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## DER WEG DER ROTEN FAHNE. ART IN CORRELATION TO ARCHITECTURE, URBAN PLANNING AND POLICY

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**Abstract.** The presented research focuses on the relationship between art and architecture. On the example of the mural *Der Weg der Roten Fahne* (The Path of the Red Flag) installed at the western façade of the *Kulturpalast Dresden* (Palace of Culture in Dresden) the author analyses the necessity of the mural as an immanent element to communicate political decisions of the *German Democratic Republic's* government to the public by using architecture. Up until now the mural reinforces the political value of the *International Style* building in function and shape and links its volume to the urban layout.

**Keywords:** architecture, culture house, German Democratic Republic, International Style, monumental art, mural, political architecture, representation, Socialist Realism, urban planning.

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### Introduction

An artefact that is designed in collaboration with architecture depends on its context. Its intention and significance can only be comprehended and understood by its interaction with the building, where it was installed. In certain cases this building is representing an artefact on its own, and then the object of art is just an addition. In other cases the object may point to the building's effect and value or even emphasise it. This essay presents the synthesis of an object of art and an architectural artefact to exemplify their correlation. The illustrated example is the mural called *Der Weg der Roten Fahne* (The Path of the Red Flag; Fig. 1) that is installed at the western façade of the *Kulturpalast Dresden* (Palace of Culture in Dresden)<sup>1</sup>.

### The mural *Der Weg der Roten Fahne*

In 1969 a collective of the Dresden Academy of Fine Arts created the mural *Der Weg der Roten Fahne* (Fig. 2) under the direction of Gerhard Bondzin (1930)<sup>2</sup>. He developed the object in collaboration with his professors, their lecturers, assistants and students<sup>3</sup>. The mural's size is three times as wide as high (30 to 10 metres); given its size, *Der Weg der Roten Fahne* befits the standard for oversized murals. The 466 concrete tiles were coated with a mixture of marble and porphyry splint. After that the tiles were grounded twice and covered with coloured glass splinters in an electrostatic process, the result was comparable with the surface of terrazzo. Until then this technique had never been used for an image of that size (Kiefer 1973: 33).

<sup>1</sup> Groundwork of this essay is the author's unpublished master thesis *Der Kulturpalast Dresden* (The Palace of Culture in Dresden) that was accepted at the Department of Art History, University of Hamburg in 2006. In 2011 another essay concerning this topic was published in a modified form and with a different focus (Fülischer 2011).

<sup>2</sup> Gerhard Bondzin: 1957–1970 head teacher of the Dresden Academy of Fine Arts; 1970–1974 Chairman of the Union of Fine Arts in the German Democratic Republic (GDR); 1969–1984 member of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED), district leadership Dresden.

<sup>3</sup> In the piece of art Alfred Hesse, Gerhard Stengel and others had been involved (Schröter, Grösel 1974; Guth 1995: 428).



Fig. 1. Kulturpalast Dresden with the mural *Der Weg der Roten Fahne*, Schlossstraße, 1969. SLUB Dresden / Deutsche Fotothek / Manfred Thonig



Fig. 2. *Der Weg der Roten Fahne*. Gerhard Bondzin and collective, 1969. SLUB Dresden / Deutsche Fotothek / Helmut Seifert

In 1967 a public competition for the artistic composition of the mural's design had been set up. The Jury decided in favour of a relief created by Rudolf Sitte (1922–2009) even though he used his preferred material, concrete, exclusively and not in combination with glass and metal, like the competitive tendering required. Sitte's design showed wave structures and forms weaving into one another accentuating hammer and sickle, two stars, the sun, a bird and a small group of figures. In spite of the jury's decision the design was refused by the district party leadership in Dresden. Their decision was based on the missing presentation of the socialist idea of man and the alleged cosmopolitan respectively western influence visible in the concept. A second competition was called and attended by well-known East German artists like Walter Womacka, Wieland Förster and Jo Jastram; but again Sitte won the first prize with a concrete relief. Although he added a distinguishable figure group in the centre of his design, the SED disapproved of it and even threatened Sitte with prosecution (Schirmer 1995: 196–197).

