

Thinking about the Bauhaus from the Other Side: the History of the *Bauhaus Kolloquium* in Communist Germany.

Rixt Hoekstra

Bauhaus University, Weimar, Germany
titiarixt.hoekstra@gmail.com

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Like most forms of culture in the GDR the first Bauhaus Colloquia were an outcome of the control exercised by the centralistic government over cultural life. However, the Bauhaus Colloquia were also marked by the complex relationship between official policy and the loopholes of law. In this respect the Colloquium was an outcome of the tenacious presence of the Bauhaus in Weimar: like a strong Grand Narrative, it was able to persist also in the years of its *damnatio memoriae* by the GDR. After all, Weimar remained the cradle of the Bauhaus, just like the *Hochschule für Architektur und Bauwesen* was de facto the successor of *Das Staatliches Bauhaus*. From the start the conference had an international character, which resulted in a confrontation between researchers from the two German states and from other European countries. This makes the history of the Bauhaus Colloquia in Weimar a history of scholarly exchange in a time when such an encounter was not self-evident. However, most of all the development of the Colloquia in the 1970s illustrates the different phases of the GDR regime and the way in which cultural issues were used in a constant search for identity. In this article I will present an introductory account of the history of the Bauhaus Colloquia. In the first part of this article I will place the early Colloquia in their political and institutional context. In the second part of the article I will deal with the contents of the first two Colloquia, organised in 1976 and 1979.

The Bauhaus comes from Weimar

The first Colloquium was organised in October 1976, under the guidance of professor Christian Schädlich.¹ It was a consequence of the decision by the side of the SED (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands, called hereafter either SED or Socialist Unity Party) to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Bauhaus building in Dessau.² The event marked a change in politics by the side of the SED: the initial condemnation of the Bauhaus as a form of “formalistic modernism” was now exchanged for a cautious appreciation.³ The second Colloquium took place

1 I thank Christian Schädlich, Norbert Korrek, Marco de Michelis and Birgit Röckert for their support in writing in this article.

2 Frank Simon-Ritz, Klaus-Jürgen Winkler, Gerd Zimmerman, eds., *Aber wir sind!, wir wollen!, wir schaffen!, und, Von der Grossherzoglichen Kunstschule zur Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, 1860-2010*, Band II 1945/46-2010 (Weimar: Verlag der Bauhaus-Universität, 2012).

3 Karl-Siegbert Rehberg, Wolfgang Holler, Paul Kaiser, *Abschied von Ikarus: Bildwelten der DDR – neu gesehen* (Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2013).

three years later in June 1979; it was now for the first time called the “Bauhaus-Kolloquium”.⁴ These first meetings were followed by further colloquia in the years 1983, 1986, and 1989, which was the last Colloquium before *The Change*.⁵

However, the history of the Bauhaus colloquia starts with the history of the art school in Weimar, as the institution that at the start of the 20th century accommodated the Bauhaus.⁶ In fact, it is important to make the distinction between the art school of Weimar and the innovative phases it accommodated in the twentieth century. The art school in Weimar was founded in 1860 by the grand duke Carl Alexander as a trainings centre for painters. It experienced its first innovative phase in the year 1902 when the Belgian architect and painter Henry van de Velde was appointed as director. In 1907, he transformed the school into the Grand Ducal School of Arts and Crafts. Van de Velde was made to leave Weimar shortly before the First World War on account of being a foreign national. The years following Van de Velde’s departure in 1915 were marked by the fall of the monarchy and the installation in Thüringen of a provisional republican government of the Free State of Saxony-Weimar-Eisenach, which was followed by the Weimar Republic shortly afterwards. During these years it was decided that the architect Walter Gropius should head the school. With this decision the second innovative phase of the art school came about; from 1919 to 1925 Gropius headed the by now legendary Bauhaus. Due to reactionary forces, in 1925 Gropius decided to leave Weimar and head for Dessau with his Bauhaus school. The years after Gropius’ departure were marked by a lengthy discussion about the identity of the school as a traditional art school or rather as a school for the applied arts. Also, architecture now for the first time gained a place in the curriculum. As early as 1930 the national-socialists in Thüringen succeeded in appointing the Nazi-architect Paul Schultze-Naumburg, under whose leadership the school turned into a reactionary pedagogical institution opposed to modernism. In 1946, directly after the war, it was the architectural part of the curriculum that was fore grounded at the cost of other artistic disciplines. At the same time, the school now had to deal with the burden of history, as one of its most pressing concerns became how to move forward with the history of the Bauhaus in its rear mirror. In the years to come, it was necessary to somehow take position with regard to the Bauhaus; in all the discussions about the future course of the school, it was a station that simply could not be ignored.

The Bauhaus in the GDR

The first years of the allied occupation of Eastern Germany were marked by a relatively liberal attitude towards the arts.⁷ Likewise in Weimar the liberal climate was felt: it was accepted, first by the American and later by the Soviet occupying power, to adopt the Bauhaus heritage as a guiding line for the rebuilding of the school. In the months directly after the war – roughly from April 1945 – two ex-prisoners of the Buchenwald concentration camp, Herman Brill and Walter Wolf, were officially assigned by the American occupying power to reconstruct the school system in

4 Ritz, Winkler, Zimmerman, *Aber wir sind!*, II, 215.

5 The texts of the different presentations of the Colloquia can be found online at: <http://www.bauhaus-kolloquium.de>, last accessed 9.08.2013.

6 Frank Simon-Ritz, Klaus-Jürgen Winkler, Gerd Zimmerman, eds., *Aber wir sind!, wir wollen!, wir schaffen!, und, Von der Grossherzoglichen Kunstschule zur Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, 1860-2010*, Band I 1860-1945 (Weimar: Verlag der Bauhaus-Universität, 2012). See also: <http://www.uni-weimar.de/en/university/profile/portrait/history.de>, last accessed 26.07.2013.

7 Joes Segal, “Beeldende kunst, politiek en censuur in de DDR en de Bondsrepubliek,” in *De marge van de vrijheid, over censuur, zelfcensuur en tolerantie*, ed. Wessel Krul, (Groningen: onderzoeksschool Rudolf Agricola, 2002), 49-62. See also: Willem Melching, *Van het socialisme, de dingen die voorbijgaan, Een geschiedenis van de DDR* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2005).

