



CONSTRUCTING THE NATION:

THE ROLE OF THE BALLAD IN TWENTIETH CENTURY
GERMAN NATIONAL IDENTITY
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SCOTLAND.

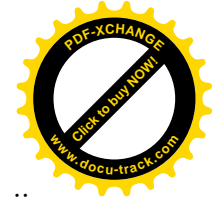
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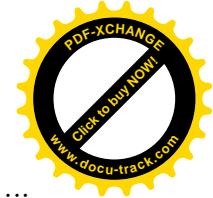
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Abstract

This thesis focuses on the importance of the ballad in constructing national identity in Germany during the 20th century from 1918-1978. It presents a comparative approach using Scotland as a comparator, based on three significant time periods throughout the century: the Weimar Republic, the Nazi era and the German folk revival. In each of these eras the issue of national awareness was most in evidence and national identity was being created or was a particular object of tension. The modern Scottish literary renaissance and the Scottish folk revival will be used for comparative purposes. The comparative approach will also aid a deeper understanding of the concept of national identity itself. The hypothesis is that the ballad has contributed to the development of national identity in specific and differing ways in the two countries. Selected artists; poets, singers and Liedermacher have been chosen as representatives for each particular stage. The ballad in the 20th century has previously received little critical attention, thus this period has been chosen as the time frame of the thesis in an attempt to redress this balance and create new knowledge. The 20th century is also a rewarding area of study because it saw specific developments in the notion of nationalism and evidenced both the devastating results of the abuse of national identity and the positive power of the concept for nation building. The foundation of this thesis is the recognition that national identity is not necessarily natural, inherent and straightforward, but is rather a deliberate construction, created by people or groups within the nation for distinct political, social and cultural ends.



Dedication

To Clare Kennedy and Bronwen Kearney
for believing I would make it.

In memory of our parents

*Maureen Ann Kearney
&
James Roy Kearney*



Acknowledgements and Declaration

This thesis would never have come to completion had it not been for the steady, determined and wise support of my supervisor, Professor Brian Murdoch, whose encouragement has seen me through and for whose friendship and understanding I am unreservedly grateful. Thanks are also due to Professor Rory Watson of the English Studies Department at Stirling, whose input during the early stages of this thesis was so helpful. Jane Barber-Fleming in the School of Languages, Cultures and Religions has provided over a decade of support and friendship, which has been a source of strength. This thesis would not have been possible without the generous scholarship provided by the University of Stirling.

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On a personal note, the support of many of my friends has been a source of constant strength in the years of battle with this thesis. In Stirling thanks are particularly due to Polly and Donald Rodger for their unstinting encouragement and hospitality, to Dr Fiona Darroch and Dr Clare Bird for leading the way, Lorna McAllister for calm common sense, Jo-Anne Bell and Hazel Bielinski for lightening the load, the boys in A101 for proving success comes in many forms and to many friends in Dunblane for their prayers and faith in me. In Germany many fellow-travellers come to mind and my thanks are due to all of them. Back in Belfast, thanks are especially due to Christine O'Toole for bringing light relief, lunches and small children into the PhD mix. I am also extremely grateful to Richard Kimber for his help, to John Sharp for his support and to David Lewis and Tom Magill for their understanding and encouragement in the final months of this thesis.

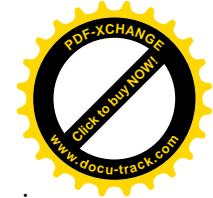
I owe the existence of this thesis in no small part to the encouragement of my family past and present. Without the doses of sanity that they all provide this thesis would have faltered at many times over the years. My thanks and love to them all.



I declare that this thesis is my own work and that all critical and other sources (literary and electronic) have been specifically and properly acknowledged, as and when they occur in the body of my text.

Signed:

Date:



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Introduction

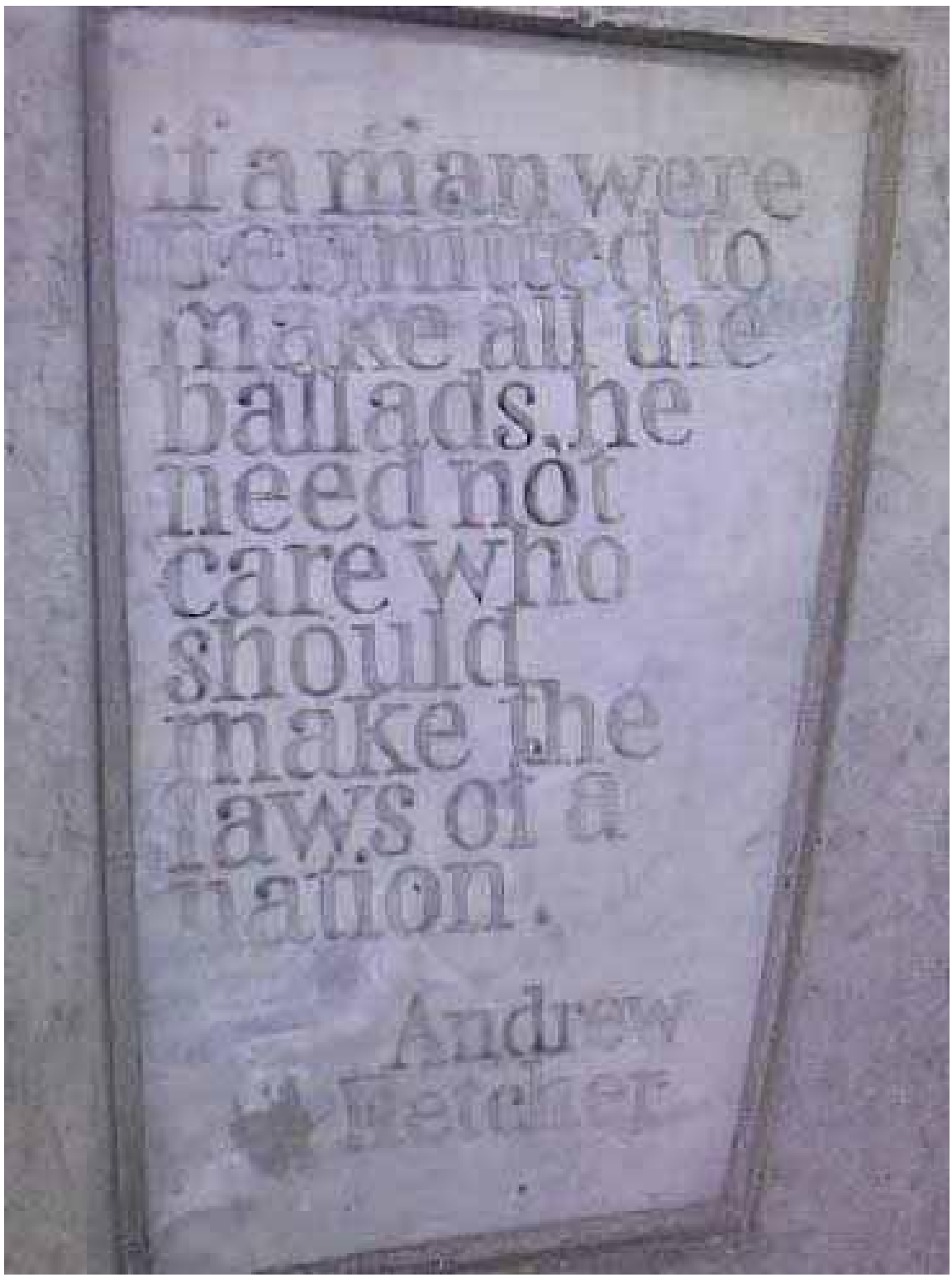
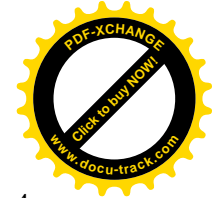


Plate 1: Quotation from Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun (1653-1716).



i.i National Identity

‘If a man were permitted to make all the ballads, he need not care who should make the laws of a nation’. This well-known statement by Scottish patriot Andrew Fletcher encapsulates the centrality of the ballad to the internal social, national and political workings of a nation. It is significant that during the building of Scottish Parliament, it was selected, along with many famous quotations from the likes of Burns and Walter Scott, to be engraved into the wall of the Parliament in Edinburgh as seen in the above photograph. This quotation highlights the potential power contained within the ballads which will become so apparent throughout this thesis.

National identity and the associated ideas of the nation, national consciousness and nationalism are concepts which are unstable and have changed and developed throughout history. This thesis deals purely with the 20th century and with the modern rather than the historical understanding of national identity. However, to understand the concept, it is useful to sketch quickly the changes in the use of the term. The root of the word nation is in the Latin *nasci* (*natus*), to be born. Herein lies the crux of the matter, in that nationality is understood as something which is inherent and received as a birthright. However, in these days of multiculturalism and a greater mobility of the population, the concept of national identity being something into which one is born (hence *natus*) is becoming more outdated and problematic.

Originally the term nation was used to denote to which tribe one belonged. Tacitus used the word *nationes* once it became necessary to distinguish between different tribes.



Therefore, from the very beginning of its usage, the term was used to differentiate one social grouping from another and was rooted in an oppositional stance. Although the English word nation was first recorded in the 13th century, in German it was first used in the larger political context in the 16th century in texts such as Martin Luther's 'An den christlichen Adel deutscher Nation' (1520). In a dictionary of foreign words published in 1571, *Nation* is defined straightforwardly as follows, 'Ein Volck das in einem Land erborn ist; ein gantz geschlecht oder menge eins volcks im lande'.¹ This association with birthright has endured and become inherent within the concept of national identity in both a literal and metaphorical sense. In the modern, or indeed, post-modern world, nationality continues to be seen as a given, as a universal socio-cultural concept.

Those concerned with nationalism include Nationalists, Perennialists, Post-modernists and Marxists, each with their own emphases and opinions about when, how and why nations developed. This thesis will focus on the particular expressions of national identity in specific historical periods as seen through the work of different poets and singers, rather than attempt to deal with the theoretical debates surrounding the concept. The foundation of this thesis is the recognition that national identity is not necessarily natural, inherent and straightforward, but is rather a deliberate construction, created by people or groups within the nation for distinct political, social and cultural ends.

This draws on the classic ground-breaking study of nationhood as an imagined community proposed by Benedict Anderson in 1983 in his book *Imagined Communities: Reflections on*

¹ Entry 'Nation' in Friedrich Kluge, *Etymologisches Woerterbuch 18th edn*, ed. by Walther Mitzka (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1960), p. 504.



*the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.*² This concept provides one of the most persuasive understandings of the modern nation and is essential for the purposes of this thesis because it acknowledges the role of the imagination which can be manipulated, for well-meaning purposes and otherwise. Other scholars, like Ernest Gellner see the concept of imagination and the creation of nations in a much more negative light. In *Thought and Change*, Gellner states:

Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist.³

Whereas Anderson's approach allows for the emergence of the nation as a positive development, aided by technological advances and by the notion of community, Gellner stresses that the very concept of nation is an intrinsically artificially created one.

It is generally accepted amongst historians that nationalism did not take strong root until the 18th century with the creation of the first 'original' nation in 1789 during the French Revolution.⁴ 'The French' established their nation in the name of *Égalité, Liberté, Fraternité*, and then proceeded, during the Napoleonic wars, to express their own nationhood to the detriment of those around them. Previously, the term nation had been used variously to refer to the upper classes, to those who enjoyed suffrage, and to those who did not pay taxes within a country. This stressed social divisions rather than notions of birth, as it allowed only certain social strata within a nation to be designated as the nation.

² Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. edn (London: Verso, 1991). First published 1983.

³ Ernest Gellner, *Thought and Change* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1964), p. 169.

⁴ In his landmark lecture at the Sorbonne in 1882, Ernest Renan says 'Le principe des nations est le notre'. (The principle of nationhood belongs to us.) The French text exists in its entirety as a link from the nationalism project website, as part of the internet resources of the municipal library at Lisieux. http://www.ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/bib_lisieux/nation01.htm The written text is found in Ernest Renan – 'Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?' in *Oeuvres Completes*, 1, Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1947-61, vol. 1, pp. 887-906, here p. 892.



Although the word nationalism did not come into general usage until the end of the 19th century,⁵ it became a topic of much debate towards the end of the 18th century, with the first partition of Poland in 1772 and the American Declaration of Independence in 1776. The concept of patriotism was more prevalent at this time and was used in an exclusivist way to justify expansionist politics and the ethics of empire.

As communication improved and print media became more widespread at the end of the 18th century and into the 19th it became possible to conceptualise the idea of the nation, to lay the 'bases for national consciousness'⁶ and broaden the scope of social groupings beyond the familial and regional to encompass the concept of an entire country. It is essential to note that at the end of the 18th century, language was not the unifying factor for emerging nations although it became more important as people realised the necessity to link the people linguistically, so language often had to be 'created' by making one dialect a standard language.

By the first half of the 19th century, the nation was a concept which could draw on its forefathers and could be seen as a role model for burgeoning national movements. The American and French concepts of the nation, as worked out in practice, provided inspiration for other nations, who began to understand nationalism in a genealogical way, and pictured it as awakening from sleep; as recognising in revolution and in the desire to create a new nation, that they were drawing on a pre-existing concept. This concept will

⁵ A comprehensive overview of the development of nationalism is available in Aira Kemiläinen's *Nationalism: Problems Concerning the Word, the Concept and Classification, Studia Historica Jyväskyläensia* III (Jyväskylä: Kustantajat Publishers, 1964) in particular p. 10, pp. 33, 48-49.

⁶ *Imagined Communities*, p. 44.



prove highly relevant to the thesis and will be dealt with in more depth in the individual chapters through specific examples from artists' work.

After, and in reaction to, the popular national movements in the 1820s in Europe, the dynastic rulers, realising the potential of the concept in unifying their people, 'became national', clothing themselves in a concept of nationhood which gave them a sense of authority which differed from the divine concept of kingship, but also made them responsible to the nation, to their people, because there now was a concept which possessed greater legitimacy than the monarchy. This led to official nationalism, which Anderson defines as the 'willed merger of nation and dynastic empire'⁷ as the kings and queens sought to maintain control over their subjects. This involved creating a sense of nationhood, the monarchs often having to nationalise their people and control the representations of the nation most potently through school education. Their aim was to create a sense of their nation, which was more overriding than regionalism and which could command obedience and loyalty.

At the end of the 19th century nationalism became the prevailing ideology in nearly all European countries, drawing legitimacy from Charles Maurras' theory of 'le nationalisme intégral'⁸ which made the *Vaterland* into an exclusive value and justified, indeed necessitated, the spreading of one's own nation over the globe in a quasi-religious expansionist way which gave a theoretical backbone to colonialism, imperialism and capitalism. These policies led ultimately to the world wars of the 20th century. After

⁷ *Imagined Communities*, p. 86.

⁸ Integralism advocates society as a organic unity and defends the class system. Maurras' *Action Française* movement has come to be associated with fascism and with Blood and Soil conservatism of a Nazi order. See Bruno Goyet, *Charles Maurras*, (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2000), p. 11.



World War I the age of high dynasticism came to an end and the Congress of Berlin became a League of Nations; the nation-state became the norm and nationality took precedence over imperialist thinking. After World War II the nation-state took over completely and empires died out as the same nations that had been colonised exercised their new-found nationhood to rebel against the imperial powers that had forced a colonial nationalism upon them. There was a paradigm shift from believing that the nation was based on common characteristics to focusing on national ideology and a people as a means to create a human network of communications.⁹ The end of the 20th century also brought the end of socialist rule in the Eastern bloc and saw many emergent nations taking up or inventing the mantle of their own nationhood in order to define themselves as distinct from their neighbours. At the beginning of the 21st century nationalist leaders can draw on previous models of nationalism, whilst being aware of the dangers inherent in the concept, as shown all too clearly in 20th century history.

In the 20th century, the idea of nationhood became a given, and became almost impossible to consider a form of political consciousness which did not incorporate this concept. Despite that, there is still an extreme lack of clarity about the terms employed so freely. Therefore it is necessary to delineate, as far as is possible, the terms of reference that will be used throughout this thesis. In his landmark 1882 lecture, 'Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?' Ernest Renan begins:

⁹ Karl Wolfgang Deutsch describes a 'Volk' as 'ein ausgedehntes Allzweck-Kommunikationsnetz von Menschen' in *Nationenbildung – Nationalstaat – Integration* (Düsseldorf: Bertelsmann, 1972), p. 204.



Je me propose d'analyser avec vous une idée, claire en apparence, mais qui prête aux plus dangereux malentendus.¹⁰

The concept of nationalism does seem straightforward until examined in detail, and then it reveals itself as the opposite and as both strangely resistant to theory and open to abuse. Much of this strangeness is due to its flexibility as a concept which can be used in any political situation and is context-specific.

One of the most important issues about nationalism is the sheer power of the concept versus its relative philosophical poverty.¹¹ Nationalism has not spawned the same depth of intellectual attention as the contemporaneous theories of humanism and liberalism have. However, nationalism has become a concept which is taken very seriously and is now the subject of much academic research. One reason for this is that nations are proving extremely resilient. To use Europe as an example, individual nations have not been, as some feared, subsumed into a European superstate at the end of the 20th century but rather individual nations have continued to assert their national identity within a European framework.

Peter Alter, whose book *Nationalismus* was published in Germany in 1985 offers one of the best definitions of modern nationalism. He says nationalism is:

¹⁰ Ernest Renan, 'Qu'est ce qu'une nation?' http://www.ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/bib_lisieux/nation01.htm date of access 221106. ('I propose that we examine together an idea, which appears straightforward, but which can be dangerously misunderstood.') See also Ernest Renan, 'Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?' in *Oeuvres Complètes*, 1, Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1947-61, vol. 1, pp. 887-906. Here p. 887.

¹¹ Anderson comments on this problem claiming that nationalism has never produced its own great thinkers and is therefore in danger of being treated with condescension. *Imagined Communities*, p. 5.



...eine Ideologie und zugleich...eine politische Bewegung..., die sich auf die Nation und den souveränen Nationalstaat als zentrale innerweltliche Werte beziehen und die in der Lage sind, ein Volk oder eine große Bevölkerungsgruppe politisch zu mobilisieren. Nationalismus verkörpert also in hohem Maße ein dynamisches Prinzip, das Hoffnungen, Emotionen und Handlungen auszulösen vermag. Er ist ein Instrument zur politischen Solidarisierung und Aktivierung von Menschen, um ein gemeinsames Ziel zu erreichen.¹²

He warns of the dangers of nationalism and highlights the fact that it is both an ideology and a political movement. Although Alter seems to provide a positive reading of nationalism, claiming that it is a dynamic principle which is capable of engendering hopes, emotions and actions and motivating people towards a common goal, it is telling that he also stresses in his book the abuses that nationalism has brought about. It is important that nationalism is identified as a political movement, which operates in a very specific way within each country, and also as an ideology which underpins societies. This encompassing definition says much more than the vagaries of a dictionary definition which blurs nationalism with patriotism and highlights the negative nature of the term. For example, the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines nationalism as ‘a patriotic feeling, principles etc, an extreme form of this, chauvinism, a policy of national independence.’ The *Collins Dictionary* defines nationalism in more depth as:

a sentiment based on common cultural characteristics that binds a population and often produces a policy of national independence or separatism...loyalty or devotion to one's country... patriotism... exaggerated or fanatical devotion to a national community

Although this definition also highlights the dangers of exaggerated nationalism, it does attempt to consider both the causes and effects of nationalism. Grimms *Deutsches Wörterbuch* does not include the word nationalism, but defines the nation as ‘das (eingeborne) volk eines landes, einer groszen staatsgesamtheit’. *Nationalismus*, on the

¹² Peter Alter, *Nationalismus* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1985), p.4



other hand, is defined in the *Neues Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache* as '(ueber)betontes Volks, Staatsbewusstsein', thus encompassing both the concepts of ethnic and of state-controlled political nationality.¹³

Nationalism is often seen as being more in the interests of the people, or as being associated very closely with the people who constitute a nation, whereas patriotism, which has fluid boundaries with nationalism, tends to be more influenced by the state apparatus, with emphasis put on symbols and institutions. Both concepts draw on emotions, common traditions, values, history and culture. The danger is that these concepts can be tapped into and then manipulated or controlled. It is worth noting that the concept of the fatherland¹⁴ is central to both ideologies. This word is etymologically linked to patriotism which stems from the Greek *patris* and the Latin *patria* meaning of the father. The implications of the gender bias in this regard with concepts such as the fatherland, motherland, mother tongue etc. are of interest but are not integral to this thesis.

Tom Nairn regards nationalism very negatively as 'pathological' and as akin to a 'neurosis' in humans,¹⁵ while writers such as J. G. Herder (1744-1803) and Ernest Renan (1823-1892) belong to a Romantic school of thought and see in the concept of nationalism a 'Geist' or 'un principe spirituel'.¹⁶ Marxist writers have claimed nationalism holds no value to them for 'Die Arbeiter haben kein Vaterland. Mann kann ihnen nicht nehmen, was sie nicht

¹³ Lutz Mackensen, *Neues Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache* (Berlin: DBG, 1963).

¹⁴ The term *Vaterland* will be used despite its historical baggage for all instances involving Germany; otherwise, the English word fatherland will be used.

¹⁵ Tom Nairn, *The Break-Up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-Nationalism*, 2nd edn (London: NLB, 1977), p. 359.

¹⁶ (a soul, a spiritual principle) Ernest Renan, *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?* Chapter 2, http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/bib_lisieux/nation03.htm, date of access 161106.



haben'.¹⁷ Communism's internationalist spirit has been in part superseded by the revolutions of the 1990s and the resurgence of nationalisms in the former Eastern bloc, as the countries rebuild their nations and head towards integration in the European Union. It is, however, intrinsic in the theory of Communism that national identities should take second place to the class loyalties of the party and international intentions of spreading the Communist system. Thus the role of nationalism in the German Democratic Republic was of a completely different order to that in the Federal Republic.

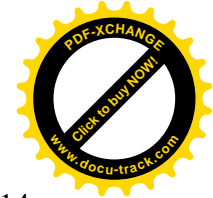
One of the most interesting and paradoxical concepts involved in nationalism is highlighted in Renan's lecture when he talks of the importance for the nation of forgetting and remembering:

L'oubli, et je dirai même l'erreur historique, sont un facteur essentiel de la création d'une nation, et c'est ainsi que le progrès des études historiques est souvent pour la nationalité un danger. Or l'essence d'une nation est que tous les individus aient beaucoup de choses en commun, et aussi que tous aient oublié bien des choses.¹⁸

Forgetting is simultaneously a danger, for, if the nation forgets where it comes from, it begins to lack the historical underpinnings which unite it. However, to create a coherent vision of a nation, there are often episodes from the nation's past which have to be either communally forgotten or ignored with common consent from the people. Renan highlights the problematic nature of this concept, for in his call for the French people to forget certain battles in their past, he simultaneously reminds them of them. This type of thinking will be

¹⁷ Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei* (Berlin: Dietz, 1959), p. 29.

¹⁸ Ernest Renan, *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?* Chapter 1, http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/bib_lisieux/nation02.htm, date of access 161106. (Forgetting, and, I would even say, historical error are an essential factor in the creation of a nation, and thus the advances of historical study are often threatening to a nationality...Now the essence of a nation is that individuals have many things in common, but also have forgotten many other things.). English translation from Ernest Renan, 'What is a Nation?', in *Nationalism in Europe, 1815 to the Present: A Reader*, ed. by Stuart Woolf (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 50-51.



increasingly relevant when dealing with Germany and the traumatic experience of the Nazi period.

A final consideration is found in the work of Friedrich Meinecke. Meinecke invented the concepts of *Kulturnation* and *Staatsnation* and claimed, in his 1907 book *Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat*, that Germany is a *Kulturnation* as opposed to Britain which he sees as being a more predominantly a *Staatsnation*. Meinecke describes the elements essential to a *Kulturnation* as follows:

Gemeinsprache, gemeinsame Literatur und gemeinsame Religion sind die wichtigsten und wirksamsten Kulturgüter, die eine Kulturnation schaffen und zusammenhalten.¹⁹

The concept of a *Kulturnation* based on language, literature and religion existing in the vacuum of a *Staatsnation* based on political state apparatus,²⁰ provides a helpful way of understanding Germany in the period before 1871 and can also be used fruitfully in the post-World War II period to consider how Germany is rebuilding its sense of nationhood.²¹

It is evident that the notions of nation, nationality, national awareness and national identity are all interlinked. Much of the imagery used when dealing with these concepts is that of building, with much debate upon which elements form the foundation and which are built upon it. In this thesis nationality will be regarded as the officially prescribed or individually chosen legal state of belonging to a particular nation. The twin issues of

¹⁹ Friedrich Meinecke, *Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat : Studien zur Genesis des deutschen Nationalstaates* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1928), p. 3.

²⁰ The concept of the state apparatus, in particular that of the ideological state apparatus is drawn from Louis Althusser's thinking. See in particular his essay 'Ideology and Ideological Apparatuses: Notes towards an investigation', in *Essays on Ideology* (London: Verso, 1984).

²¹ Indeed Stephen Brockmann argues that literature and culture are the most important elements in holding together a German national identity, drawing on Meinecke's thinking and his concept of the *Kulturnation*. *Literature and German Reunification*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1999).

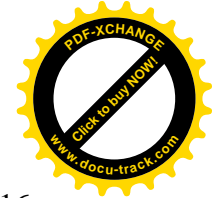


national awareness and national identity are obviously interlinked. It is necessary to have an awareness of your nation before you are able to identify with it. Hence national awareness is a preparatory step towards creating or recognising national identity. Therefore, this thesis will deal with times of increase in national awareness which may or may not lead to periods of strengthened or more pronounced national identity. The definition of a nation which underpins this thesis is the following:

A nation is an ambiguous linking of individuals into an imagined political community based on any combination of the following factors: common history, common geographical habitat, common perceived culture, language or a common understanding of themselves as being a nation and preferably, general outside acceptance of this nationhood.

This statement uses the word ambiguous to highlight the differing emotional attachments that people within any nation so defined possess. This relationship can be positive or negative, depending on personal factors or political factors within the nation at a specific time. It should also be stressed that the 'political' community should be understood as political with a small 'p', based on the assumption that everything is political, instead of thinking that it has to refer to the political state apparatus. Individuals are structured into social networks through family, friends, social groups, towns, cities, regions and lastly nations. Few of these categories are as solid as they once were, as the extended family and ties of kinship break down, the search for jobs and personal betterment takes people away from their home towns and makes them frequently more mobile, so social networks are constantly being restructured. Regionalism is something which is still powerful and, since Scottish and Welsh devolution,²² became more apparent in England; as exemplified in its proposed regional assemblies to balance out the English democratic deficit. It is perhaps

²² Within this thesis any mention of devolution that is non-specific will refer to Scottish devolution.



indicative of the weaker nature of regionalism in England that their proposed assemblies were roundly voted against.

There are significant deliberate omissions in the factors highlighted above for creating a nation. Race is not explicitly included because the concepts of national identity dealt with in this thesis go beyond racial nationalism to investigate concepts of nationhood held by those within a nation who perceive themselves as belonging to it, although they may not be of the majority or most powerful ethnic race. This is not, of course, to deny the role that the concept of race has played in the creation of nations, nor the sometimes dubious importance that has been placed upon it during the 20th century. Furthermore it is not possible to claim that a nation exists because of a common cultural legacy, or conversely to claim that the existence of a nation will spawn a common cultural identity. It is possible to speak of cultural characteristics which are more prominent in one nation than another, but to go any further than this, and claim that a nation consists of people with the same culture, is to oversimplify the matter and raise worrying questions for the role of minorities or counter-cultures within the nation.²³

The issue of having a common history is one of the most central concepts to this thesis, but also one of the most problematic. This lies in the fact that history is often little more than a perceived history; an understanding of the past of a country which has been allowed by the history-makers, i.e. by those in power. Indeed, the very nature of history itself may refute

²³ All of the issues raised here are and continue to be topics of debate and tension into the 21st century. It is a commonly held view for example, that a common culture is present within a nation, i.e. an imagined community, even if this is constructed of disparate elements. Furthermore there are clearly many proponents of the right-wing opinion that the nation should belong to its people; that people often being defined on racial, ethnic or historical lines, i.e. that Britain should belong to the (WASP) British.



the possibility of having ‘a’ history. Because history exists outside of time, it has to be constructed, it becomes a fiction which often encompasses great leaps of time and draws on ‘useful’ material from many different eras. Weidinger speaks of how elements of a common history are selected, used and become the ‘Kern einer (fiktiven) nationalen Geschichte’.²⁵ Also the existence within a nation of divided communities, which have different interpretations of the same historical events, causes this notion to be highly problematic. The two communities of Northern Ireland are one very obvious example in this regard. One community sees the British as occupying forces, the other as protectors.

In order to create a sense of nationhood it is usual to have a common geographical habitat. Exceptions to this only seem to occur where another stronger characteristic, such as race or religion, replaces this geographical necessity, for example, in the state of Israel.²⁶ Language is not an essential, but it is a useful characteristic because it makes communication between the members of the nation much easier. Obviously Britain is a nation with a standard language but several minor languages,²⁷ German is spoken outside of the nation of Germany and English is a world language, spoken in many of the former colonies, so it is impossible to be prescriptive with this issue.

²⁵ Dorothea Weidinger (ed.) *Nation – Nationalismus – Nationale Identität* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2002), p. 24. English loses the pun on ‘Geschichte’ which means story and history – so the history of a nation is simultaneously its story.

²⁶ Therefore the Jews and the Jewish diaspora can be considered a nation, despite not being confined to one geographical area. This stands in stark opposition to the teaching of Stalin who claims the Jews are not a nation, but have a ‘national character’ at the most. See I.V. Stalin, *Marxismus und Nationale Frage*, 3rd edn (Moscow: Verlag für fremdsprachige Literatur, 1945).

²⁷ Scotland has three languages; English, Scots and Gaelic, while in Northern Ireland official government papers have to be published in English, Gaelic, Ulster-Scots and Chinese. Wales still has a minority who speak Welsh, while ethnic minorities throughout Britain speak a wide range of languages.



The issue of a common understanding of being a nation is more helpful. While trying to avoid ‘I think therefore I am’ logic in this matter, there is much justification for the following definition by Hugh Seton-Watson. He claims ‘a nation exists when a significant number of people in a community consider themselves to form a nation, or behave as if they have formed one.’²⁸ The former SNP leader Alec Salmond echoed this when he commented on Scotland and nationhood saying: ‘Nations are nations if they feel themselves to be a nation. And Scotland overwhelmingly feels itself to be a nation.’²⁹ Although this is a rather circular explanation, it is also one which is commonly held and has a certain degree of legitimacy.