As a result of this development, Bondzin received – per decree and under unclear circumstances – the order to create a mural. The title of the assignment to Bondzin was *Die Veränderbarkeit der Welt* (The

World's Convertibility). Influenced by the party and city council the issue changed to the victory of socialism using the historical development of Dresden since 1848 in an exemplary manner. Reportedly the artists had problems to transfer the particular Dresden topic to a universally readable conclusion and decided to change the theme to the working class that eked the victory of socialism (Kiefer 1973: 28–29).

### The mural's motives

The mural's chief motive is a knee-length portrait of a female standard bearer, parting the mural into a major left and minor right part, in line with the rules of the golden ratio. The figure spreads her left arm with an inviting gesture, while holding the flag's shaft in the highly raised right hand. As an established symbol of the socialistic labour movement the flag's drapery encloses the body of the female standard bearer and touches the national coat of arms of the GDR: hammer and sickle. Alongside with her headscarf this brands the figure as a member of the working class. The theme of the red flag pervades the entire mural and contains miscellaneous minor groups of persons. Arranged in temporal order, these whole-body figures symbolise evident chapters in the working class' fight and victory (Schröter, Grösel 1974). Accordingly Karl Marx (1818–1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820–1895), Vladimir Ilyich Lenin (1870–1924), Ernst Thälmann (1886–1944) and Walter Ulbricht (1893–1973) are portrayed<sup>4</sup>.

The mural's left part includes the history of the labour movement up until 1945, whereas the artists postulated this as the beginning of the movement with the insurgence in Dresden in May 1849 (Kiefer 1973: 32). In the lower left of the image the sequence starts with three protesters that arm themselves. Above them Karl Marx stands erect holding a document in his hands. He is flanked by Friedrich Engels on his right. Scenes of fighting and repression are leading to the subject of the Russian revolution of 1914, represented by three armed supporters of the labour party and a red star, and to Ernst Thälmann, who stands elevated raising his right fist. On his left side a woman carries the flag. Then next to the great female standard bearer the sequence is interrupted by a group of figures portraying the suffering in the Second World War.

The right section of the mural illustrates the post-war victory of socialism. Beginning with the picture of a soldier helping a concentration camp prisoner a

<sup>4</sup> Ernst Thälmann, 1925–1933 Chairman of the Communist Party of Germany (KPD), Walter Ulbricht, 1950–1971 First Secretary of SED.

series of figures in groups can be seen, showing women and men of different professions following one another. Either some are wearing weapons and flags or are raising the right fist. Repeatedly figures look to the portrait of Walter Ulbricht in the middle of that section. On the left side above him Lenin's head appears as a reduced dark red coloured silhouette. In the front children are playing and a young woman is holding a banderol bearing the title of the mural. Certainly Ulbricht, in his function as the First Secretary of SED, exerted a dominating influence on the mural's composition and execution (Schirmer 1995: 197). In representing himself on a par with Marx and Thälmann as well as in striking distance to Lenin (Guth 1995: 428), Ulbricht set himself a monument.

Nevertheless the choice of motives was consistent with the murals' purpose to form the socialistic awareness of citizens and socialistic community in the *German Democratic Republic* (GDR). This went hand in hand with a programmatic search for the expression of the socialistic form of society in art as well as architecture and with the transfer of the results of the *Bitterfelder Weg*<sup>5</sup>. In summary, *Der Weg der Roten Fahne* read as an important contribution to the socialistic monumental art, ought to transcribe artistically '[...] the fight of the revolutionary forces in Dresden for progress and socialism, against reaction, imperialism and war'<sup>6</sup>.