Thüringen.⁸ This meant first of all a cleansing of Nazi-elements: at the art school in Weimar, this meant that Gerd Offenberg, who had followed Schultze-Naumburg and Rudolf Rogler as director in 1942, had to be dismissed. Continuity with the Bauhaus tradition was important during this initial stage; therefore Ernst Neufert, a former employee of the architectural office Gropius/Meyer, was asked to become the new director of the school. After Neufert had decided to turn down the offer for a professorship in Darmstadt, it was the architect Hermann Henselmann who accepted the job. In this way, he was given the opportunity to build up the school in the spirit of the Bauhaus and of “anti-fascism and democratic reconstruction”.⁹ Henselmann proposed to rename the school *Das Bauhaus – Hochschule für Baukunst und das Gestaltende Hand-und Maschinenwerk*; The Bauhaus – College for Applied Arts and the Design of Machines.¹⁰ However, political pressure forced him to drop the name “Bauhaus” in October 1945, as the mayor of Weimar feared that it would not be accepted by the former Bauhaus director Mies van der Rohe as well as by the SMAD, the Soviet Military Administration.¹¹ In fact, the Soviet occupying force much preferred the school to develop in the direction of a polytechnic school, fitted for the immense work of reconstruction, rather than emphasizing the artistic-humanistic spirit of the Bauhaus. Moreover, inside the school the first complaints about the association with the Bauhaus tradition were heard. The teacher of architectural history, Denis Boniver, accused the Bauhaus of “formalistic modernism” with no endurable results. He made a plea for solid craftsmanship and for a “healthy”, unromantic attitude by the side of the architect. In these words, echoes of the Nazi-heritage of Schultze-Naumburg may be heard, but, strangely enough, also a prelude to the later Communist critique of the Bauhaus.¹² However, despite the doubts about the Bauhaus heritage, Henselmann was able to ask former Bauhaus students as teachers of the new institute; among others, he asked Emanuel Lindner, who was a former student of Mies van der Rohe, to become lecturer in modern art, and Gustav Hassenpflug, who had worked in Dessau under Gropius, as professor of city planning.¹³ The opening of the school in August 1946 was accompanied by an exhibition showing, for the first time in fifteen years, the experimental work of Schlemmer, Klee, Kandinsky and Marcel Breuer’s furniture.¹⁴

From 1947, against the background of a crystallizing cold war, the climate became harder and the pressure upon artists and architects to conform to the ideology of the state increased. Under the guidance of Stalin, artists had to commit themselves to socialist realism, the style that from the 1930s onwards had developed into the house-style of socialism. However, for many artists and architects this was not such a difficult demand, as the moral bankruptcy of National Socialism had made them receptive for the socialism of the GDR as the appropriate answer to fascism. They recognized that art in the “clash of systems” should have a public function and they embraced

8 This section is based upon: Norbert Korrek, “Zur Bauhaus-Rezeption an der Weimarer Hochschule von 1945-1979,” in Ritz, Winkler, Zimmerman, *Aber wir sind!*, II, 177-227. See also: Sigrid Hofer, “Ein Sozialistischer Bauhaus? Die Staatliche Hochschule für Baukunst und bildende Kunst in Weimar zwischen 1946 und 1951 als Laboratorium der Moderne,” in Karl-Siegbert Rehberg, Wolfgang Holler, Paul Kaiser, *Abschied von Ikarus: Bildwelten der DDR – neu gesehen* (Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2013), 89-105.

9 See: Anne Hoormann, “Von der Bauhaus-Idee zur Formalismus-Debatte. Kunstausbildung an der Staatlichen Hochschule für Baukunst und bildende Künste (1946-1951),” in Ritz, Winkler, Zimmerman, *Aber wir sind!*, II, 39-59.

10 Korrek, “Zur Bauhaus-Rezeption,” 181-182.

11 Hoormann, “Von der Bauhaus-Idee zur Formalismus Debatte,” 45.

12 See: Ulrich Wieler, “Die Weimarer Hochschule von 1945 bis 1954 – Betriebsames Abwarten, die Gründung der DDR und der Weg in eine wissenschaftliche Hochschule,” in Ritz, Winkler, Zimmerman, *Aber wir sind!*, II, 17. Denis Boniver already worked as lecturer in architectural history during the Nazi period under Schultze-Naumburg; in the first years after the war, he was able to continue his work.

13 Wieler, “Die Weimarer Hochschule von 1945 bis 1954,” 20-24; Hoormann, “Von der Bauhaus-Idee zur Formalismus-Debatte,” 47-53; Korrek, “Zur Bauhaus-Rezeption,” 185-189.

14 Korrek, “Zur Bauhaus-Rezeption,” 186.

their role as educators of the people. What was difficult was the demand to not only change the content but also the style of their work. During the 1930s modern art and architecture had become synonymous with political resistance and left-wing protest against Nazism. After the war, there was ample reason to declare modernism to be an honorary, proud artistic style. There was little understanding for the decision taken by the Soviet-Union, and from 1949 by the GDR, to declare modernism to be “bourgeois-decadent” or even “degenerate”. The modern style was called “formalist” which was meant as a negative label for its autonomous status. Even more, the social-realist style proposed by the GDR government had a suspect resemblance to the academic realism that was set as a norm by the National Socialists.¹⁵ The Bauhaus tradition was directly attacked by the new party policy. In fact, during a meeting in 1951 the *Zentralkomitee* of the SED called for a “battle against Formalism in art and literature” and the “so-called Bauhaus-style”.¹⁶ From now on, it was no longer possible to associate oneself openly with the Bauhaus. Instead, the Soviet neo-classicist style preferred by Stalin became the new point of orientation. In Weimar, this led to a difficult situation for teachers once affiliated with the Bauhaus; some teachers were fired on these grounds.¹⁷ Weimar increasingly became a technical school, with no place in it for ‘suspect’ subjects such as painting, sculpture or graphic design.¹⁸ In the year 1948 the architect Alfred Becker was employed as an assistant in architectural history. His task was to “avert decadent philosophy” – read: all the harmful theories produced by the staff of the Bauhaus - and to become an “agitator”.¹⁹ He was also an important representative of the SED in the school and as such able to influence programs and appointments. Becker started to rewrite the history of the school; according to him, both abstract painting and functionalist architecture had failed because they had, with their integrative “Gesamtkunstwerk” tendencies, damaged the autonomous status of both architecture and fine art. With the socialist government coming into power after the war, the school finally had the chance to recuperate from the destructive movements before the war, said Becker. Now the school could flourish as a scientific and technical institute, able to solve real problems in society. The activities of Becker led to a power struggle in the school between those inspired by the Bauhaus and those working for the SED.²⁰ Finally, in the 1950s the new course of the school led to an exodus of teachers: all the former Bauhaus lecturers, Lindner, Hassenpflug and so on, left the school and also the GDR.

