntnis. Die Universität ist der Schauplatz dieser ideologischen Kämpfe. Sie will weder eine Universität des aufgeklärten Despotismus noch eine “freie Universität“ vom Schlage Berlin Wests sein, sondern lediglich eine Volksuniversität.’ SStA Leipzig, No. 21638, NV6/34/34-6, Blatt 3, 31 October 1948.

provisional solution still lacking proper facilities. The teaching staff had altered remarkably. Whereas fifty-eight percent had been full professors in 1945 (before the denazification), by 1950 only a quarter had this academic accolade. Sixty percent of the entire teaching body of the university were mere *Lehrbeauftragte* (tutors – mostly students in their final semesters). Of the remaining group of *Dozenten* (lecturers), a third did not hold a doctorate (even more were without the *Habilitation*, the German postdoctoral lecturer qualification).¹⁴² Leipzig's students had been forced into submission, some of the brightest heads had been arrested. Leipzig now was truly a *Volksuniversität*, lacking the means or the will to return to its status as one of Germany's and Europe's leading universities.

Leipzig University had been a leading higher education institution in Germany and beyond. It had international renown for its scientific research and the quality of its teaching. The university was able to maintain a certain level of freedom during National Socialism as it prevented a takeover by mere party functionaries. Thus its teaching body should have been sufficient to ensure a rapid rebuilding of the university. However, both the forced 'evacuations' by the Americans and Soviets and the harsh denazification measures in Saxony deprived the university of most of its remaining potential. Indeed, denazification became a first marker of the socialist takeover. The constant pressure on its base of traditionally *bürgerlich* lecturers and students led to the exodus of even more high calibre teaching staff from the university. The student body of Leipzig also changed rapidly with politically motivated or class-based discrimination. The arrest of Leipzig's democratically elected student leader sealed the institution's fate. This *Volksuniversität* Leipzig was subsequently turned into a political cadre training ground, referred to colloquially as the 'Red Monastery'.

¹⁴² To allow 'nicht Vollakademiker' to run the majority of courses was regarded as 'heresy' by contemporaries. See Müller, '*...stürmt die Festung Wissenschaft*', p. 298.

These measures went even beyond what had been envisaged by the staff of the Soviet *Volksbildung* department in Berlin. Major Nikitin remarked in his memoirs that by 1950 the German socialists 'were destroying everything we had worked for in the last five years'.¹⁴³

¹⁴³ Nikitin, *Zwischen Dogma und gesundem Menschenverstand*, p. 235.

Conclusion

This thesis has charted the history of one Germany's major cities through a period of destruction, chaos and profound political and social change. It differs from comparable studies in English by examining a city other than the familiar metropolitan centres, Berlin and Munich.¹ Leipzig was chosen precisely because it was not, and never had been a capital city or *Residenzstadt*. By focusing on what was perhaps the archetypal *bürgerlich* stronghold this thesis sought to examine the decline of *bürgerlich* power (and the occasional persistence of *bürgerlich* attitudes against all the political odds). The study scrutinised patterns of *bürgerlich* behaviour through the prism of Leipzig's main cultural institutions, the sources of the city's pride, as well as the arena of power display and self-image. The chosen time frame allowed this study to analyse *bürgerlich* responses to a range of political pressures, the two German dictatorships as well as both Western and Soviet occupation.

In the process several points emerged. First, and perhaps most strikingly, the role of the Allied occupiers was not as clear-cut as traditionally perceived. The Soviet Zone, in which Leipzig found itself after July 1945, turns out, on closer examination, to have been no more monolithic than the Third Reich had been; indeed, regional differences were a crucial factor especially with regards to denazification, a process which affected German public life at the time more profoundly than any other Allied policy. Leipzig's *Gewandhauskapellmeister* Abendroth was thus ousted in Saxony, yet welcomed with open arms in neighbouring Thuringia; professors Hellmann and Bruckmann were teaching, respectively, at the universities of Halle and Rostock but were not be allowed to take up positions in Leipzig. That sort of defiant regional disregard of supposedly unalterable

¹ Inter al: Peter Jelavich, *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (Berkeley, 2006); Peter Fritzsche, *Reading Berlin 1900* (Cambridge, 1996); David Clay Large, *Where Ghosts Walked: Munich's Road to the Third Reich* (New York, 1997) and *Berlin* (New York, 2000), Schivelbusch, *In a Cold Crater*.

nationwide policy would of course have been all too familiar to anyone who had experienced Nazi rule.