### The Kulturpalast in Dresden

On 5th October 1969, two days shy of the 20th centenary of founding the GDR, the mural bearing structure – the *Kulturpalast Dresden* – was opened for the public (Fig. 3). The building's shape is the result of the joint work of the architects Leopold Wiel (1916), competition and preliminary draft, and Wolfgang Hänsch (1929–2013), conceptual design, detailed planning and construction site management. It represents a plain cubic solitaire in the mode of the *International Style*, with a central positioned hexangular hall breaking through the roof membrane and appearing externally as a cro-ne. Constructed in the central point of Dresden's historic centre, the edifice stands at the end of the northern part of the *Altmarkt* (Old Market), the historic main square of Dresden close to the castle. Visually the *Kulturpalast* is part of the *Altmarkt*, but in the urban development it is disconnected by the *Wilsdruffer*



Fig. 3. *Kulturpalast Dresden*. View from the *Altmarkt*, 1973. SLUB Dresden / Deutsche Fotothek / Hering



Fig. 4. *Kulturpalast Dresden*. View from the *Wilsdruffer Straße*, around 1971. SLUB Dresden / Deutsche Fotothek / Erich Höhne

*Strasse*, the main axis between the parts to the east and west of Dresden (Fig. 4). The western façade, with the mural, is flanked by the *Schlossstrasse* (Castle Street). It links the pedestrian axis from north to south Dresden and leads along the *Altmarkt* and the *Prager Straße* (Street of Prague) to the central station of Dresden. Both axes sustainably mould the cityscape. A few years ago a huge open area (which was used as a parking place) extended the north of the *Kulturpalast*, facing the *Frauenkirche* designed by Georg Bähr. Today the reconstruction of the historic urban layout in neo-baroque style fills that zone.

The three-storey *Kulturpalast* is structured in a precise and symmetrical way. As it is lower than wide, the edifice displays a pronounced horizontal effect that is punctuated by the separation of the two-storey upper main level and the one-storey lower entrance level. In

<sup>5</sup> Conference that engaged in the advancement of the workers' active access to art and culture in April 1959.

<sup>6</sup> Des '[...] Kampf[es] der revolutionären Kräfte in Dresden für Fortschritt und Sozialismus, gegen Reaktion, Imperialismus und Krieg' (Leucht 1969: 164).

contrast to the glass dominating the building's upper part and giving it transparency, the entrance level is characterised by closeness. The biggest interruption of the red granite panelling occurs at the south façade, where the wide entrance hall with a glass curtain wall opens to the *Altmarkt*. Five bronze double wing doors welcome the visitors at the main front; in addition, two side entrances exist at the east and west façades respectively. The rectangular outer shell forms the framework of the ground level that is dominated by circle and quadrate. The corner points of the hall may be imaginarily connected to a circle that is surrounded by a quadratic corridor. It allows the approach to the hall and the outer secondary rooms, i.e. a non-hierarchical organisation of all rooms and the flexible utilisation of the building. The hall is the centre of the *Kulturpalast* in a functional and cultural way. It was designed to permit performances of theatre, ballet, concerts, congresses and lots more (*Das Großkulturhaus ...* 1963: 9).

### The alteration of urban intentions in Dresden

The high dominant had been also an issue of prime importance in the post-war urban discussions about the reconstruction of the ruined city of Dresden. On the basis of these urban ideals and current states of planning for the *Kulturpalast*, here just abridged, the abandonment of this architectural means of expression becomes comprehensible.

In line with the national reconstruction work declared by government and Party in 1952, the rebuilding of Dresden's central district was based on the *16 Principles of Urban Planning* (Bolz 1951b). They were in line with the indoctrination by Soviet authority and laid down by the Minister of Reconstruction, Lothar Bolz (1903–1986)<sup>7</sup> in 1950. What is more, they were to become the legal foundation for all urban and rebuilding activities once the Law of Reconstruction had been adopted (Bolz 1951a; Schätzke 1991: 28, 42; Ulbricht 1952: 11). Propagated as the pendant of the *Athens Charter*<sup>8</sup> the *16 Principles* differed from them by reverting to 'traditional concepts of the dense city with closed streets and squares plus a city centre that is dominated by edifices as initial point of urban planning'<sup>9</sup>. But the principles