The last part of the definition, that preferably there should be ‘general outside acceptance’ of a nation’s existence is relevant because it charts part of the process of becoming a nation. The nation can exist within the minds of the people, or in the hands of the revolutionaries, before it is officially ratified by the rest of the world. This perhaps creates levels of nationhood, where the Catalan people would not be as much a ‘nation’ as the Scots, but the examples serve to show that nationhood, or creating a nation, is a journey, which begins with national awareness and identity and ends in legally codified nationhood.³⁰

²⁸ Hugh Seton-Watson, *Nations and States: An Enquiry into the Origins of Nations and the Politics of Nationalism* (London: Methuen, 1977), p. 5. This explanation for nation is that which holds Native American tribes together; the Sioux nation for example.

²⁹ ‘Scotland’s modern-day ‘Braveheart’ fights with statistics’ 14th March 1999. <http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/europe/9903/14/britain.scotland/> date of access 201206.

³⁰ It should be noted that this journey may halt at any point along the way and does not presume a teleological reading of nationalism. It is not to be understood from this reasoning that each emergent ‘nation’ that wants world recognition will necessarily gain it.



i.ii Germany and Scotland

The choice of Germany and Scotland for the basis of comparison in this thesis is due to two factors. Firstly, in the 18th century the two countries were closely linked through the ballad and concepts of national identity. The German literati were inspired to mine the resources of their oral tradition to create their own national identity, having seen the confidence with which Scotland was presenting the riches of its oral tradition on an international stage. In his collection of Goethe's works, Erich Trunz highlights Goethe's confidence in uncovering this lost *Kulturgut*³¹ when he states: 'Was Schottland besaß, das hatte Deutschland ebenfalls. Man mußte es nur erst suchen'.³² Secondly, viewing the two countries from the start of the 21st century, it is very challenging to compare two countries that have such different relations to their national identity. The influence of nationality has been devastatingly evident in 20th century German history, with national identity being used to create a fascist state. Germany is still attempting to recover from this to regain a positive sense of national identity. In Scotland, however, national pride has culminated in a surge of national identity which led to democratic devolution in 1997.

In the 18th century developments within Britain in the shape of the publication of Percy's *Reliques*³³ and MacPherson's *Ossian*³⁴ poems created a hunger within Germany to find

³¹ *Kulturgut* does not translate well into English. Literally it means cultural possessions, traditions and customs etc., usually those which are handed down, so it is a kind of cultural legacy.

³² *Goethes Werke*, ed. by Erich Trunz, Hamburg Edition, vol. 1, (Hamburg: Christian Wegner Verlag, 1958), p. 448.

³³ For a more detailed examination of the influence of Percy's *Reliques* and MacPherson's Ossianic poems, see the author's article 'Scotland and the German "Percy-Complex": Ballad Transitions in the 18th Century', *Irish-German Studies: Yearbook of the Centre of Irish-German Studies 2001/2002*, ed. by Joachim Fischer, Pól Ó Dochartaigh, Helen Kelly Holmes (Trier: WVT Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2004), pp. 103-110.

³⁴ MacPherson's Ossianic poems, *Fragments of Ancient Poetry* was published in 1760 and *Fingal: An Ancient Epic Poem* in 1762. These poems provided a view of a mythical and bardic time, one deeply linked to the ideas of the 'Folk' and the primitive view of nationhood. These ideas had their attractions for both the Scots and the Germans in ways that were deeply rooted in the history of the time.



their own tradition that could represent the concept of Germany that they felt was lacking. In the face of turbulent political times, leading up to the French Revolution, the Napoleonic wars and the consequent occupation of parts of Germany, German intellectuals experienced a threat to their cultural identity and were looking for some way of presenting and creating a coherent sense of a national identity. To this end they drew upon what they saw as the ancient sense of nationality that they experienced in their experience of Scotland. As Germany was politically weak and consisted of a collection of unequally sized states and principalities, German identity was therefore profoundly cultural instead of political. It is important to remember that the German state did not exist until 1871, so the efforts to unite diverse German-speaking peoples under a common banner of German-ness required cultural fodder. Scotland in contrast was an independent, although internally disputed, kingdom from the 13th century onwards and lost its independent statehood in 1707 rendering it a stateless nation.

As part of the effort to strengthen the German cultural identity, the publication in 1765 of Percy's *Reliques*³⁵ proved essential. They spawned a process of translation and retranslation; Herder translated 'Edward', Goethe wrote 'Der Erlkönig', and Bürger wrote 'Lenore' which seemingly inspired Sir Walter Scott to become a poet. Scott then translated Goethe and Bürger's ballads into English. Writing on this phenomenon, Matthew Hodgart says, 'The stimulus of Percy's *Reliques* came back from Germany to this country like a boomerang'.³⁶ This osmosis from one culture to the other became a two-way process.

Interestingly S.S. Prawer claims:

³⁵ The full title is *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry, consisting of Old Heroic Ballads, Songs and Other Pieces of our Earlier poets (chiefly of the Lyric kind) together with some few of the later date.*

³⁶ Matthew Hodgart, *The Ballads* (London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1950), p. 149.



German literature...has proved throughout its history unusually hospitable to the literature of other countries, assimilating it through translations and adaptations, and allowing it to stimulate native productions which show its influence and yet are uniquely German.³⁷

This inherent Germanic-ness is something for which both Goethe and Herder were striving. They were also inspired by the view of the noble savage offered in MacPherson's writings and by the possibility of there being a true primitive *Volk*.³⁸ In Herder's *Stimmen der Völker in Liedern* Heinz Rölleke described the poems' 'ungeheuerliche Wirkungsgeschichte in Deutschland' and summed up the experience of the Ossianic story as a 'Produkt dieser Zeit, Fiktion einer imaginären Volkstümlichkeit und eines schimärischen Mittelalters'.³⁹ Although it was accepted that this ancient age was a chimera, it served the purposes and underpinned the ideas in which these writers were interested.

The German romantic writers were not narrowly national by any means and saw themselves more as citizens of the world, rather than just of Germany. Both Herder and Goethe realised the opportunities that the ballad and its comparative nature offered. Herder set in motion 'a new conception of literature and literary history' through looking at folk-song and poetry and by so doing, 'opened up one of the most fertile and extensive areas of comparative literary history.'⁴⁰ He began to study the differences between German and

³⁷ S. S. Prawer, *Comparative Literary Studies: An Introduction* (London: Duckworth, 1973), p. ix.

³⁸ This was also to the fore in the Brothers Grimm's ideology. Their reputed epithet 'Das Volk dichtet' encapsulates their theories of the communal oral authorship of the ancient folktales and ballads. They developed an almost cultic view of *das Volk* (later to be exploited by Nazi ideology) in which the *Volk* was held to be primordial and sacred. As G. L. Kittredge points out in his introduction to *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, this phrase should be regarded as a 'summing up of Grimm's theory rather than as a direct quotation'. See George Lyman Kittredge & Helen Sargeant Child (eds) *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1932), p. xviii.

³⁹ Johann Gottfried Herder, *Stimmen der Völker in Liedern – Volkslieder*. [1778-79] ed. by Heinz Rölleke (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1975), p. 464.

⁴⁰ Susan Bassnett, *Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), p. 25.



Middle English literature and wanted, by using this comparative method, to promote a 'specifically national, German way of writing.'⁴¹ The term *Weltliteratur* was coined by Goethe in 1827, after he had been in the Alsace collecting ballads for Herder. It meant:

an awareness of national traditions other than your own, openness to works written in other countries and other languages, traffic and exchange between the various literatures which would parallel and supplement commercial traffic and exchanges.⁴²

The movement of European Romanticism, to which Goethe and Herder were both central stressed *Weltliteratur* rather than *Nationalliteratur*, but the term *Weltliteratur* had its roots in the discovery or the attempt to become aware of national identities, to discover your own national identity and use it as a foundation to construct an internationalist, humanist vision.

The ballad was central to this creative reclaiming of a national identity. It is seen as being reclaimed, because in the projection of the bardic writer, or the ballad singer back into the unchartable past, the Scottish and German intellectuals were able to claim that nationhood was something pre-existing, which could then be re-claimed. Teresa Caterella, in her 1994 study of the orally transmitted ballad, claims:

Herder combined an emotional anti-Enlightenment ideology with a hostility to everything tainted by French classicism and called for a return to Germanic national self-consciousness through mythology and balladry.⁴³

The word 'tainted' and the expressed need for a conscious return to a past period reflect something of the inferiority that was prevalent in the Germanic attitude towards the French at this time. That Herder chose to draw upon myth and ancient ballads highlights the fact that there was a feeling of something that had been lost in the German experience which

⁴¹ *Comparative Literary Studies*, p. 58.

⁴² *Ibid*, p. 4 cf. Fritz Strich, *Goethe und die Weltliteratur* (Berne: Francke, 1946), pp. 13-27.

⁴³ Teresa Caterella, 'The Study of the Orally Transmitted Ballad: Past Paradigms and a New Poetics', *Oral Tradition*, 9/2, 1994, pp. 468-78, here p. 469.



needed to be actively rediscovered. This rediscovery was also open to interpretation. In her book *Bardic Nationalism: the Romantic Novel and the British Empire*, Katie Trumpener deals with this issue in relation to the bard, stressing how the past is invented, imagined or fabricated. In much the same way as the traditional ballad is seen as a repository of cultural history and memory, the role of the bard as a preserver of oral history reveals how the ‘truthfulness’ of history can be manipulated. As Trumpener says:

This left an open field for later generations of “bards, senachies, or antiquaries, poets and genealogists” (all “different names for the same thing”) to fabricate whatever version of the past seemed nationally expedient⁴⁴

The narratives of the past are essential for the understanding of the narratives of the present, for the past is drawn on and played with, either to react against it; in satire, parody, open rejection or to continue the tradition and shape it to the needs of the modern world. Germany and Scotland are interesting in this regard because the ballad tradition in Germany has not continued in the same way as it has in Scotland. Due to the Nazi’s appropriation of the ballad tradition, the ballad fell into disrepute and no longer provided a positive link to the national folk tradition. Whether this continued to be the case will be investigated in this thesis. Germany has additional difficulties in that it is a country whose borders have been constantly shifting and one that has only been (re-)united towards the end of the 20th century. So the comparison of a country where it is difficult to be proud of your nationality, with one where it is difficult not to be proud of it, countries which were closely linked in previous times and where the culture of one (Scotland) is still very popular in the other, provides a firm basis for a comparative study.

⁴⁴ Katie Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism: the Romantic Novel and the British Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 4.



i.iii Comparative Literature

Comparative study happens continually, even if it is not recognised as such. The intertextual linkages of modern and postmodern poetry cross lines of genre, language and temporality, often drawing on many different sources and incorporating them into one work. This comparative approach is also essential for the study of nations. A concept of nationhood is often only present in comparison, in that a country often defines itself by what it is not, rather than by what it is, defining itself against the Other.⁴⁵ Thus many of the Scottish national songs are in fact anti-English songs, describing battles against the English, or losses against the English, or praising the beauty of Scotland in comparison to the English, rather than expressly praising Scotland in its own right. Therefore it seems sensible to present this thesis on ballads and nationhood as a comparative study, in order to view how nationality is created in one nation, in comparison to another.

The study of ballads has, of necessity, always been comparative. The folk-song and the ballad as a sub-genre do not exist in a vacuum, bounded by geographical barriers. From the 18th century forward, the collectors and critics of the ballad acknowledged that, in order to know and understand the ballads, they had to take the journeying of the ballad across different countries into consideration and therefore, also the variants each ballad had left behind. Two of the best-known ballad collectors, Svend Grundtvig and Francis James Child were:

⁴⁵ This refers to the common understanding of the 'Other', familiar from post-colonial theory, drawing initially on the thinking of Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 1978).



pioneers in the comparative study of ballads...they saw the art of folk-song as a possession common to many races...[and realized that] In no country is the ballad an isolated phenomenon.⁴⁶

These ideas had already been stressed by Matthew Arnold, who was one of the first proponents of comparative literatures. As he put it in his inaugural lecture as Professor of Poetry at Oxford in 1857:

And everywhere there is connexion, everywhere there is illustration: no single event, no single literature is adequately comprehended except in its relation to other events, to other literatures.⁴⁷

The interconnectedness which is integral to the ballad and to literature in general, will be the basis of this thesis. It will proceed along the lines of Praver's concept of 'placing', firstly looking at the literary or oral phenomenon in its own terms and within its own national tradition and then using that knowledge as a basis for comparison. He describes this as follows:

By 'placing' then, I mean the mutual illumination of several texts, or series of texts, considered side by side; the greater understanding we derive from juxtaposing a number of (frequently very different) works, authors and literary traditions.⁴⁸

In this thesis Germany and Scotland will be juxtaposed during specific time periods in the 20th century in order to illuminate the role of the ballad in the construction of national identity. At the start of the 21st Century the world has become a much-hyped global village, where the links between nations and between languages are instant and continuous. The cultural diversity within each nation state questions the very nature of national identity

⁴⁶ Gordon H. Gerould, *The Ballad of Tradition* (New York: OUP, 1957), p. 16.

⁴⁷ Matthew Arnold, 'On the Modern Element in Literature', in *On the Classical Tradition*, ed. by R. H. Super (Michigan: Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press, 1960), pp. 18-37. Here pp. 20-21.

⁴⁸ *Comparative Literary Studies*, p. 144.



itself, therefore the study of literatures alongside each other as a means to illumination can only be an important and timely one.

i.iv Time Frame

The chosen time period is the 20th century because it is a time when national identities were shifting and constantly under scrutiny or attack due to the effects of the two world wars, the division and reunification of Germany and the devolution movement in Scotland. Also, as David Fowler has pointed out in his book *A Literary History of the Popular Ballad*,⁴⁹ there is a great need for research into the ballad in the modern period. He stresses that part of the main interest in this period is that the ballad has been reinvigorated as an instrument of social protest and has been greatly aided by the electronic revolution but has still not been the subject of academic work. He concludes:

I continue to hope that a scholar of sufficiently catholic taste will be found who can chronicle the evolution of balladry from Sir Walter Scott to Bob Dylan.⁵⁰

Much of the work that currently takes place in the field has been carried out since 1966 under the auspices of the *Kommission für Volksdichtung*.⁵¹ The KfV was established with a view to classifying ballads on an international basis, and has expanded to become a forum for the scholarly study of all aspects of traditional narrative song, with a conference held annually and proceedings published. One of the few sources of up-to-date ballad material available is their series of conference publications and books by members of the

⁴⁹ David Fowler, *A Literary History of the Popular Ballad* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1968).

⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 332.

⁵¹ Known variously as the International Ballad Commission and *Commission Internationale pour l'Étude de la Chanson Populaire*, although the German name is accepted as the official title.



commission.⁵² However, the KfV tends to focus rather narrowly on traditional ballads and collecting extant versions, rather than on the fragmentary journey that the ballad has taken in the 20th century.⁵³

i.v Ballad Theory

A nation exists in the stories it tells itself about itself and in the stories that it chooses to believe about itself. Thus the ballad is intrinsic to the study of nationality because its oral form has enabled it to preserve some of the earliest stories about people within a nation, previous to the age of literacy, the print age, the literary age, the electronic and the digital age. The stories told in ballads are powerful, universal and human stories, ones which touch on many facets of human life. From love and betrayal, to familial problems, matricide, fratricide and the willingness to die for your country, ballads encompass both the commonplace and the extreme. They connect on a deep level with the emotions of the people who sang them and who carry the tradition onwards.

The traditional ballad was originally a genuinely popular form of expression; one which had a specific social function for the people who first sang them; whether that was to entertain, to provide an outlet for feeling, a forum for complaint or a space for gossip. People sang them as part of their daily lives, not necessarily to express a certain political bent or convey a particular meaning, but simply because they enjoyed them. The ballads,

⁵² Since 2004 these proceedings have been more formally collected and published in book form in a series entitled BASIS (Ballads and Songs International Studies) by the Wissenschaftlicher Verlag in Trier.

⁵³ An exception to this is the work of Luisa Del Guidice, former President of the KfV and Gerald Porter who have focused on nationalism in their book *Imagined States: Nationalism, Utopia, and Longing in Oral Cultures* (Utah: Utah University Press, 2001).



especially the broadsides, provided a form of tabloid newspaper for storytelling and spreading news across the country, situating the ballads in a socio-political and historical context. Part of the flexibility of the ballads was that they adapted as they moved from place to place, adopting new characters, geographical locations and themes relevant to their environs.

In contrast, the revival of 18th century scholarly interest in the ballad was a way of claiming ancient roots for the nation the antiquarians wished to promote or create. Thus there was a Romantic literary gloss applied to the ballads as they enjoyed a period of being fashionable. The ballads therefore coexist in their original context, which is often lost to the ballad historian and in their literary and literate context. Today's understanding of the word 'ballad' is extremely limited, yet, paradoxically, at the same time extremely broad. Usually a song described non-historically as a ballad is expected to be slow and romantic.⁵⁴ It will be about love, generally with first person narration and an 'I' and 'you' love affair. Even well-known poets are unclear as to what constitutes a ballad.⁵⁵ In contrast, the type of ballad which will be used as a template in this thesis is what most people, at least in Germany and Scotland, would understand as the traditional ballad, also known as the popular ballad. Very simply, this is a non-authored narrative song, or one whose author has been lost to history, one passed down through the oral tradition and seen as belonging to the common cultural legacy of a country.

⁵⁴ A music book compiled by Nick Crispin called *After Midnight: Ballads* describes the 'classic ballads' included in its pages as 'smooth, romantic and sensual...some of the finest love songs of the last five decades.' (London: Wise Publications, 1999), back cover.

⁵⁵ This was proved in an interview between the author and Liz Lochhead about her unpublished poem 'The Baker' which she calls a ballad, although there is nothing typically balladesque about the poem. This highlights the flexibility or vagueness of the form in common usage, even among poets themselves.



Occasionally, as was the case in Germany, it can refer to a song whose author has been strategically removed or ignored. In Scotland this description encompasses the narrative songs of the Northeast, the 'Big Ballads' and the later bothy ballads. In Germany it includes the oral ballads and the *Kunstballade*; the authored narrative songs written in imitation of the oral ballads. The focus in this thesis will not simply be on poets and singers who write or sing traditional ballads in the 20th century but also on artists whose writing or songs can be considered balladesque. Obviously it is impossible to talk about 'the' ballad, as if it were a set entity that brooks no variation. Indeed the trademark of the ballad is that it exists and lives in variations. The following section will explain how the term and concept will be used in this thesis.

There are long-established and well-documented difficulties with the attempt to define the ballad. Even the recognised source of authority on the ballad, Francis James Child, who wrote the seminal *English and Scottish Popular Ballads* in 1882-98, did not define the ballad or explain his reasoning for inclusion and exclusion in what has become the Western ballad canon.⁵⁶ The ballad has always been in a state of flux, by virtue of the process of oral transmission, so change is its keyword. Any definition of the ballad that has been attempted tries to capture the ballad synchronically, in a taxonomic fashion, when it has 'ended' and can thus be categorised as something complete and finished. However, the ballad resists such attempts. Even much quoted definitions are often no more than a list of ballad characteristics; formal or thematic properties which, in a certain combination, might be said to constitute a ballad.

⁵⁶ This explanation was to appear in the introduction to the completed volumes. However, Child died before he achieved this aim. Ballad scholars disagree as to whether all the 'ballads' contain in the *ESPB* should actually be classed as ballads. This goes to show that a definitive and generally accepted definition is impossible to come by even amongst experts.



The word ballad has changed in meaning many times throughout the years of its usage. Its etymology may be useful or alternatively may be misleading. 'Ballad' stems from Middle English, via Old French *balade*, from the Provençal *balada*; meaning dancing song, from *balar* to dance. In Britain in the 13th century it was used of a lyric with a fairly intricate stanzaic form, probably with origins in the dance; hence the link to the Provençal and Italian. The late 14th century saw the naturalisation of the French *ballade* (lyrical not narrative) which became the leading verse form with a fixed structure in the 15th century. The ballade form comprised three eight-line stanzas with a 4-line envoi, which typically summed up the tale or offered a moral comment. The French ballade was a poetic form used for many types of verse from commemorative, political, satirical and moralizing poetry, to devotional and elegiac verse. The English usage of the French term however, came to mean more utilitarian, political, and politico-religious poetry.

Throughout the 15th century, ballad referred broadly to many types of lyrics in various metrical forms. The 16th century saw the use of the word ballad for madrigals and, with the emergence of the broadside ballad, the lyric became subordinate to the narrative. The broadside ballad itself was a huge term, referring as it did to the means of production rather than the content. The broadside was a large sheet of paper, usually printed on one side and often illustrated with woodcuts. They were authored ballads, and functioned as a kind of early newspaper or crude entertainment, dealing with more sensational matters. During the 17th century the broadsides thrived in the towns and come the 18th century the ballad referred mainly to the broadside ballad. Referring to this muddled state Gordon Gerould says:



only the Anglo-Saxons have chosen to adopt a foreign term for a sophisticated product and apply it without discrimination to at least five or six different sorts of verse.⁵⁷

The publication of Percy's *Reliques* in 1765 used the word ballad specifically to refer to old historical ballads, whereas towards the end of the 18th century Addison and Ritson started to use ballad more generally to mean narrative song. This caught on during the Romantic period, when the term became used only for popular narrative poetry. However, the term was still used quite indiscriminately for traditional ballads with many collections of ballads, grouping ballads and songs together without drawing any distinctions between them.

In Germany, the term ballad was used equally loosely. It referred to a sub-category of folk-song, but the word itself was imported from the English after Percy began using it. Previous to this, songs were known simply as *Lieder* or *Volkslieder*. *Lied* could apply to almost any type of poetry: balladic, epic or lyrical, so with this lack of linguistic signposts, German accounts of ballad origins are even more confusing than the accounts of other nations. Goethe defined the traditional ballad as being characterised by its mixture of the three major genres; he said:

the ballad was lyrical in its affinity to song, its use of the refrain; dramatic in its dialogue, tempo, concentrated scenes, turning points; and epic in its narrative content and impersonal story-telling tone...⁵⁸

In the following description, Gummere also stresses that the origins of the ballad, as far as can be known, are various and diverse. The traditional ballad, he says:

⁵⁷ *The Ballad of Tradition*, p. 235.

⁵⁸ E. W. Herd & A. Obermayer, *A Glossary of German Literary Terms* (Dunedin, NZ: Dept of German, University of Otago, 1983), p. 26.



is a conglomerate of choral, dramatic, lyric, and epic elements which are due now to memory, now to individual invention, and are forced into a more or less poetic unity by the pressure of tradition over long stretches of time.⁵⁹

The idea of these influences being 'forced' into a poetic unity seems to undermine the detailed patternings that are part of the oral process and downplay the centrality of oral transmission to the very nature of the ballad. His ideas of the sources of the ballads echo Goethe's interpretation of Germanic ballads as the *Ur-Ei* of all literature.⁶⁰ In addition, there is only one word in German, *Ballade*, which means both the traditional ballad and the ballade form. Traditional German ballads belong with the Scottish to the Nordic region of balladry.

The German ballad collectors realised earlier than the British, the importance of melody and collected words *and* tunes while the British collectors were still just copying down the words.⁶¹ Thus in the *Deutscher Liederhort*,⁶² collected and published by Erk and Böhme at the same time as Child's *ESPB*, there is much information about the tunes of the ballads. Although in the 15th century works such as *Lindenschmid*, *Agnes Bernauer* and *Stortebeker* were highly narrative, the ballads of the *Landsknechte* and *Reiter* in the 16th century became more lyrical, with the narrative being used to express emotion. Even the more modern military ballads used a bare narrative to appeal to a commonly felt emotion, rather than for the purposes of the narrative itself. The German ballads experienced similar

⁵⁹ Francis B. Gummere, *The Popular Ballad* (New York: Dover Publications, 1959), p. 321.

⁶⁰ *Ur-Ei* translates literally as 'the original egg' and refers to Goethe's concept that all of literature originally hatched from this 'egg.'

⁶¹ William J. Entwistle, *European Balladry* 2nd edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951), p. 242.

⁶² Ludwig Erk and Franz M. Böhme, *Deutscher Liederhort: Auswahl der vorzueglicheren deutschen Volkslieder, nach Wort und Weise aus der Vorzeit und Gegenwart* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Haertel, 1893/4).



developments to the Scottish ballads; the Ritter was replaced by the Reiter, just as the aristocrat of the Scottish ballads gradually slid down the social scale.⁶³

The German and Scottish ballads are also thematically similar. Both balladries contain adventure ballads, often love songs, presenting the usual taboos of horrific crimes: parricide, infanticide, rape, incest and poisoning. The Scottish and German ballads travelled by both cultural and trade links over the North Sea (the 'German Ocean') to the Low Countries and were also spread by contact between intellectuals in both countries, whether on a personal level, or the fact that many books and ballad anthologies from one country were read in the other.

The origin of the word has been used variously to defend critical positions, in particular the relation of the ballad to the dance,⁶⁴ but as Matthew Hodgart said, destroying any such firm claims, 'the derivation of the word, then, tells us almost nothing about ballad origins'.⁶⁵ The polysemy of the word ballad is highly problematic so in this thesis the term balladesque will be used to define the ballad in terms of its characteristic features. The suffix -esque is used to suggest that the object under scrutiny bears a resemblance to, or contains some of the features of the other object. Hence, balladesque will suggest a likeness to the traditional ballad and the possessing of certain ballad features. Although this may seem too wide-ranging to the ballad purist, in order to deal with the 20th century, which is a period in which the ballad fragmented and developed in different directions,

⁶³ As Ailie Munro highlights, after literacy became an issue in Scotland, class did as well and 'the ballads descended in the social scale, passing from the tenant-farmers to the ploughmen to the travellers.' *The Folk Music Revival in Scotland* (London: Kahn & Averill, 1984), p. 235.

⁶⁴ This relation can still be seen in the ballads and ring dances of the Faroe Islands, where the ballad is sung to an accompaniment of the dance.

⁶⁵ *The Ballads*, p. 78.



such an understanding is necessary to avoid ignoring what is useful material. Therefore, where possible this term balladesque will be used, otherwise the term ballad will refer to the generally accepted understanding of the traditional oral ballad and broadside ballads will be simply called broadsides.

The common ground of the ballad can only be staked out by agreeing the parameters of the balladesque. The ballad is an artistic form, not a scientific category so all taxonomic attempts will only be partial at best. As William MacMath said in 1886, quoting Child's own words back to him:

Strictness is offensive as well as useless. Perhaps it is impossible. Ballads are not like plants or insects, to be classified to a hair's breadth.⁶⁶

The desire to classify to a hair's breadth lies in the attempt to make sense of the genre, to define and limit it. Michel Foucault speaks of the normality of the human desire to bring order out of chaos, for 'we are accustomed to tame the wild profusion of existing things'.⁶⁷ Part of the frustration in writing about the ballad is that part of its nature remains within this wild profusion and will not be tamed. Every ballad critic has spoken of his or her difficulty in making this attempt to tame or classify. Gordon Gerould, in his 1931 introduction to *The Ballad of Tradition* says:

It is not easy to establish a definition of what we call nowadays the popular or traditional ballad; it is still harder to find how it came into being; and it is quite impossible to make a satisfactory canon of specimens.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Sigurd B. Hustvedt, *Ballad Books and Ballad Men: Raids and Rescues in Britain, America, and the Scandinavian North since 1800*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1930). Hustvedt quotes from Child's manuscript (Child MSS, XXIV, 468f.; letter of March 10, 1886).

⁶⁷ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: an Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London: Tavistock, 1970), p. xv.

⁶⁸ *The Ballad of Tradition*, p. vii.



The quest for the essence of the ballad seems to be one fraught with difficulty, with the Grail being in the end a mere ‘chimera of verse, dance and song.’⁶⁹ Indeed the slipperiness of the ballad, whilst being frustrating on the one hand, is also part of its very nature as a product of oral transmission, and therein lies much of its power. Gerould goes so far as to say: ‘The paramount interest of the ballad lies ... in its existence as a malleable creation.’⁷⁰ It is this malleability which will be of interest to this thesis.

The malleability of the ballad is both the pleasure and the bane of the ballad scholar’s life. Each of the ballad scholars who have wrestled with the nature of the ballad has ultimately offered a definition as well. Each such definition, however, is little more than a description of ballad features. The question remains, however, at what point do such features become definitive or indeed, prescriptive. If the decision is made to accept a very narrow definition, claiming that it should have all the characteristics of the traditional oral ballad, this will strand the ballad in the past, or mean that the only ballads acceptable today fall into the category of mere imitations, rather than developments.

The following definition by Gordon Gerould is useful, although fairly broad. He describes the ballad as:

a folk-song, [which] is subject to all the conditions of production and transformation peculiar to folk-song, though it is distinguishable in respect of content and purpose.⁷¹

So the ballad is a sub-genre of folk-song, shaped by the process of oral transmission central to the folk tradition. Kittredge nails his colours to the mast at the beginning of this

⁶⁹ Albert B Friedman, *The Ballad Revival: Studies in the Influence of Popular on Sophisticated Poetry* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 4.

⁷⁰ *The Ballad of Tradition*, p. 164.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, p. 3.



introduction to the *ESPB* claiming that ‘A BALLAD is a song that tells a story, or ... a story told in song’.⁷²

It is accepted that narrative is the core of the ballad. Many critics also hold that it is always learned with melody through the pure oral tradition. This stresses the musical nature of the ballad, the fact that it is sung, and the process of oral transmission, that it must be learned orally / aurally from someone else, rather than from words on the printed page. However, the ballad, as we receive it today, can come to us from many sources. Some may be fortunate enough to learn a ballad from the tradition bearer or a traditional singer, others learn from archive material, or indeed from commercially available recordings. Each of these recorded sources present a type of secondary orality, in that they are still oral sources, but ones in which the human agent is absent.⁷³ Others learn the ballads from a printed source and then sing them, bringing them back into an oral realm. A ballad on paper is still a ballad, indeed some of the best ballad informants recited their ballads and did not sing them.⁷⁴ Indeed, not all ballads were even originally sung. In *The Oxford History of English Literature*, E. K. Chambers writes:

Certainly many ballads, possibly most ballads, have at some time been sung. But not all ballads. One of our earliest English ballads, Robin Hood and the Monk, has already been noted above as a ‘talking.’ And this may well be the best description of other long minstrel ballads, even if they were given in a chanting tone, and perhaps with some musical accompaniment.⁷⁵

⁷² *ESPB*, p. xi.

⁷³ Primary orality refers to an oral experience which is live, i.e. sitting listening to a ballad singer, whereas secondary orality refers to radio, records or electronic media which are oral recordings of a primary source.

⁷⁴ A good example of this is Bell Robertson, who was one of the informants for the Greig Duncan collection, see David Buchan, *The Ballad and the Folk* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1997) p. 250.

⁷⁵ E. K. Chambers, *English Literature at the Close of the Middle Ages; The Oxford History of English Literature Part 2* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1945), p. 148.