After the foundation of the GDR in 1949, the artistic policy of Eastern Germany soon assumed suffocating traits. Ideological purging took place so that only “true” socialist artists remained. Not only were art and architecture subject to control by the state, but all the publications about art and architecture were heavily censored. In this process, periods of relative freedom – for example, after the revolt of 17 June 1953 in the Stalinallee in Berlin or shortly after the construction of the Wall in August 1961 – alternated with periods of dogmatic severity and restrictions – for example, after the revolt in Hungary in 1956 and the Prague Spring of 1968. There was also a good deal of confusion about the exact criteria of socialist art. According to the speeches of Otto Grotewohl and party leader Walter Ulbricht art had to be optimistic, harmonic, realistic and future-oriented. However, nobody was able to indicate when exactly an artwork met with those demands. As a result, debate and controversy was at the order of the day, leading to situations in which approved

15 Segal, “Beeldende kunst,” 51.

16 Korrek, “Zur Bauhaus-Rezeption,” 188.

17 *Ibid.*, 192.

18 The fine art department of the school was closed in 1951; in the following years, the school increasingly received a technical and civil engineering identity. See: Wieler, “Die Weimarer Hochschule von 1945 bis 1954,” 27-31; Hoorman, “Von der Bauhaus-Idee zur Formalismus-Debatte,” 47-55.

19 Korrek, “Zur Bauhaus-Rezeption,” 191.

20 *Ibid.*, 192.

works of art were later scandalized after all.²¹ In Weimar, the heritage of the Bauhaus was like a ghost that was thrown out through the front door to later creep back through the chimney. That is, despite all the criticism, the Bauhaus remained present in what was by now called the University of Architecture and Civil Engineering. There were several reasons for this. First, there were the ongoing attempts by the school to investigate its own history. Although the Bauhaus episode and the National Socialist era were sensitive chapters, they simply could not be ignored in these overviews. For example, in 1954 the assistants Karl-Heinz Hüter, Christian Schädlich and Günther Steiger received the commission to prepare a history of the school.²² In their attempt, they cautiously tried to include the Bauhaus period; they fabricated a history that was ideological acceptable, yet not totally negative. Most of all, they stressed the political message of the Bauhaus. According to the authors the socialist aims of the Bauhaus should not be forgotten, also when – following the Party’s condemnation of “cosmopolitanism” – the Bauhaus had failed to connect with its roots, thus remaining defenseless to the hostile takeover of its ideas by the Imperialists from the West.²³ Another reason for the persistence of the Bauhaus in these difficult years was the inclination by the side of the directorate to celebrate anniversaries and jubilees. For example, in the 1950s the school prepared a large set of activities to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the school.²⁴ Exhibitions and a publication about the history of the school were part of the planned activities. In the end, after a long period of deliberations, the project failed. This failure is symptomatic for the difficult position of the Bauhaus during these years: the organizers simply did not succeed in finding an ideological correct way of dealing with sensitive chapters – also the National Socialist era remained an issue. With regard to the Bauhaus, the central problem was how to pay attention to this episode without even suggesting an association with its tradition. How could one write about its contents without identifying with its aims? Finally, the first sign of a different appreciation of the Bauhaus in the GDR was caused by a new social agenda. After the first difficult years of post-war reconstruction had passed, it became clear that there remained an ongoing shortage in housing. Therefore, a new emphasis was placed on the need to industrialize the building industry so as to give mass-housing a new impulse. In the school this led to a new emphasis given to civil engineering subjects; in 1954, the name of the school was also altered into *Hochschule für Architektur und Bauwesen* – University of Architecture and Civil Engineering.²⁵ The Bauhaus now gained a cautious and modest recognition for its early experiments with standardisation and the development of types. With a very little step, the Bauhaus thus found its way through the front door again.

In the 1960s the Neue Ostpolitik of Egon Bahr and Willy Brandt’s enabled a more intensive cultural exchange between the two German states; for the GDR it now became important to gain cultural standing in international respect, something that was considered relevant in the struggle for international constitutional recognition by the side of West Germany. In Weimar, this resulted in an increased sensitivity with respect to architectural studies executed in the West; in a way, a sense of competition came into being, based upon the question who could count as the true inheritor of the “spirit of the Bauhaus”. In April 1961 a group of students from the *Hochschule für Gestaltung Ulm* visited Weimar, which was followed by a journey of Weimar students to Ulm.²⁶ As a famous design school, the HFG Ulm was competing with the Bauhaus regarding cultural prestige; after the war, they ruffled feathers by declaring themselves the true

21 Segal, “Beeldende kunst,” 52.

22 Korrek, “Zur Bauhaus-Rezeption,” 193.

23 *Ibid.*, 194.

24 *Ibid.*, 195-202.

25 From 1946 to 1954 its name had been *Hochschule für Baukunst und bildendeKünste* – Academy for Architecture and Fine Art.

26 Korrek, “Zur Bauhaus-Rezeption,” 203.

heirs of the Bauhaus-tradition. The exchange between Weimar and Ulm led to a mutual advise, in which Ulm asked Weimar to pay more attention to the capitalist context of the Bauhaus and Weimar urged Ulm to consider its Communist political potential; a true *dialogue des sourds*. An important event in the 1960s was the decision by the city of Dessau to restore the original Bauhaus building, which had been severely damaged during the Second World War.²⁷ After the war, the building was provisionally repaired in a way that did not respect its original intentions; this was now to be corrected.²⁸ In the wake of this event, the East German “Bauakademie” – The Academy for Building - granted the building the status of a monument.²⁹ This was an important impulse for the advocates of the Bauhaus: for the first time, the Dessau building was officially recognized as the fruit of a progressive artistic movement. In Weimar, different groups of study were now formed.³⁰ In these study circles, the total condemnation of the 1950s was prudently exchanged for a more positive outlook on the Bauhaus. The Bauhaus certainly had had its failures, so stated the researchers Steiger, Hüter and Schädlich, but in the end these had been necessary steps to arrive at the level of architecture and building today.³¹ Also, the competition with the other side of the Iron Curtain played a role in these study groups: where the capitalist West had uncritically embraced the Bauhaus, there the East should set an example by way of “exact research of historical truth.”³² In this way, for the first time since the war, a minimal opening had been given to the study of the Bauhaus. The offered opening was very small; in fact, already in 1963, the door was partly shut again.³³ However, the departure signal for the study of the Bauhaus had been given; it was a development that could not be stopped anymore.

A New Opening

Shortly after Erich Honecker took office as a party leader in 1971, he held a speech in which he announced a liberalisation of art and culture. He claimed there could be no taboos regarding style and content, as long as cultural expression was grounded in the “solid base of socialism”³⁴. However, this did not mean that artists enjoyed a total freedom from then on. Repression of artistic life also happened in the 1970s; the expulsion of the critical singer Wolf Biermann proves this point. In Weimar, there were several developments that finally made a positive appreciation of the Bauhaus possible. The direct cause for the new opening was present in Dessau: in the middle of the 1970s the Central Committee of the SED made the decision that the preparations for the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Bauhaus in Dessau could start. With this decision, the party officially recognized the Bauhaus as a “progressive humanist artistic achievement”, as the “heritage of the German people” and as a part of the socialist culture

27 Ibid., 204-209.

28 The original glass façade of building had been replaced by a rough brick wall with square windows.

29 This happened in October 1962. See: Korrek, “Zur Bauhaus-Rezeption,” 204.

30 These groups were called: “Bauhaus Beratungen” and “Arbeitsgemeinschaft für moderne architekturgeschichte”. Ibid., 205.