demanded a new centrality depending on ideological basics and without respect to historic urban structures. In general the magistral axis, the *Central Square* and *Central House* represented the main components of urban predominance. This principle determined the position of the *Altmarkt* as the Central Square and the *Wilsdruffer Straße* as the *East-West-Magistral* as well as the proposal to fill the plot at the northern side of the *Altmarkt* with the *Central House* to dominate the whole urban layout of Dresden. In the GDR's urban planning the *Central House* as a high-rise of maximum centrality was the most important form of dominance and was destined to broadcast the socialistic success architecturally. Appropriately the first drafts for the central building as a *Haus der Partei* (House of Party) showed high-rises that subordinated the whole historic silhouette of Dresden in the early 1950ies (Durth *et al.* 1998: 341), while adopting soviet architectural ideals like the *Lomonosov University* in Moscow (1947–1953) or the *Palace of Culture and Science* in Warsaw (1953–1955), both erected under the direction of the soviet architect Lev Rudnev (1885–1956).

However, Nikita Sergejevich Khrushchev (1894–1971) demanded the architectural turn in 1954, the concept of a Stalinist high-rise was kept as the basis of the urban planning up to 1956, henceforth as *Haus der Kultur* (House of Culture). Later on a bar with a slender tower in the middle axis was developed according to the *International Style* (Tscheschner 2000: 343). The final point marked the competition announcement for the *Haus der sozialistischen Kultur* (House of Socialist Culture) in 1959 that asked for a lateral and independent campanile.

One of the twenty-nine entries disclaimed the tower for the benefit of Dresden's historic silhouette. Instead the contribution of the collective of the Technical University of Dresden under the direction of Leopold Wiel offered an ensemble with three glass cubic structures that were connected by an elevated pedestrian layer. Not surprisingly the Jury refused this entry because of the lacking ideological expression. But, presumably the flat roofed *Congress Palace* in Moscow's Kremlin that was designed in 1958 and completed in 1961 inspired the architects (Meyer 2005: 56).

The continuing planning process demonstrated the impossibility to express architecturally the recent socialistic society. Indications for a so-called socialistic architecture were rare. Especially function and shape of the high dominant constituted difficulties. Because of its idealistic character the tower should represent the unity of architecture and art, instead of just being a technical construction (Bächler, Milde 1960/61(?): 3). The retained dominant manifests that the GDR acted

<sup>7</sup> At founding the state in 1949 the SED installed the *Ministry for Reconstruction* to enforce their purposes.

<sup>8</sup> The urban principles, compiled by CIAM in 1933, provided a strict urban classification in functional zones and wide residential areas with multi-storey blocks of flats. Le Corbusier significantly affected the results of *Athens Charter* (Frampton 1997: 230).

<sup>9</sup> '[...] traditionelle Vorstellungen der kompakten Stadt, mit geschlossenen Straßen und Plätzen sowie dem mit beherrschenden Gebäuden gestalteten Zentrum als Ausgangspunkt der Stadtplanung.' (Tscheschner 2000: 260).

much more in line with the doctrine than the USSR in its demand for an architectural expression of social order. Prior to the competition Walter Ulbricht ordered that the modern materials concrete, glass, aluminium and newly developed chemical building materials were to be used for the construction of the culture house according to Soviet postulation. Next to this he still adhered to the idea of a high central dominant that had been criticised by the USSR before (Lerm 1993: 156; Fürst *et al.* 1998: 70; Chruschtschow 1991: 158). In this context Ulbricht's influence on the architectural politics in the GDR becomes as obvious as its dependency on single public figures. Moreover the process clearly illustrates the continuous control of the German political tendencies by the Soviet government as in 1961 a commission of experts from Moscow favoured Leopold Wiel's design (Lerm 1993: 177, 178). Therefore the following planning processes were conducted under the direction of Wolfgang Hänsch, based on the contribution of the collective of Wiel, but with an extremely reduced space allocation plan.