Gerould claims that content and purpose are the distinguishing marks of the ballad from folk-song. The 'purpose' of a ballad is however, culturally and historically specific and as such, is more applicable to specific field research rather than to general ballad theory. Content however, is more easily discernible:

A ballad is a folk-song that tells a story with stress on the crucial situation, tells it by letting the action unfold itself in event and speech, and tells it objectively with little comment or intrusion of personal bias.⁷⁶

The ballad has, as discussed above, a narrative core. This core has the kernel of a crucial situation, the one dramatic situation that is said to be the hallmark of the traditional ballad. The story is told through event and dialogue, with the singer of the tale being very much secondary to the narrative itself. MacEdward Leach describes this saying 'the hard core of tension remains – the moment of drama.'⁷⁷ Whether or not this is, as he argues, a consequence of the oral transmission process is less important than the simple recognition that it is a feature of the ballad as we understand it today. Other linked features of the ballad are the typical commencement *in medias res*; or in 'the fifth act'⁷⁸ the presentation of a dramatic story without introduction or explication of background or motivation, the lack of characterisation or character development and the high proportion of dialogue to stage direction. The traditional as opposed to the broadside ballad is not moralising and contains no didacticism. The traditional ballad also possesses its own peculiar rhetoric and phraseology, which is distinctly different from poetic diction.

In structural terms, the ballads are very distinctive. German ballads rarely have refrains, are stanzaic, often echo the end syllables, are generally strophic, have four stresses per line

⁷⁶ *The Ballad of Tradition*, p. 11.

⁷⁷ MacEdward Leach, (ed.) *The Ballad Book* (New York: A. S. Barnes, London: Thomas Yoseloff, 1955), p. 3.

⁷⁸ *The Ballads*, p. 10.



and often involve elusive rhymes. Scottish ballads comprise short rhyming stanzas of 2 or 4 lines, mainly having what is referred to as common ballad metre, i.e. a 4-3-4-3 stress pattern of iambs, which can vary over the musical line. Since the work of Milman Parry and Albert Lord on Yugoslavian folk-song and epic,⁷⁹ the role of the variants, or variations, has drawn attention to the structural elements, including the formulaic diction, of the traditional ballad. Ballads, both German and Scottish, often contain ‘incremental repetition’, a technique of repetition with difference for purposes of rhythm, emphasis and suspense. This has variously been seen as a structural technique and a rhetorical one, but it is as Gummere said ‘the touchstone and test of original ballad structure’.⁸⁰ Other features include parallelism in phrase and idea, a kind of performative, whereby the description of what will happen comes immediately before the actual happening. Also there is the unique ‘leaping and lingering’ movement of the ballad narrative, sometimes pausing, sometimes changing the pace of the narrative by making great leaps of time, logic and place. Some ballads possess a refrain, although this is limited in German and Scottish ballads and is more a Scandinavian tendency. This generally functions as structural filler and rarely contributes to the storyline, although occasionally it can hold the twist in the tale of the ballad.

One of the most significant features of balladry which distinguishes it clearly from authored poetry is the presence of the ballad commonplace, stock phrase, epithet, cliché, kenning or formula. For example, the female figure in the ballad will nearly always have ‘milk white’ hands, preferably a ‘grass green’ cloak and a ‘middle sae sma.’ However they are termed, these formulae function as a kind of shorthand for the storyline. The literate mind has

⁷⁹ Albert B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (New York: Atheneum, 1968).

⁸⁰ *The Popular Ballad*, p. 117.



tended to be scathing towards these formulae, seeing them through the eyes of individual creativity as something weaker and of less worth. However as William Motherwell said in his introduction to his *Minstrelsy* they are a means:

whereby oral poetry is more firmly imprinted on the memory, more readily recalled to it, when partially obliterated, and, in the absence of letters, the only efficacious means of preserving and transmitting it to after times.⁸¹

They function as a kind of oral patterning and are intrinsic to the process of memory that the oral singer uses to recreate their ballads, while creating an aesthetic function which signals the song as balladesque and belonging to the ballad tradition.

For the purposes of this thesis the features of the ballad that will be used to ascertain if a certain artist can be said to work in a balladesque format will be:

- the poem/song is narrative or possesses a narrative element
- it has a regular stanzaic form which is recognised as balladic
- it uses some ballad commonplaces, whether traditional or updated
- it includes features of the ballad such as leaping and lingering, incremental repetition
- it draws on ballad characters and / or motifs

These features should be present in any combination to make the poem or song worthy of study. Even if just one of the features is present the poem or song may still yield material relevant to the study of the continuing ballad tradition.

⁸¹ William Motherwell, *Minstrelsy, Ancient and Modern* (Michigan: Singing Tree Press, 1968), p. xix.



i.vi Orality / Literacy Debate

The ballad belongs to the world of the popular and public, where it is experienced as a living thing, rather than as something dead, inscribed monumentally in text. As David Buchan says, 'balladry is a genre of oral poetry'.⁸² It is poetry, but it is also something other than poetry, possessing a more direct oral form. Writing on ballads involves a terminological struggle because 'the denotative and connotative meaning' of the terms we use 'are rooted in a literate context'.⁸³ It should be stressed at this point that the traditional ballad is a non-literary genre.⁸⁴ It is a genre that was initially sung or recited, and not generally read, although, as previously discussed, in these days of electronic media, it is quite possible to learn a ballad with its tune from a CD or the internet instead of from a tradition bearer. The musical nature of the ballad, the fusion of words and music that breathe life into the traditional ballad and make it a performative event are essential distinguishing factors. Although this thesis will not be able to deal with the tunes and melodies of the ballads, their importance to the traditional ballad must be stressed.⁸⁵ Some 20th century ballads are oral, in that their primary mode of transmission is that of singing or recitation, while others are ballads which exist primarily on the page.

The above comments have not dealt with the inherent orality of the ballad. The concept of orality makes it difficult to describe or discuss the ballad using the usual critical tools that have been honed on literate matter. The ballad is an unwritten form; it combines music and words and in a strange way incorporates creation, performance and transmission into one

⁸² *The Ballad and the Folk*, p. 51.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *The Ballad Revival*, p. 259.

⁸⁵ This issue will be dealt with in more depth in the German Folk Revival chapter.



whole. Although the traditional ballad may be written down later, it is not a text and does not possess an *Urtext*. In *The Ballad as Song* Bertrand Bronson claimed it is:

not a text but a ballad: a fluid entity soluble in the mind to be concretely realized at will in words and music.⁸⁶

It is a constantly recreated thing and breaks with any concept of the fixity of the text, nor does it privilege any authorial presence within that text. Whether the ballads were communally or individually composed, by homogenous groupings, minstrels or gifted individuals, over a process of time the author has been lost to us, so we deal with the ballad itself and itself alone. The 'ballad wars' between communalists and individualists that have gone on over this issue are of little relevance here.⁸⁷ Although the personality of the singer can affect the character of the ballad to a great extent, the ballad story will remain as a constant, even through different variations. Places, names, identities of characters and social positions may be flexible but changes in these within a ballad do not affect the narrative core of the action.

The orality/literacy divide is often described as if there were a gulf between the two which cannot be bridged. They have been presented as opposites and the focus has been on the divide and the debate, rather than on the dialectic and interchange between the two, by which energies can be channelled and passed in both directions. Eric Havelock's notion of the interlock between orality and literacy expounded in his book *The Muse Learns to Write*

⁸⁶ Bertrand H. Bronson, *The Ballad as Song* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), p. 71.

⁸⁷ The communalists were most famously represented by Kittredge and Gummere, with the most extreme position being taken by Andrew Lang. The individualists included Ritson, Sir Walter Scott, Motherwell, Gerould, Henderson and Louise Pound. The debate is not of specific relevance to this thesis.



is very relevant. He stresses the engagement of the one with the other and the overlaps between the two seemingly divided modes.⁸⁸

It is difficult to deal with this field without falling into terminological morasses. The paradoxical nature of such a common term as ‘oral literature’⁸⁹ is evident and while other possibilities vie for credence, neologisms such as the postcolonial ‘oral literature’, ‘voicings’, or notions of ‘oral art forms’ are clumsy and have not gained common usage. The fact that everything is related to the literate society is clear in the way we define cultures; we speak of non-literate and pre-literate societies, not of post- or non-oral worlds, situating the oral negatively against the literate. Although the oral predates literacy in historical terms, the notions of progress and development used in our temporal frames of pre- and post- deny the fact that the oral culture was and is something inherently different from literate thinking. The vocabulary we use as a matter of course for speaking of orality and literature is also deeply conditioned by our own print culture, so that a word such as ‘text’ has to be divorced from its literal meaning in order to be used of an oral form. However, etymologies are difficult things to shake off and the language used of the oral world is not really satisfactory. Dealing with the oral and the non-oral in a critical manner is made hazardous by the very ‘text-bound’⁹⁰ nature of our thinking.

The distinction between speech and writing has been and will probably continue to be, the subject of much critical debate from the time of Socrates and Plato to Rousseau and the

⁸⁸ Eric A. Havelock, *The Muse Learns to Write: Reflections on Orality and Literacy from Antiquity to the Present* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), p. 13.

⁸⁹ ‘Literature’ stems from the Latin *littera*; meaning letter. Walter Ong refers to Ruth Finnegan’s defence of the term oral literature, highlighting the fact that, as the word oral is the adjective, it appears as if ‘oral creations were variants of written productions’ instead of something separate and of equal worth. See Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Methuen, 1982), p. 8.

⁹⁰ *Orality and Literacy*, p. 156.



ongoing dialogue between these thinkers and modern theorists and philosophers such as Jacques Derrida⁹¹ and Michel Foucault. Though their arguments and thinking are enlightening, only the aspects that bear direct relevance to the issue of the orality and literacy of the traditional ballad will be considered throughout this thesis. The area of folk-song, folk-tale and ballad, all oral forms from an undecided age, has been opened up dramatically by the writings in the 1960s, starting with the publication of the research carried out into oral-formulaic diction in Yugoslavian folk-song in the 1930s by Albert Lord which unlocked the thinking of Lévi-Strauss, McLuhan, Havelock and Mayr, all of whom published works around 1963 dealing with the role of orality in the history of human culture.⁹²

It seems too obvious to stress that the oral and written are different. How they differ is a more difficult question to answer. The oral is clearly related to sound, to the aural of the spoken or sung word that falls upon the ear. It requires a speaker and a listener, hence, an audience, and depends upon the acoustics of echo, patterning, rhythm and rhyme in order to be conveyed and remembered. In contrast, scribal or printed language depends on the visual, on the sign made flesh in the written letters on the page or screen. It needs the eye to read it, converting the written symbols into the commonly agreed words they represent. In the world of the ballad, the focus may be either on the singer or the page, but in the cultural act of singing, the ballad will always be returned or restored from the scribal to the realms of the oral.

⁹¹ See Jacques Derrida, 'That Dangerous Supplement', in *Acts of Literature*, ed. by Derek Attridge, (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 76-109.

⁹² See Ernst Mayr, *Animal Species and Evolution* (1963), Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (1962), Claude Lévi-Strauss, *La Pensée Sauvage* (1962), Eric Havelock, *Preface to Plato* (1963). These were followed slightly later by Jacques Derrida's *De la Grammatologie* in 1967.



Paula Burnett, who has done much to promote the concept of oral poetry, questions the inherent difference between the oral and the scribal, before deciding that the most important factor is the 'manner of transmission';⁹³ whether it is passed down by word of mouth or through the medium of writing or print. This distinction forms the heart of ballad scholarship, for the oral transmission of the traditional ballad is generally argued as that which makes it 'traditional' in the first place. However, these boundaries can also be blurred. It is difficult to establish whether a traditional oral ballad could have been in contact with written sources, without the informant being aware of it. Several of the 'traditional' ballads in Child's corpus seem to bear the hand of a writer rather than the tongue of a tradition bearer. Of course, many of the 18th century collectors were not averse to touching up the songs that came into their possession, making them strange hybrids of the written and the oral processes.

The reverse could also be true, in that a written ballad could be taken up again into the oral tradition and passed on, through the moulding processes of oral transmission as was the case for many songs during the German and Scottish folk revivals. So years further on, it is impossible to ascertain whether it is a traditional oral ballad, or if it still bears a certain mark of the scribal hand. The actual written ballads, the widely popular broadsides, which bridged the oral and the print worlds, were generally looked down upon for their inflated and moralizing tone and their delight in the gruesome side of life. It was these ballads that spawned the negative term of ballad-mongering and the disreputable career of the balladeer.⁹⁴ In such cases it is clear that the oral is being privileged over the written, so in the course of the traditional ballad's history, spoken is good, written is bad. This has

⁹³ *The Penguin Book of Caribbean Verse in English* (London: Penguin, 1986), p.xviii.

⁹⁴ Ben Jonson declared 'A poet should detest a ballad-maker', *The Ballad Revival*, p. 65.



undoubtedly been one of the factors which has led to the oral being valued for being somehow closer to the 'source'.

The ironic and paradoxical situation that emerged in the 18th century, however, was that the ballad collectors aspired to put every version of every ballad on paper, so that they could be preserved for posterity. Thus, despite praising the oral origins of the ballad, they were dependent on print to preserve what they saw as an already moribund artistic form. Despite the oral form being deeply rooted in memory, they considered that the social changes of the time would lead to the death of the ballad and the written text was the only means to save it. The reaction of the informants to this collecting was not always positive. Margaret Laidlaw Hogg is famously reported as saying to Walter Scott:

there war never ane o' my sangs prentit till ye prentit them yoursel', an' ye hae spoilt them awthegither. They were made for singin' an' no for readin'; but ye hae broken the charm noo, an' they'll never be sung mair. An' the worst thing of a', they're nouter richt spell'd nor richt setten down.⁹⁵

By printing the ballads, the collectors took the traditional form away from those who carried the tradition and in effect froze the process of oral transmission, because for the first time, the notion of a fixed and authentic text was introduced. However, the modern use of sound recording, with records, tapes and CDs and digital audio has reintroduced and revived the aural element in both the reception and the transmission of songs in ways that might even paradoxically have pleased Mrs Hogg.

This thesis does not deal explicitly with traditional ballads. It deals with 20th century 'texts' whether transmitted orally, aurally or in writing. Each of these texts has enough

⁹⁵ James Hogg, *Memoirs of the Author's Life and Familiar Anecdotes of Sir Walter Scott*, ed. by Douglas S. Mack (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1972), p. 62.



features of the balladesque, to be included in an investigation into the role of the ballad in German and Scottish writing and singing. This can only be clarified when dealing with each individual case. The thesis is based on the premise that poetry is always an oral form, whether it is written on the page, sung or recited and that the similarities between the oral and the scribal are more plentiful than the differences.⁹⁶ Thus balladic written poetry and songs including some of the features of the balladesque will be considered as legitimate objects of comparison.

i.vii Outline

The thesis starts in the Weimar Republic. Having lost the First World War, Germany was struggling to come to terms with the turbulent political aftermath of 1918 and with the loss of confidence in Germany and being German. In contrast, in Scotland, part of the victorious powers, the modern Scottish literary renaissance was emerging, with cultural forces in play aimed at raising a specific national awareness and trying to create a national identity using both political and literary concepts of Scottishness. The Second World War presents a major rupture in all concepts of national identity, but nowhere so clearly as in Germany. Hence the focus in the war period is on Germany and on how the Nazis took and used the ballads for their own political ends. The post-war development is the site of most interest in terms of the comparative study. The focus is on the folk-revivals in both countries, in the 1950s in Scotland and the 1960s-70s in Germany. A country which has a

⁹⁶ Specific types of modern poetry, such as concrete poetry would be exceptions to this rule.



very positive and safe relationship to the folk- and ballad tradition is contrasted with a country which has a shattered and politically tainted relationship to its tradition.

The thesis is based on the hypothesis that the ballad has contributed significantly to the development of national identity in the two countries. To this end the thesis will show how artists and singers within the two countries have reacted to their cultural and political situations and how they have drawn on the ballad tradition to fulfil their own artistic and political goals. Each time period will use selected artists, who have been chosen because of the strength of their material and/or their political significance. The objective is to explore the development of the ballad within the two national traditions and contrast the complexities of national identity itself, in order to cast more light on what it means to be German or Scottish or, to belong to any nation, today.

The first chapter of the thesis will deal with the role of the ballad in Germany in the Weimar Republic. It is marked by the Brechtian dominance over the use of the ballad and posits the ballad form and qualities as a major instrument of satirical power. The main artists involved in this movement are Erich Kästner, Klabund and Tucholsky, whose ballads will be considered in detail. The modern Scottish literary renaissance will be used as a basis for contrast and comparison as the same time period saw Scotland undergoing a major literary development in concepts of Scottishness.

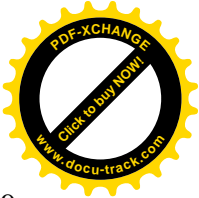
The second chapter will explore the Nazi party's use of the ballad as an implement of indoctrination. Selected writers are Agnes Miegel, whose old-fashioned ballads were taken up by the Nazi party, and Hans Friedrich Blunck, who was in charge of the



Reichsschrifttumskammer (RSK) until 1935. Ballads sung by German soldiers will also be considered, as will ballads of resistance to the regime. This chapter will show the way in which Germany's relationship to the ballad and to its own folklore came to be devalued or even destroyed.

The final part will focus on the German folk revival of the 1960s-70s, considering how the folk-singers responded to the rupture in the history of German identity. This will use primarily the singers of the Burg Waldeck festivals. Many Liedermacher including Franz Josef Degenhardt, Wolf Biermann and Dieter Süverkrüp will feature. The experiences and outcomes of the German revival will be contrasted with the folk revival in Scotland which paved the way for the German revival. The conclusion will consider how the ballad form has been used in both countries throughout the time period set for the thesis to encourage, solidify, manipulate or recover concepts of national identity. Suggestions will be made as to further study.

Throughout this thesis words in languages other than English will be italicised unless they have passed into common usage in the English language, for example the Third Reich or the Führer. Therefore, despite the familiarity of certain other German terms such as *Volk*, *Vaterland* and *Heimat*, these will still be presented in italics for ease of consistency unless contained within quotations. Any exceptions to this will be explained separately.



Chapter One

Reflections from the Mirror of Satire

Weimar Germany and the Scottish Literary Renaissance



1.1 Introduction

Writing in Geoffrey Cubitt's *Imagining Nations*, Peter Lambert comments 'There is really nothing so very novel about recognition of the 'invented', 'forged' or simply constructed quality of national traditions and identities.'⁹⁷ This force was evident in Scotland during the period of the Modern Scottish Literary Renaissance. Conversely, Weimar Germany, which covered the same historical period as the Scottish Renaissance, emerges as a counterpart to this force, for its writers are involved in attacking established notions of national and cultural identity, trying to deconstruct what they saw as a flawed concept of Germany, which alienated the people of Germany from the government that was meant to be representing them. Scotland, on the other hand, did not have to protest against a government or a flawed concept of self, but rather aimed to strengthen a sense of Scottish national identity by finding, recreating or constructing an identity which could enthuse sufficient numbers of people within the country and draw them together under its banner to enact change, whether social, political or cultural.

Germany in the 1920s was a major nation in defeat, trying to come to terms with the loss of its territories, its army, its status as a world power, and its national pride. This resulted in nationalism being partly de-territorialised and de-institutionalised, dislocating a sense of

⁹⁷ Peter Lambert, 'Paving the 'peculiar path': German nationalism and historiography since Ranke', in Geoffrey Cubitt, (ed.) *Imagining Nations* (Manchester & New York: Manchester University Press, 1998), pp. 92-109, here p. 92.



nationhood from the state itself. Therefore in the Weimar period there was a *völkisch*⁹⁸ reorientation of nationalism, as the German people again became identified with the 'state-transcending, institutionally amorphous ethnocultural nation or *Volk*.'⁹⁹ In an attempt to deal with the complex and changing issue of German national identity at this time, the writings of Kurt Tucholsky (1890-1935), Klabund (1890-1928), Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956) and Erich Kästner (1899-1974) will be considered. This chapter will explore how they used the ballad form and qualities as a major instrument of satirical power during the turbulent Weimar period, and how they presented a concept of a Germany during a time of national humiliation and rebuilding. Where relevant it will draw comparisons with the situation in Scotland.

In the 1920s a sense of a Scottish national identity was sustained by culture and language¹⁰⁰ with the Treaty of Versailles providing hope in its smaller provisions for the national self-determination of a smaller nation within a greater one. Politically, there was opposition within Scotland to the UK's involvement in World War I which found expression in the events of 'Red Clydeside' between 1920-1932. This movement was, however, more focused on workers' rights and Marxist class issues rather than matters of national

⁹⁸ The concepts of the *Volk* and the *völkisch* are extremely loaded terms in Germany. After World War I there was an emergence of many *völkisch* groupings, which drew upon folklore, ethnic nationalism, romanticism and also ecology and the occult. Some of these strains were taken up in the Nazi propaganda of the racially pure, homogeneous German *Volk*. Such historical baggage means that these terms are no longer used, unless in a specific historical context. Peter Gay writes of how, even during World War I 'grand old words like *Volk* and *Reich* and *Geist* were now given new meaning by this grand crusade for *Kultur*.' Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture: the Outsider as Insider* (London: Peregrine Books, 1974), p. 12.

⁹⁹ Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the national question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 118.

¹⁰⁰ Although language was significant in German culture it was rooted in the late 18th century concept of Herder's *Volkssprache*, which allowed a 'conception of nation as founded on language and linguistically embedded culture' to take root as opposed to the situation in Scotland where it was used as a marker of cultural difference. This linguistic differentiation was to divide German speakers from the other languages surrounding them and create the concept of a linguistically rooted nation. Rogers Brubaker writes: 'From this time on, the imagined community of the ethnocultural nation was available as a point of orientation, focus of value, source of identity, and locus of allegiance independent of – and potentially conflicting with – the state', *Nationalism Reframed*, p. 114.



identity.¹⁰¹ In contrast, in Germany, the nation was characterised by a resentment of the Versailles Treaty,¹⁰² and by an identity rooted in politics, state power, the military and a literary heritage in German Romantic poetry. A German sense of national identity was also underpinned by openly nationalistic songs, so although the ballads that the writers of Weimar drew upon tended to be literary *Kunstballade*,¹⁰³ the oral was also represented in the use of such songs. Having just lost the war, Germany was in a state of great turbulence, as manifested in the densely packed political events of 1918-1919.¹⁰⁴ Whilst in Scotland new political bodies were being formed in support of Scottish independence, in Germany new political groupings aimed to provide an alternative to the state and achieve their ends through revolution. In Scotland, as the need for protest was not as strong, the methods used were peaceful, but in Germany armed revolution and putsches attempted to shake the political order just as it was being established. Therefore many writers attacked the state within Germany, showing that there was a subversive element or force in Germany that represented another Germany, one closer to the people, and aiming to speak for them.

¹⁰¹ It is striking however, that the predominant mood of the protests was unpatriotic. A common message which appeared on placards during rent strike protests was 'While my father is a prisoner in Germany the landlord is attacking us at home', suggesting that while the men were fighting on the front line in the war, the landlords were in league with the enemy.

¹⁰² This resentment was further compounded on Nov 12th 1918 when the Austrian Provisional National Assembly declared itself a Republic and part of the German Reich and was endorsed by the Weimar National Assembly. As this was refused by the allied powers, under the leadership of France, a feeling developed of Germans as 'a state-transcending Volk to whom the right of national self-determination was denied at the same time that this right was trumpeted in principle as the basis of the postwar settlement.' *Nationalism Reframed*, p. 120.

¹⁰³ The German term *Kunstballaden* will be used to refer to the ballads written in the 18th and 19th centuries that echoed the rhythms of the oral ballads, but were purely authored ballads. Some of these were translations of oral ballads, others were imitations. These *Kunstballaden* had a huge effect on German Romantic poetry and hence, on nationalism.

¹⁰⁴ See John Willett, *The New Sobriety, 1917-1933: Art and Politics in the Weimar Period* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978), p. 10. Here Willett stresses that World War I caused a hiatus in German identity and many elements of 'Weimar' culture had actually predated the Weimar Republic and simply been interrupted by the war.

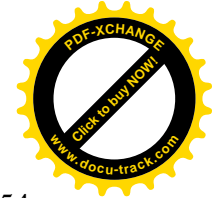


In Germany writers rejected the state, satirising the foundations of German culture itself in order to enlighten the populace and hopefully to enact change, while in Scotland, governed from Westminster, poets aimed to construct a sense of national identity, which would then lead to political and cultural change. Thus in general, German writings were more political or politicised, as the needs of the times demanded, and their nationalism, embodied in the revolutionary figures of political activists like Kurt Eisner, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, was against the established order. Within this framework the ballad functions as a subversive force, which aims to upend and contest political structures. In comparison, satire in Scotland was ironically exercised to a greater extent between the prominent writers of the age, rather than used against the state.¹⁰⁵

It need hardly be stressed that Germany is significantly different from Scotland in terms of national identity in general because, due to the former's history of feudalism and individual principalities, the concept of a coherent nation in Germany took much longer to develop and did not emerge until the late 19th century, unlike in Scotland where the notion of a Scottish people as distinctly different was rooted far back in tribal history and exemplified in the medieval Kingdom of Scotland.¹⁰⁶ The revolutions of the 19th century and the rhetoric of World War I attempted to create a coherent sense of a German state where all were brothers and were united in the love of the fatherland. However, the disaster which was the First World War proved the dangers and limitations of this approach and sent many thinkers and artists into the Weimar Republic as sceptics who were antagonistic toward the

¹⁰⁵ For example, William Soutar satirised Hugh MacDiarmid as 'Wee Hughie' and wrote a riposte to *A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1926) called 'The Thistle Looks at a Drunk Man', in *Poems of William Soutar, A New Selection*, ed. by W. R. Aitken (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1988), pp. 171-175.

¹⁰⁶ It is of course necessary to note that this notion of Scottishness was not one of a coherent Scottish people, for the clans had an internal coherency which was not utilised in the service of a Scottish nation until William Wallace (c. 1270-1305) mobilised Scots to fight together against the English at the end of the 13th century.



state, whilst being supportive of the German nation.¹⁰⁷ Writers and intellectuals during the Weimar Republic were often accused of contributing to its downfall because of their lack of support, and in this chapter it becomes clear that most of the writers supported the principles of a liberal democracy, yet saw the abuses carried out in the name of such a democracy and were not prepared to remain silent.¹⁰⁸

Weimar was a republic which promised much and opened up the way for sustained modernisation and cultural diversity, attempting to salvage a new Germany from the rubble of the war, either as a socialist utopia or a new national community of the German people. It was a period of great cultural vitality where the arts flourished and select circles, especially in the cities, enjoyed the lax morals of the 'roaring twenties'. Others, on the conservative side, felt that this represented a 'corruption of the German spirit' which was 'endemic to the new Weimar culture'¹⁰⁹ and symbolised the cultural decay within the post-war German nation. However, amongst the *Bildungsbürgertum*, there was hope that 'the new state would finally provide an appropriate political form for a national culture.'¹¹⁰ The fact that such a hope was necessary and that the existence of an appropriate political form was not a given shows that the political nation and the cultural nation were still very divided in Germany at this time.

¹⁰⁷ It is important to keep the concepts of state and nation as separate as possible. State is used to refer to the political apparatus that runs the country, whereas the nation is here used to refer to the people who are often seen as embodying a cultural nation as opposed to a state one. (The reference here is to Friedrich Meinecke's distinction between *Staatsnation* and *Kulturnation* as discussed in the introduction.)

¹⁰⁸ It becomes apparent in the chapter however, that Brecht, in his nihilist / anarchist phase was not particularly supportive of liberal democratic principles.

¹⁰⁹ Rob Burns (ed.), *German Cultural Studies: an Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 69.

¹¹⁰ *German Cultural Studies*, p. 16.



In Scotland in his 1927 treatise *Albyn or Scotland and the Future*, Christopher Murray Grieve (Hugh MacDiarmid) stated that ‘the time is ripening for a new political nationalism, as part and parcel of a general national awakening.’¹¹¹ It is essential to note the yoking together of a general and political nationalism which was present in Scotland as well as in Germany, although Germany was fighting against its current political climate while in Scotland writers were attempting to create a new political system which would be underpinned by a strong Scottish culture. Rogers Brubaker describes how this is a ‘deep tension inherent in the nation-state as a model of political organization’,¹¹² a ‘tension between the “conceived order” or “imagined community” of the “nation” and the territorially framed organisational reality of the state.’¹¹³ This tension, although inherent within the form, was extreme in the Weimar Republic and was a continuous theme in the work of the writers and artists working during this period. Often their work exposes how the Weimar Republic was both built on uncertain foundations and riddled with fault lines and was therefore not capable of sustaining or reviving a concept of German national identity. These tensions reveal how the Weimar Republic was not able to embody the nation or ‘contain’ nationalism.¹¹⁴

As the political situation was so unstable, culture took on an increased importance:

Culture, both by and for the people became a defining feature of German society in the 1920s...[Weimar] became a crucible of diverse and often conflicting elements of bewildering complexity.¹¹⁵

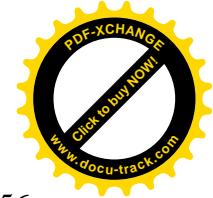
¹¹¹ Christopher Murray Grieve, *Albyn or Scotland and the Future* (London: Kegan Paul, 1927), p. 47.

¹¹² *Nationalism Reframed*, p. 112.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.117.

¹¹⁵ *German Cultural Studies*, p. 62.



Although previously German culture was seen as high culture, something which was on a higher level than the shabbiness of politics, the war and its revolutionary aftermath meant that culture became politicised by events and had to respond to them, which it did in many varied and conflicting ways. This variety means that it is difficult to speak of a Weimar culture and is more meaningful to speak of Weimar cultures.

One of the major ways that Weimar writers responded to this period was through the instrument of satire. The first writer under consideration, Kurt Tucholsky, warned of the potential political consequences of a satire that attacked society and the state, saying, in the early days of the Republic:

Die Satire ist heute - 1919 – gefährlich geworden, weil auf die spaßhaften Worte leicht ernste Taten folgen können, und dies umso eher, je volkstümlicher der Satiriker spricht.¹¹⁶

It is worth noting that the political explosiveness of the satirical approach is compounded when the popular national and folkloric elements of the society are also called into question. These are often seen as being quintessentially of the people and thus sacred and above reproach. It is therefore a mark of the strength of the Weimar writers that they were prepared to hold every element of German society up to ridicule and to reproach.

The modernity which was central to Weimar culture and the advances in modern technology during the period created a national community, in Benedict Anderson's sense of the imagined community.¹¹⁷ The first radio broadcast in Germany on the 29th October

¹¹⁶ Kurt Tucholsky, *Ausgewählte Werke*, ed. by Fritz J. Raddatz, 2 vols, Vol. I (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1965), p. 134.

¹¹⁷ *Imagined Communities*, p. 6. Fulbrook also echoes this saying that the rapid increase in radio ownership 'formed a new national public', Mary Fulbrook, *History of Germany, 1918-2000, The Divided Nation*, 2nd edn. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), p. 34.