31 Karl-Heinz Hüter, Christian Schädlich, Gunther Steiger, “Geschichte der Weimarer Hochschule. Manuskript für das Personen-und Vorlesungsverzeichnis vom 20. Juni 1954, Archiv Christian Schädlich Weimar,” in Korrek, “Zur Bauhaus-Rezeption,” 194.

32 Bernd Grönwald, “Kulturpolitische Bedeutung und gesellschaftliche Wirkung der Pflege und Aneignung des Bauhauserbes in der DDR,” *Wissenschaftliche Zeitung der Hochschule für Architektur und Bauwesen Weimar* 4-5 (1979): 309-311.

33 This “ideological damp” was most of all a consequence of a debate held within the German Bauakademie between Edmund Collein, who was himself a student of the Bauhaus and the historian Klaus-Jürgen Winkler. Collein criticised Winkler for a history writing that was in a bourgeois way objective and that did not reflect the interests of the Party. See: Korrek, “Zur Bauhaus-Rezeption,” 205.

34 Erich Honecker in his speech held on December 17th, 1971 during a meeting of the Central Committee of the SED, now in: Eckhart Gillen ed., *Das Kunstkombinat DDR* (Berlin: Dumont Buchverlag, 1990), 77.

of the GDR.³⁵ On a theoretical level, this recognition was accompanied by the attempt to elaborate Honnecker's plea for "Weite und Vielfalt" – "breadth and multiplicity" – into a certain understanding of architectural heritage. Kurt Hager, a member of the Central Committee and Politburo of the SED – now developed a notion that equaled heritage to a process of critical appropriation; furthermore, he stated that instead of a restricted access people should be able to become acquainted with a broad array of heritage objects.³⁶ According to Hager, heritage should not be understood as a canon or as a set of norms with ongoing relevance, but rather as a series of objects with which one should, from the perspective of today, engage in a critical dialogue. Instead of outright condemnation, it was Hager's contention that artistic achievements of the past had to be subjected to a critical examination, which included their social context. Contradictions, imbalances and failures became acceptable once regarded as part of the conditions of their time.³⁷

In this way, the view of the past that was developed by the GDR officials in these days was relational: it encompassed the object, the context in which it was made, the history of its reception and its usability for the present. The historical object was thus caught in a web of relations spun between the past and the present. In Weimar, the new party policy was adopted and further elaborated by the architect and theoretician Bernd Grönwald.³⁸ He was a convinced socialist, head of the architectural department as well as a representative of the SED in the school. In the years to come, he would become an important force behind the development of the Bauhaus Colloquium – in part because of his ability to function as an intermediary between the Faculty of Architecture and the party.³⁹

Grönwald claimed that there had not yet been written a historical-materialist history of the Bauhaus. Instead, researchers from the Eastern Bloc were forced to use the bourgeois sources developed in the capitalist West. In this way, as Grönwald put it, "the Bauhaus was appropriated unilaterally by the enemy."⁴⁰ At this point, the ideological struggle for the ownership of the Bauhaus heritage reached its peak. As Grönwald claimed, the Western dominance of the subject had led to a number of falsifications in the history writing of the Bauhaus; among others, there had been too little attention paid to the role of Hannes Meyer, as well as for the presence of the KPD – Germany's pre-war communist party – in Dessau during the years of the Bauhaus. Only systematic research, said Grönwald, could improve the situation: among others, archives had to be collected and rescued from the hands of greedy Western researchers so that Eastern Germany could dispose of its own archival material.⁴¹ This now was the sign for the formation of study groups working specifically on the theme of the Bauhaus. The "section" for architectural history worked on an overview – albeit incomplete, with the most sensible topics left out – of all the study initiatives in East Germany on the Bauhaus so far.⁴² The overview was given to

35 Korrek, "Zur Bauhaus-Rezeption," 210.

36 Ibid., 210-11.

37 Ibid., 210.

38 See about Grönwald: Stefan de Rudder, "Die Architekturausbildung an der Hochschule für Architektur und Bauwesen Weimar von 1968 bis zur Wende," in Ritz, Winkler, Zimmerman, *Aber wir sind!*, II, 253-277.

39 In the 1970s, Grönwald received the opportunity to live in the Haus am Horn, designed by Georg Muche under Gropius in 1922. The house was in a bad state and was renovated by Grönwald himself. Thus, he learned to appreciate the heritage of the Bauhaus in a physical way, by working on it with his own hands. While adhering to the SED policy in almost every other aspect, he thus came to adopt a 'dissident' position with regard to the Bauhaus. See: de Rudder, "Die Architekturausbildung," 259.

40 Grönwald, "Kulturpolitische Bedeutung," 310.

41 Ibid.

42 Since the second University Reform of 1951 the GDR had broken with the bourgeois system of universities and its scientific practice. In the third reform of 1968 faculties, institutes and chairs were exchanged for "sections", "scientific areas" and professorships. See: de Rudder, "Die Architekturausbildung," 261. See also: Korrek, "Zur Bauhaus-Rezeption," 213.

the *Bauakademie* in Berlin and the Central Committee of the SED; attached to it there was the advice to coordinate the different research activities so that they be less dispersed. With the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Bauhaus building in Dessau lying ahead, why not combine the two activities of festive celebration and exchange of knowledge?