At the opening of Dresden's *Kulturpalast* in 1969, the 16 Principles had been adhered to for quite a long time, but had not unfolded their true effect until the completion of the culture house. In consequence of its being in the most central spot of the city the *Kulturpalast's* value increased. During the existence of GDR and in the interaction with the *Altmarkt* the *Kulturpalast* kept to be the political central point of Dresden.

In particular this urban legacy burdens its political and residents' acceptance today. Although the *Kulturpalast* was listed in the communist era, it lost this status in 1990, when Germany was reunified. For a while it was used as carpet storage, before the building was again used as a concert and congress centre. As late as 2008 it was added to the list of protected monuments anew. Even though the modification of the structure to a concert hall of Dresden's philharmonic orchestra begins in these days.

### **The functions of a culture house and its political settings**

The building type of the culture house is tightly connected to the cultural and political ambitions of the GDR. In general post war architecture was just a necessity of rebuilding. Architecture for the sake of cultural politics was a rare topic for the Soviet occupation zone; however, with the build-up of socialism it became more important (Schätzke 1991: 42). Like a mirror image architecture ought to picture the national social restructuring (Ulbricht 1952: 5), and in addition animate the population's socialistic awareness (Flierl 1967: 564). The poli-

tical ambitions aspired to at that time, namely to satisfy the cultural needs of the working masses and to mirror the build-up of the socialistic society by architecture (Flierl 1996: 151), culminated in the building type of the culture house. Spread all over the whole country these buildings should convey the new social ideals to the general public (Drewelow 1993: 25). The culture house replaced traditional mono-functional establishments like theatres, concert halls, playhouses, working party et cetera and consolidated all cultural institutions and offers. By emphasising the high significance of culture and cultural establishments, the GDR tried to establish a border to the *Federal Republic of Germany* (FRG) (Meyer 2005: 182). Moreover, the culture house is another indication for the government's attempt to influence the public in line with the party's desires, as it allowed centralising and controlling cultural activities<sup>10</sup>.

A close net of these houses grew steadily until 1989. In spite of industrialised building processes and while residential building was increasingly standardised and optimised to the basics, building culture houses was considered to be prominent significant construction work. By socialisation of household functions and concentration of nearly every cultural event, the culture house appeared to be a second home and hence an inherent part of the state's citizen everyday life.

The architectural style of culture houses manifested changes of policy based on the culture political dependencies. Serious political caesuras in consequence of the founding of the state in 1949 and Stalin's death in 1952 brought considerable changes in cultural politics and separated the development of the culture house building in two stages. These differ in style, place, function and form. The first stage commenced with the state foundation and continued until the beginning of the 1960ies (Flierl 1996: 152).

Contemporaneous to the political aim to establish the founding of socialism, culture houses arose in centres of industrial and agricultural production to achieve a close connection to the working processes and therefore to lead the worker effectively into the new

<sup>10</sup> In the GDR an enlarged censorship of all cultural activities dominated life. All artists were forced to enter cultural organisations like association of authors, association of composers and musicologist of the GDR, association of artists of the GDR etc. Private cultural associations were prohibited by law or political decisions.

'Auf allen Gebieten der Kultur herrscht eine weitgehend perfekte Zensur durch verschiedene Partei- und Regierungsinstitutionen. Private Träger kultureller Organisationen sind weitgehend durch das Gesetz oder die faktische Politik untersagt. Der größte Teil der professionellen Künstler wird durch die Mitgliedschaft in Organisationen (z.B. Schriftstellerverband der DDR, Verband der Komponisten und Musikwissenschaftler der DDR, Verband bildender Künstler der DDR) und in der DDR diszipliniert.' (Grätz 1979: 98–99).

social order and to new forms of civil culture. The architectural style followed the rules of *Socialist Realism*, in the GDR called *National Traditions*. Even though the implementation of a homogenous building type failed, discrete constitutive criteria for erecting culture houses were asserted like the precise classical and closed arranged entrance portal with portico, column based tympanum or the subordinated wings that heighten the dominant and axial main volume (Thunert, Reicher 1953: 167–172; Deutsche Bauakademie 1954: 158–187; Fendel 1996: 445; Drewelow 1993: 25). An outstanding example for that period is the culture house *VEB Maxhütte* in Unterwellenborn (1952–1954) designed by Josef Kaiser (1910–1991).