1923 created the possibility of speaking to the whole nation simultaneously, and thus reaching a mass audience and creating a coherence which was not previously possible.¹¹⁸ Tellingly, the first programme concluded with an infantry band playing the newly-instituted German national anthem 'Deutschland, Deutschland über alles'. Although Brecht was initially sceptical about the uses of the medium, Kästner embraced it and wrote for radio. The use of the radio for nationalistic propaganda purposes would become more and more apparent towards the end of the Weimar Republic and into the Third Reich.

As becomes clear throughout this chapter, the satirists drew with great regularity on two poems or songs. The first is Hoffmann von Fallersleben's 1841 'Das Lied der Deutschen' / 'Deutschlandlied', now better known as the German national anthem and the second, the 1840 poem 'Die Wacht am Rhein' by Max Schneckenburger. It is essential to understand the context of these poems to avoid confusion later in the chapter.¹¹⁹ August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben (1798-1874) was a folksong scholar and a patriot who desired that Germany be united in egalitarian brotherhood.¹²¹ He wrote the words to 'Das Lied der Deutschen' on 26th August 1841. In the words 'Deutschland, Deutschland über alles' he raised up the concept of Germany as a nation, as the goal which would unite the feuding

¹¹⁸ See *German Cultural Studies*, p. 83 and *History of Germany*, p. 34.

¹¹⁹ It is interesting to note that there is still confusion in Germany over the status and meaning of their national anthem for in October 1996 the German Parliament felt it necessary to release a document called 'Textverständnis und Rezeptionsgeschichte des Deutschlandliedes' explaining the text and reaction to the song, in order to clear up any misunderstandings. This retelling of history aimed to prove that Hoffmann von Fallersleben was not a 'reaktionärer Chauvinist, sondern vielmehr ein Repräsentant guter demokratischer Tradition unserer Nation.' The document is published in *Der aktuelle Begriff*, Wissenschaftliche Dienste des Deutschen Bundestages, 21.10.1996, Nr. 22/96 and is available online at <http://www.coburger-convent.de/dokumentation/quellen/deutschlandlied.html>. Date of access 28/10/06.

¹²¹ His book *Unpolitische Lieder* ([n.p.]: [n.pub.], 1840) lost him his professorship at the Friedrich-Wilhelm University in Breslau in 1842 and he was subsequently subject to constant censorship, political persecution and imprisonment.



states under one banner. In 1841 the *Deutscher Bund*¹²² consisted of 38 states, varying in size and power which were held together very loosely without a central authority. Attempts had already been made at the *Wartburgfest* in 1817 and the *Hambacher Fest* in 1832 to establish a 'German' national identity. After the failed revolution of 1848, Hoffmann von Fallersleben still wished his song to be the national anthem; however, Bismarck refused and chose instead the militaristic 'Heil dir im Siegeskranz, Herrscher des Vaterlands!' which had first been published in 1793, and was dedicated to Friedrich Wilhelm II after the defeat of the French revolutionary army.¹²³ The music for the 'Deutschlandlied' was composed by the Austrian composer Franz Joseph Haydn following a visit to Britain where he had been impressed by the solemnity of the British national anthem.¹²⁴

The 'Deutschlandlied' however, was first sung in public in 1890 when Heligoland, where the song was written, was given back to the Germans by the British, in exchange for Zanzibar. From this point on, it was associated with militaristic expansionist politics. On the 11th November 1914 it was sung at the Battle of Langemarck and was declared the national anthem after the war by Friedrich Ebert in August 1922. Ebert hoped to embody some of the new desire for democracy in the song, returning to its original meaning, rather than the militaristic layering that had occurred. However, the Third Reich stressed the superiority of Germany, being above all else, used the second stanza to romanticise German women, wine and song and ignored the final stanza because it was too democratic. All three verses of the song were officially reinstated as the national anthem after World War II by Adenauer in 1952, although it was agreed that only the third verse should be sung at

¹²² Formed in 1815.

¹²³ This is of course sung to the tune of 'God Save the King'.

¹²⁴ This melody, most famously also used in the *Kaiserquartett*, 2nd Set, op. 76, No. 3, in G major, became initially the tune for the Austro-Hungarian national anthem 'Gott erhalte Franz den Kaiser' which it remained until the demise of the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the end of World War I.



state functions. Thus the 'Deutschlandlied' was not officially the national anthem during World War I and when it was declared to be, it was already too tainted with overtones of militaristic victory to return to its original democratic birthright.¹²⁵

Hoffmann von Fallersleben wanted Germany to turn away from the divisions and conflicts between the states and be united. In answer to Ernst Moritz Arndt's question 'Was ist des Deutschen Vaterland?'¹²⁶ he replied:

Kein Österreich, kein Preußen mehr,
ein einzig Deutschland hoch und hehr,
Ein freies Deutschland Gott bescher'¹²⁷

This concept of a single united Germany has been misunderstood and deliberately abused throughout the years for political purposes. It is ironic that a song which was based on humanitarian, national principles should now be famed as a narrowly nationalistic song of German military arrogance. It is this understanding of the song that the satirists are attacking. They ignore, as do the majority of the German populace, the original, positive meaning of the song. This exemplifies the difficulties that songs have in shaking off their accumulated meanings which will become more and more apparent throughout this thesis.

Max Schneckenburger wrote 'Die Wacht am Rhein' in 1840, during the period when the French were trying to make the Rhine the eastern border of France. The poem was set to music in 1851 by Karl Wilhelm and subsequently sung for Kaiser Wilhelm I's silver wedding anniversary on 11th June 1854. It gained in popularity when the troops in the

¹²⁵ This problem of songs gathering associated meanings, often with darker overtones, becomes very evident during the Nazi era.

¹²⁶ Ernst Moritz Arndt wrote the song 'Was ist des Deutschen Vaterland' in 1813. This functioned as the German national anthem until 1866. It is this song to which Hoffmann von Fallersleben is responding.

¹²⁷ 'Das Lied vom deutschen Ausländer'. <http://www.von-fallersleben.de/article413.html>. Date of access 281106.



1870/71 Franco-German wars made it their own, turning it into a folk anthem. The poem stresses defence, rather than attack, but has come to be the supreme example of German military belligerence. It combines the beauty of the German Rhine landscape, which was central to the German Romantic movement, with the strength and faithfulness of the German people. The words of the poem are inscribed on the base of the 'Niederwalddenkmal', the Germania statue which overlooks Rudesheim on the Rhine.¹²⁸ Both the statue and the poem have become symbolic of the Reich. Thus it includes useful material for parodying and playing with concepts of German national identity.

1.2 Kurt Tucholsky

Kurt Tucholsky is one of the most vehement representatives of the 'other' Germany, the Germany not represented by those in power in the Weimar Republic. He is a satirist who spoke out against the deep-rootedness of Weimar society in the traditions of the past, in militarism, in respect for the Kaiser and a romanticised vision of a past Golden Age. He is the most clearly political of all the writers included in this chapter and, although on a more minor scale, he comes the closest to the role of an agitator for a new concept of the German nation, a similar role to that of MacDiarmid in Scotland.¹²⁹ Tucholsky utilised journalism as a means to convey his message, writing in many different journals, from the controversial Berlin weekly, *Die Weltbühne*, which also published Kästner, to the short-

¹²⁸ The statue was built in 1870/71 to immortalise the strength of the German *Volk* and the re-establishment of the German *Reich*.

¹²⁹ Political is used with a capital P here to mean someone who is involved in political activism or is very outspoken against the political regime in their work.



lived USPD¹³⁰ journal *Die Freiheit*, the pointedly-titled *Das andere Deutschland*, the Communist *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung* (AIZ) and the satirical Berlin magazine *Eulenspiegel*. Tucholsky was a non-party left-wing political writer, a famous pacifist, responsible for penning the well-worn phrase ‘Soldaten sind Mörder’. He had a positive attitude towards democracy and the new German constitution but despised the way the Weimar Republic had not broken with the power structures of the Wilhelmine era. As a satirist, he also attempted to present a vision of the Weimar Republic to its people, in the hope that they would wake up to the stark realities and worrying flaws in its make up before it was too late. As with many of the writers in this chapter, Tucholsky’s books were burnt in May 1933 and he was also deprived of his citizenship, finding refuge in Paris and Sweden, and eventually, in 1935, in death.

Tucholsky writes into the hollowness that is post-World War I German culture. There was no stable concept of the nation at the time, for the political nation was unstable and Germany had just suffered national disgrace, and in the fledgling efforts to build a new ‘version’ of the nation, old concepts had to be dealt with. The schizophrenia that characterises this period is caught by Tucholsky in his eponymously titled poem ‘Kurt Tucholsky.’¹³¹ Although this is not a ballad, it provides a clear context for the rest of Tucholsky’s work which will be addressed in this chapter. This poem comprises two lists, in one all that Tucholsky hates and the other, all that he loves. Germany appears in both columns. It is interesting to begin with this poem because the <Deutschland> with inverted commas is hated, while the Deutschland without is loved. Tucholsky stresses throughout

¹³⁰ The *Unabhängige Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*, was formed in April 1917 and numbered Kurt Eisner, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht amongst its most well-known members.

¹³¹ *Werke* II, 415.



his work that there are two Germanies in existence. For example, the poem 'Unser Militär' has as an envoi:

Es gibt zwei Deutschland –: eins ist frei,
das andre knechtisch...¹³²

Tucholsky, and indeed the other writers in this chapter, are representatives of the first, the free Germany, often identified as the 'other' Germany. Clearly the problem with this concept, in relation to national identity, is that each side presumes the other holds a false concept of what the country actually is. In Scotland the relation of an 'other' state can be partially externalised rather than needing to protest against it internally, because the 'other' in the Scottish context was the British nation which it is simultaneously part of and alienated from. Tucholsky questions the right of anyone, including himself, to have a monopoly on the notion of Germany. In his ballad 'Die blonde Dame singt' (186-87) the woman says 'Ich habe mir mein Deutschland angesehen' (186) thus suggesting that the concept of a nation can only be personal. He echoes this himself saying 'außerdem hat jeder sein Privat-Deutschland.'¹³³ A concept of national identity in general, then, is highly problematic and in the Weimar period, especially so. Either it is a personal idiom, a ragged accumulation of each individual personal concept, a lowest common denominator approach to a cultural coherence, or a public construct, shaped by those in power, either in government or in the media.

Tucholsky is very aware of the power of the opinion shapers, be they the Weimar politicians, the military, the people, or the artist. He attacks those who have almost

¹³² *Werke*, I, pp. 322-24, here p. 324. Further references to *Werke* I, will be shown in brackets within the text.

¹³³ Taken from the essay 'Heimat', *Werke* I, pp. 497-500.



destroyed the ability to even speak of elements pertaining to national identity. Dealing with the word *Heimat* he writes:¹³⁴

Das ist in schlechten Büchern, in noch dümmern Versen und in Filmen schon so verfälscht, daß man sich beinah schämt, zu sagen: man liebe seine Heimat. (497)

Tucholsky speaks here of the problem which will become especially pertinent in the post-World War II period, when the vocabulary of nationhood becomes even more ideologically charged. This is nowhere more apparent than in the twisting of Hoffmann von Fallersleben's 'Das Lied der Deutschen',¹³⁵ which was common currency for critical satire in the Weimar period. Tucholsky calls it a 'törichtem Vers eines großmäuligen Gedichts' (497) and disputes the conception of Germany contained therein:

Nein, Deutschland steht nicht über allem und ist nicht über allem – niemals. Aber mit allen soll es sein, unser Land. (497)

Tucholsky stresses the communal aspect of national identity and calls on people to take ownership of it. Again, echoing the 'Deutschlandlied', in his ballad 'Deutscher Richter von 1940' (439) he rejects the 'deutsche Geist' (439) embodied in the corrupt judges and calls on the people to awake:

Ihr seid das Volk und die Masse
von der Etsch bis an den Rhein:
soll *das* die herrschende Klasse,
sollen *das* unsere Führer sein-? (440)

¹³⁴ The word *Heimat* carries a huge ideological weight in Germany. It literally means homeland or home but was later to be linked to the *Blut- und Boden* mentality, which led to extreme nationalism and was so abused in the Third Reich. The concept of *Heimat* was associated with a distancing from the city and a return to the simpler pleasures of rural, family life. The *Heimatroman* was a romantic, nationalistic, conservative praising of 'hearth and home' which was very popular in Germany from the start of the 20th century. There are some interesting parallels between this movement and the Kailyard School in Scotland.

¹³⁵ August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben, 'Das Lied der Deutschen', here quoted from *Politische Lyrik: Deutsche Zeitgedichte des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. by Wolfgang Gast (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1983), p. 10.



Tucholsky stresses that the land, and the concept of the nation belong to the people who live in it, but these people must also claim it. He proclaims confidently:

Es ist ja nicht wahr, daß jene, die sich <national> nennen, und nichts sind als bürgerlich-militarisch, dieses Land und seine Sprache für sich gepachtet haben.... Wir sind auch noch da. (499)

In this quotation Tucholsky highlights his greatest enemies, i.e. the military, who masquerade under the concept of the nation and the apathetic bourgeois German citizen. Tucholsky was famous for his attacks on German militarism. The link between the nation and the military is made clear in his article of 1920, 'Deutschland – ein Kasernenhof.' (II, 119-123). He regards militarism as being present in the soul of the German people, so that they are responding to 'nationale Urtriebe' (II, 120) but he stresses that although 'Die Nation trug den Kasernenhof in ihrer Seele' (II, 122) there are actually two spirits in Germany, one military, one not. The military spirit embodies 'der schlechte deutsche Geist.' However, 'Es gibt einen guten. Aber er trägt nicht die Züge eines Offiziers.' (II, 122). In his early poems, he deals with these concepts in more detail.

In his 1918 poem 'Kümmernis', Tucholsky attacks the war-mongering that was carried out in the name of the nation, who thought that their foreign policy was their Golden Age. He asks:

Was kommt nach den Tränen, dem Blut und der Schmach
und all dem Nationengeschrei? (201)

This question lies at the heart of the Weimar period, for the failure of the call to arms in the name of the nation leaves a silence that other voices are more than willing to fill. Tucholsky's poetry tries to speak into this space. In 'Der Graben' of 1926 (319-20) Tucholsky uses the question and answer format of the traditional ballad to question the



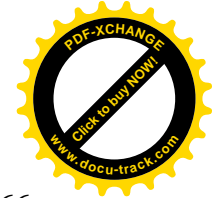
tragic waste of life which was the First World War. He uses a traditional abab, 4-line ballad stanza with a refrain which stresses the word 'Graben'. The ballad has a folksong quality because it stresses the commonality of human experience and reaches towards the universal. He addresses the universal mother, asking why she raised her children to suffer such a death and blames those who have taken the children away:

Bis sie ihn dir weggenommen haben.
Für den Graben, Mutter, für den Graben. (319)

He similarly addresses the sons who have lost their fathers before moving on to issue a Communist / humanist / internationalist cry to the comrades who all fell in the war, reminding them that it was the Junker class that was to blame for their deaths and encouraging them to 'Reicht die Bruderhand als schönste aller Gaben / übern Graben, Leute, übern Graben -!' (320). The ballad pours scorn on the notion of the fatherland because the 'Dank des Vaterlands' (320) is a crown of immortality, which is of little use, either to the dead or to the people left behind.

Tucholsky takes this one step further in terms of political criticism when he asks in 'Krieg dem Kriege' (320-22), 'Für wen das alles? Pro patria?' (321). This is also a fairly straightforward ballad, written in rhyming couplets, that tells the story of the many who fell in the war and calls the 'Brüder' to learn from it and not be fooled by the nationalists who are continuing their abuse during the war into the Weimar Republic itself. He warns:

Das Feuer brannte, das sie geschürt.
Löscht es aus! Die Imperialisten,
die da drüben bei jenem nisten,
schenken uns wieder Nationalisten. (322)



Here Tucholsky equates the nationalist aims of the Imperial war effort with the underlying power structures of the Republic, because the same people are in positions of power and are continuing to stoke their fires with talk of a new nationalism. The ballad is worryingly prophetic, because, despite being written in 1919, it warns that within twenty years ‘kommen neue Kanonen gefahren.’¹³⁶ (322). Tucholsky turns the poem into a pacifist tirade but the concept of who owns the nation remains at the heart of the debate.

As becomes apparent in debate over the Weimar era, the division of state and nation is omnipresent. This is also the case in Tucholsky’s work. It often appears in the division of we / us and the state / politicians. Often when he uses Germany, he means the hated Germany in inverted commas. For example, again in ‘Unser Militär’ (322-324) he makes a topical political statement saying:

Liebknecht ist tot. Vogel heidi.
Solche Mörder straft Deutschland nie.
Na und-? (323)

The state, which here bears the name of ‘Deutschland’, is all the more threatening because it institutionalises violence, here specifically the murder of Karl Liebknecht, the Spartacist revolutionary, and justifies it in the very name of the nation that it is attacking. Tucholsky warns of the pressure that is building up within the discrepancy between the people of the nation and the deeds performed in their name:

Achtung! Es ist Zündstoff im Haus!
Wir wollen nicht diese Nationalisten,
diese Ordnungsbolschewisten,
all das Gesindel, das uns geknutet,
unter dem Rosa Luxemburg verblutet. (323-24)

¹³⁶ Note also Tucholsky’s article ‘Die zufällige Republik’, *Werke* II, pp. 126-136, also speaks prophetically about the threat of extreme nationalism; what is likely to happen and what measures should be instituted to avoid it. He speaks of ‘die Diktatur des Nationalismus.’ *Werke* II, p. 131.



There is real irony in the people of the nation claiming that they do not want the nationalists, for the nationalists put to death the revolutionaries, who spoke on behalf of at least some of the civilian population. The irony is also striking in the politicians being called ‘Ordnungsbolschewisten’ for they are Bolsheviks in no other way.¹³⁷

Tucholsky is not exclusively a ballad writer. However, he used ballads as one of many literary techniques in his arsenal in his fight against the corruption he saw in the German state. Ballads were useful to him because he could use them to tell the stories of the people in the nation he was trying to stir up by highlighting the fate of individuals or groups of people, by exaggerating their fates in line with what he believed satire to be. He writes:

Übertreibt die Satire? Die Satire muß übertreiben... Sie bläst die Wahrheit auf,
damit sie deutlicher wird...
Was darf die Satire?
Alles. (II, 76-77)

It is the tragedy of Germany and of Tucholsky that often his exaggerations turned out to be closer to the truth than was ever expected.

1.3 Klabund

Alfred Henschke (alias Klabund) was born in 1890, the same year as Tucholsky yet he reflects less of Tucholsky’s political convictions and more of the political manoeuvring that was also part of the Weimar Republic. Although it does not come into the timeframe of

¹³⁷ Tucholsky echoes similar sentiments in ‘Zwei Erschlagene’, *Werke* I, pp. 369-70, which comments on their methods and their murders. However, it is not balladesque and therefore is not directly relevant.



this chapter, it is worth acknowledging that Klabund, although declaring himself a pacifist after the First World War, became close to the Nazis and even wrote for them at one point during the early development of the party. This manoeuvrability is summed up in his pen name of Klabund, combining the German folkloric *Klabautermann* (*Kobold* – a mischievous spirit) motif with the romantic outsider function of the *Vagabund*. He is an intriguing figure in relation to national identity due to the extent of the changes that he went through in his political opinions and forms of expression during a short period of time. He later summed up the centrality of this element of change and transformation, saying, ‘Mein Name Klabund. / Das heißt Wandlung.’¹³⁸

From writing jingoistic soldier songs extolling the honour of war and the fatherland¹³⁹ to becoming a pacifist who wrote to the Kaiser demanding the end of the war and was later imprisoned for Spartacist sentiments, the shifting politics of Klabund’s *Wandlung* capture something of the nation in flux around the time of the Weimar Republic. In the introduction to Klabund’s 1998 *Sämtliche Werke*, editor Ramazan Şen elaborates on this saying:

Werk und Person repräsentieren in vielen Facetten das typische Literatentum der sog. ‚Golden Twenties‘ in Deutschland, vor allem in Berlin und München. (I, ii)

It is as a representative of this *Zeitgeist* that a reading of Klabund’s work is most effective for he served to ‘illuminate the cultural landscape’¹⁴⁰ of his time.

¹³⁸ *Klabund, Sämtliche Werke*, Lyrik I, Vol. 1, ed. by Ramazan Şen (Amsterdam & Atlanta: Rodopi, 1998), section III, p. 183. It is important to note the centrality of the concept of ‘Wandlung’ to the German Expressionist movement at the start of the 20th century. They desired a transformation of the human, to become more fully human.

¹³⁹ Early in his career in 1912 in the poem ‘Im Morgenrot’ *Werke* I, p. 44-45, Klabund equates the fatherland with freedom itself ‘Freiheit und Vaterland’, here p. 45.

¹⁴⁰ Malcolm Read, entry on Klabund in *Encyclopedia of German Literature*, ed. by Matthias Konzett, (Chicago & London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2000), pp. 585-86, here p. 585.



Klabund was a very prolific writer, although his writing did vary greatly in quality, and throughout his short life he published twenty collections of poetry including more than 1500 poems. The focus in this section will be on poems drawn from collections published during the Weimar Republic, or poems known to have been written within this period.¹⁴¹ It is difficult to understand how a writer could pen such lines as the following without irony, but Klabund's early work did include such jingoistic soldier songs as the following 'Soldatenlied' from 1912:

Es ist kein schöner Leben,
Als Musketier zu sein,
Sein teures Blut hingeben
Ums Vaterland allein
Für zweiundzwanzig Pfennige...¹⁴²(I, 34)

From this background he developed into a strong critic of the Weimar Republic and its regime. Although Klabund experienced the failures and difficulties of the Weimar era, he never became a political activist, preferring instead to use his writing to highlight the deficiencies and tyrannical nature of the power of the state. As Klabund died of tuberculosis in 1928 he did not live to see the state tyranny of Hitler's National Socialist regime, although his name was placed on the list of the Nazi's banned authors.

Klabund is very definitely a ballad writer.¹⁴³ He draws on the satirical romanticism of Heinrich Heine, the oral techniques that Clemens Brentano showcased in *Des Knaben*

¹⁴¹ The entire texts of four of the main collections of Klabund's poetry *Morgenrot! Klabund! Die Tage dämmern!*, *Der himmlische Vagant*, *Das heiße Herz*, *Die Harfenjule* can be accessed online at <http://www.thokra.de/html/klabund.html>. Date of access 28/11/06.

¹⁴² It is hard to believe that this song is not satirical yet all the commentators on Klabund's work regard this song as being a literal reflection of his political opinion at this time.

¹⁴³ Some of his ballads, like 'Die Drei Waisen', *Der himmlische Vagant: eine Auswahl aus dem Werk*, ed. by Marianne Kesting (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1968), pp. 388-89 will not be looked at here, despite being very balladic in a traditional oral sense because they do not contribute to an understanding of Klabund and national identity. Note that references to *Der himmlische Vagant* refer to this collection and not to Klabund's 1919 poetry collection of the same name.



Wunderhorn, the work of François Villon and Frank Wedekind¹⁴⁴ and both influenced and was influenced by Brecht, with whom he was involved in the cabaret scene. His style of parodic social criticism also situates him with Kästner in the bracket of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* movement.¹⁴⁵ What we are dealing with in this section is a web of interrelationships and intertextuality which stretches back to the 15th century French Ballade, through Max Schneckenburger's 'Die Wacht am Rhein',¹⁴⁶ Hoffmann von Fallersleben's 'Das Lied der Deutschen',¹⁴⁷ to the contemporary interconnections amongst like-minded writers and artists. Klabund's ballads draw on both literary and oral forerunners but deliberately use a traditional oral form as an instrument of modernity in order to make an ironic or heavily sentimentalised comment which has contemporary relevance.

As with many of his contemporaries discussed in this chapter, Klabund draws a clear distinction between the state and the nation of Germany. The state is seen as being tyrannical, cruel and enslaving, while 'Germany' or the concept of Germany seems without coherence, absent, a void filled only with fractured conceptions of what remains of the Germany that existed before World War I. It is this void that the writers attempt to fill with a concept of the 'other' Germany. However, it is these disparate insights that reflect the complexity of attempting to realise some conception of Germany within the Weimar era. In post-World War I Scotland, Cairns Craig describes a similar void, a restless search for a

¹⁴⁴ Klabund has a 'Ballade (für Frank Wedekind)', *Der himmlische Vagant*, pp. 397-98, which tells the story of an abandoned child.

¹⁴⁵ The *Neue Sachlichkeit* movement will be discussed in the Erich Kästner section of this chapter.

¹⁴⁶ *Politische Lyrik*, p. 9-10. Allusions to this appear in several poems which will be discussed in this chapter. 'Früher Morgen in der Friedrichstrasse' which is too early to be relevant here, also plays on the first line with 'Da braust der erste Stadtbahnzug ins Loch / der Bahnhofshalle...' *Der himmlische Vagant*, p. 340.

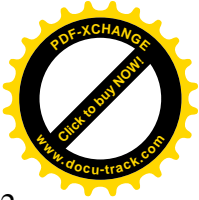
¹⁴⁷ *Politische Lyrik*, p. 10.



'lost cultural continuity, a shared myth of the true Scot and the real Scotland.'¹⁴⁸ From being subsumed within the British military war effort, the 1920s saw Scotland beginning to try to realise a new concept of Scottishness. This quotation exemplifies many of the issues at stake in the modern literary renaissance agenda and issues which will become very obvious again in Germany in the post World War II situation; something has been lost, the continuity has been broken and hence, this has to be located in order to be of use. It also raises the problematic terms of the true and the real. The 'myth' has to be a shared concept and must encompass both the notions of 'the people' and of the country itself.

Klabund presents the German state as being a ruthless master. This can be seen clearly in the two linked ballads from 1922 which were published side by side in *Das heiÙe Herz*, 'Ballade vom deutschen Landsknecht' (II, 426) and 'Jochen Himmelreich' (II, 427-28). The 'Ballade vom deutschen Landsknecht' has a straightforward narrative, told in a 4-line, abab stanzaic form, while the narrative of 'Jochen Himmelreich' is placed in extended stanzas with intricate rhyming patterns. The ballads are linked by the play on words whereby the 'Landsknecht' (II, 426) in the first ballad becomes 'Des Landes Knecht' (II, 427) in the second, the 15th/16th century mercenary soldier becoming the contemporary soldier who is enslaved to the nation. However, instead of telling, as would be expected from the title, the story of historical mercenaries, the 'Ballade vom deutschen Landsknecht' tells the story of the modern soldiers who endured many marches across Europe. This temporal leap shows that history has not learnt from its mistakes but instead of being paid soldiers, these German soldiers have to pay the unfeeling state with their lifeblood. Klabund parodies the Lord's Prayer, crying in the last stanza:

¹⁴⁸ Cairns Craig, *The History of Scottish Literature: Twentieth Century*, Vol. 4 (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1987), p. 6.



O Deutschland unser, das du bist im Himmel!
Wir fühlen tausendfach dein Weh.
Und deiner Söhne grauestes Gewimmel
Ist Stein zu deiner ewigen Statue. (II, 426)

The *Vaterland* replaces the Father in the prayer and is apostrophised as afar off in heaven, as opposed to on earth where his children are. Although the soldiers feel the pain of Germany in her sufferings a thousand times over, Germany is as stone to her many sons.¹⁴⁹ The human cost does not count, the only thing which is important is Germany's eternal existence, the commemoration of the state in the 'ewigen Statue' (II, 426).

In 'Jochen Himmelreich', (II, 427-28) the state is represented by the Kaiser and by the 'deutsche Fahne', the 'schwarzweißrote Fahne' (II, 427) of the Wilhelmine period. Germany is embodied in this flag which was the official flag for the 2nd Reich from 1871-1919, and which is depicted as sacred, always having 'ein Heiligschein um sie.' (II, 427). Regardless of whether the soldiers were led through 'tausend Himmel- und Höllenqualen' (II, 427), their allegiance was due to the state and its official bodies. The story is of one soldier called Jochen Himmelreich, whose name is laden with irony for the utopian heaven on earth for which the Germans had fought has become a hell on earth from which he cannot escape. The refrain maintains a basic pattern which is varied throughout but initially reads:

Deutschland, Du bist unser Tod und Leben!
Ich bin dein Knecht.
Des Landes Knecht,
Und stehe auf der Wacht.
Schwarz ist die Nacht,
Weiß ist der Schnee,
Weh,
Es droht

¹⁴⁹ Klabund echoes the image of Germany being made of stone in his 1926 poem 'An das Vaterland' (I, 547) where he stresses the fact that the country has a 'Felsenhaupt' which is proud and raised up above all else.



Der Tod
Dem morschen Weltgefüge.
Rot fließt das Blut aus unsrer Brust,
O Lebensleid, o Lebenslust!
Fliege, schwarzweißrote Fahne, fliege. (II, 427)

In a similar way to the 'Ballade vom deutschen Landsknecht', Klabund here employs a liturgical feeling with the apostrophe of 'Deutschland!' the country which is literally Jochen's life and death, his 'Lebensleid und Lebenslust'. In this opposition we find what Tucholsky six years later¹⁵⁰ describes as the tension between the hatred and the love he feels for Germany. Each stanza begins with the assertion of his identity, 'Mein Name ist Jochen Himmelreich' (II, 427-28). Jochen is enslaved to Germany, he is 'Des Landes Knecht' (II, 427-28), an Everyman figure whose universalising allegorical function allows for the individual to become plural in the line 'Rot / Fließt das Blut aus unsrer Brust' (II, 428). The colours of the flag take on new significance with the black of night, the white of snow and the red of blood. In the poem the very structure of the world is seen as being insecure and shaky, threatened by death and by material need.

Germany moves from being the alpha and the omega in the poem, to being a shameful thing: 'Deutschland, die Schande wuchert und schlemmt!' (II, 427). This occurs through a development of Jochen's own consciousness where he discovers a wider international humanist perspective when he says 'Brüder, wir wären Kameraden geworden, / Aber wir müssen uns stechen und mordern' (II, 428). The final stanza turns the ballad around. It provides personal details about Jochen; he has a wife who drowns herself and children who are starving in his absence. This brings him to the recognition that 'Sie verkaufen unser

¹⁵⁰ Tucholsky's poem 'Kurt Tucholsky' discussed earlier was written in 1928 whereas 'Jochen Himmelreich' was published in 1922.



Fleisch – Lebensgewicht – für Gold.’ (II, 428). The reality of their enslavement has dawned and with it, the mutiny which turns the loyal ‘Deutschland, Du bist unser Tod und Leben’ into the revolutionary cry ‘Aber einmal werden wir erstehen, / Tot und lebend euch ins Auge sehen’ (II, 428) when the dead and the living will face up to their oppressor.