The idea was taken seriously by the party, with the result that in June 1975, carefully prepared by the SED, a Bauhaus meeting was held in Weimar. Three issues were put on the agenda: first, there was the question of the conservation of the Bauhaus building in Dessau, second there was the historiography of the Bauhaus and third, the question of the commemoration of the official opening of the Bauhaus building in Dessau.⁴³ It was decided that on the last point a scientific conference, an exhibition and a number of professional publications should be organized. The outcomes of the meeting were discussed by the Ministry of Education, who then assigned Christian Schädlich, professor in architectural history at the HAB, to formulate a concept for the conference. At the HAB, an "Arbeitskreis" – a work group – for the history of the Bauhaus was formed and the architect Klaus Jürgen Winkler was hired as an assistant in architectural history to prepare the exhibition.⁴⁴ In the mean time, the SED also defined the political lines for the conference. First, it should be made clear that the Bauhaus was part of a social and progressive tradition in culture. Second, the political orientation of the Bauhaus students and teachers should be emphasized, especially those who "consistently worked for the cause of socialism and the working class". Thirdly, the attempts to come to standardisation and industrial art should be appreciated as a precursor of the housing program and industrialisation of building in the GDR.⁴⁵

After a decision by the Central Committee in June 1976 three Ministries were officially given the task to prepare the commemoration: the Ministry of Education, Culture and Building. A festive commemoration was to be held in the assembly hall of the newly restored Dessau building, accompanied by an exhibition. At the HAB in Weimar, the "Ständigen Arbeitskreises Bauhausforschung" - an Ongoing Work Group in Bauhaus research – was to be formed with the aim of preparing a scientific conference reflecting Leninist- Marxist historiography and as a contribution to the "systematic care for the heritage of the Bauhaus in the GDR".⁴⁶ In June 1976 the Ministry of Education officially approved of the concept elaborated by Schädlich. It was now decided that the conference should contain four focal points: the general development of the Bauhaus, Bauhaus and its relationships with the Soviet Union, architectural and industrial design in Dessau and the question of the conservation of the Bauhaus heritage. Also the list of participants was accepted, with the exception of the former Bauhaus students Wils Ebert and Hubert Hofmann; the former was rejected because of his cooperation with the Bauhaus archive in Berlin West, which was founded around the time of the first Colloquium.⁴⁷

43 Korrek, "Zur Bauhaus-Rezeption," 212.

44 Ibid.

45 "...Die konsequent für die Sache der Arbeitersklasse und den Sozialismus gearbeitet haben..." See: Christian Schädlich, "Die Bauhausrezeption an der Hochschule für Architektur und Bauwesen Weimar," typescript, Weimar 1992-1994, now in Korrek, "Zur Bauhaus-Rezeption," 213.

46 Quoted from a letter of the Ministry Council of the GDR to the President of the HAB dated 12th of May 1976, now in Korrek, "Zur Bauhaus-Rezeption," 213.

47 Ibid.

The First Bauhaus Colloquium of 1976

With hindsight it was no coincidence that a positive valuation of the Bauhaus was first made possible in the 1970s. By then the war had ended almost thirty years before and the black and white thinking implying that “bad” capitalists had been guilty of Nazism while “good” communists were victims of Nazism was now ready to be exchanged for a more nuanced perception of reality. Instead of the war functioning as an all-explaining point of reference, the GDR attempted to define its own cultural identity in these years. To do so, it had to answer questions like: what can be considered as our history? What material and immaterial heritage is proper to our socialist state? Also, the strict socialist doctrines were now loosened somewhat so as to give room to opposing and conflicting views. Instead of regarding reality from only one point of view – the one prescribed by the communist party – intellectuals were now allowed to consider issues in their complexity and to give voice to the confusion that arises from it. The reconsideration of the Bauhaus was an outcome of this climate: it was now accepted to think of it as a complex phenomenon containing good and bad sides. At the same time, the rehabilitation of the Bauhaus also confronted architectural scholars with the challenge to convincingly situate the Bauhaus in the ideology of the GDR.⁴⁸

After a long preparatory phase the first Bauhaus Colloquium – in its first edition called “Wissenschaftliches Kolloquium” – was organised from the 27th to the 29th of November 1976, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Bauhaus building in Dessau.⁴⁹ The conference was officially called “The progressive ideas of the Bauhaus in Dessau and its meaning for the socialist development of architecture, urban planning and industrial design in the German Democratic Republic.” There were twenty-eight presentations, held by among others the French-Swiss architectural theoretician Claude Schnaidt, the Hungarian researcher Edith Hórváth and the Lithuanian architect Antanas Spelskis.⁵⁰ There were 117 participants and twelve guests from abroad. In the audience there were several prominent guests, such as the architectural historians Marco de Michelis and Francesco Dal Co from Venice and the Swiss designer and former Bauhaus student Max Bill. The conference program included an exhibition about Hannes Meyer, for which his wife Lena Meyer-Bergner had donated documents, and a visit to the Bauhaus building in Dessau. It was accompanied by a special issue of the architectural journal *Form und Zweck*, dedicated to the history of the Bauhaus.⁵¹ The conference was the first opportunity for GDR researchers on the Bauhaus to exchange knowledge and meet with colleagues from the East and the West. In this way, the conference gathered speakers like Karl-Heinz Hüter, Kurt Junghanns, Konrad Püschel and Adalbert Behr; all of them historians, writing on the Bauhaus.⁵²

48 This paragraph is based upon a conversation with Nobert Korrek, held June 2013 in Weimar. It also contains my own interpretation of the events.

49 “Die progressiven Ideen des Dessauer Bauhauses und ihre Bedeutung für die sozialistische Entwicklung von Städtebau und Architektur sowie für die industrielle Formgestaltung in der DDR”, *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Hochschule für Architektur und Bauwesen Weimar* 5/6 (1976): 400.

50 Claude Schnaidt, “Was man über das Bauhaus weiss, zu wissen glaubt und ignoriert”, *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Hochschule für Architektur und Bauwesen Weimar* 5/6 (1976): 496-501. Antanas Spelskis, “Zum Einfluss der progressiven Ideen des Bauhauses auf die Entwicklung der Architektur in Litauen (1918-1940)”, *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Hochschule für Architektur und Bauwesen Weimar* 5/6 (1976): 502-503. Edit Horváth, “Ungarn und das Bauhaus”, *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Hochschule für Architektur und Bauwesen Weimar* 5/6 (1976): 504-507.

51 “50 Jahre Bauhaus Dessau”, *Form und Zweck, Fachzeitschrift für industrielle Formgebung* 6 (1976): 2-44.

52 Karl Heinz Hüter, “Vom Gesamtkunstwerk zur Totalen Architektur: Synthese konzeptionen bei Gropius und dem Bauhaus”, *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Hochschule für Architektur und Bauwesen Weimar* 5/6 (1976): 507-514. Kurt Junghanns, “Über Neuertum und Tradition in der Produktgestaltung bis 1933 und die Stellung des Bauhauses”, *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Hochschule für Architektur und Bauwesen Weimar* 5/6 (1976): 488-495. Adalbert Behr, “Das Bauhausgebäude und seine Bedeutung für die Entwicklung der neueren Architektur”, *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Hochschule für*



Fig.1 Bauhaus Kolloquium 1976; meeting with students in the Kasseturm. AdM 25.1./7-1.

Fig.2 Bauhaus Kolloquium 1976; trip to Bauhaus Dessau with the original Bauhäusler. AdM 25.2./1-3.