Furthermore, this thesis established very clearly that the traditional dichotomy of ‘good’ Western Allies as opposed to the ‘evil’ Soviets is unsustainable. Evidence presented here shows that the Americans were quite capable of occasional criminal acts (and plenty of criminal stupidity), while the Soviets were capable, on occasion, of unexpected generosity. There is the further complication that in the case of both occupying powers, the city commanders’ behaviour was quite different from the nefarious actions of the respective US and Soviet secret services. The Leipzig population, of course, failed to make that distinction: it just perceived an ‘occupation power’ seemingly unburdened by moral scruples. That the Soviets tended to fare worse in any direct comparison is undisputable and in a sense hardly surprising. The Soviet Union, after all, was based on arbitrary rule and had a long and inglorious record of mass murder, while the United States at least publicly proclaimed its adherence to the rule of law. Yet the American ‘harvest’ of Leipzig’s resources – both the nature of the exercise and the manner in which it was carried out – was clearly extra-legal. It contravened the statutes of war as well as existing agreements between the Allies, thus poisoning East-West relations even before the start of the Potsdam negotiations. This study has conclusively disproved the ‘apologist’ view in the Anglo-American historiography that the appropriation of these resources was necessary to boost Western defences in view of the looming Cold War. Only one Leipzig academic ever began to work in America and most were left to their own devices once removed from Leipzig. The so-called evacuation was in effect a slash-and-burn operation, solely designed to devastate the city’s intellectual and economic infrastructure prior to the handover. The fact that the Soviets were subsequently guilty of particular brutality does not excuse the earlier American conduct. Two wrongs do not make a right. Most of the existing German historiography on the occupation has been conspicuously silent on the subject, perhaps out

of old Cold War loyalties or the fear of being accused of pursuing either a pro-GDR or, alternatively, a German nationalist agenda.

The existing literature has been found misleading also in its portrayal of the dynamics of Allied occupation. The Anglo-American historiography in particular has tended to give prominence to the role of the occupiers. An important point to emerge from this study is the need to re-think the relations of occupiers and occupied. The German administrators, especially those under Soviet rule, were shown to have played a pivotal role in shaping the post-war face of Leipzig. The German socialists not only sought to influence the Soviet decision making process, but were *active participants* in this process itself, sometimes actually thwarting the efforts of the occupying power. While it has long been known that in the American Zone Bavarian conservatives successfully sabotaged much of the liberalising efforts by the US-occupiers, this study has shown that in the Soviet Zone the Saxon communists, too, were able to derail Soviet policy, in this case by being even more doctrinaire than the Soviets themselves. In the case of Leipzig's university this meant that political qualification consistently mattered more than academic ability. That this went far further than anything the Soviets had intended is shown by the exasperation of Major Nikitin at the 'destruction' of the Soviets' work once the German socialists took over completely five years after the war.² Such evidence is difficult to square with the perception put forward even in recent Anglo-American historiography that the 'Soviets and the German communists' were 'one' ruling force in East Germany and should effectively be seen as Siamese twins.³ In the case of Leipzig at least, both groups had minds of their own, and aims that were not always congruent and at times opposing each other.

² See chapter 5 'Leipzig – city of learning', p. 221.

³ See for example: Corey Ross, *Constructing Socialism at the Grass-Roots* (London, 2000). Ross treats the German communists as mere appendage to the occupying power, which is shown in his constant referral to the 'Soviets and the German communists' as fixed term, among others: *Ibid.*, p. 5 and p. 15.