The poem ends with the revolutionary vigour of the final threatening stanza:

Deutschland, wir werden die Ernte mähen!
Ich bin dein Knecht,
Des Landes Knecht,
Und stehe auf der Wacht:
Schwarz ist die Nacht,
Weiss ist der Schnee,
Weh,
Droht
Auch der Tod -
Es breche oder biege!
Rot
Sucht das Blut sich seinen Pfad
Und düngt der Freiheit junge Saat.
Fliege, rote Fahne, fliege ... (II, 428)

While Germany had previously harvested the fruits of the soldiers’ obedience, now it will reap the whirlwind as a new flag is hoisted and the newly-proclaimed freedom is watered by the blood that was spilled in the name of the country. The old flag of Germany has been discarded, but it has not been replaced by the new black-red-gold colours of Weimar¹⁵¹ but rather by the red of the Spartacist and the Communist revolution.

The positive ending of this ballad is tempered by the later ballad, ‘Vater ist auch dabei’ (HV, 415), which is grouped with the ‘Chansons and Brettlieder’¹⁵² in *Der himmlische Vagant*. Klabund combines the archaic folkloric beginning ‘Und als sie zogen in den

¹⁵¹ This flag was also used at the *Hambacher Fest* and the 1848 uprising.

¹⁵² *Brettlieder* are a type of *Bänkelsang*, a narrative song which was originally sung to illustrations on a board (*Brett*), often by a singer standing on a bench (*Bank*).



Krieg' (HV, 415) with the story of a father who returns from the war to become involved with the Spartacists, despite the advice of his wife and child. The poem uses the ballad technique of repetition, for the lines 'Da standen am Fenster die zwei' and 'Vater ist auch dabei' (HV, 415) are repeated in each stanza to chart the course of the narrative. In each stanza the lines take on different tenses and meanings. The final stanza reveals a tragic irony:

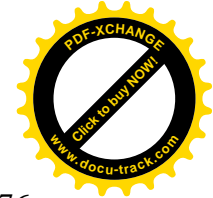
Vorbei der Traum der Revolution:
Wenn früh die Kolonnen ziehn zur Fron,
Stehen am Fenster die zwei:
Es zieht ein Zug von Hunger und Leid
In Ewigkeit – in die Ewigkeit –
Vater ist auch dabei. (HV, 415)

The mother and child are caught in the present tense, in the eternal now moment of their loss, for the revolution has failed and their suffering and hunger is permanent, for the father and husband has died in the fighting and now belongs in eternity. So Klabund also reveals the human price paid for the attempt to wrest a revolution from the arms of those in power in Germany.¹⁵³

Klabund's detailed poem 'Hört, Hört!' (HV, 452-57) charts the story of the Weimar Republic, including topical comments on the politicians of the time and the period itself. It is subtitled 'Genio loci, To the spirit of the place', making it Klabund's clearest comment on the Germany of his time.¹⁵⁴ It is written in rhyming couplets and is balladic in that it

¹⁵³ Klabund's view of a more successful revolution is captured in his 'Ballade vom Bolschewik' which reveals his revolutionary sympathies for the revolution of 1917 in Russia, (HV, 416-18).

¹⁵⁴ It is worth noting that the choice of Weimar as a new beginning for the German nation was deliberate. On a practical level it removed the constitutional activity from the hotbed that was revolutionary Berlin, but on a more cultural level, it highlighted the choosing of Weimar, which is a centre of German culture, a place inseparably linked with Goethe, Schiller, and Herder and thus with the riches of German Romantic poetry. Hence, the politicians at the time were making a political and cultural statement by their choice of Weimar as a place to draft the constitution.



presents a narrative of the era in all its complexity and confusion. It is interesting to draw out Klabund's opinions on the state that he presents here.

He separates the nation and the state saying:

In Deutschland geht es drüber, drunter.
In Weimar ist man leidlich munter. (HV, 452)

There is no coherence between the nation of Germany and the state that is attempting to govern the nation. Here we see clearly the division that Meinecke stresses between *Staatsnation* and *Kulturnation* to which Klabund had drawn attention back in 1919: 'Ich sage Land! Ihr paukt: Fester Staat und festliche Staatlichkeit'.¹⁵⁵ Here the state is attempting to build up a reputable government to rebuild Germany, but Klabund stresses that it is nothing new, it is not breaking with the past but the ways of the national parliament are still 'Den ältesten Wein in älteste Schläuche.' (HV, 452). He claims it is just a reawakening of the 'alte Reichstag' (HV, 452).¹⁵⁶ He contrasts the heightened phrases of the ballad narrative 'Die Erde brennt. Die Erde brennt' (HV, 452) and 'Es steigt die Flut, es brennt die Flamm' (HV, 453) with the commonplace tone of 'In Weimar tagt das Parlament' (HV, 452) and the disparaging 'In Weimar hocken sie zusamnn,' (HV, 453) where all they live on is 'Chimären' (HV, 456). This new dawn, 'das Licht... / Der neuen Morgenröte,' (HV, 454) that the politicians in Weimar offer is not seen as being new, it does not seem to relate to the reality of what is happening in the nation of Germany at the time, and hence does not gain legitimacy from those whom it is courting.

It is clear that he is scathing about the efforts of the fledgling Republic. The irony is telling in the lines combining the new world with the myths of the old:

¹⁵⁵ 'Silvia oder die Verheissung', Part VIII in the 1919 *Dreiklang* collection, *Werke* I, p. 299.

¹⁵⁶ *Werke* I, p. 299.



Empor, du neue Welt der Mythen!!

(Ob Weimar oder ob Versailles:
Es ist die gleiche grande canaille.) (HV, 457)

For Klabund, the new world will just replicate the old, except with different myths, whether based on the principles of the Weimar Republic or of Versailles, the people are the same rabble and are equally untrustworthy. He pours scorn on the German National Assembly comparing it to the French assembly saying:

Schon hat, was kindlich hier gestammelt,
Auch dort sich nationalversammelt.¹⁵⁷(HV, 457)

However, the French Revolution was successful, whereas the German Republic is only built on shaky foundations.

Apart from such expressly topical political balladry, Klabund also comments on the social state of the nation. Here we see that his eye is attracted, like Kästner and Brecht, to the outcast and the underdog or the ordinary man in the street. His social critique also often deals with the role of women in a judgemental society. In Klabund's ballad 'Im Obdachlosenasyll' (II, 608-09) from his 1927 collection *Die Harfenjule*, the first person narration tells the story of a girl who has become the victim of 'love' for in loving a man and becoming pregnant, she spirals downwards, killing her child, turning to prostitution and eventually becoming ill and embittered, being prepared to pass on her disease to whichever man she sleeps with. This functions along the same lines as the 'Kindermörderballade', and also includes a comment on the state of Berlin as the capital of the *Vaterland*:

Wer weiß, wie Liebe tut.

¹⁵⁷ The use of the French word 'canaille' indicates that this most likely refers to the national assembly set up in France following the French Revolution.



Berlin, o wie süß,
Ist dein Paradies.
Unsere Vaterstadt
Schneidige Mädchen hat.
Schwamm drüber. Tralala. (II, 608-09)

The utopian notion of German society is destroyed in the irony of ‘o wie süß / Ist dein Paradies’ (II, 608-09). Berlin is seen as the cradle of humanity being forced to become inhumane because of social circumstances beyond the control of those at the bottom of the social scale. These ideas are reflected in ‘In Lichterfelde Ost’ (HV, 402) where another woman becomes the victim of men and unwittingly signs her own death sentence. Also in the ‘Hamburger Hurenlied’ (HV, 406-07)¹⁵⁸ this is made most apparent in the lines:

Eines Tages holt die Sitte uns hinaus,
Und sie sperrt uns in das graue Krankenhaus.
Dann sind wir tot und sterben
Wohl bei der Nacht,
Ahoi!
Weil es uns Freude macht. (HV, 407)

In this, Klavand was very close to other writers and also other artists of the Weimar period, painters like Otto Dix and Georg Grosz who peopled their paintings with prostitutes and fallen women. There was an artistic desire to uncover the reality of the society in all its darkness and complexity, on a political, social and human level.

This is made most explicit in ‘Berliner Weihnacht 1918’ (II, 431) which captures many of the themes and social concerns of the Weimar period in a similar way to Otto Dix’s painting ‘Grossstadt Triptych’, which contrasts the walking wounded, the prostitutes and the vibrant social scene of Berlin.

¹⁵⁸ *Der himmlische Vagant*, p. 406-07.



Plate 2: Otto Dix, 'Grossstadt Triptych'

In the poem *Klabund* sets up a series of oppositions, framing them in a tragicomic balladic narrative with close internal rhymes and rhythms adding to the comic effect. Each stanza ends with the line 'Wir wolln uns mal wieder amüsieren' (II, 431) which initially refers to the hedonistic society of the rich of the Weimar era who open the poem. As in the Weimar Parliament, the rich 'hocken zusammn' (I, 431) and the liberated rich women play coquettishly at being prostitutes, joking about who will pay them. Their attitude is summed up in the heartless lines:

-- Nee, uns kanns nich fehlen,
 Und wenn Millionen vor Hunger krepieren:
 Wir wolln uns mal wieder amüsieren. (I, 431)

There is an element of self-righteousness to the lines, as if the rich have earned the right to enjoy themselves again after the war had just ended. Here we have the opposition of façade and reality, rich and poor, of the rotteness at the core of society where those at the top can amuse themselves while those below them do not have the choice or possibilities to do so.



The second stanza transports us from the lights of the Kurfürstendamm to the darkness of the Wedding quarter of Berlin. Here Klabund presents a view of one who has paid the price of war, of a poor man who has lost five of his seven children and is now ill and starving. Although it is not clear, the suggestion is in the poem that his two remaining children are the ‘Zwei magre Nutten’ (II, 431) who are freezing in the doorway. Thus the coquettishness of the rich women in the first stanza is set in opposition to the hardship and desperation of those driven to prostitution in order to survive. The heavily laden repetition of ‘Wir wolln uns mal wieder amüsieren’ (I, 431) coming from the mouths of the poor prostitutes serves to highlight the disparities between those who can and those who cannot, between the extremes that the society harbours of rich and poor.

The final stanza opens with lines reminiscent of oral balladry in their speed and scene-setting:

Es schneit, es stürmt. Eine Stimme schreit: Halt...
Über die Dächer türmt eine dunkle Gestalt...
Die Blicke brennen, mit letzter Kraft
Umspannt die Hand einen Fahnschaft. (I, 431)

The man on the roof with ‘Die Fahne vom neunten November’¹⁵⁹ (I, 431) is presented as the last hope of a starving and desperate underclass. This hope is swiftly dispatched as the man is shot and falls from the roof, symbolising in his death the death of the German revolution. The sin of the society which allows such things to happen is pictured in the Biblical image of ‘Der weiße Schnee färbt sich blutrot.’ (II, 431).¹⁶⁰ The poem’s final lines

¹⁵⁹ This refers to the 9th November 1918 when the Kaiser abdicated in face of uprisings throughout Germany.

¹⁶⁰ “Come now, let us reason together,” says the LORD. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow.” (Isaiah 1.18). Here this motif is reversed, for the snow is tainted by the blood which is split upon it, revealing the guilt and sin of the nation as exemplified in its army. This image is also used much later in Süverkrüp’s ‘Kirschen auf Sahne’ when dealing with the guilt of the Holocaust. This will be discussed in the German folk revival chapter of this thesis.



are all inconclusive, each of the last seven lines ending with an aposiopesis of three dots. This stresses the instability and emptiness of the period, no more so than in the starkness of the final line with the accumulation of voices ‘Wir wolln uns mal wieder amüsieren’ (I, 431).

Similar sentiments are echoed in ‘Die Ballade des Vergessens’ (HV, 418-21) when Klabund holds up a mirror to a society which seems to have forgotten the price that its people paid so that ‘ein paar Dutzend’ (HV, 419) could win the war. The millions of starving people of the previous ballad are recollected in the opposition of these few dozens and the ‘Millionen [die] krepiereten in diesem Krieg.’ (HV, 419). Klabund stresses that the few profited from the war and in the relief of the post-war period, much of the reality is being glossed over and ‘vergessen, vergessen, vergessen.’ (HV, 419). The threefold repetition of the word plus the repetition of the line, either as a question or a statement at the end of each stanza, focuses on the selective amnesia that has beset the society. Klabund ends the ballad by stressing that God, the judge of all time, will not forget those who died in the war, nor those responsible for their deaths.

Klabund also plays with the notion of German pride throughout this ballad by parodying again the national anthem:

Es blühte noch nach dem Kriege der Mord,
Es war eine Lust, zu knallen.
Es zeigte sich in diesem traurigen Sport
Sich Deutschland über allen.¹⁶¹ (HV, 419)

¹⁶¹ Klabund also pokes fun at the national anthem in ‘Berliner in Italien’, where he says ‘Die ganze Welt ist voll von Berlinern / Deutschland, Deutschland überall in der Welt.’ (HV, 428-29).

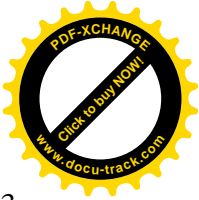


Here, the only extent to which Germany is 'Deutschland über alles', is in the extent of its degradation and continued destruction of human life, even after the war had ended. He also parodies the concept of the heroic ballad, saying that there will be 'kein Nibelungenlied' sung 'von eurem Untergang.' (HV, 421). This harks back to the ancient fear that one could die and not be remembered, not have songs sung about oneself. Therefore 'Die Ballade des Vergessens' is a panegyric song which attempts to remember and remind Germany of what it would rather forget. It is essential to national identity that the past is not forgotten, even if it is a dark past, and it is often the satirists who force the society to look into the mirror of their own culture and face up to the reality that they find therein. It is this act of anamnesis that Klabund is trying to create in the poem. One final comment reveals that Klabund has a positive attitude towards the original concept of the *Vaterland*:

Wir haben Gott und Vaterland
Mit geifernden Mäulern geschändet (HV, 419)

At this point in the poem Klabund still includes himself among the 'wir' in contrast to later when he changes the personal pronoun to 'ihr' and distances himself from those he is attacking. For Klabund the concepts of God and fatherland appear to be theoretically above reproach, to be pure in and of themselves or at least to contain within themselves, the possibility to be pure. Klabund suggests that it is only through contamination with men's own national or political desires that these concepts are corrupted.

However, the fatherland is seen as being a panacea which blinds the gullible poor to how they are being exploited. It is not religion which is here the opiate of the masses, but the religious cult that has been built up around the concept of the fatherland. In the topical poem 'Der geistige Arbeiter in der Inflation' (HV, 422-23) Klabund satirises the plight of



the worker in the terrible inflationary period of the Weimar Republic, who is saving every Mark he can to prepare for his impending death. The irony lies in his choice of wood:

Aus deutscher Eiche. – Das Vaterland
Reichte mir hilfreich stets die Vaterhand.
Begrabt mich in deutschem Holz, in deutscher Erde,
im deutschen Wald.
Aber bald! (HV, 423)

The idiocy of the man's blinded attitude towards the fatherland that he still believes is supporting him is highlighted by the comedy in the poem, but the tragedy of the waste of human life cannot be overlooked and it is Klabund's goal that his reader / listener does not overlook it.

Klabund's relationship to patriotism is worth some comment here. In 'Der Landwirt Würstlein von Sebelsdorf' (HV, 423) with the subtitle '*Patriotisches Gedicht*' Klabund makes a clear statement against patriotism. This belongs to a group of poems in which Klabund plays with and parodies famous German poems and songs. Here it is the arch-patriotic poem, Scheckenburger's 'Die Wacht am Rhein' which receives this treatment. In addition to inverting many German figures of speech, this ballad upends many positive values, making them negative.

Trotz Gut und Blut hie schwarzweißbrot,
Da hat es selbender keine Not!
Fest steht und treu der Rhein auf der Wacht.
Durch Sieg zum Tod! Durch Licht zur Nacht! ¹⁶² (HV, 432)

Again Klabund symbolises the Germany he is mocking in its flag, the Wilhelmine schwarzweißbrot, instead of the new Weimar schwarzrotgold. The intertextual link of 'Die Wacht am Rhein' links this patriotic concept of Germany with the past, with a time of

¹⁶² Note the inversion of 'Fest steht und treu die Wacht am Rhein', *Politische Lyrik*, p. 9.



military victory and pride where the social classes were ordered and unchangeable. Klabund's mockery of the farmer 'Würstlein', the subtitle stressing its patriotism, and the ending of the poem in death and night, instead of victory and light, leave the reader clear that this character is to be regarded in a sceptical, negative light.

Similar mockeries of the *völkisch*¹⁶³ are also found in 'Die Ballade von den Hofsängern' (II, 602) whereupon it becomes obvious that the singers put on their political opinions, depending upon who is listening. This ability to pick and choose is also central to Klabund's own political colours:

[Wir] sind katholisch, wenn es sich lohnt,
Auch singen wir völkisch voll und ganz
Für'n Sechser Heil dir im Siegerkranz.
Jawoll.¹⁶⁴ (II, 602)

The *völkisch* is not seen as belonging to the people or having some inherent connection to the past or to the *Volk* but as something which can be utilised for certain ends. Here, the minstrels choose to use it if they are paid to present such a song, but in the constructions of Germany, Klabund points out that the folkloric tradition can be similarly exploited to achieve whatever political ends the exploiter wishes. This ballad shows this exploitation in its frank nakedness, in order to make the reader/listener aware that this may be happening in disguise in their own society. This obviously becomes most apparent during the Nazi's exploitation of the concept of the *Volk*, although the same elements, i.e. glorification of the past, the romanticisation of a Golden Age and of the unity of the people are also present in the Weimar Republic.

¹⁶³ It is worth noting that Klabund's concept of the *völkisch* was also linked with the *Pöbel*, the rabble, and was therefore inherently negative. Klabund was much more supportive of individualism. See the aforementioned 'Silvia oder die Verheissung', Part VIII in the 1919 *Dreiklang* collection, (I, 299).

¹⁶⁴ 'Heil dir im Siegerkranz' was the national anthem that Bismarck chose instead of the 'Deutschlandlied'.



To conclude with the humour which characterises much of Klabund's work, his cento poem 'Deutsches Volkslied' (HV, 457-58) offers a highly amusing and also pointed conglomeration of all that is regarded as *völkisch* in German society.

Es braust ein Ruf wie Donnerhall,¹⁶⁵
Daß ich so traurig bin.¹⁶⁶
Und Friede, Friede überall,¹⁶⁷
Das kommt mir nicht aus dem Sinn.¹⁶⁸

Kaiser Rotbart im Kyffhäuser saß¹⁶⁹
An der Wand entlang, an der Wand.
Wer nie sein Brot mit Tränen aß,¹⁷⁰
Bist du, mein Bayerland!

Wer reitet so spät durch Nacht und Wind?¹⁷¹
Ich rate dir gut, mein Sohn!¹⁷²
Urahn, Großmutter, Mutter und Kind¹⁷³
Vom Roßbachbataillon.

O selig, o selig, ein Kind noch zu sein,¹⁷⁴
Von der Wiege bis zur Bahr!
Mariechen saß auf einem Stein,
Sie kämmt ihr goldenes Haar.¹⁷⁵

Sie kämmt's mit goldnem Kamme,¹⁷⁶
Wie Zieten aus dem Busch.¹⁷⁷

¹⁶⁵ Schneckenburger, 'Die Wacht am Rhein', *Politische Lyrik*, pp. 9-10.

¹⁶⁶ Heinrich Heine, 'Loreley', *Deutsche Gedichte: Von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. by Theodor Echtermeyer and Benno von Wiese (Berlin: Cornelsen, 1993), p. 431.

¹⁶⁷ Detlev Freiherr von Liliencron, 'Krieg und Frieden' see <http://www.baerliner-kaeseblatt.de/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=337>. Date of access 281106.

¹⁶⁸ 'Loreley', *Deutsche Gedichte*, p. 431.

¹⁶⁹ Ferdinand Freiligrath, 'Barbarossas erstes Erwachen', *Das große deutsche Balladenbuch*, ed. by Beate Pinkerneil (Königstein: Athenäum, 1978).

¹⁷⁰ Goethe, 'Wer nie sein Brot mit Tränen aß' see <http://ingeb.org/Lieder/werniese.html>. Date of access 281106.

¹⁷¹ Goethe, 'Erkönig', *Balladenbuch*, p. 91.

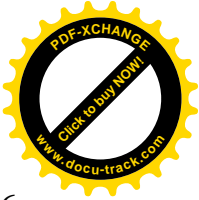
¹⁷² 'Warnung vor den Rhein', by Karl Joseph Simrock. See http://www.recmusic.org/lieder/get_text.html?TextId=15080. Date of access 281106. The song ends 'An den Rhein, an den Rhein, / Zieh' nicht an den Rhein, / Mein Sohn, ich rate dir gut!'

¹⁷³ Gustav Schwab, 'Das Gewitter' <http://ingeb.org/Lieder/urahneg.html>. Date of access 281106.

¹⁷⁴ Anonymous song of the Tsar, 'O selig, o selig, ein Kind noch zu sein', see <http://ingeb.org/Lieder/oseligos.html>. Date of access 281106.

¹⁷⁵ Anonymous folksong 'Mariechen, saß auf einem Stein', see <http://ingeb.org/Lieder/mariecha.html>. Date of access 281106.

¹⁷⁶ 'Loreley', *Deutsche Gedichte*, p. 431.



Sonne, du klagende Flamme:¹⁷⁸
Husch! Husch!

Der liebe Gott geht durch den Wald,¹⁷⁹
Von der Etsch bis an der Belt,¹⁸⁰
Daß lustig es zum Himmel schallt:
Fahr wohl, du schöne Welt!

Der schnellste Reiter ist der Tod,
Mit Juppheidi und Juppheida.¹⁸¹
Stolz weht die Flage Schwarzweißrot.¹⁸²
Hurra, Germania!

This poem concludes, again, with the old flag, with the old concept of Germania, as opposed to Deutschland and with the overblown pride of the *Niederwalddenkmal*, where the figure of Germania towers over the Rhine, embodying the victorious German spirit. It is essentially this blind pride that Klabund attacks in his poem, the piecemeal approach to history being reflected in the pastiche of the folksongs.

Klabund's writing forces the reader / listener to face up to reality as it is happening in the Weimar Republic. He uses the ballad form to link in his narratives with a tradition of romanticised poetry which he can then subvert. Klabund presents stories of different people in various social situations within the Weimar Republic, drawing attention to the plight of the lower social classes and the losses endured by the average German citizen in the face of the political situation in which they have to live. His satirical eye highlights the discrepancies and injustices of the German state, hoping, in drawing attention to them, that

¹⁷⁷ Theodor Fontane, 'Der alte Zieten', *Balladenbuch*, p. 421.

¹⁷⁸ Heinrich Heine, 'Deutschland ein Wintermärchen', Caput XIV, see <http://www.articulate.de/heine/winter/winter14.htm>. Date of access 281106.

Heine says in the poem that it is the final line from an old folksong that his nurse used to sing him.

¹⁷⁹ Leberecht Blücher Dreves 'Waldandacht' see http://www.recmusic.org/lieder/get_text.html?TextId=5035. Date of access 281106.

¹⁸⁰ Hoffmann von Fallersleben, 'Das Lied der Deutschen', *Politische Lyrik*, p. 10.

¹⁸¹ These nonsense syllables form the refrain of many German marching songs.

¹⁸² This song of the German navy was common in the oral tradition and was sung by the Nazis. It is included in the *Liederbuch der Nationalsozialistischen Partei*, pp. 54-55.



something could be done to remedy the situation. Klabund does not despise Germany itself, but his work does reveal deep-seated problems with the state apparatus of the Weimar Republic, with its flawed attitude to the fatherland and its ideologically-suspect patriotic underpinnings. The national identity that he expounds, although it is subject to change and is not continuously coherent, is one of fully-functioning German people who are prepared to separate themselves from the sense of identity they gain from the past and look into the void that was German identity at the time of writing, in the attempt to construct and build up a more positive conception of what it means to be German.

Scotland did not have to deal with many of the difficulties that Germany did in the 1920s, however, the Scottish nation had their own version of a cultural void to come to terms with. While the German authors used the ballad as an instrument of political satire, the Scottish writers, utilised the ballad as something ‘distinctively Scottish’¹⁸³ and as a carrier of the tradition of an independent Scotland from a pre-Union period. While most of the Scottish writers drew from these traditional ballads, Sir Alexander Gray also published *Songs and Ballads, chiefly from Heine* in 1920,¹⁸⁴ linking his Scots translations of the literary German ballads into ‘a vein that suited the Scottish genius.’¹⁸⁵ This was unusual as most of the ballads were translated from English / Scots into German rather than vice versa. His yoking together of the German Romantic tradition and the Scots ballad tradition foreshadowed the emphasis the Renaissance was to place on links with Europe.

¹⁸³ These are MacDiarmid’s words and show the ballads as a marker of cultural difference, although this overlooks the complexities of placing a ballad in a national setting and ignores the fact that there are English and Scottish versions of the same ballad.

¹⁸⁴ Alexander Gray, *Songs and Ballads Chiefly from Heine* (London: Grant Richards Ltd., 1920).

¹⁸⁵ Kurt Wittig, *The Scottish Tradition in Literature* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1958), p. 280.



1.4 Brecht

In his foreword to the 1966 *Gedichte und Lieder* selection of Brecht's poems, Peter Suhrkamp remarks:

Daß Brecht als Dichter, im Gedicht und im Drama, die Historie unseres Volkes seit 1918 schreibt, wird noch viel zu wenig gesehen.¹⁸⁶

It would be easy to assume from this quotation that in writing this 'history' Brecht would have much to say about the political situation of the German people immediately after World War I. Added to this the fact that Brecht is famed for being a political writer, it could safely be expected that Brecht would provide a rich vein in dealing with concepts of national identity. This, however, is not the case. It is essential to be aware that Brecht was an internationalist and did not highly value his German identity. For him, 'nations' were those of Disraeli, the nations of rich and poor,¹⁸⁷ and his identity was that found in the international brotherhood of the working man, rather than within geographically- or culturally-demarcated national borders.

As this section deals solely with work taken from the years of the Weimar Republic, it only encompasses Brecht's anarchic and nihilist phases, leading into his discovery of Marxist writings, rather than the later work for which he is most well known and in which it is easier to find specific political, although again not explicitly national statements. In none of his work, however, whether early or late, does Brecht attempt to construct a concept of the nation, as a geographic or cultural entity, as understood in this thesis. However, his

¹⁸⁶ Bertolt Brecht, *Gedichte und Lieder*, ed. by Peter Suhrkamp (Berlin & Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1966), p. 6.

¹⁸⁷ Benjamin Disraeli described the 'Two nations between whom there is no intercourse and no sympathy; who are as ignorant of each other's habits, thoughts, and feelings, as if they were dwellers in different zones, or inhabitants of different planets. The rich and the poor.' *Sybil, or the Two Nations*, (London: Warne, 1868) available as download from <http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/3760>. Date of access 141206.



work is of value because the criticisms that he raises against the Weimar regime are echoed in the other writers in this chapter and are endemic to the intellectual life of the period. To some extent his later work can be seen as a protest against the German political nation, in Meinecke's sense, but it is more as of an example of a capitalist state, rather than of Germany specifically.¹⁸⁸ There are some ballads which are still of interest, but it is important to bear this context in mind while considering them.

As Brecht was a hugely prolific writer, it has been necessary to be very selective in the examples chosen for investigation in this section. The ballads under discussion are drawn from the poetry collection *Hauspostille* (1927),¹⁸⁹ the operas *Die Dreigroschenoper* (1928),¹⁹⁰ and *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* (1929/30)¹⁹¹ and the song-cycle *Das Berliner Requiem* (1929).¹⁹² Despite containing many ballads, the poems of the *Nachlaß*¹⁹³ provided no material relevant to national identity.¹⁹⁴ In view of the huge mass of work by and about Brecht, this selection has been limited to work which shows clear evidence of a balladic tradition and speaks expressly about German national identity, the state, or the political situation of the time.

¹⁸⁸ Even in the 1948 version of *Die Dreigroschenoper* when Brecht updated the songs to attack the Hitler regime, the criticism was specifically anti-Hitler, rather than anti-German, i.e. 'Der neue Kanonen-Song' and 'Die Ballade vom angenehmen Leben der Hitlersatrapen'. See the appendix to Brecht's *Werke*, pp. 150-52.

¹⁸⁹ Bertolt Brecht, *Hauspostille: Mit Anleitungen, Gesangnoten und einem Anhang* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1977), first published as *Taschenpostille* (Berlin: Propyläen, 1926), republished with some changes as *Hauspostille*, (Berlin: Propyläen, 1927). References in this section will be made to the 1977 Suhrkamp collection.

¹⁹⁰ *Die Dreigroschenoper* (*The Threepenny Opera*) opened at the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm in Berlin in 1928 and became the most successful play of the Weimar Republic.

¹⁹¹ *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* opened at the Leipzig opera in 1930 and was picketed by the Nazis.

¹⁹² Weill composed the *Berliner Requiem* during November and December of 1928, but state censors' concerns about the political and religious nature of Brecht's poems delayed the broadcast performance until 22nd May 1929 when it was broadcast by Radio Frankfurt. Brecht's poems were censored so that the reference to the murder of Rosa Luxemburg in the epitaph to 'Die rote Rosa' had to be replaced by 'Hier ruht die Jungfrau Johanna Beck' in the movement 'Marterl'.

¹⁹³ Bertolt Brecht, *Gesammelte Werke: Gedichte aus dem Nachlaß: 1913-1956*, Supplement 2, (8 vols), ed. by Herta Ramthun (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1982).

¹⁹⁴ The unpublished earlier work, *Lieder zur Klampfe* (1918) also yielded nothing of interest.



Brecht's use of the ballad is as slippery as his politics. The variant editions of his poems in different collections during his lifetime prove that he uses the terms 'Ballade', 'Legende' and 'Lied' fairly indiscriminately. For example, the poem known as 'Lied der drei Soldaten' in the *Taschenpostille*¹⁹⁵ becomes the 'Ballade von den drei Soldaten' in the 1956 edition of the *Hauspostille*.¹⁹⁶ Kurt Wölfel correctly observes, in his introduction to Brecht's *Selected Poems*, that 'Ballade is a complex term as used by Brecht and comprises poems of differing structures.'¹⁹⁷ Most of Brecht's early poems are actually ballads, in the strict stanzaic and rhythmical sense, whether he specifically calls them such or refers to them as 'Lied', 'Song', 'Historie', or 'Legende'.