The results of the conference were published in a special issue of the *Wissenschaftliche Zeitung der Hochschule für Architektur und Bauwesen Weimar*.⁵³

The idea of the Bauhaus that was fore grounded during the first Colloquium was that of a progressive, humanist movement that had contributed to a harmonic design of the environment. What is more, the Bauhaus was seen as a political movement that had suffered substantially from reactionary forces in the 1930s. By and large, there were three thematic lines that structured the conference. First, there was the attempt to write the general history of the Bauhaus, with an emphasis on Dessau. Second, there were presentations about similar movements in other socialist countries – for example, the foundation of the Vkhutemas art school in Moscow at the start of the 20th century.⁵⁴ In the third place there was the question of the conservation of buildings and objects belonging to the Bauhaus. A thread running through the conference was the critique on Western historiography. Persons and movements in the Bauhaus had to be re-evaluated, so it was felt, in order to fully do them justice. In this respect, especially the role played by Hannes Meyer was excessively emphasized; apart from the exhibition, his work was discussed by Claude Schnaidt, Konrad Püschel and Klaus-Jürgen Winkler.⁵⁵ Also the testimonials of former Bauhaus students were important in this respect. For example, during the conference the Polish architect Max Krajewski – known for his design of lamps and lighting

Architektur und Bauwesen Weimar 5/6 (1976): 463-468. Konrad Püschel, "Die Tätigkeit der Gruppe Hannes Meyer in der UdSSR in den Jahren 1930 bis 1937," *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Hochschule für Architektur und Bauwesen Weimar* 5/6 (1976): 468-472.

⁵³ See note 46.

⁵⁴ Christian Schädlich, "Die Moskauer Höheren künstlerisch-technischen Werkstätten und das Bauhaus," *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Hochschule für Architektur und Bauwesen Weimar* 5/6 (1976): 472-475.

⁵⁵ The ample attention given to Meyer is an example of how the ideological program of the conference led to deformations and, in the case of Meyer, exaggerated indications of relevance. Claude Schnaidt, "Was man über das Bauhaus weiss, zu wissen glaubt und ignoriert," *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Hochschule für Architektur und Bauwesen Weimar* 5/6 (1976): 496-501, Konrad Püschel, "Die Tätigkeit der Gruppe Hannes Meyer in der UdSSR in den Jahren 1930 bis 1937," *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Hochschule für Architektur und Bauwesen Weimar* 5/6 (1976): 468-472. Klaus Jürgen Winkler, "Der soziale Aspekt in den architekturtheoretischen Anschauungen und in der Architekturlehre Hannes Meyers," *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Hochschule für Architektur und Bauwesen Weimar* 5/6 (1976): 514-519..

fixtures – reflected upon his reasons to study at the Bauhaus.⁵⁶ He told the audience how at the start of the 1920s he exchanged his job at the mines in the Ruhr area for a position at the school and how he had suffered from poverty during that time. Accounts like these were an attempt to counterbalance Western historiography by, as the organisers put it, “drawing directly from the source.”⁵⁷ In the eyes of the organisers, the accounts of the former Bauhaus students were gateways to *Wahre Geschichte* – truthful history –, beyond capitalist “myths” and “legends” about the Bauhaus. Most of all, giving voice to the former students foregrounded the Bauhaus as a plural container of individuals, of masters and of students, more than a unity structured around the prestige of a few persons and a strict set of rules. This was the Eastern German response to what was perceived as the uncritical, hagiographic history writing of the West. Most of all, the first Colloquium of 1976 was an attempt to give the Bauhaus a place in communist history. After years of struggling for the presence of the Bauhaus in the GDR, now a narrative was presented that made the Bauhaus into an acceptable element of cultural history. In this way, the key lecture of the conference given by rector Karl-Albert Fuchs was essentially a proposal for a certain interpretation of Bauhaus history, indicating its historical relevance from a GDR perspective.⁵⁸ To this end, Fuchs introduced a number of theses. First, he stated that the Bauhaus should be regarded as part of the large historical movements that dominated the twentieth century. In fact, so argued Fuchs, the introduction of functionalism as the new doctrine of design sprang from the recognition of a social issue. For Gropius, the changed relationship between man, machine and technology was the indication of a social problem that could only be solved through the arrival of a new world. According to Fuchs the Bauhaus was in this sense a movement situated on the threshold between two worlds: it stood with one leg in the old capitalist world and with the other in the new, socialist future. However, the Bauhaus also exemplified the inherent contradictions of the capitalist system: its students and teachers sensed these contradictions, but they could not solve them as they could not break away from the societal system of which they were a part. It was this process, so argued Fuchs, that ultimately led to the failure of the Bauhaus and decided over its faith as a set of initiatives that in this time simply could not come to fruition. In the end, the Bauhaus remained the product of bourgeois progressive tendencies and it was also this that defined the reach of its abilities. This now constituted the drama of the Bauhaus: only in a different, socialist, society could its promises come to fulfillment.

What is remarkable in Fuchs’ account is his attempt to directly relate the Bauhaus to the proletarian revolutions in Russia and Germany. Instead of being apolitical, the Bauhaus was to be considered part of a political history concerning the left-wing political movements in Europe. Fuchs argued that new relationship between the machine and craftsmanship since the industrial revolution should be viewed as the super structural manifestation of an underlying social problem present in the capitalist system. According to Fuchs, the problem was that the capitalist, profit-based system simply could not do justice to the promises of the new technical and scientific horizon. At the start of the twentieth century, modernity and capitalism proved to be a difficult combination: it was this that spurred the Russian proletarian revolution of 1917 and the German

56 Max Sinowjewitsch-Krajewski, “Meine Lehr- und Ausbildungsjahre am Bauhaus,” *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Hochschule für Architektur und Bauwesen Weimar* 5/6, (1976): 565-571.

57 As Bernd Grönwald wrote: “...das die Pauschalurteile über “das Bauhaus” und die uneingeschränkte Glorifizierung einiger weniger Persönlichkeiten zu keiner realistischen Wertung der Bauhausleistung führen konnte...Darüber hinaus steht uns eine stattliche Zahl ehemalige Bauhausler und Zeitgenossen...mit Rat und Tat zur Seite, um wissenschaftlich von der Quelle aus ...erforschen zu können.” In: Bernd Grönwald, “Zu einigen Aspekten der weiteren Aneignung und Pflege des Bauhauses in der DDR,” *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Hochschule für Architektur und Bauwesen Weimar* 5/6, (1976): 458.

58 Karl-Albert Fuchs, “Die Stellung des Bauhauses in der Geschichte und die Bedeutung seines Erbes für die Entwickelte sozialistische Gesellschaft, Hauptvortrag zum Bauhaus-Kolloquium, Weimar, Oktober 1976,” *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Hochschule für Architektur und Bauwesen Weimar* 5/6, (1976): 439-453.