From the 1960ies to the 1980ies the second stage of culture house development preceded parallel to the comprehensive formation of socialism (Flierl 1996: 157ff). The previously disregarded rebuilding of the destructed urban centres came to the fore of construction activities in 1958 (Hoskislawski 1985: 88). Henceforth culture houses were erected in urban settlements, primary on positions that had been provided for the essential town buildings for years. Stalin's death in 1953 and the following political shift under Nikita Khrushchev changed the direction of cultural politics (Chruschtschow 1991: 158–160). In face of Khrushchev's demand for the industrialisation of the building trade themed 'better, cheaper and faster building' the GDR government adhered to the *National Traditions* not earlier than 1955, when the nation obtained sovereignty (Hoskislawski 1991: 14). Afterwards the architecture was allowed to be geared to modern, western concepts, factually the *International Style* (Hoskislawski 1991: 138–149).

The *Haus der Kultur und Bildung* (House of Culture and Education) in Neubrandenburg, erected from 1963 to 1965, was the first building in that shape. However, the design of Iris Dullin-Grund (1933) dominated the town's skyline by an emerged tower that just contained piled exercise rooms, so it kept unique in the GDR. Instead of it the *Kulturpalast Dresden* transferred the building type *Culture House* from the first to the second stage, even though it had been opened only four years later (Fülscher 2011: 129–151). Without the high dominant the Dresden example evolved into a prototype for following culture houses like the one in Schwedt (1978) that adopted both the idea of the central hall penetrating the flat roof and of the surrounding gallery.

The tower question was assigned to other functions in the environment of the central culture houses. Eventhough it was never realized there, the idea of a *Haus der Wissenschaft und Technik* (House of Science

and Technique) situated at the *Prager Straße* emerged in Dresden. But in Chemnitz a high-rise hotel was added to the centre of culture in the early 1970ies. However, the most prominent example was the *Palast der Republik* (Palace of Republic) in East Berlin designed by Heinz Graffunder (1926–1994) and erected between 1973 and 1976. It was seat of the Volkskammer (the parliament of the GDR) but mainly used as a culture house. It was finally demolished in 2008. To the west the flat bar on the significant plot of the former imperial Prussian castle was flanked by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the GDR (1964–1967, demolished 1996), a long cubic high-rise based on the design by the architects Josef Kaiser, Heinz Aust, Gerhard Lehmann and Lothar Kwasnitza. Moreover there was the intended connection between the *Palast der Republik* and the television tower (1965–1969) at the *Alexanderplatz* on the northern side. The dominant pin is seen on every official photo of the governmental building.

### Synthesis of architecture, urban planning and art

As a result of function and purpose, the *Kulturpalast Dresden* definitely symbolises state power and is consequently an example for political architecture. The political task of culture houses, in particular that of the *Kulturpalast*, demonstrates its indispensability for the government as an instrument for the socialist community by conveying the culture emphatically. By demanding an architectural expression for the new form of society, these buildings fostered and legitimated the existing political power relationships and they pictured the prevalent power sharing at the same time (Gotschall 1987: 56). Relating to Dresden, this means certainly, that the party tried to suggest power sharing by architecture, as they occupied the historically, politically, socially, and geographically most central sight of town with a *House of People*. Programmatically this contained a participation that did not exist in reality.