Brecht is clearly influenced in his ballad writing by several sources. First of all, his work shows the influence of the 19th century German *Kunstballade*, with the usual stress on a dramatic situation, presented *in medias res* with narrative progression. He also acknowledges his debt to modern balladeers, especially Kipling. Brecht's 'Ballade vom Weib und dem Soldaten' (HP, 106-7) which appeared in the *Taschenpostille* with the rubric 'nach einer englischen Soldatenballade' was later revealed to be based on a ballad fragment found at the end of Kipling's short story 'Love o' Women'.¹⁹⁸ From Kipling he also draws his use of the refrain. As is the case with Klabund, the medieval *poète maudit*, François

¹⁹⁵ In the *Taschenpostille* collection (1926). For details see the contents listings in the Appendix of *Werke*, Vol. 11, p. 279.

¹⁹⁶ For the 1956 edition of *Hauspostille*, see *Bertolt Brecht Werke: Grosse kommentierte Berliner und Frankfurter Ausgabe, Gedichte I: Sammlungen 1918-1933*, 33 vols, Vol. 11, ed. by Werner Hecht et al., (Berlin: Aufbau, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1988), p. 285.

¹⁹⁷ *Bertolt Brecht, Selected Poems*, ed. by Kurt Wölfel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 16.

¹⁹⁸ 'That's what the girl told the soldier' in the short story 'Love-o'-Women' from Kipling's 1893 collection *Many Inventions*, see <http://whitewolf.newcastle.edu.au/words/authors/K/KiplingRudyard/prose/ManyInventions/loveowomen.html>. Date of access 28/11/06.



Villon, was a major influence, famously providing the model for ‘Vom Armen B. B.’¹⁹⁹ This also accounts for Brecht incorporating into his ballad corpus, as many of the other authors in this chapter do, the French concept of a *Ballade* which was alien to the Germanic *Kunstballade* tradition.²⁰⁰ Instead of this traditional Germanic ballad concept, Brecht uses the ballad form to write a moralising didactic poem, with elements of satire and parody, dealing with normal human life. This element is also prevalent in Kästner’s writings. Lastly, Brecht is drawn back to the German traditions of *Moritat*²⁰¹ and *Bänkelsang*,²⁰² due in part to the influence of Frank Wedekind. This is most clear in Brecht’s anarchic murder ballads, ‘Apfelböck, oder die Lilie auf dem Felde’ (HP, 15-17) and ‘Von der Kindesmörderin Marie Farrar’ (HP, 18-22) which are firmly in this tradition.

For Brecht, the ballads were oral events, often sung to a simple guitar accompaniment. According to his theoretical position, expounded in his 1927 essay ‘Die Lyrik als Ausdruck’,²⁰³ poetry must *handeln*, i.e. be active, create a reaction and achieve a certain goal, instead of being purely about individual poetic expression. This brings Brecht in line with Kästner’s concept of *Gebrauchslyrik*.²⁰⁴ Brecht draws so heavily upon the ballad form

¹⁹⁹ *Hauspostille*, pp. 147-49. This poem is inspired by Villon’s ‘Le Testament’ which begins with the lines ‘Ici se clôt le testament / Et finit du pauvre Villon’. Francois Villon, *Sämtliche Werke*, bilingual edition, ed. and trans. by Carl Fischer (Munich: dtv, 2002), p. 188.

²⁰⁰ It should be noted that German only has one word *Ballade* to mean both ballad and ballade. The French ballade often has a closing envoi which functions as a space to provide the moral of the story. Often these are didactic, moralistic ballads.

²⁰¹ *Moritat* comes from the German word *Mordtat* and has the same narrative content as songs in the *Bänkelsang* tradition. Specifically they are murder ballads, often gruesome and exaggerated.

²⁰² A successor to the town crier (*Zeitungssänger*), since the 17th century the *Bänkelsänger* sang news in a narrative ballad form, primarily horror, tragic and dramatic ballads. These were normally sung to a barrel-organ melody, standing on a bench and pointing to relevant pictures on a board.

²⁰³ Bertolt Brecht, ‘Lyrik als Ausdruck’, in *Lyriktheorien: Texte vom Barock bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. by Ludwig Völker (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1990) pp. 310-11.

²⁰⁴ This will be discussed in detail in the Kästner section.



because in the ballad's objectivity he saw a chance to make an impersonal 'Geste der Mitteilung eines Gedankens'.²⁰⁵

The idea which is communicated most strongly in the *Hauspostille* in relation to German national identity lies in the poem 'Legende vom toten Soldaten',²⁰⁶ (HP, 136-40). This is written in a strict Chevy Chase ballad stanza which echoes the rhythms of the heroic ballad.

Riha makes an interesting point about this:

Brecht übt mit der »Legende vom toten Soldaten« - damals noch ungewöhnlich für ihn – scharfe, politisch gerichtete Gesellschaftskritik. Er geht von der völkischen Heldenballade aus – und vernichtet sie satirisch mit einem literarischen Gegenentwurf.²⁰⁷

He stresses that such criticism of the regime was not usual at this point in Brecht's writing, which confirms the point being made in this section that Brecht does not often comment explicitly in his early work on the state or the nation. This also highlights how, by using the set form of the ballad and subverting it so completely, Brecht creates a literary piece and turns the very notion of heroism on its head. It is important to note that it was this poem that placed Brecht on the Nazi black list, so its political effect at the time was considerable and also shocking. Many people found it offensive because they felt it was being disrespectful to the dead and the efforts of the soldiers. It is linked into the folk-ballad tradition because it echoes the notion of the revenant common in balladry to describe the return from the dead of a character. Usually, however, this is to avenge a murder, to see a lover again or to bring the lover into the grave. Here, this motif is also subverted. This

²⁰⁵ *Selected Poems*, p. 14.

²⁰⁶ References to the stanzas in this poem will be made by placing the stanza number in brackets throughout. Brecht had to leave his publisher Kiepenhauer because they insisted they wanted his 'Legende vom toten Soldat' to be removed from his first collection of verse.

²⁰⁷ Karl Riha, *Moritat, Bänkelsang, Protestballade: zur Geschichte des engagierten Liedes in Deutschland* (Imprint: Frankfurt: Athenäum / Fischer, 1975) p. 72.



also ties into the very ramified idea of *debout les morts*, where the dead return to speak to the living, although in the original motif the dead return to fight alongside the living, while in Brecht's ballad the dead soldier is forced to fight again. This idea of the return of the dead soldier was widespread after World War I in literature and in film, in, for example Abel Gance's 1919 film *J'Accuse* and Hans Chlumberg's 1930 play *Wunder um Verdun* where the dead arise in protest.

The form of the heroic ballad is grotesquely appropriate because the dead soldier receives a hero's welcome before being declared fit for duty (k.v. – *kriegsverwendungsfähig*) and sent back to the Front. This poem, written in 1918, refers specifically to the policy of the Spring Offensive of 1918 when all men, young and old, including Brecht himself, were conscripted into the army for the final months of the war. Playing on phrases from the 'Deutschlandlied',²⁰⁸ Brecht writes about this policy saying:

Im Frühjahr 1918 durchkämmte der kaiserliche General Ludendorff zum letztenmal ganz Deutschland von der Maas bis an die Memel, von der Etsch bis an den Belt nach Menschenmaterial für seine große Offensive. Die Siebzehnjährigen und die Fünfzigjährigen wurden eingekleidet und an die Fronten getrieben. Das Wort kv, welches bedeutet kreigsverwendungsfähig, schreckte noch einmal Millionen von Familien. Das Volk sagte: Man gräbt schon die Toten aus für den Kriegsdienst.²⁰⁹

This policy was despised by the civilian population and was also inscribed in Georg Grosz's drawing 'k.v.' of 1916/17:

²⁰⁸ *Politische Lyrik*, p. 10.

²⁰⁹ Bertolt Brecht, *Gesammelte Werke*, 20 vols, Vol. 19 (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1967), p. 422.



Plate 3: Georg Grosz, 'k.v.'

The nineteen stanzas of the ballad begin and end with the concept of the *Heldentod*. This concept and indeed the entire poem is deeply ironic. In the first stanza, the brave soldier dying the hero's death, does so because the war has continued for four years (in later reprints this is adjusted to five years), and the logical consequence that he draws is that it is better to die than to continue fighting a losing battle, 'Da zog der Soldat seine Konsequenz / Und starb den Heldentod' (1). This is presented as a form of suicide, hence desertion, which is clearly against the rules of the state and of war. Brecht attacks the pompous attitude of the Kaiser for he is seen as owning the soldier, 'sein Soldat' (2) and thus as being able to best decide what is good for him. The soldier's death 'schien ihm noch vor der Zeit.' (2).



Brecht presents in grotesque detail how the ‘militär-/ische ärztliche Kommission’ (3) disinters the body, declares him fit for duty, and marches him through the villages in a military victory parade. The staccato syllables of ‘mili-tär-/isch-e ärtz-lich-e Komm-ission’ deflate the importance of the state organisation through sharp comic rhythm. The viewpoint Brecht offers us in the ballad is the all-seeing view from above, where the ‘Sterne der Heimat’ (6) shine:

Man konnte ihn einzig von oben noch sehn
Und da sind nur Sterne da. (18)

From here it is possible to observe the horror of the corpse being daubed with the Wilhelmine ‘Schwarz-Weiß-Rot’ colours (11) while the priest swings the censur to disguise the rotting smell. This viewpoint is only possible ‘wenn man keinen Helm auf hatte’ (6), i.e. if you are not part of the military apparatus, but rather a normal person observing what the rulers of the nation are doing to their people. However, in the poem Brecht also attacks the conspirators, which include the normal people: the church, the doctors, the women of the village, and even the flora and fauna of the land, the animals that are patriotically proud not to be French, and even the trees and moon who lend their blessing to the parade. The emphasis in the poem is on the concept of *Pflicht* (12), the particularly German predilection for duty. The man in the tailcoat is aware of his duty as ‘ein deutscher Mann’ (12) and even the soldier himself does not protest and obeys his superiors ‘so wie er’s gelernt’ (9, 19).

The ‘national’ identity that Brecht presents in this poem is specific to the Wilhelmine military society that characterised Germany at this time, even when it stood on the point of



defeat. He highlights the inhumanity of the society, the farce that the war has become, and the blindness of the people who refuse to see the reality of the times because they are blinded by patriotism. This poem presents therefore more of an anti-national ideology, for everything and everyone seen in the poem as being German, are seen negatively. The positive conception of Germany, called for in the national anthem:

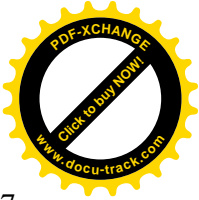
Deutschland, Deutschland über alles,
über alles in der Welt,
wenn es stets zum Schutz und Trutze
brüderlich zusammenhält.²¹⁰

is destroyed in the ironic use of 'brüderlich' as the two medical orderlies support the dead man by putting their arms around him in a brotherly fashion. Brecht seems to provide a note of hope in the concept of *Heimat* in the poem. The 'Sterne der Heimat' (6) is the one image of beauty in the poem, and the stars herald the new dawn, the 'Morgenrot' (19) which the soldier will not see. It is also apparent in the poem that the positive connotations that *Heimat* might be able to have are hidden from all the figures represented. Thus the 'nation' is presented as rotten, the dead soldier becoming a metaphor for the state.

Another ballad which deals with the military is the 'Ballade vom Weib und dem Soldaten' (1921-22).²¹¹ In this ballad the soldiers are determined to continue to march and fight although the woman warns them repeatedly of the dangers of the ice which will break under their feet. This echoes the motif of death by water common in the tragic traditional ballads. The ballad also has many of the formal features of the traditional ballads: the question and answer format, a regular stanzaic form, abab or aabaab rhyme scheme and

²¹⁰ *Politische Lyrik*, p. 10.

²¹¹ *Hauspostille*, pp. 106-7. Later printed as 'Die Ballade von dem Soldaten', in *Bertolt Brecht Werke: Grosse kommentierte Berliner und Frankfurter Ausgabe, Gedichte I: Sammlungen 1918-1933*, (33 vols), Vol. 11, ed. by Werner Hecht et al. (Berlin: Aufbau, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1988), pp. 98-99.



patterns of repetition. However, the ballad makes no specific comment on the nation, or even specifically on the military, apart from to lament their misplaced confidence:

Ach, bitter bereut, wer des Weisen Rat scheut!
Sagte das Weib den Soldaten. (HP, 107)

Another ironic comment on the military is included in the poem known originally as 'Lied der drei Soldaten' (11, 89) and later, showing Brecht's variability with the concept of the ballad, as 'Ballade von den drei Soldaten'. It was included in the original *Taschenpostille* but excluded from the 1926 *Hauspostille*. It was also used, with a refrain, as 'Der Kanonensong'²¹² in *Die Dreigroschenoper*. The song has the form of a ballad and charts the journey of three men, George, John and Freddy, through their professional military lives into death. The inhumanity of the call to arms in the final stanza is apparent in the juxtaposition of:

George ist gefallen und Freddy ist tot
Und Johnny vermißt und verdorben.
Aber Blut ist immer noch rot
Und für die Armee wird wieder beworben. (11, 89)

The dactylic rhythm of the final line is broken by the additional syllables making it disjunctive and stuttering as befits such an inappropriate request from the nation to its own people.

It seems that Brecht had leanings towards stronger political comment at this stage, but drew back, either by not printing a poem which was intended for publication or by adapting a poem to dilute the political effect.²¹³ One such example of this is 'Vom ertrunkenen Mädchen' (HP, 131). The detailed study in Hennenberg's *Liederbuch* reveals that this

²¹² *Brecht Liederbuch*, ed. by Fritz Hennenburg (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1984), pp. 60-61.

²¹³ It is hard to ascertain if this is Brecht's doing or if it is largely influenced by the censors at the time.



ballad was originally written in 1920 to commemorate the murder of the Spartacist revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg. Her body was found in the Landwehrkanal in Berlin in 1919 and hence, in the original version of this poem, Brecht combined the Ophelia motif with a contemporary and dangerous political statement. The text originally read:

Als sie erschlagen war und hinunterschwamm
Von den Bächen in die größeren Flüsse
Schien der Opal des Himmels sehr wundersam
Als ob er die Leiche begütigen müsse.²¹⁴

In the *Hauspostille* Brecht replaces the word 'erschlagen' with 'ertrunken' in the first line of the poem thus releasing it from its factual basis and by so doing turns a political comment into a nihilistic statement which owes more to Rimbaud, than it does to politics. In the ballad the body slowly decays and is forgotten, eventually even by God. To make such a statement, effectively accusing the state of murder and then dismissing the Spartacist Revolution and all its consequences as ineffectual, would have been a politically explosive commentary on the Weimar Republic at the time of publication.

There was also previously in existence a 'Ballade von der roten Rosa', written in 1919, which was intended for publication in the *Hauspostille*.

Die roten Fahnen der Revolution
sind längst von den Dächern herabgeweht...²¹⁵

The futility of the revolution is captured in the image of the red flags that are no longer visible for the wind has ripped them into shreds. It is one of Brecht's many images of

²¹⁴ This is quoted in the *Liederbuch*, p. 410 but the details come from the Bertolt Brecht Archive in Berlin. See also Hans-Thies Lehmann, 'Text und Erfahrung (Vom ertrunkenen Mädchen)', in Hans Thies-Lehmann and Helmut Lethen (eds.), *Bertolt Brechts »Hauspostille«: Text und kollektives Lesen* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1978), pp. 122-145, here p. 140.

²¹⁵ Klaus Schuhmann, *Der Lyriker Bertolt Brecht 1913-1933* (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1964), p. 54, (Munich: DTV, 1971), p. 75.



transience in the *Hauspostille*. The motif of death by or in water, seen in ‘Vom ertrunkenen Mädchen’ is echoed again in the lines:

Die rote Rosa
schwamm als einzige Befreite.²¹⁶

It is ironic that such freedom is shown to be only accessible by death, not by political means. The poem ‘Grabschrift 1919’ (11, 205) also refers to ‘Die Rota Rosa’ and reveals the opposition of the ‘Armen’ and the ‘Reichen’ which was the basis of Brecht’s ideology, even at this early point.

Two final ballads which are worthy of note are the ‘Mahagonnygesänge’ Nos 1 and 2. The poems were published in the 1927 *Hauspostille* and later became the basis for a *Songspiel* and the opera *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* (1929/30). Arnolt Bronnen tells of a visit with Brecht to a meeting in Munich where Hitler was speaking in June 1923. He writes:

Brecht hatte damals zuerst das Wort ›Mahagonny‹ gefunden. Es war in ihm aufgetaucht, als er die Massen braunbehemdeter Kleinbürger gesehen hatte...Der Begriff wuchs ihm aus dem Wort, wandelte sich mit ihm; doch in jenem Sommer mochte er ihm zunächst Spießers Utopia bedeuten, jenen zynisch-dummen Stammtisch-Staat, der aus Anarchie und Alkohol bis die dahin gefährlichste Mixtur für Europas Hexenkessel zusammenbraute. ›Wenn Mahagonny kommt, geh ich‹, sagte Brecht zum Abschied.²¹⁷

This casts some light onto the strange world that Brecht created. According to the ‘Songspiel’,²¹⁸ ‘Mahagonny ‘gibt es nicht’, ‘ist kein Ort’ and ‘ist nur ein erfundenes

²¹⁶ *Der Lyriker*, p. 75.

²¹⁷ Arnolt Bronnen, *Tage mit Bertolt Brecht: Geschichte einer unvollendeten Freundschaft* (Darmstadt & Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1976), p. 116, first published (Munich: Desch, 1960).

²¹⁸ In May 1927 Weill and Brecht worked these ‘Mahagonny-Songs’ into a chamber opera called the *Mahagonny-Songspiel*.



Wort'.²¹⁹ Although Mahagonny did not perhaps exist at the time of writing, Brecht's assertion that when, not if, it arrived, he would leave the country, shows a worryingly prophetic tone to the 'Mahagonnygesänge'. Mahagonny is a theoretical town, but one that could exist, one that embodies all that Brecht hated, whether that be capitalism, the concept of the 'spießige deutsche Bürger'²²⁰ or the threat of fascism and its specifically German manifestation in Nazism.

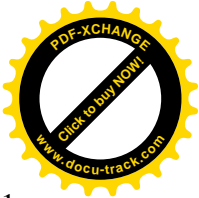
This 'Songspiel' was already being planned in July 1924, even before Brecht met his collaborator Kurt Weill. When discussing these poems, Weill stressed that 'immer mußte der einfache, balladeske Grundstil gewahrt bleiben.'²²¹ The poems are balladesque, although the rhythmic structures differ slightly from the traditional abab, 4343 stanza. In the first Mahagonny song, (HP, 115-16) the rhythm is a stanza of 3343 followed by a 4-line refrain with elongated phrases. The first song echoes a recurrent theme in the *Hauspostille*, namely the attempt to find 'das Land, wo es besser ist' (HP, 79)²²² which is always seen as being unreachable and transient. It is a call to journey to the imaginary town of Mahagonny where everything is beautiful. However, the rhymes and juxtapositions of the stanzas suggest that this beauty is deceptive. By destroying the Romantic image of the 'kühl und frisch' (HP, 115) air by rhyming it with 'Whisky und Pokertisch', (HP, 115) Brecht parodies the concept of the romanticised utopia. There is the ironic juxtaposition of

²¹⁹ *Liederbuch*, p. 370.

²²⁰ *Spießig* is, of course, nearly impossible to translate, meaning something like respectable, middle class, bourgeois, but generally always conveying some element of scorn and disapproval. Likewise *Bürger* literally means citizen but also includes a particularly Germanic sense of responsibility and duty towards the state. '*Bürgerlich* has similar connotations to *spießig*'. Thomas Mann equated the *bürgerlich* with the German, writing during the Imperial German period 'The German is synonymous with the *Bürgerlich*; if spirit [Geist] in general is of *bürgerlich* origin, then this is particularly true of the German spirit; German culture [Bildung] is *bürgerlich*', 'Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen', in *Gesammelte Werke*. 12 vols. (Frankfurt am Main, 1960), vol. xii, p. 107.

²²¹ Kurt Weill, *Ausgewählte Schriften*, ed. by David Drew (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1975), p. 59.

²²² 'Ballade von den Abenteurern'.



‘Pferd- und Weiberfleisch’ (HP, 115) to cater for all needs but ‘keine Direktion’ (HP, 115), as everything is static once you arrive there. Everything revolves around money and capitalism, for the travellers stress in each refrain that they are carrying ‘Geldpapier’ (HP, 115) hidden under their shirts.

The refrain is surreal, Brecht’s break with the romantic Expressionism of the time being complete in the apostrophe to the moon ‘Schöner grüner Mond von Mahagonny, leuchte uns!’ (HP, 115). The poem hinges on the meaning of the phrase ‘Die Zi-zi-zi-zi-zivilis / Die wird uns dort geheilt.’²²³ (HP, 115). The aural parallel with the venereal disease Syphilis is hardly coincidental, of course, nor is the association of ‘Zivilis’ with both civilians (as opposed to the army) and civilisation. However, the main sense of the lines lies in the fact that in Mahagonny there is healing. The town is seen by those who travel there as being a panacea, even though it is actually a trap. The seemingly perfect civilisation is seen as being corrupted, threatening and perverted, although it is presented as a social utopia. In Germany at the time of writing as the Weimar Republic was disintegrating, the desire for a social utopia was strong, leading to Hitler’s manipulation of the people’s desires in the hope of a better Germany. Brecht’s realism stresses that such a place or concept does not or cannot exist, and if it were to exist, that it would be inherently flawed.

‘Mahagonnygesang Nr. 3’ (HP 117-119) has the strains of a folk-dance or of a drinking song. This poem is a narrative about the town of Mahagonny and the day when God came to visit. After an opening stanza which is repeated as the refrain, the ballad uses the

²²³ The chanson ‘Civilis’ which is a scathing poem about the colonial project uses many of the same images. *Nachlaß*, pp. 85-87.



folkloric question and answer style, although the men only manage a 'Ja' in response to God's accusations of their hedonistic and murderous ways. When God condemns them to Hell, the men respond with a simple 'Nein' before they begin to protest that they cannot be sentenced to Hell because 'wir immer in der Hölle waren.' (HP, 119). They now claim that their hell was a hell on earth. So the concept of the promised land of Mahagonny is seen as being corrupted by the activities of the humans living there. It comes as a moment of enlightenment, or perhaps simply as opportunistic manoeuvring in face of the threat of hell, when the people realise that their land is actually accursed.

Although Brecht became famous as a ballad writer after this time period, it is clear that the origins of his balladesque writings were evident from the very outset. He uses the construct known as the ballad very broadly, basing his rhythmic structures and narrative plots upon the traditional ballad framework, but allowing room for manoeuvre. He picks up on the heroic ballad in order to subvert it, challenging the basis of heroism in the Weimar Republic, draws on the revenant ballad, but interestingly does not allow the revenant to speak. In the 'Legende vom toten Soldat', no voice is given to the dead soldier; he is disinterred merely to suffer again. Brecht provides no hope for Germany, choosing instead to castigate and satirise, setting up social utopias in order to knock them down, attacking the militaristic bases of Weimar society and essentially, not speaking anything positive into the void of German national identity in the Weimar period. Where other authors support the principles of liberal democracy, balancing this against the abuses of the Weimar regime, Brecht is still searching for hope, a hope which he later famously found in Communism. During this period, however, it becomes apparent that his overtly political statements were suppressed, his sympathies for the Spartacist revolutionaries were latent, but not



immediately apparent in his published writings. Later, however, Brecht's ballads took on an openly didactic, political message.

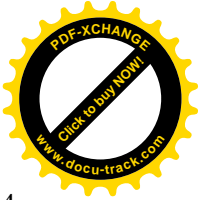
The Scottish ballads in this period did not often deal with explicit political topics. A meaningful exception to this tendency is Hugh MacDiarmid's 'Ballad of the Crucified Rose'.²²⁴ The rose is the General Strike of May 1926 and it encapsulates MacDiarmid's hopes for the rise of the workers. In using the ballad for political propaganda purposes, MacDiarmid looks forward to the political balladeering of the Scottish Folk Revival. Interestingly the events of this time period still have cultural resonance as is seen in the 2002 adaptation in ballad form of the events of the 1920s Red Clydeside period and the life of the revolutionary John MacLean in Alistair Hulett and Dave Swarbrick's ballad musical *Red Clydeside*.²²⁵

1.5 Kästner

Erich Kästner (1899-1974) is the youngest of the four writers in this chapter and therefore his work covers a later period in the Weimar Republic. Along with the other writers in this chapter he supported the democratic aims of the Weimar Republic but was not slow to point out the deficiencies contained within it. This section will look at Kästner's representations of national identity, drawing on his early writing, i.e. the phase 1928-1932,

²²⁴ *A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle*, ed. by Kenneth Buthlay, (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1987), pp. 119-120.

²²⁵ This musical was recorded and produced as Alistair Hulett and Dave Swarbrick, *Red Clydeside* (Red Rattler, RATCD005, 2002).



which encompasses his first four collections of poetry; *Herz auf Taille* (1928)²²⁶ *Lärm im Spiegel* (1929),²²⁷ *Ein Mann gibt Auskunft* (1930),²²⁸ and *Gesang zwischen den Stühlen* (1932).²²⁹ These writings, along with his children's books, made Kästner a famous figure within Germany and abroad, but also made him subject to censorship throughout the Weimar period, culminating in the burning of his books by the Nazis on the 10th May 1933.

Kästner's decision to stay in Germany after this provides a key to his usefulness as a writer of the people and as a chronicler of the state of the nation in his time. In his introduction to Kästner's *Gesammelte Schriften* Hermann Kesten says of Kästner:

In seinen scharfen Zeitsatiren wird Kästner zu einem lyrischen Richter der Zeiten.
In seinen feuilletonesken Balladen wird er zum moralischen Chronisten.²³⁰

Kesten stresses both his role as a ballad writer and a moral chronicler of his country's times. Many of Kästner's ballads deal with the life of the petit-bourgeoisie, often in harrowing detail. These ballads capture something of the desperation and social emptiness of life in a metropolis where the individual is overlooked and made purely a human resource.

The best example of these ballads is the 1930 ballad called, interestingly, 'Kurt Schmidt, statt einer Ballade' (161-62). It is the first poem in the collection *Ein Mann gibt Auskunft*. The character Schmidt reappeared later in Kästner's cabaret pieces. The use of the most

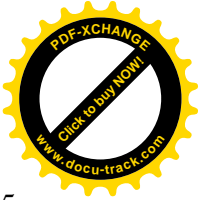
²²⁶ *Herz auf Taille* (Leipzig: Curt Weller, 1928) with illustrations by Erich Ohser.

²²⁷ *Lärm im Spiegel* (Leipzig: Curt Weller, 1929) 2nd edn (Stuttgart: Deutschen Verlags-Anstalt) with illustrations by Rudolf Großmann.

²²⁸ *Ein Mann gibt Auskunft* (Stuttgart: Deutschen Verlags-Anstalt, 1930) with illustrations by Erich Ohser.

²²⁹ *Gesang zwischen den Stühlen* (Stuttgart: Deutschen Verlags-Anstalt, 1932) with illustrations by Erich Ohser.

²³⁰ Erich Kästner, *Gesammelte Schriften*, 7 vols, vol. 1, *Gedichte*, 3rd edn (Cologne & Berlin: Kiepenhauer & Witsch, 1959), p. 10. All references to Kästner's poems in brackets are from this edition unless indicated otherwise.



common German surname brings the protagonist closer to the Everyman figure of allegory. Although the title claims that this is not a ballad, it uses the same form as becomes familiar in Kästner's writing, namely the 4-line abab form culminating in the 5-line final stanza. The poem appears at first as an anti-ballad because there is no action at all, merely the recurrence of proscribed and prescribed patterns of behaviour. Schmidt's life even takes the form of a poem or song, hence *he* is the ballad itself:

Am Montag fing die nächste Strophe an.
Und war doch immerzu dasselbe Lied!
Ein Jahr starb ab. Ein andres Jahr begann.
Und was auch kam, nie kam ein Unterschied. (161)

The poem of the life of Kurt Schmidt is a glimpse into the life of the working man. Schmidt does the things that many people do; he goes dancing, meets partners, has sex, even has a child, but none of these things gives his life any meaning.

The event in the poem is the moment of realisation: 'Er merkte eines Tages, daß er litt' (161). What follows is a mere response to this darkened epiphany. Schmidt realises that he is, in fact, Everyman, or that everyman is him:

Und auf dem Globus, sah er, lag kein Land,
In dem die Schmidts nicht in der Mehrzahl waren. (161)

This realisation has only one logical consequence for the thinking man that Schmidt has become. With the studied accuracy of his daily timetable, he uses the only hour that belongs to him, to kill himself. Kästner's provision of a man's death instead of a ballad event captures something of the small dramas that he saw as taking place in secret, behind the closed doors of the Weimar Republic. There are many examples of such ballads throughout Kästner's work.



Kästner expounded the concept of 'Gebrauchslyrik', continuing the French tradition of *littérature engagée* utilised by Jean Paul Sartre and André Gide. He describes this type of poetry in his 'Prosaische Zwischenbemerkung' in *Lärm im Spiegel*, saying:

Zum Glück gibt es ein oder zwei Dutzend Lyriker – ich hoffe fast, mit dabei zu sein -, die bemüht sind, das Gedicht am Leben zu erhalten. Ihre Verse kann das Publikum lesen und hören, ohne einzuschlafen; denn sie sind seelisch verwendbar. Sie wurden im Umgang mit den Freuden und Schmerzen der Gegenwart notiert; und für jeden, der mit der Gegenwart zu tun hat, sind sie bestimmt. Man hat für diese Art von Gedichten die Bezeichnung »Gebrauchslyrik« erfunden... (125-26)

For Kästner, poetry had to be something which could be used, which had a purpose. He saw poetry as being necessary, and as being useful for the soul. In this way functional poetry had to be contemporary and topical and had to say something about the state of the world at the time of writing. It had to reflect and cause people to reflect on what was happening round about them. It was an attempt to force the reader to confront reality, even in a splintered form. Helmut Kiesel describes this as follows:

Er [Kästner] hält den Menschen einen Spiegel, meist einen Zerrspiegel, vor, um sie durch Anschauung zur Einsicht zu bringen.²³¹

The image of the satirist as holding up a mirror to an unbelieving people was echoed in satirical magazines of the time, especially the Berlin *Eulenspiegel* which published work by Tucholsky and many artists of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* movement.

Kästner is the major protagonist of this group, which also included Klabund and Tucholsky. *Neue Sachlichkeit*²³² is often translated as 'New Realism' or 'New Objectivity', both

²³¹ Helmut Kiesel, *Erich Kästner*, Autorenbücher 26 (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1981), p. 16.