By straddling the supposed *Stunde Null* in German history, this study has also considered the links between the two German dictatorships. The current historiography of the East German regime is still very much divided on the question of whether the GDR (and its precursor in the Soviet Zone) could be or indeed should be classified as a 'second German dictatorship' on a par with the Third Reich. Mary Fulbrook, for one, is scathingly dismissive of such suggestions. She states that 'this particular case for comparison [...] has had more [...] to do with contemporary political considerations than with the intention of seeking analytical purchase on historical interpretations of dictatorial rule'. Certainly, the term 'totalitarianism' was misused during the Cold War. Fulbrook is also right in saying that there probably are 'a far greater number of differences than similarities' between the Third Reich and the socialist regime in East Germany, most notably that 'there was no equivalent of Auschwitz in the GDR'.⁴ The foremost authority on the Third Reich now writing in English, Sir Ian Kershaw, shares Fulbrook's view that any comparison could only be superficial and essentially simplistic. Yet, one might note, that Kershaw has largely focused in his own work on Hitler and the 'Hitler myth', on one of the most distinctive features of the Nazi regime in other words.⁵ Other recent work, particularly that of Heydemann and Oberreuther, however, suggests that there might be fruitful aspects of comparison between both dictatorships in structures, institutions and behaviour.⁶ The motivations of the Nazis and the socialists might not have been congruent, yet the approaches sometimes seemed not too dissimilar. This can be seen very clearly in the case of Leipzig. The process by which both the NSDAP and SED took over the city administration is one obvious example. Superficially, the detail might seem different. Whereas Goerdeler refused to join the NSDAP and subsequently had a Nazi deputy

⁴ Mary Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship: Inside the GDR, 1949-1989* (Oxford, 1995), pp. 286-7.

⁵ See Ian Kershaw, "'Working towards the Führer": reflections on the nature of the Hitler dictatorship' in Ian Kershaw and Moshe Lewin, *Stalinism and Nazism: Dictatorships in Comparison* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 88-106, especially comment on the comparisons between Hitler and Honecker: footnote 2, p. 89. Also: Ian Kershaw, *The 'Hitler Myth': Image and Reality in the Third Reich* (Oxford, 1987).

(Haake) forced upon him, Zeigner willingly embraced the SED and chose staunch communists, Hartig and especially Holtzhauer, as his deputies. Yet, the gradual seizure of power by the respective deputies followed largely along the same lines and with a similar disregard of laws, regulations and ordinary human decency. Moreover, *both* Lord Mayors, despite being on opposite ends of the political spectrum and working, as Fulbrook would have it, under very different regimes, were actually berated for the *same* supposed crime: their *bürgerlich* origin and outlook. Whether we like it or not, the anti-*bürgerlich* animus of the SED was wearingly familiar to all who had lived through the Third Reich. There was admittedly one difference: whereas National Socialism initially tried to co-opt sections of the *Bürgertum*, and thus ‘owed’ them at least some concessions, socialism did not even need to pay lip service to the ideals of the ‘old elites’. During the Third Reich, the *bürgerlich* elements of Leipzig’s society resistant to total *Gleichschaltung* were pushed to the sidelines, under Soviet occupation, and with German socialists taking the lead in this, they were eradicated from positions of influence altogether – in Leipzig’s university, in its musical establishments, in the book trade and in the judiciary. The politicisation of the cultural realm, which had already proven highly damaging during the Nazi regime thus essentially continued after the war. The Nazis forced out Walter and Brecher (for ‘racial’ reasons), the socialists ousted Abendroth (because of his NSDAP affiliations) and Schüler (in an undisguised display of anti-*bürgerlich* bias). If there was a difference, it was one of the wider scale of things: whereas the NSDAP was content with forcing some of its members onto the board of directors of the *Gewandhaus*, the SED insisted on completely destroying the independence of the institution. Similarly, the Nazis were content to remove the Mendelssohn monument in front of the *Gewandhaus*, the socialists proceeded to demolish the *Gewandhaus* building itself (although the core structure was sound and could

⁶ Heydemann and Oberreuther, *Diktaturen in Deutschland*.

have been rebuilt).⁷ As the building was a reminder of the achievements of Leipzig's *Bürger*, it had to go. In both cases, the reasons for the demolition(s) were ideological, anti-Semitic in the case of the Nazis, anti-*bürgerlich* in the that of the socialists. (The SED's obliteration of Leipzig history also led in 1968 to the dynamiting of the perfectly preserved university church of St Paul's. This act of gratuitous barbarism again displayed an unmistakable parallel to the Nazis' earlier efforts at 'secularising' German history.)