Even today, the architecture of the *Kulturpalast* transfers the socialistic values and norms. This political communication is effected by architectural symbols that establish, abide to and spread social identities. This is most evident in the implementation of the *Kulturpalast* as a central building and in any case refers to an increased architectural expression (Reinle 1976: 113). The socialist idea of the collective, in which every individual is considered an equal part of the whole, pervades the entire building. It appeared in the multifunctional hall, the equal organisation of rooms around it and the translucent façade that integrates outside activities into the inner space and uncovers the inner events to the outside. In addition, the build-

ding has an entrance that is even with the ground and without any steps. Though these architectural elements serve as distinct mediating means of expression and as such are pure forms, they cannot be explicitly defined as socialist forms (Åman 1996: 150). They rather accord to the means of expression that were used by the *Federal Republic of Germany* to articulate their notion of democracy (e.g. transparency equals proximity to citizen). The *Kulturpalast* cannot achieve the claim of an architectural expression that has been developed just from its form. The components that characterise the building as a distinctive socialist structural work are the absolute artistic ones like the mural as its most important example. These components illustrate the significance of the synthesis of architecture and art, as without them, a permanent representation of political intention at buildings of the *International Style* is not possible.

Since calling for the competition for the *Haus der sozialistischen Kultur* in 1959, the synthesis of art and architecture has been a matter of the façade's design. Instead of the demand for a monument of Ernst Thälmann, Leopold Wiel and his collective proposed a mosaic in the basement that would have dealt with the issue of labour movement. At the western and northern façade they suggested large-scale murals to picture the issue of culture, music and poetic arts. This had to be dispensed later for the demanded illustration of the labour movement<sup>11</sup>. Nevertheless *Der Weg der Roten Fahne* is not and has never been conceived as a monument for Thälmann.

The synthesis of art and architecture as well as the contextual bond between mural and building consists in their identical target audience of the working class. *Der Weg der Roten Fahne*, taken as 'triumphal procession' (Roettig 1995: 200) of the working class, mirrors the function of the *Kulturpalast* as a worker's palace, so the socialism as the real society should be legitimated and the own – in this case Ulbricht's – claim to power should be manifested. The mural adopted form and function from Dresden's most prominent mural *Fürstenzug* (Procession of Princess) to be a pendant to it and a demonstration of the socialist supremacy (Schirmer 1995: 196; Roettig 1995: 200). The *Fürstenzug* was painted at the northern wall of the stables courtyard of the castle in the second half of the 19th century and replaced by Meissen porcelain tiles before the First World War. By showing riding sovereigns along hundred metres it illustrates the millennial history of the Wettin dynasty. It survived the Second World War al-

most unharmed. Although with this transfer *Der Weg der Roten Fahne* ought to legitimate the new social order (Bandmann 1984: 34), the urban involvement is of vital importance. Given its task to lead people to join their social environment and its social intent as an organic part of architecture (Kiefer 1973: 24), the mural identifies the area in front of it as a socialist urban space. As part of the pedestrian *North-South-Magistral* it is intimately connected with the mural *Dresden grüßt seine Gäste* (Dresden is Greeting its Guests) (Fig. 5) that faces the central station and is installed at the southern façade of the restaurant *Bastei* at the end of the axis. It shows a great female figure with a bunch of roses in her raised hand surrounded by members of different professions, a child and emblems of Dresden. The figure as well as the emblems symbolise the city of Dresden while the different figures around it express the ideal of the socialistic society. Combined the mural marks the rebuilding of Dresden as a socialist city<sup>12</sup>.



Fig. 5. *Dresden grüßt seine Gäste* (1968/69). Restaurant *Bastei*, Prager Straße, 1981. SLUB Dresden / Deutsche Fotothek / Christian Borchert

Both murals constitute the most prominent items of the art programme that had been developed for the pedestrian axis (Fig. 6). They were accompanied by two letterings that had been installed on a high-rise block of flats along the *East-West-Magistral*. The letterings *Der Sozialismus siegt* (The Socialism is Triumphant) at *Pirnaischen Platz* (Fig. 7) and again *Dresden grüßt seine Gäste* at *Postplatz* (Fig. 8) reflected pointedly the content of the murals and afresh relegated to the *Altmarkt* and *Kulturpalast* as the centre of Dresden.