²³² The term came from Gustav Hartlaub's 1925 exhibition in the Kunsthalle in Mannheim. Cf. *The New Sobriety*, p. 111.



harking back to some extent to the Realism movement. However, it can better be understood as 'New Sobriety'. This was a broad artistic movement incorporating the art of Georg Grosz, Otto Dix and the like, aiming to mirror post-war disillusionment by using objective instead of symbolic means. Although it also had emotional elements, it abandoned the individual emotional response and stressed communality, using sharp and sober social commentary to highlight the sufferings of people, especially from the lower classes. This attempt to create a climate of change within the culture of the Weimar Republic through satire was the main goal of each of the writers in this section. Hermann Kesten links the use of *Gebrauchslirik* to the movement saying:

Die »Gebrauchslirik« gehört zum Programm der »Neuen Sachlichkeit«, der Gegenbewegung zum Expressionismus; sie parodiert mit der Mischung von Volkslied und Chanson, Bänkelsang und Kabarett. (8)

The mixing of ballad, *Bänkelsang*, chanson and folksong is apparent in each of the authors featured in this chapter. It is also worth noting that the overlaps between each of these subgenres are extensive. This, coupled with the fact that different authors use the terms in varying ways, makes it impossible to be prescriptive as to the nature of each subgenre.

In order to be able to understand the sufferings of the German people throughout the traumatic events of the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich, Kästner, unlike all the other writers in this chapter,²³³ chose to remain in Germany rather than to emigrate. This gives him a certain weight or arguably legitimacy in his critique of Germany during this time. It also stresses the role that he took upon himself as a chronicler of Germany, although those in power who were meant to represent Germany had rejected him. Kästner says:

²³³ Tucholsky went into exile and then committed suicide, Brecht went into exile and Klabund did not live long enough to see the end of the Weimar Republic.

Ein Schriftsteller will und muß erleben, wie das Volk, zu dem er gehört, in schlimmen Zeiten sein Schicksal erträgt. Gerade dann ins Ausland zu gehen, rechtfertigt sich nur durch akute Lebensgefahr. Im übrigen ist es seine Berufspflicht, jedes Risiko zu laufen, wenn er dadurch Augenzeuge bleiben und eines Tages schriftlich Zeugnis ablegen kann. (21)

For Kästner, charting the development of Germany during his lifetime was not just a role, it was his job. He saw himself as an observer of the people, but also as their more legitimate representative. Kästner's poems from the period of the Weimar Republic are mainly ballads, and their ever-present social criticism is directed at the petit-bourgeois, the military, Germany as represented by the state, and then later, specifically, the Nazi party. These areas tend to overlap but they form the heart of Kästner's oeuvre.

Kästner's role as a chronicler of the German people was clear from the very start of his career. The cover of his first collection *Herz auf Taille* bore the following illustration:



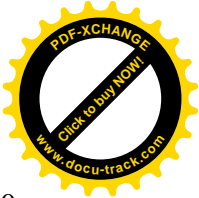
Plate 4: Cover of *Herz auf Taille*.²³⁴

²³⁴ It reads 'Stefan Grossmann says: Morgenstern? Peter Panter? Nein, Erich Kästner! Ein Grossstadtlyriker mit eigenem Gesicht...Hans Natonek. Hier spricht einer, der repräsentativ ist für seine Generation. Jahrgang 1899. Lyrik unserer Zeit kann gar nicht anders aussehen.' Peter Panter is, of course, one of Tucholsky's many pseudonyms.



The first poem in his first collection is called 'Jahrgang 1899' (37-38), the year of his birth. In this poem, Kästner writes the life story of his generation. The poem is anti-military, sets itself up against a certain vision of Germany and also expresses the rage of the children against their elders who have disappointed them. It is a ballad, as most of Kästner's poems are, written in his typical ballad 4-line stanza which has a regular abab rhyme-scheme which breaks down in the final stanza, when the four lines become five and the rhyme is stretched to abaab. This echoes the function of the envoi found at the end of the French ballade, which allows for a space to convey the moral of the poem. The poem spans the topics of sexual awakening, conscription, war, sexually-transmitted diseases, the failed German revolution, inflation, bankruptcy, abortion and growing old, in the space of nine stanzas. The poem has a 1st person plural narrative, the 'we' signifying all those born in the same year as Kästner.

Kästner interweaves the humour and the tragedy in his vision of his generation through the linking of rhymes, and the bathetic juxtaposition of images. For example, the reciprocal losses of the sons and the mothers are linked through the rhyming of 'Kanonenfutter' and 'Mutter' (37). The German revolution of 1918-19 is denigrated as 'ein bißchen Revolution' and is juxtaposed with 'Gonokokken' (37). Kästner reveals a Romantic longing for childhood innocence throughout much of his work and here the theft of his generation's youth is the angry conclusion of the poem. Since 'anstatt mit Puppen zu spielen' (37) the children have been made an unwilling part of the 'Weltgeschichte' (38), led by aggressive German foreign policies, the lessons they have learnt have been of horrors. Their schooling in the real world has destroyed the innocence and beliefs that they should have held, so the break down of the final stanza conveys something of the angry



explosion of the young people. They are being expected to operate along the lines of the biblical 'a time to sow and a time to reap',²³⁵ yet these lines of stability have been obliterated by their experiences:

Die Alten behaupten, es würde nun Zeit
Für uns zum Säen und Ernten.
Noch einen Moment. Bald sind wir bereit.
Noch einen Moment. Bald ist es so weit!
Dann zeigen wir euch, was wir lernten! (38)

Kästner speaks out in 'Jahrgang 1899', as Brecht did in the 'Legende vom toten Soldaten', (HP, 136-40) against the German policy of recruiting schoolboys for the army. He highlights the human cost of the war, not just in terms of lives, but in terms of lost innocence and lost childhood. The final line reads as a threat from the younger generation to the older as they turn the sowing and reaping metaphor on those who they see to be to blame for the state of their lives. The whole poem functions as a sustained and detailed attack of an entire generation on those in power in Germany at the time of the war and reveals Kästner's hatred of the military and the warmongers.

The poem 'Stimmen aus dem Massengrab' (96) operates along the same lines as 'Jahrgang 1899'. As the last poem in the collection *Herz auf Taille*, it functions as a kind of equal and opposite reaction to the opening poem. Whereas the voices in the first poem were of the generation who survived to make their complaint, the 'Stimmen' of the final poem can be read as those who did not survive, who became 'Kanonenfutter'. Both sets of voices have been ignored but both need to be heard. Kästner proposes that this poem take the place of a sermon on Remembrance Day, as a more accurate and useful reminder of the dead. As in

²³⁵ Ecclesiastes 3. 1-8.



the first poem, the speaking voice is plural and the rhyme scheme operates in exactly the same way, including the envoi of the last stanza.

Again the poem is a ballad, placing the narrative in the mouths of the dead. The images of the poem are those of nightmare and the fear of being buried alive is incorporated in 'Wir haben Dreck im Mund,' (96) for the cries are strangled and go unheard. This poem could be read in terms of a traditional revenant ballad in which someone comes back from the dead to avenge their death or to pass on some essential knowledge to the living or seen in the twist of the *debout les morts* tradition. In this poem the dead in the mass grave speak to the reader in order to warn them.

The ballad is an accusation, like Klabund's 'Ballade des Vergessens'²³⁶ or Kästner's own 'Der Herr ohne Gedächtnis' (39), against those who have forgotten the war, have romanticised it and want to cover up the atrocities that happened so that 'normal' life can continue. This suggests that part of what the authors in this chapter are attempting to do is perform an act of national anamnesis, to remind the people of things they should not forget.²³⁷ The poem pours scorn on the petty assurances offered by religion, the typically Germanic trait of 'Pflicht'²³⁸ and the inconceivable concept of the war dead resting in peace. The tragedy in the poem is that the people prefer empty words to the truth. The anger in the final stanza breaks the confines of the regularity of the poem, and after the 'Vier Jahre Mord' the only things that the state has to offer are 'ein schön Geläute' and 'ein

²³⁶ *Der himmlische Vagant*, pp. 418-21.

²³⁷ This echoes back to the foundations for national identity stated by Ernest Renan at the beginning of this thesis.

²³⁸ *Schriften*, p. 96.



paar Kränze.’ (96). The poem finishes with a rejection of religion and a curse on those still alive:

Verlaßt Euch nie auf Gott und seine Leute!
Verdammt, wenn Ihr das je vergeßt! (96)

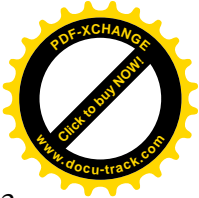
As functional poetry intended to be read on a Remembrance Day in the place of a conventional sermon,²³⁹ Kästner is explicit in challenging the silencing of the truth about the war and the complicity of the church and in warning of the possibility of another war to come for ‘Ihr laßt Euch morgen, wie wir gestern, schlachten.’ (96). He attacks the state for being militaristic and being prepared to martyr its people to support its nationalistic aims. However, he also attacks the German people for being prepared not to listen and being keen to forget.²⁴⁰

Similar themes continue throughout Kästner’s work. In ‘Kennst du das Land, wo die Kanonen blühen’ (56) he parodies Goethe’s famous poem ‘Mignon’ (Kennst du das Land, wo die Zitronen blühen) and in so doing contrasts the fertile splendour of the Mediterranean with the stark horror of the militaristic state. Here the canons are not just present physically but the mentality has been fully absorbed into the people. They wear ‘unsichtbare Helme’ (56) and find pleasure in the war efforts. The children are born as soldiers,²⁴¹ rather than civilians, and in every second man there is a child ‘Das will mit Bleisoldaten spielen.’ (56) Instead of a land with oranges and lemons where the ‘sanfter Wind’ blows ‘vom blauen Himmel’, in this land:

²³⁹ The subtitle of the poem reads (Für den Totensonntag. Anstatt einer Predigt.)

²⁴⁰ This theme continues throughout Kästner’s work. In *Gesang zwischen den Stühlen*, the poem ‘Verdun, viele Jahre später’ deals with the same idea. Here a ‘Chor der Toten’ says daily ‘»Habt ein besseres Gedächtnis!«’ (270).

²⁴¹ This is echoed in the poem ‘Patriotisches Bettgespräch’ of 1929 where the couple in bed say ‘Jawohl, wir sollen Kinder fabrizieren. / Fürs Militär. Und für die Industrie.’ (179-80).



gibt es Äcker, Kohle, Stahl und Stein
und Fleiß und Kraft und andre schöne Sachen. (56)

The German attributes of duty and strength and its industrial goods are ironically equated here with good things. The poem finishes:

Dort reift die Freiheit nicht. Dort bleibt sie grün.
Was man auch baut – es werden stets Kasernen
Kennst Du das Land, wo die Kanonen blühen?
Du kennst es nicht? Du wirst es kennenlernen! (56)

Kästner stresses that such a land does not have the necessary prerequisites to allow freedom to develop. Freedom in such a land is not a natural thing, here nature itself is corrupted and made grotesque. He echoes Tucholsky's essay 'Deutschland – ein Kasernenhof'²⁴² when he suggests that the barracks are the natural growth of such a land. The poem ends with a threat similar in tone to that in 'Jahrgang 1899', for those who do not yet know of the country, soon will.

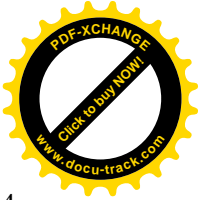
In the poem 'Knigge für Unbemittelte' (90-91) Kästner highlights the power of the state over its people and the worrying brainwashing which he sees as evident in the society:

Ihr sollt nicht denken, wenn ihr sprecht!
Gehirn ist nichts für kleine Leute. (91)

Although the poem addresses the 'deutsche Volk' (90)²⁴³ it then claims that they are not a real people 'Ihr seid kein Volk von Lebensart' (91) and that they should be accepting of whatever the state deigns to do with them. This highlighting of German servility is echoed in 'Die Tretmühle' (50-51) where Kästner parodies the Georg Herwegh revolutionary song

²⁴² Tucholsky, *Werke* II, pp. 119-123.

²⁴³ *Schriften*, p. 90.



‘Frisch auf mein Volk’,²⁴⁴ turning the original song about freedom into a song about bowing down to the people who make the rules and allowing yourself to be abused by them. These people are the people in power:

Tief, Tiefer! Auf die Knie mit deiner Nase!
Das Vaterland erwartet, daß du’s lernst. (50)

The people in power are the state, but they have also taken over the concept of the fatherland itself. Kästner stresses that the fatherland always looks back to a ‘große Zeit’, to a more Golden Age: ‘Ihr wollt die Uhrenzeiger rückwärtsdrehen.’ (273-74). In the poem from which this quotation is taken, ‘Marschliedchen’, (273-74)²⁴⁵ Kästner raises the interesting concept of the need to *construct* a state:

Wie ihr’s träumt, wird Deutschland nicht erwachen.
Denn ihr seid dumm, und seid nicht ausgewählt.
Die Zeit wird kommen, da man sich erzählt:
Mit diesen Leuten war kein Staat zu machen! (274)

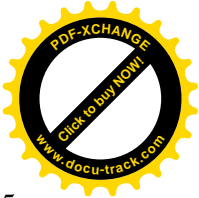
The ‘you’ in the poem refers to the army. Despite the fact that they think they are the chosen people, Kästner prophesies that later generations will realise the foolishness and impossibility of trying to create a new state which is built on the foundation of military power and abuse.

In addition to criticising the military for their conception of Germany, Kästner attacks the tradition of Germanic heroes and Romantic poetry. Again, in the ‘Prosaische Zwischenbemerkung’ he says:

Die Mehrzahl der heutigen Lyriker singt und sagt noch immer von der
»Herzliebsten mein« und von dem »Blümlein auf der Wiesen«...’ (125)

²⁴⁴ See <http://ingeb.org/Lieder/frischam.html>. Date of access 281106.

²⁴⁵ First published in an extended version as ‘Denn ihr seid dumm’ in *Die Weltbühne*, 2nd August 1932, p. 164.



In the ballad 'Der Handstand auf der Loreley' (231-232)²⁴⁶ Kästner uses a parody of the Loreley poetic tradition.²⁴⁷ He stresses that it is a true story and tells of how a gymnast performed a handstand at the top of the Loreley cliffs, only to be distracted by thinking of Heine's 'Loreley' and fall to his death. In this poem Kästner trivialises the proud tradition of the Germanic hero saying:

So alt ist keine Heldensage,
daß sie nicht doch noch Helden nach sich zieht. (231)

The apparent hero of the poem, the gymnast, is presented in a comic light whereas the poem ends on the wife and child he leaves behind. However, as the envoi emphasises:

P.S. Eins wäre allerdings noch nachzutragen:
Der Turner hinterließ uns Frau und Kind.
Hinwiederum, man soll sie nicht beklagen.
Weil im Bezirk der Helden und der Sagen
die Überlebenden nicht wichtig sind. (232)

This parody of a legend which is central to Romantic Rhine poetry and the heroic ethos which became important to Nazi ideology serves to highlight Kästner's views on the devaluing of ordinary human life.

Kästner's other poems which could be categorised as anti-German poems provide insight into the 'Germany' to which he is opposed. In *Lärm im Spiegel*, the poem 'Lob der Volksvertreter' (104-05) shows Kästner's anger at those elected politicians who claim to represent Germany but are only exploiting it for their own ends, whereas Kästner is trying to represent another Germany, in the same way as Tucholsky did, by highlighting the

²⁴⁶ First published in *Die Weltbühne*, 17th May 1932, p. 753.

²⁴⁷ Clemens Brentano, 'Lureley' *Das große deutsche Balladenbuch*, p. 161-62. Heinrich Heine, 'Ich weiß nicht, was soll es bedeuten', *Das große deutsche Balladenbuch*, pp. 322-23. It is important to note that Heine's 'Loreley' is already parodying the whole tradition.



problems with the *Staatsnation* concept of Germany. He presents a German allegory in the ballad ‘Hunger ist heilbar (*Eine deutsche Allegorie*)’.²⁴⁸ The ballad tells the story of a man who was admitted to hospital and many operations later, in the last line of the envoi, after the man has died from the doctors’ gruesome attentions, there is the balladic sting in the tail: ‘>>Ich glaube, er hatte nur Hunger.<<’ (236). The irony of the title is that while hunger could be solved with less draconian measures, once those in authority have had their way, the original problem is irrelevant because the man has been killed. In terms of allegory, it is useful to know that the poem was first published in the satirical Berlin weekly *Die Weltbühne* in 1931,²⁴⁹ shortly after the economic crisis of July 1931 when the Danat bank collapsed and with it the remains of the fragile Weimar economic infrastructure.²⁵⁰ Kästner suggests that there is an easy solution, i.e. to feed the man, but that all other solutions would be tried first until it is too late. Quite what the easy solution would be he does not say, but he does reflect the state that Germany was in at the time and warns of the extreme measures that would be put in place to attempt to rectify the situation.

A poem of Kästner’s which was politically explosive when it was first published in 1929 is ‘Die andre Möglichkeit’ (163-65).²⁵¹ The poem considers what would have happened to Germany had it won the war. The Nazis, unsurprisingly, condemned the poem as *zersetzend* and demanded it was removed from the 1932 reprinting of *Ein Mann gibt Auskunft*. The poem attacks the military, playing again on the ‘Die Wacht am Rhein’:

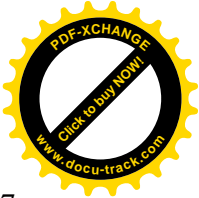
Wenn wir den Krieg gewonnen hätten,

²⁴⁸ *Schriften*, pp. 235-36.

²⁴⁹ *Die Weltbühne*, 29th November 1931, p. 489.

²⁵⁰ The poem ‘Auf einer kleinen Bank vor einer großen Bank’ was written immediately after this crisis and deals with it in detail. *Schriften*, p. 236-37. (First published in *Die Weltbühne*, 21st July 1931, p. 104.)

²⁵¹ Here Kästner echoes lines taken from Heinrich Heine’s *Deutschland: Ein Wintermärchen*, about the Germans defeat of the Romans in the Hermannschlacht: ‘Wenn Hermann nicht die Schlacht gewann, / mit seinen blonden Horden, / so gäb es deutsche Freiheit nicht mehr, / wir wären römisch geworden.’



mit Wogenprall und Sturmgebraus,²⁵²
dann wäre Deutschland nicht zu retten
und gliche einem Irrenhaus. (163)

but instead of boasting of military strength he uses it to warn of what would have happened if the forces that caused Germany to be in the war had completely controlled it afterwards. His vision of Germany under this regime is truly nightmarish. German pride would know no end and servility would be extreme:

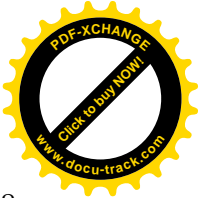
Wenn wir den Krieg gewonnen hätten,
dann wären wir ein stolzer Staat.
Und preßten noch in unsern Betten
die Hände an die Hosennaht. (163)

It is important to note that Kästner still associates himself with the 'wir' of Germany, although he disagrees on the deepest level with what Germany was and was again becoming. Kästner rarely talks directly of national identity, unless it is to criticise the nationalists, but here he says:

Wenn wir den Krieg gewonnen hätten,
dann wär der Himmel national. (164)

Kästner shows the German conception of national identity to be one which is overarching and aims to take over the world, even to the highest heavens. In this poem he warns of the coming tragedy of the Nazi regime and the oppressive military state. It was, as Kästner explains in the 'Anmerkung', a poem which was very misunderstood, at the time and also after World War II. The phrase 'zum Glück gewannen wir ihn nicht!' (165) was interpreted as a rejection of everything German and as an alignment with the victorious powers. It is a mark of Kästner's essential 'Germanness' that he did not mean it to be understood as such,

²⁵² Cf. the first two lines of 'Die Wacht am Rhein', 'Es braust ein Ruf wie Donnerhall / Wie Schwertgeklirr und Wogenprall.'



but was trying, as a German on the inside of the situation, to warn the German people and politicians of the dangers of such a regime and world view.

In his later work Kästner became more direct, challenging the foundations of Nazi ideology much more directly. In his 1932 collection *Gesang zwischen den Stühlen*, this becomes most apparent. The ballad ‘Das Führerproblem, genetisch betrachtet’ (235)²⁵³ describes how God created the world, but of all the countries he had made, Germany still wanted a leader. Creation being over, God refuses to make one for them and leaves them to their own devices. The final stanza shifts the responsibility for Germany’s need to be led onto world history, but it is clear that Kästner is trying to make the German people face up to their own responsibility for what he could see happening:

Nun standen wir mit Ohne da,
der Weltgeschichte freundlichst überlassen.
Und: Alles, was seitdem geschah,
ist ohne diesen Hinweis nicht zu fassen. (235)

Kästner suggests that it is actually easy to understand world history if the German responsibility for it is accepted. Such dangerous writing makes it clear why, for the Nazis, Kästner was an enemy of the state.

In an attempt to make people understand what was happening within their society Kästner utilises more allegories. In ‘Die deutsche Einheitspartei’ (265-67)²⁵⁴ Kästner writes a comic ballad which suggests that German reconciliation is only possible through a levelling of society so that all men and women are the same. However, this attempt at German

²⁵³ *Schriften*, p. 235, first published as ‘Das Führerproblem, entstehungsgeschichtlich behandelt’ in *Simplicissimus*, 17th August 1931, p. 238.

²⁵⁴ First published as ‘Die deutsche Einheits-Partei’ in *Simplicissimus*, 25th August 1930, p. 254.



‘Versöhnung’ (267) is achieved through *Gleichschaltung*,²⁵⁵ the extremists form a party for German unity, which can only consist of people called Müller, or those prepared to change their names and be baptised into the name of Müller. In the hugely exaggerated caricature of an entire German nation called Müller, Kästner highlights the dangers of the Nazi policies which exclude everyone who did not fit into their concept of the Aryan German. Ironically Kästner uses the national anthem:

Von Memel bis zum Rande des Rheins
feierten nun die Deutschen Versöhnung.
Im alten Aachen gab’s Kaiserkrönung.
Und der Kaiser hieß: Müller Eins. (267)

Where the national anthem was originally meant to unite all people under the banner of the new German state, here the boundaries are drawn more narrowly. Despite combining the Weimar political structures of ‘Republik und Monarchie’ (266) including even the Kaiser in the ‘Müllermehrheit’²⁵⁶ (267), this peace is shortlived because an opposition party is set up, under the leadership of a man called Möller.

There are several warning calls to the German people which were published between 1931-32 in *Die Weltbühne*. These were reprinted in November 1945 just after the war in *Neuen Zeitung* I, where Kästner had just begun working. A comment prefaced to the ‘Große Zeiten’ (283) poem casts light on this group of poems:

»... Dieser Warnungsruf vor den Folgen des Nationalsozialismus verhalte wie andere Warnungsrufe auch.«²⁵⁷

²⁵⁵ There is no good English word for *Gleichschaltung* because it is a specific German historical event. It refers to the Nazi policy of levelling or standardising all literature and people to make sure that it/they toed the appropriate party line.

²⁵⁶ The play on the name Müller could be traced back to Hermann Müller who was *Reichskanzler* of the Weimar Republic from 1928-30 whose Cabinet was dissolved 18th July 1930. Müller is, of course, also one of the most common names in Germany.

²⁵⁷ *Neuen Zeitung* I, 15th November 1945, p. 449.



One of the strongest warning calls is found in the poem ‘Ganz rechts zu singen’ (299-301)²⁵⁸ which is included in Kästner’s *Nachlese*. It is a parody of the student song from the era of the German wars of independence ‘Deutsches Weihelied’²⁵⁹ which begins ‘Stoßt an mit hellem hohem Klang’. The poem deals with the unexpectedly high gains that the right-wing parties made in the elections to the Reichstag on the 14th September 1930, when Hitler’s party gained 18.3% of the votes. Kästner rages against what he sees as the stupidity which is taking hold of German society saying: ‘jetzt beginnt die Dummheit als Volksbewegung’ (300). Kästner highlights many facets of the new wave which was sweeping Germany, stressing that it was ‘Die nationale Ehre’ (300) that the Nazis saw as being at stake, and to regain it they would call upon the tradition of the Germanic ‘Heldentod’ (300), the god Wotan, and heavy military machinery. Kästner introduces the concept that the new German identity would have to be one which had a racial and ethnic element, i.e. one cleansed of Jews, ‘Und deshalb müssen die Juden raus!’ (300). Kästner uses the German oak motif of the strength and stability of German identity to describe the overwhelming influence of the new party:

Die Deutsche Welle, die wächst heran
als wie ein Eichenbaum.
Und Hitler ist der richtige Mann.
Der schlägt auf der Welle den Schaum. (300)²⁶⁰

and calls again on ‘Die Wacht am Rhein’ to describe the farcical nature of the politics going on in the Reichstag:

²⁵⁸ First published in *Die Weltbühne*, 1st October 1930, p. 509.

²⁵⁹ This song is translated from Matthias Claudius’s ‘Cantate carmen carminum’ of 1731. See <http://ingeb.org/Lieder/stimmtan.html>, date of access 281106. This song was also used by the Nazi party to stress the superiority of German culture and customs. See ‘Stimmt an mit hellem, hohen Klang’ in *Liederbuch der Nationalsozialistischen Deutschen Arbeiterpartei*, ed. by Hans Buchner, 18th edn., (Munich: Franz Eher Nachf., 1933), p. 54.

²⁶⁰ The phrase ‘Schaum auf der Welle’ was used by Georg Büchner as a metaphor for the French Revolution: ‘Der einzelne nur Schaum auf der Welle’.



Der Reichstag ist ein Schweinestall,
wo sich kein Schwein auskennt.
Es braust ein Ruf wie Donnerhall:
Kreuzhimmelparlament! (300)²⁶¹

Kästner despairs of the German people because he sees that they are not capable of having a true democracy and therefore are incapable of creating a proper state and hence, a true nation. The servility which he has stressed in many other poems makes them easy victims for a dictatorship:²⁶²

Wir brauchen eine Diktatur
viel eher als einen Staat.
Die deutschen Männer kapieren nur,
wenn überhaupt, nach Diktat. (300)

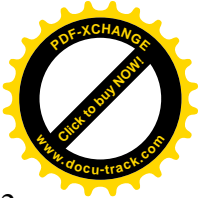
The final stanza contains the final irony because it calls for another putsch to win power *back* from those, i.e. Hitler and the German's Workers' Party, who had originally attempted a putsch in Munich in November 1923. Now however, it is those who lost who have gained power and are gradually taking over all areas of German life. Kästner saw Germany disappearing under the influence of the Nazi party and, despite his strongest satirical and political criticism in his writing, he was powerless to alert enough people to the danger. He foretold this in his poem 'Das ohnmächtige Zwiegespräch' (276-80)²⁶³ which was the final poem in his last poetry collection before the Nazis banned him from publishing. Here the chronicler and the questioner debate the state of the nation and conclude:

Im Jahre 1940 waren
die Herrn der Erde wieder mal soweit.
Sie litten an zu vielen Friedensjahren,
zogen die Völker heftig an den Haaren

²⁶¹ This plays on the expletive *Kreuzhimmelsakrament* which means something like Christ, almighty! Here the 'sakrament' is replaced by 'parlament'.

²⁶² Published in 1932, the 'Ballade vom Nachahmungstrieb' (258-59) tells the story of a group of children murdering one of their number, because they have seen adults do the same. This also highlights the failure of Germans to take responsibility for their actions and their willingness to blame someone else.

²⁶³ *Schriften*, pp. 276-280.



und brauchten wieder eine große Zeit. (278)

In the poem the chronicler tells of how the war is short-lived, the people do not want to fight and a world war is avoided, at the cost of 83 lives. However, the chronicler realises that this will not happen, that the wheels are already in motion for a world war and that the forces that had taken hold of Germany would not be able to be reined in any longer. Kästner prophesied that the war would start just one year later than the actual start of World War II.

Kästner is the most prolific ballad writer of the four writers in this chapter. Unlike the others, he is specifically a ballad writer and his ballads form the core of his work. He later wrote much for cabaret and radio, including plays and short dramatic sketches but his self-appointed role as the chronicler of his time meant that the narrative form was essential to his style. The stories Kästner tells are of a Germany in crisis, of the man in the street who is affected by the major political changes of his day, yet is powerless to combat them. Kästner's writing was his method of combating the things he so strongly disagreed with. His ballads are sobering, sharp, satirical, sometimes idealistic, but above all human. It was this lack of humanity in the Weimar Republic against which Kästner strove most strongly.

1.6 Conclusion

During the Weimar era it was impossible to have a set concept of national identity because there was no set concept of the nation. Each of the writers in this chapter attempted, in their different ways, to deal with the insecurities which accompanied the Weimar Republic:



its lack of political coherence, the economic crises and the rise in the tide of fascism. Tucholsky and Kästner both fell victim to the 1933 *Bücherverbrennung*, and each of the four writers was banned from publishing within Germany. This drove Brecht and Tucholsky into exile and Kästner, remaining in Germany, became the object of intimidation and surveillance during the Nazi period. Although Tucholsky and Kästner supported the principles of a liberal democracy, they joined with Klabund and Brecht in criticising the state apparatus of the Weimar Republic, highlighting its flaws and the idiocy of its dependence on past power structures and ideologies. Only Tucholsky supported the Communist revolution, by his actions as well as his words, but each writer shows certain sympathies with those who stood up to the regime. Each of the writers also draws a clear distinction between the state and the nation, reserving their strongest criticism for the state while being quite prepared to criticise their own people. In many ways both Germany and Scotland were working on a *Kulturnation* level, for in Germany, the banned writers were expressing an alternative version of their Germany while in Scotland, ballad writers and poets were trying to create a greater pride in Scottish culture, which would hopefully then culminate in a political change, leading to Scottish independence.

Each writer also comes out very strongly against militarism. Both Tucholsky's politics, ballads and work with John Heartfield's photo montages, testify to his anger against the continuing power of the army in the Weimar Republic.²⁶⁴ Brecht's work underlines the pervasive and threatening influence of the military, and its ability to destroy innocent human life. It is not just war which is attacked, but rather the militaristic thinking which continued to underpin society. In such a society, the *Dolchstoßlegende* perpetrated by the

²⁶⁴ See *Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles, Ein Bilderbuch von Kurt Tucholsky und vielen Fotografen, Montiert von John Heartfield* (Berlin: Neuer Deutscher Verlag, 1929).



army generals took quick root. The anger within Scotland was against the incorporation of Scotland into the British forces, but this did not become a main feature of the writing of the period. Although Klabund wrote bellicose soldier songs early in his career, experience brought him into the pacifist camp and enabled him to comment strongly on the militaristic underpinnings of the entire *Vaterland* ideology. This did not, however, stop him from writing in support of the Nazis later in his career. Of the four writers, he is the one who is most unstable in his political opinions and did not exercise the courage of his convictions, unlike Kästner, who choose to stay in Germany, or Tucholsky who choose suicide rather than watching the fulfilment of his dire prophecies.