This study has also shown uncomfortable similarities between both regimes in the politicization of the judiciary. The *Reichsgericht* in Leipzig had been party to the perversion of the rule of law in the Third Reich, though not always willingly and rarely to the full satisfaction of the regime. *Gauleiter* Mutschmann therefore even tried to 'rid his *Gau*', and Leipzig, of academic jurists. Instead of re-establishing a credible supreme court, the new authorities in the Soviet zone translated into practice the earlier Nazi threats. Of the *Reichsgericht* members, more than a third were deported without trial and kept detained in conditions where all but a handful died. The *bürgerlich* concept that the law should not be subject to political expediency seemed as absurd to the socialists as it had done to Mutschmann or Hitler before them.

In the light of all this it seems difficult to concur with Fulbrook's views on the supposed watershed of 1945 (even though her point about the singularity of the holocaust is clearly a valid one). This study has revealed a range of parallels, altogether too numerous to be dismissed as insignificant. Even in the rhetoric there were similarities between the Third Reich and the socialist regime in the Soviet Zone and later the GDR, which were not missed by the people living through both. Tellingly, Wolfgang Natonek, whose family had been persecuted by the Nazis, compared the earlier importance for people wishing to go to university of having an *arische Großmutter* with the need to possess a *proletarische Großmutter* under the new regime. To those able to observe events

⁷ Demolition was expressively discouraged. See Kaufmann, *Von einem Abriß wird abgeraten*.

subsequently with academic detachment these parallels might seem ‘superficial and simplistic’; for contemporaries denied the chance to study and arrested for speaking up, they were real enough. As one witness in Leipzig observed at the time, it appeared that the ‘mind was just being raped in the opposite direction’ now.⁸

That ‘rape of the mind’ had previously also been regarded as the reason for the downfall of the *Bücherstadt* Leipzig. Here, too, this study has been able to correct the existing historiographical consensus by proving that the depletion of Leipzig’s book trade and the establishment of the *Deutsche Bibliothek* in Frankfurt were not the supposedly inevitable consequences of the emerging Cold War but were a trial run, in the cultural sphere, of the subsequent partition of Germany. Moreover, the shenanigans in the publishing world demonstrate, yet again, that the Germans played a greater role in actively shaping their country’s future, and did so in some cases much earlier than current historiography allows.

It only remains to record a final irony of history outside the time frame of this study. While both the Nazis and the (East German) socialists in the period investigated had sought to destroy the *bürgerlich* fabric of Leipzig, *bürgerlich* values and traditions became a decisive factor in ending six decades of dictatorship and arbitrary rule. It was Leipzig that played a central role in bringing down the GDR, and a *Gewandhauskapellmeister*, no less, who opened his concert hall and thus provided a grand forum for *Montagsdemonstrationen* and their call for civil rights: ‘*Bürgerrechte*’ in German.⁹ The men and women who had earlier tried to defend Leipzig’s *bürgerlich* heritage against Nazi and socialist predations were finally vindicated.

⁸ StadtAL, StVuR (I), No. 4212, Blatt 175, 19 October 1945: ‘...den Geist in entgegengesetzter Richtung vergewaltigen’.

⁹ For a good overview of the *Friedensgebete* in St Nicholas Church Leipzig from where the *Montagsdemonstrationen* originated see Christian Dietrich and Uwe Schwabe (eds.), *Freunde und Feinde. Friedensgebete in Leipzig zwischen 1981 und dem 9. Oktober 1989* (Leipzig, 1994).

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