The intention to develop an autonomous architecture, that was directly readable as the socialist idea of society and that supported the socialistic build-up of cities, failed, when Khrushchev changed the direction of building tasks. Because the *International Style* was

<sup>11</sup> Conversation with Leopold Wiel on 7th of December 2005. Cp. Protocol in Fülischer 2006: A5–16.

<sup>12</sup> Design: Kurt Sillack and Rudolf Lipowski, 1969 (Guth 1995: 233).

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1 Kulturpalast Dresden                     | 7 Dresden begrüßt seine Gäste               |
| 2 Altmarkt                                 | 8 Pirnaischer Platz / der Sozialismus siegt |
| 3 Wilsdruffer Straße / East-West-Magistral | 9 Postplatz / Dresden begrüßt seine Gäste   |
| 4 Pedestrian North-South-Magistral         |   |
| 5 Der Weg der Roten Fahne                  |   |
| 6 Fürstenzug                               |   |

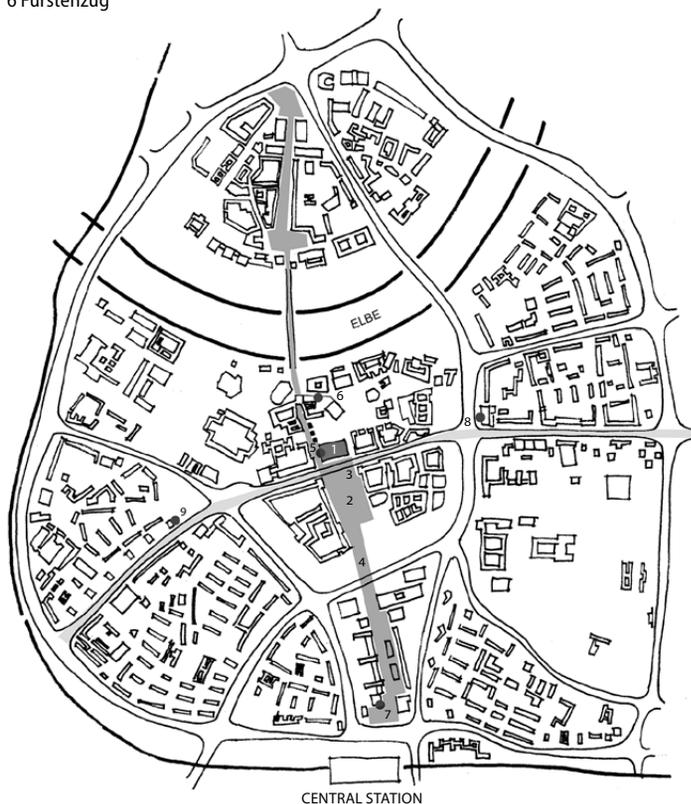


Fig. 6. Sketch Concept of Pedestrian Axis in the 1960ies.  
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adopted, the representation of state authority by architecture became inapplicable. The distinction between public demonstration and political reality is exemplified by the glass metaphors inherent in the construction of the *Kulturpalast*, although it is not unique. For a constant communication of socialist ideals murals had been imperative, appropriate to the high importance of arts for the cultural education of the working masses. Certainly, in the case of *Der Weg der Roten Fahne* Ulbricht used the opportunity to fix the party's predominant force in the epicentre of Dresden, imbedded in the monument of the labour movement.

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Fig. 7. *Der Sozialismus siegt*. Pirnaischer Platz, 1969.  
SLUB Dresden / Deutsche Fotothek /  
Asmus Steuerlein



Fig. 8. *Dresden begrüßt seine Gäste*. Postplatz, 2005.  
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