November revolution of 1918. The Bauhaus, so wrote Fuchs, was receptive to these changes; it sensed the need for a new society and it tried to answer this call with artistic means. However, as it was not able to transcend the boundaries of the societal system in which it was embedded; its attempts could only go so far. This also meant that the Bauhaus was in fact an open-ended history, stretching out into contemporaneity. This argumentation had as a huge advantage that the historians of the Colloquium could place themselves in the tradition of the Bauhaus. They would, so to speak, finish the job that others could not: they would, as members of a socialist state, pick up where the *Bauhäusler* had left things in the 1930s. In this way, the history of the Bauhaus was the history of a postponed victory.

The Second Bauhaus Colloquium

The second Bauhaus Colloquium, held from 27 to 29 June 1979, was a consolidation of the achievements of the first conference. It was now officially given the name of “Bauhaus Colloquium” and perceived as part of a series ending somewhere in the 1980s, when the knowledge about the Bauhaus would have reached a sufficient level. Again, a concrete occasion for the conference was individuated: this time it was the 60th anniversary of the foundation of the Bauhaus in the year 1919.⁵⁹ Some 170 participants took part in the conference, among them twenty former Bauhaus students. At the start of the conference each participant received an “official” historical overview of the Bauhaus written by Schädlich; for the first time in the history of the HAB, it was now possible to circulate such a history.⁶⁰ The conference had a substantial side program. Among others, the former Bauhaus teacher and architect of the Haus am Horn Georg Muche received an honorary doctorate.⁶¹ The main exhibition “Bauhaus 1919-1933” was now organised in the city of Weimar, which meant that for the first time in post war history the Bauhaus was put on display for a broad, non-academic public.⁶² There was also an exhibition about the teaching of Johannes Itten, opened by his widow.⁶³ This was remarkable, as the mystique of Itten – who was a follower of the Mazdaznan cult – was difficult to accept for the GDR intellectuals, who saw themselves as the advocates of a scientific, reality-based socialism devoid of vague utopianism. Around the time of the conference, a number of reliefs made by Oskar Schlemmer and destroyed by the Nazis were reproduced and restored to their original place in the school. A regular part of the program was also the meeting of the *Bauhäusler* with the students of the FDJ student club.⁶⁴

With respect to the first conference, the lectures of the second Bauhaus Colloquium were marked by a greater variety of themes. Typically, the program consisted of a mixture of sound scientific work and ideology-informed history. An example of the first category was a young Simone Hain who spoke about the relationships between the Bauhaus and the avant-garde in the Czech

59 The results of the conference were published in: *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Hochschule für Architektur und Bauwesen Weimar* 4/5 (1979).

60 Korrek, “Zur Bauhaus-Rezeption,” 214.

61 See: *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Hochschule für Architektur und Bauwesen Weimar* 4/5 (1979): 291-295.

62 See: Klaus Jürgen Winkler, “Bauhaus 1919-1933, Ausstellung zum 60. Jahrestag der Gründung des Bauhauses Weimar vom 12.6 bis 2.9. 1979 in Weimar,” *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Hochschule für Architektur und Bauwesen Weimar* 4/5 (1979): 442-453.

63 See: Helga Hoffmann, “Johannes Itten – sein Unterricht am Bauhaus und später – Ausstellung vom 17.5. bis 9.9. in Weimar,” *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Hochschule für Architektur und Bauwesen Weimar* 4/5 (1979): 455.

64 Founded by the students in the 1960s, this club developed into a remarkable institution within the school: it enjoyed a relatively autonomous status and it was an important representative of DDR culture. Also, the students club was marked by a liberal climate, in which critique was to a certain extent possible. In April 1979 they organized their own students' conference about the Bauhaus. See: de Rudder, “Die Architekturausbildung,” 259-60.

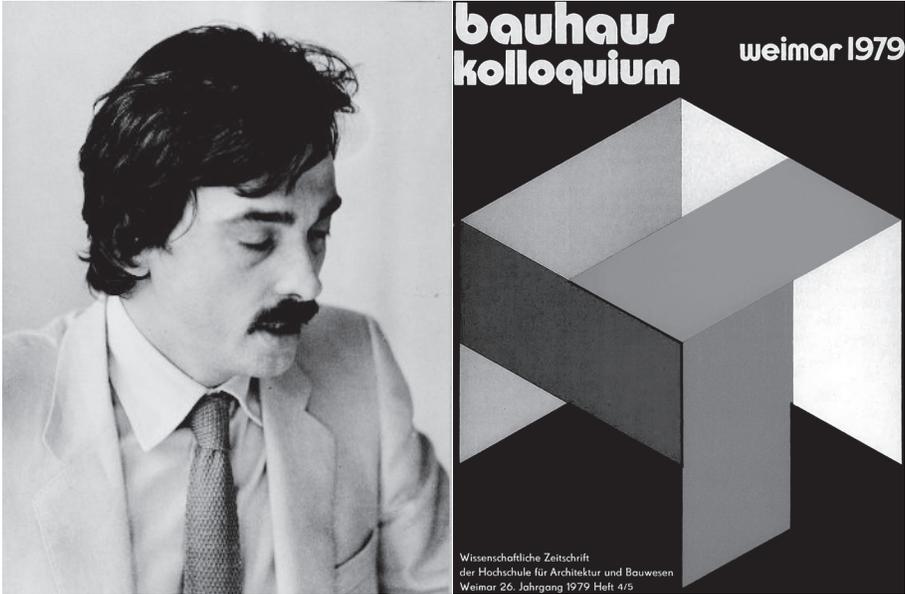


Fig.3 Bauhaus Kolloquium 1979; presentation by Marco de Michelis. AdM 26.1./3-4.

Fig.4 Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift HAB 1979; publication of Kolloquium proceedings; front cover.

Republic; also, a number of researchers from the USSR reflected upon the relationship the Bauhaus and Vkhutemas, basing their account on archival material and other primary sources.⁶⁵ In this way, for scholars from the East and the West, the conference was an opportunity to gain new insights in modern architectural history on both sides of the iron curtain. This was especially important since the circulation of knowledge – let alone the visit of archives – was more difficult in times of the cold war. Most of all, the second Bauhaus Colloquium marked the moment when the Bauhaus scholars in Eastern Germany found connection with international research. However, at the same time this also foregrounded the differences within the left wing ideological family. Especially the presentation of the Italian historian Marco de Michelis is relevant in this respect.⁶⁶ While coming from the country with the largest Communist Party outside of the Eastern Bloc, De Michelis refused to use dogmatic socialist rhetoric and instead used a language that was unknown also to many researchers in the West.⁶⁷ For researchers from the GDR the Bauhaus was part of a progressive history: it was a valuable artistic movement that with its ideas was ahead of time and that had to wait for the arrival of socialism to see its promises realized. The

65 Simone Hain, "Bauhaus und tschechische architektonische Avantgarde," *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Hochschule für Architektur und Bauwesen Weimar* 4/5 (1979): 414-417, Ju. N. Sokolow, "Die Tradition des Bauhauses und die sowjetische Architekturschule," *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Hochschule für Architektur und Bauwesen Weimar* 4/5 (1979): 317-319, L.K. Komarowa, "Die Architekturfakultät der WCHUTEMAS und des WCHUTEIN 1920-30," *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Hochschule für Architektur und Bauwesen Weimar* 4/5 (1979): 319-319. Larissa A. Shadowa, "Hinnerk Scheper und Beris Ender im Maljarstroj –Über Verbindungen von Mitarbeitern des Bauhauses und sowjetischen Künstlern," *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Hochschule für Architektur und Bauwesen Weimar* 4/5 (1979): 319-323.

66 Marco De Michelis, "Das Bauhaus und die moderne Architekturgeschichtsschreibung," *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Hochschule für Architektur und Bauwesen Weimar* 4/5 (1979): 335-338.

67 Based upon an interview held with De Michelis over telephone, 16.08.2013.

failure of the Bauhaus could be corrected by the present socialist society: such was the optimist message presented by researchers from the GDR. However, in contrast to their triumphant account, De Michelis spoke of a problematisation of the Bauhaus. What in the eyes of the GDR researchers had been the drama of the Bauhaus, now turned into the tragedy of the artist in modern society.

It was the achievement of the Bauhaus that it had indicated a role for the modern architect beyond avant-garde and utopia, so stated De Michelis.⁶⁸ However, nevertheless the Bauhaus had had its vicissitudes which all came down to one fundamental problem: the students and teachers of the Bauhaus were caught up in the larger struggle of *Kultur* against *Zivilisation*.⁶⁹ De Michelis thus used a typical German opposition between two notions of culture to indicate the difficult position of the artist in modern society. The history of the Bauhaus, by De Michelis, starts in the years after the First World War. Gropius was now faced with a world in ruins: chaos and fragmentation had taken the place of familiar structures. In this climate “old” strategies came to an end. In fact, already in the first decade of the twentieth century artists like Van de Velde or Endell had reacted to the fierce modernisation of society by trying to restore a lost unity. In the face of the uprooting forces of industrialisation, they wanted to once more give meaning to the artistic act. However, at the same time these artists were confronted with the interests of capitalist industrialists such as Walter Rathenau who were looking for a new type of culture to legitimize the power of the new, liberal-capitalist state, De Michelis said. The artist was called upon to give expression to the new unity between art and the machine and thus, to “give capitalism a soul”.⁷⁰ However, this would imply exchanging the realm of a moral based *Kultur* for that of a technology-driven *Zivilisation*. For the artists, this would amount to the degradation of art itself. According to De Michelis, this was the struggle of the modern artist which came to an end with the event of the First World War. However, the chaos that followed its end also entailed a promise. In the Weimar Republic, German artists were now confronted with the “empty space” offered by democracy: finally, the political system had arrived that would enable them to liberate themselves from the unworthy association with capitalism and to exchange *Zivilisation* for *Kultur* once again.⁷¹ To do so, the artist had to use a twofold strategy. On the one side, “capitalist mechanisation” could be opposed by seeking unification between art and the people. On the other hand, so argued De Michelis, artists saw new possibilities by withdrawing into small communities, as a kind of “heroism of the weak”.⁷² The “Arbeitsrat für Kunst” demonstrated what such a community would amount to: it worked like a secret alliance, a conspiracy plotting against fate. It was the brilliant intuition of Gropius, De Michelis said, that also a school could be such a community.⁷³ In this way, the Bauhaus came into being as a cloister-like community of artists. With its accent on craft, it strived towards the unification of art and the people; with its accent on workshops it emphasized that a new art could only come about through doing-by-learning as a new ethics of work. In this way, for De Michelis, the Bauhaus was a “weak” answer to a fundamental problem underlying modern culture: how to resist its permanent inflation through the forces of modernisation.

68 De Michelis, “Das Bauhaus,” 335.

69 *Ibid.*, 336.

70 “Die Rolle, die Rathenau oder Naumann den deutschen Künstlern zudachte, bestand darin, den Übergang von der Zivilisation zur Kultur auszudrücken. Die organische Synthese von Maschine und Kunst ist das Symbol der kapitalistischen Kultur und der Möglichkeit, dem Kapitalismus eine Seele zu geben.” *Ibid.*

71 “Die Revolution schien imstande zu sein, eindgültig jene mechanistische Hegemonie fortzukehren, die den deutschen Intellektuellen gezwungen hatte, die unwürdige Verbindung mit den erstickenden Bedingungen der kapitalistischen Entwicklung einzugehen.” *Ibid.*

72 *Ibid.*

73 “Die Schule ist der ideale Weg, um dieses Ziel zu erreichen. Die Kunst kann nicht in der Schule gelehrt werden, es sei denn durch Arbeit. Der neue Stil wird sich gestalten durch die handwerkliche Arbeit, deren Qualität erlernbar ist.” *Ibid.*

Conclusion

Between 1976 and 1980 the first two Bauhaus Colloquia were organised at the Hochschule für Architektur und Bauwesen in Weimar. As pointed out in this article, these conferences were the outcome of a development that started long before 1976. The colloquia should be considered as the final piece of the arduous rapprochement of the GDR to its modernist past; a process that went step by step from total condemnation to acceptance in the time span of three decades. What finally opened the door to the official acknowledgement of the Bauhaus and for the first Colloquium was a practical issue concerning the conservation of its material heritage; the large ideological disputes were by then already over. At the same time, the Bauhaus Colloquia were also the outcome of a dialogue between the two German states in times of the cold war. As demonstrated by the simultaneous foundation of the Bauhaus Archive in West Berlin, the question was which societal system could call itself the proper heir of the Bauhaus. In this respect, the reception of the Bauhaus in the East forms the negation of that in the West. When in the decades after the war the Bauhaus was discussed in the terms of an a-critical apology in the West, it faced a total condemnation in the East. When from the 1960s onwards modern architecture, including the Bauhaus, was criticised in the West and the first signs of postmodernism began to dominate discourse, it was finally accepted in the East. This yields the question if the discourse in the East should be considered a delayed copy of that in the West, or if it should rather be considered an autonomous narrative, corrective and enriching with respect to that of the West. In other words, in what respect were both sides of the Wall equal partners in debate? For the answer to this question a broader research is necessary that extends beyond the scope of this article.



Fig.5 Bauhaus Kolloquium 1979; logo. AdM 26.1./0-1.

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