Both Brecht and Klabund suggest that there are positive elements of German national identity which have been lost or corrupted, although neither is able to garner enough courage to hope that they could be found again. Their criticism is of a Germany which is still shaped by Wilhelmine society. As has been established in the introduction, the recreation of a culture or a common history is central to the development of a coherent sense of national identity and this remained the case in both Scotland and Germany. In Scotland during the 1920s however, there was more of a sense of trying to create something new, albeit drawing on older patterns, while in Germany there was a feeling of trying to regain something which had been lost and provide a realistic reflection of contemporary society. While German ballads of this period were dark and realistic, Scottish ballads were often mythical and romantic. Similar elements of myth and romance were later used by the Nazis to shore up their sense of national identity, while the Scottish ballad-makers focused on more concrete issues during the Scottish folk revival.²⁶⁵

²⁶⁵ These will be addressed in the Scottish folk revival chapter.



Brecht, in his international perspective, emerges as being anti-national, often actually anti-German, but as a stern and accurate critic of the country and its mentalities nevertheless. He is the only writer of the four who does not present a vision of some 'other' Germany. However, he also attacks, uniquely amongst the four writers, the concept of the social utopia, which would later become so prevalent in Nazi thinking. Tucholsky and Kästner both represent the tension between love and hate which characterises their relationships to Germany. Tucholsky spells this out most clearly in his work, but Kästner's awareness of his duty to his people and the constant microscopic lens that he keeps on 'his' people testify to his credentials as the moral chronicler he hoped to be. His work refers back to the war, attempting to salvage some sanity from the madness that engulfed the nation and forward to the worrying tendencies he observed in his society. Throughout the Weimar Republic his focus was on the common man, in all his exaggerated satirical shabbiness.

The methods of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* movement are, of course, obvious in Kästner's ballads, but also apparent in Tucholsky's and Klabund's, especially in Klabund's ballads which reveal a concentration on the darker side of human life. Klabund was also able to count the human cost of the war and its aftermath. Each of the writers utilises the instrument of satire, often using humour, the tragi-comic and the ridiculous to drive his messages home. For each writer, poetry had to be something active. The concept of *Gebrauchslyrik* is evident in all the ballads which have been discussed in this chapter, for they attempt to, and indeed need to, cause a reaction and cause people to think. Working under a disliked or despised regime, writing was the only weapon to hand. There was no real parallel to this movement within Scottish writing of this period as the Scottish ballads



tended to be more rural and less urban, more traditional and less modern and had not such a need to be instruments of protest.

The ballad emerges as a perfect form for *Gebrauchslirik*, for within such a narrative framework there is space for the surface level of the story and the hidden message which was often very subversive. The fact that each of these writers chose the ballad form, some writing more extensively in the genre than others, shows that there is a tradition of such writing that can be drawn upon. The names of Frank Wedekind and François Villon have emerged in passing, but what is most intriguing is that the writers all draw on literary sources. Instead of the overriding influence in Scotland of the traditional oral ballad, heavily influenced by women writers,²⁶⁶ in Germany, the *Kunstballade*, as seen most clearly in German Romantic poetry, exercises greater influence and is used solely by men. It is also the staunchly nationalistic songs which are constantly parodied. Although there are many references to different nationalistic and revolutionary songs throughout the different authors' work, it is impossible to ignore the influence of the 'Deutschlandlied' and 'Die Wacht am Rhein'. The fact that they are the objects of such constant parodying shows the extensive influence that they had at the time in German society. It is also worth noting that it is always the misinterpretation of the 'Deutschlandlied' which is parodied, for the original sentiments lie very close to the spirit of the writers in this chapter. In terms of a desire to unite Germany under a common humanitarian banner of simply 'being German', all the writers, with the exception of Brecht, desire for the 'other' Germany to triumph. It is to this end that all their satirical and literary powers were poured out. The national identity they represent in their ballads is overwhelmingly negative, but the negativity is

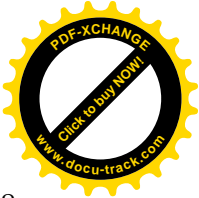
²⁶⁶ The triumvirate of Marion Angus, Violet Jacob and, to a lesser extent, Helen Cruickshank is often considered in these terms, as forerunners to the more masculine Scottish literary renaissance.



directed towards the state and its abuses of power, rather than towards Germany itself. At this time, however, it was impossible to build up a constructive and positive representation of Germany. The times were too unstable and the social and economic situations too dire to allow for this to happen.

In Germany, the writers deliberately did not draw on the past because it was the presence of the past in the Weimar Republic which was one of its major weaknesses and so to attempt to emulate that would have been self-defeating. They also did not appear to have a strong past to draw on.²⁶⁷ In terms of an oral tradition, the influence of specific ballads is practically non-existent in this chapter, although there has been reference to the collection *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* as a source of inspiration. It is the ballad as a genre, with its zenith in German Romantic poetry, which is the source for the German ballad writers, rather than a nationally-rooted oral tradition. The following chapter on the Nazi period will show how such an oral tradition in Germany came to be abused.

²⁶⁷ During the German folk revival, singers and artists were able to find sources of strength in the past and the oral tradition and use these to deal with the hiatus in German national identity.



Chapter Two

The Rupture of History



2.1 Introduction

The rupture of history, as experienced in Germany during the National Socialist period, was product of both a specific elimination and the manipulation of a distinct literary tradition. The most striking example of the silencing of various discourses within Germany at this time was the *Bücherverbrennung* of the 10th May 1933 when the works of many famous German writers were committed to the flames. Their works were denounced as *undeutsch*, as un-German. However, this German-ness was one specifically defined by the National Socialist regime alone. They claimed the ‘unsterblichen deutschen Volksgeist’ as their own and burned the books of their opponents whom they regarded as committing crimes against this spirit. That such a spirit existed was, of course, a highly Romantic conception, drawing on the 18th century zenith of German Romanticism to provide legitimacy for the deeds of the present. It is also highly significant that the era of Romanticism was also one in which the ballad tradition flourished, with Herder, Goethe, Schiller, Bürger and many more translating ballads from the English and writing their own versions before being inspired to collect German ballads. This emphasis linked the Nazi party to a national literary legacy, rooted in a time of Germanic glory.

The situation in Scotland was clearly very different during the Second World War. Despite attempts by German propaganda machines like Radio Caledonia to bring the Scottish national spirit into service of the Nazi regime by stressing an anti-British or anti-English agenda, no ballads have been uncovered in Scotland which are of relevance to this



chapter.²⁶⁸ References to the Nazi regime are contained mainly in Hamish Henderson's collection *Ballads of World War II* which will be considered at the end of the chapter.²⁶⁹

While linking back into an established tradition, the Nazi party set about destroying other traditions with which they did not agree. For example, as the works of Kurt Tucholsky and Karl von Ossietzky were committed to the flames the following slogan was chanted:

Gegen Frechheit und Anmaßung, für Achtung und Ehrfurcht vor dem
unsterblichen deutschen Volksgeist.²⁷⁰

Gegen Verfälschung unserer Geschichte und Herabwürdigung ihrer großen
Gestalten.²⁷¹

However, the Nazis then carried out their own selective reinterpretation of history, choosing which historical events and 'great figures' to highlight and which to exclude. Ernst Loewy describes this process as a form of 'pseudohistoricism',²⁷² for myths, like the *Dolchstoßlegende*²⁷³ and the Germanic heroic past were propagated as truth.

The issue of having one agreed version of history is central, but also highly problematic. This lies in the fact that history is often little more than a perceived history; an understanding of the past of a country which has been allowed by the history-makers, i.e.

²⁶⁸ Radio Caledonia broadcast to Scotland in 1940 before being shut down. It is mentioned rarely in Scottish history, although it is acknowledged as being a fascinating historical issue. It is addressed briefly in David Robinson's article 'All Our Yesterday's Revisited', *The Scotsman*, Sat 31st Jan 2004. This is available online at <http://thescotsman.scotsman.com/s2.cfm?id=120122004>. Date of access 250107.

²⁶⁹ *Ballads of World War II*, collected by Seumas Mor Maceanruig (Glasgow: Lili Marleen Club, 1947).

²⁷⁰ This is quoted in Leon Poliakov and Joseph Wulf, *Das Dritte Reich und seine Denker* (Berlin, 1959), p. 120 but is taken from a report in the *Neuköllner Tageblatt* of 12th May 1933.

²⁷¹ Ernst Loewy, *Literatur unterm Hakenkreuz: Das dritte Reich und seine Dichtung. Eine Dokumentation* 2nd edn (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1983), p. 17.

²⁷² *Ibid*, p. 24.

²⁷³ The 'Myth of the Stab in the Back' was a theory put forward by the German military after World War I because they felt they had been betrayed by their politicians and forced to surrender. They still regarded themselves as 'im Feld unbesiegt'. This theory won much support amongst extreme nationalist thinkers because it removed the shame of having lost the war and allowed for more justifiable anger against the Treaty of Versailles.



by those in power. Indeed, the very nature of history itself may refute the possibility of having ‘a’ history. Eric Hobsbawm stresses the power of historians, claiming that, in their capacity to represent or create truth, they have the potential to become terrorists, to play with politically active explosives which could have devastating consequences.²⁷⁴ As history belongs to the past, it has to be de- or re-constructed; it becomes a fiction which often encompasses great leaps of time and draws on ‘useful’ material from many different eras. Dorothea Weidinger speaks of how elements of a common history are selected, used and become the ‘Kern einer (fiktiven) nationalen Geschichte.’²⁷⁵

This chapter will look in detail at some of the song collections issued by the Nazi party and their use and inclusion of ballads, both traditional and new, before moving on to look at ballads written within the literary world. There is some evidence of anti-Nazi writers subverting the Nazi’s use of the ballad but this is not the main focus of this study. They will, however, be considered briefly at the end of the chapter. It is difficult to research this area of folksong because, due to the nature of the material, the songs are transient and were not always printed, while after the war, for obvious political reasons, they were not collected in songbooks. The available songbooks from the time show what was meant to be sung, not necessarily what was sung. Many ballad anthologies printed after the war completely ignore the Nazi period and the work of many writers seen as being close to the party was often heavily censored.

²⁷⁴ Eric Hobsbawm speaks of historians turning their studies into bomb-making factories if they do not deal carefully with their responsibilities in representing historical ‘truth’. ‘Die Erfindung der Vergangenheit’. in *Die Zeit* 37/1994, p. 49.

²⁷⁵ Dorothea Weidinger, (ed.) *Nation – Nationalismus – Nationale Identität* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2002), p. 24. English loses the pun on ‘Geschichte’ which means story and history – so the history of a nation is simultaneously its own story.



2.2 *Gleichschaltung* and Nazi National Identity

The historical breach in question in this chapter is that created by the rupture in the German literary and oral traditions caused not solely by events such as those described above, but, perhaps less obviously, by the abuse of poetry and oral poetry during the Nazi period, by the *Gleichschaltung* of authors and of the excessive use of words and concepts such as *Vaterland*, *Volk*, *Heimat*, the *Volkslied* and of the concept of nation itself. Due to the insistent and constant use of these terms within folksong, balladry and the whole range of Nazi propaganda, these notions became so tainted by association with the Nazi agenda that it is highly problematic to use them in what could cautiously be called a ‘normal’ context of national identity.

This chapter will also investigate how the Nazis exploited the German ballad tradition in order to strengthen their legitimacy by drawing on a previously established tradition. The German ballad, with its roots in the late medieval period and its zenith in 18th century Classicism and Romanticism, was claimed as a national treasure and used for purposes of creating national awareness. Writing during the Nazi regime, in a very broad definition of the German ballad, Karl Plenzat says:

Deutsche Ballade ist – räumlich gefaßt – Heimatenge und Weltweite, Nähe und Ferne, Meerfahrt und Wüstenritt, Mitternachtssonne und Tropennacht. Deutsche Ballade ist Spiegel deutscher Volkwerdung. (26)²⁷⁶

The German ballad was wide-ranging and, by linking into a well-established tradition which was a source of great literary pride to the German people, could be utilised to

²⁷⁶ Karl Plenzat, *Agnes Miegel: Werden und Werk* (Leipzig: Eichblatt, 1938) p. 26.



confirm concepts of German superiority. The most significant aspect of this quotation is that Plenzat highlights the ballad's centrality in the creation of the German *Volk*, as it began to emerge or be created as a united, coherent body. This aspect of Nazi propaganda was hugely effective, but the national identity it proposed was a narrow, exclusivist one.

The narrowness of Hitler's and, by extension, of Nazi Germany's concept of national identity was apparent as early as 12th April 1921 in the speech on nationalism which Hitler gave when he took over leadership of the German Workers' Party. This was prior to the Munich beer hall putsch and over ten years before he legitimately assumed power. He said:

'National' and 'social' are two identical conceptions. We said to ourselves that to be 'national' means above everything to act with a boundless and all-embracing love for the people and, if necessary, even to die for it. And similarly to be 'social' means so to build up the State and the community of the people that every individual acts in the interest of the community of the people and must be to such an extent convinced of the goodness, of the honourable straightforwardness of this community of the people, as to be ready to die for it.²⁷⁷

Here Hitler stresses that the nation is the people, the *Volk*, which he sees as a homogeneous unity, a higher good which demands absolute loyalty, even if it demands death. He refutes the economic and class bases of a nation saying:

And then we said to ourselves: there are no such things as classes: they cannot be. Class means caste and caste means race. If there are castes in India, well and good; there it is possible, for there were formerly Aryans and dark aborigines. So it was in Egypt and Rome. ...But with us in Germany where everyone who is a German at all has the same blood, has the same eyes, and speaks the same language, here there can be no class, here there can be only a single people and beyond that nothing else.²⁷⁸

Hitler's concept of Germany is of a common people, sharing common characteristics, language, ethnic origins and biological traits. That such a concept is unrealistic and can be

²⁷⁷ For the full text see <http://history.hanover.edu/courses/excerpts/111hit1.html>, date of access 24.07.06.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.



taken to barbaric extremes was borne out by the atrocities of his regime and the horrors of the Holocaust. His phrase 'Everyone who is a German at all' suggests that there may be passport-carrying Germans who are seen as being not German at all as they are not regarded as being of the same blood. Indeed, after the Jews were stripped of their citizenship in 1933, it became apparent how being German came to be clearly defined and began to exclude those not deemed German.

A major goal of the National Socialists was to gain legitimacy, to move from being an organisation with paramilitary links which met in beer halls, to becoming a plausible party for government. Part of this legitimising process was to appropriate the writings of those who were already acceptable and to align both the Nazi party with them and the writers with the Nazi party. To illustrate this point, this chapter will deal with two specific examples of this process: the ballad writers Agnes Miegel and Hans Friedrich Blunck. These authors have been specifically chosen because their work is the most established within the canon which the Nazis were trying to create. They also are particularly relevant because both illustrate the development from the pre-Nazi period into the Hitler era and beyond. They also have very strong balladesque elements in their work. More authors could have been chosen, but as the essence of the Nazi approach to literature was that literature be subjected to *Gleichschaltung*, these two most well-known authors serve well as representative examples of writing that was typical of the period.

It is already clear how Hitler linked the *Volk* inseparably with the state, so that any deed carried out in service of the state was also in service of the people. Effectively the two areas of life were merged by the *Gleichschaltung* that was imposed across the social sphere,



encompassing literary groupings, musical clubs, sports teams and youth groups. The state therefore seized control over the entire social machinery of the country. Hitler also gave great worth to the concept of dying for your country, giving it honorific status. Within Germany this concept, which was common across many countries, developed into the *Führerkult*, where the honour was extended to include dying for the Führer as well as for your land. This is well documented in several studies dealing specifically with the *Führerprinzip*.²⁷⁹ Whereas previously there had been tensions between political nation and cultural nation, between the people and the state, in the Nazi period, Hitler came to embody 'Germany' and so the humanist land of *Dichter und Denker* came to be symbolised by a despotic dictator who manipulated culture and language for his specific political and national ends.²⁸⁰

In her book *History of Germany, 1918-2000, The Divided Nation*, Mary Fulbrook describes Nazi ideology as:

a somewhat rag-bag collection of largely negative views combined with a utopian vision of a grandiose future coloured by nostalgic appeals to aspects of a mythical past.²⁸¹

²⁷⁹ See Ian Kershaw, *The 'Hitler Myth'. Image and Reality in the Third Reich* (Oxford: OUP, 1987). On the later development of the Führer-principle, see Helga Grebing, *Der National-Sozialismus. Ursprung und Wesen* 17th edn (Munich and Vienna: Olzog, 1964), 94ff.

²⁸⁰ There has been much valuable research in the field of the language of fascism and its outworkings in the Nazi period. Some of the most useful sources are a recent analysis of the relationship between nation and language in the past and present in Andreas Gardt's *Nation und Sprache: die Diskussion ihres Verhältnisses in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2000), while Gerhard Bauer's study *Sprache und Sprachlosigkeit im »Dritten Reich«* deals with issues of acceptable language and silencing of opposing discourses in the Third Reich (Cologne: Bund, 1988). Other useful general sources are Michael Kinne and Johannes Schwitalla's *Sprache in Nationalsozialismus* (Heidelberg: J. Groos, 1994), Claus Ahlzweig's *Muttersprache – Vaterland: die deutsche Nation und ihre Sprache* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994) and Konrad Ehlich's *Sprache im Faschismus*. (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1989). In addition, Utz Maas's "*Als der Geist der Gemeinschaft eine Sprach fand*": *Sprache im Nationalsozialismus: Versuch einer historischen Argumentationsanalyse* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1984) provides a clear historical overview of the creation of a National Socialist language.

²⁸¹ Mary Fulbrook, *History of Germany, 1918-2000, The Divided Nation*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), p. 43.



This magpie-like attitude caused the Nazi party to draw on various strands of pre-existing nationalist thought and to coerce these intellectual foundations to support the development of Nazi ideology, even if it meant that these foundations were adapted or corrupted in the process. The Nazis exploited literature and culture primarily as a political instrument, imposing controls and censorship on writers and publishers, and effectively lowering *Literatur* to the level of *Schrifttum* or *Gedichte* to the level of *Dichtung*.

The propagandist elements in this approach are clear. Loewy refers to this abuse of writing and thought as ‘der Mißbrauch des Wortes als Mittel kruder Propaganda’ and highlights ‘die Degradierung des Schriftstellers zum politischen Schulungsbeamten.’²⁸² He queries the relevance of calling such writing literature, for all elements of expression or independent thought were expunged from writing once it had undergone literary standardisation. The Nazi party deliberately used the word *Schrifttum* rather than *Literatur*. All art had to be carried out in service of the state; otherwise it was seen as degenerate and was banned, burned or censored. The writing of some authors and some particular styles of writing however, proved ideal for development into a form of Nazi writing. In particular, the genre of *Heimatsdichtung*, which was in existence before the Nazi party was established, proved fertile ground for the Nazis. Beginning around the turn of the 19th-20th century, it already included the core elements of what became, under Nazi rule, the *Blut- und Boden* school of literature. This theory was expounded by Adolf Bartels and based on the writings of Julius Langbehn. In the landmark essay *Rembrandt als Erzieher* Langbehn claims: ‘Denn im Grunde ist nur das Blut wert – das ureigene Blut -, daß um seinetwillen ein Blut

²⁸² *Literatur unterm Hakenkreuz*, p. 11.



vergossen wird.’²⁸³ There was therefore an intellectual underpinning for the bloodshed that was to be such a feature of the Nazi regime.

Heimatdichtung had certain similarities to the Kailyard movement in Scotland, in that it praised the rural at the expense of the industrial or urban and it stressed the importance of close communities which had not been as affected by individualism. Whereas in Scotland, the Kailyard was not offered as a national identity, but rather as a somewhat oversimplified, parochial, romanticised version of the past, the Nazis attempted to utilise *Heimatdichtung* as a representation of the true Germany. Under the Nazi party *Heimatdichtung* was also set in opposition to the urban *Asphaltliteratur* of decadent Berlin, which was blamed for the moral decay of the Western world and the Aryan race. In order to save the culture and the German way of life, a return to basic values was advocated. These values were embodied in the thinking and writing of the *Heimat*, a term which is notoriously hard to translate, because is simultaneously home and homeland.²⁸⁴

The Nazis wanted Germany to return to the earth, hence their admonition ‘Zurück zur Scholle’ and wanted to focus on the land from which they had come and the ancestors who had tilled the land. The ancestors were linked by blood ties into a genealogical chain, so the stress moved from *Heimat* to *Blut- und Boden*. Sagarra and Skrine contrast these two describing ‘Blubo’²⁸⁵ as:

²⁸³ Julius Langbehn, *Rembrandt als Erzieher- Von einem Deutschen*, first published 1890 (Leipzig: Hirschfeld, 1936), p. 143. See also Ernst Waldinger, ‘Über Heimatkunst und Blut- und Bodenideologie’, *German Life and Letters* NS 10 (1956/7), pp. 106-119.

²⁸⁴ For a clear exploration of the concept of *Heimat*, see Elizabeth Boa & Rachel Palfreyman, *Heimat: A German Dream: Regional Loyalties and National Identity in German Culture 1890-1990* (Oxford: OUP, 2000).

²⁸⁵ A shorthand term for *Blut- und Bodenliteratur*.



a populist genre which emphasized the rootedness of human beings in their native soil more overtly even than the fiction with a regional setting which had been popular in Germany and in other western countries since the late nineteenth century.²⁸⁷

Writers such as Hans Friedrich Blunck, who had written much about *Heimat* in the pre-Nazi period, were encouraged to develop in the direction of *Blut- und Bodenliteratur*. This was a Romantic construct, encompassing a mystical awareness of the power of the earth, of the history that it contained and of the life and continuance of a race that was in the blood. Highlighting the importance of blood, and stressing the need for its purity and therefore the expunging of impure, non-Aryan, non-German elements brought these teachings from the realms of metaphor into a dangerous reality.²⁸⁸

The Nazi party put great emphasis on the past, on the ancient world of runes and relics, on Germania and the Ur-existence of modern day Germany. This attempt to provide a national history is a well-researched phenomenon in nationalism theory, and in this particular case has been linked to the late development of Germany as a modern nation, leaving a gap in national awareness, an inferiority complex for which compensation had to be made by an aggressive assertion of a legitimising, authenticating, uniting history.²⁸⁹ Again, Langbehn stresses the Ur-existence of the German *Volk*:

Sie sollen das sein, was sie von uralters her waren; wozu sie die Natur selbst gemacht hat.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁷ Eda Sagarra and Peter Skrine, *A Companion to German Literature: from 1500 to the Present* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), p. 206. The Kailyard is much more relevant to fiction with a regional setting.

²⁸⁸ The development of Nazi eugenics is but one example of the extension of such thinking, although the principles and study of eugenics were common in other countries, including America at that time.

²⁸⁹ Aspects of this inferiority complex are addressed in the author's article 'Scotland and the German "Percy-Complex": Ballad Transitions in the 18th Century'.

²⁹⁰ *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, p. 143.



Similarly Ernest Renan highlights the power that can be gained from stressing the heroic past of a nation. Benedict Anderson describes the nation-building endeavour as benefiting from notions, such as the Barbarossa legend, of a nation awakening from sleep, having a pre-existence deliberately kept somewhere in the mists of time, where it can be helpfully projected further back into the past in an attempt to gain increased legitimacy.²⁹¹

The Nazi party gave great importance to poetry, seeing it as the expressive voice of the *Volk* and of the spirit of Germany. Albert Soergel, in his 1934 literary history of Germany, says ‘Dichtung ist wieder der Ausdruck der Blut-, Geist- und Schicksalsgemeinschaft eines Volkes.’²⁹² In reclaiming poetry from expressionism and symbolism, the Nazis sought to bring poetry back to the common man and use it as propaganda, as a way of influencing thought and opinion. They moved poetry into the public sphere and nowhere more so than in their utilisation of poetry as song, predominantly as marching song.

2.3 National Socialist Song

Tucholsky’s ironic use of the German platitude ‘Wo man singt, da komme ruhig nieder, böse Menschen haben keine Lieder’²⁹³ was proved suitably wrong in the example of the Nazi’s use of song and rediscovery of Germanic folksong. Youth organisations in particular built on the work of the turn of the 20th century *Wandervogelbewegung*, who,

²⁹¹ Renan, Qu’est ce que c’est un nation?, Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 195.

²⁹² Albert Soergel, *Dichter aus deutschem Volkstum Dichtung und Dichter der Zeit. Eine Schilderung der deutschen Literatur der letzten Jahrzehnte*, Vol. 3 (Leipzig: Voigtländer, 1934), p. 21.

²⁹³ Johann Gottfried Seume is credited with the phrase ‘Wo man singt, da lass dich ruhig nieder, böse Menschen kennen keine Lieder’. This version quoted in Kurt Tucholsky, ‘Des deutschen Volkes Liederschatz’. *Werke I*, p. 167.



drawing in turn on the *Zupfgeigenhansel* songbook, used folksongs collected from the 16th century onwards.²⁹⁴ They aimed to reclaim a national identity for Germany, based upon its songs. The idea of making all the Nazi groups, and, by extension, the whole country sing together was a way of suppressing individual thought and argument, of creating an imagined community, which literally sang from the same hymn sheet. It was a form of *Gleichschaltung* of thought.²⁹⁵ Writing about the influence of Walter Hensel, a German singer and song collector from the Sudetenland, Karin Stoverock says:

Durch die Lieder sollte dem Volk wieder ein Bewußtsein für die eigene Kultur und damit ein neues Nationalbewußtsein gegeben werden.²⁹⁶

In attempting to create a new sense of what it meant to be German, the Nazi party was fully aware of the power of music and song and exploited these in any way possible.

The Nazi songs were primarily fighting songs, then, as the party became more established, they became celebratory songs of belonging, of asserting allegiance to the party. Later they became marching songs, to be used in many public celebrations, festivals and marches. Due to the direct nature of the message and the propagandistic elements that riddled the work, the ballad, despite being promoted as central to the German song tradition, was not actually central to these songs. It did appear however, with songs such as Heine's 'Lorelei' being sung by the troops, although it was disassociated from Heine due to his Jewishness and adopted as an 'anonymous' 'traditional' song. Conversely German ballads like 'Lili

²⁹⁴ A songbook containing German folksongs from as early as the 16th century.

²⁹⁵ The Nazi party used many art forms to create this type of *Gleichschaltung*, most prominent among them were the *Sprechchöre*, where thousands of people spoke the same words at exactly the same moment as part of a highly-orchestrated spectacle.

²⁹⁶ Karin Stoverock, 'Bündische Lieder in der Hitler-Jugend', in Gottfried Niedhart and George Broderick, *Lieder in Politik und Alltag des Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1999), pp. 38-39.



Marleen' were sung by British and French troops, showing some degree of crossover between the songs.²⁹⁷

Alexander von Bormann stresses the importance of the 'traditionelle Liedform' to the Nazi party and says:

Die Ballade ist genauso populär und wird mit einer ausgeklügelten Poetik umgeben; vor allem Borries von Münchhausen, Agnes Miegel, Lulu von Strauß und Torney sind zu nennen.²⁹⁸

Here von Bormann stresses the existence of the ballad in the literary realm, rather than the oral. Due to their hatred of modern, degenerate art and writing, the Nazis propagated older verse forms, including the ballad, filling school books with sonnets and traditional verse forms, attempting to reintroduce the 'Altes und Bewährtes'²⁹⁹ and to preserve the German literary past. In a separate article von Bormann speaks of the need to present the new in the guise of the old saying 'Das heißt das Neue als das Ewig-Alte auszugeben.'³⁰⁰ The old, i.e. that which had been handed down or rediscovered, carries with it a certain legitimacy and authenticity, real or imagined, that is central to nation-making and hence to the National Socialist cause.

Fritz Stein's collection *Chorliederbuch für die Wehrmacht*³⁰¹ from 1944 and Strube and Lorenz's 1940 *Handbuch für die Singleiter der Wehrmacht*³⁰² may serve to cast some light

²⁹⁷ For general information on this area see Brian Murdoch, *Fighting Songs and Warring Words: Popular Lyrics of Two World Wars*, (London: Routledge, 1990).

²⁹⁸ Alexander von Bormann, '»Hin ins Ganze und Wahre« Lyrischer Traditionalismus zwischen 1930 und 1960', in *Politische Lyrik, Text und Kritik* 9/9a, ed. by Heinz Ludwig Arnold, Oct. 1984, p. 73.

²⁹⁹ Hans Dieter Schäfer, 'Zur Periodisierung der deutschen Literatur seit 1930', in *Das Gespaltene Bewußtsein. Deutsche Kultur und Lebenswirklichkeit 1933-1945* (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1981), p. 58.

³⁰⁰ Alexander von Bormann, 'Stählerne Romantik. Lyrik im Einsatz: Von der deutschen Bewegung zum Nationalsozialismus', in *Politische Lyrik, Text und Kritik* 9/9a, ed. by Heinz Ludwig Arnold (Munich: 1973), p. 94.

³⁰¹ (Leipzig: C. F. Peters, [1944]). Subsequent quotations are taken from this volume.



on the traditional ballads that were officially sanctioned by the Nazi party. The intention behind these collections is very clear in Hitler's speech at a *Sängerbundesfest* in Breslau on 1st August 1937 which is quoted in the introduction to the *Chorliederbuch*:

Das deutsche Lied lebt in uns und mit uns and es läßt, wo wir auch sind, plötzlich immer wieder die Urheimat vor unseren Augen erstehen, nämlich Deutschland und das Deutsche Reich. (ii)

The Nazi party deliberately used folk songs and ballads to evoke a sense of the *Urheimat* and within it, to equate the notion of the *Urheimat* with both Germany, and by association, the German empire. These songs were not meant solely for entertainment, or just to create a sense of oneness, but as Generalfeldmarschall Keitel put it, the aim was to draw strength from the songs, 'die Musik als Kraftquell zu erschließen' (iii). This was a highly orchestrated agenda; the *Chorliederbuch* was sent out to all soldiers in all areas, including all garrisons and occupied areas throughout Europe. Each area was organised into a *Singleiterlehrgang* to teach the songs to the soldiers, even in four-part harmony. In this way, they aimed to recreate the German tradition of the male voice choir and to use the power of the folksong and the German *Meistersänger* to create a *völkisch* community:

Möge es beitragen zur Erneuerung des deutschen Männerchorsingens, das, im rechten Geisten unternommen, als tatfrohes Bekenntnis zu den Wesenskräften des Volksliedes und der deutschen Meisterkunst zu einer lebendigen Schaffensmacht der Volksgemeinschaft werden soll im Krieg und Frieden! (iv)

It is evidence of the magpie-like approach that the Nazis took towards nation-building, that the traditions of folk song and the *Meistersänger* are combined and equated so easily. As Keitel says in the preface to the *Handbuch für die Singleiter der Wehrmacht*:

das Lied des Volkes und die Werke der großen Meister der Tonkunst sind aus dem gleichen Boden erwachsen, sie bilden eine Einheit und gehören zum schönsten und wertvollsten Besitz des ganzen Volkes. (preface)

³⁰² (Leipzig: Merseberger, 1940).



The idea of communal possession mooted here is rather ironic in that it is not the entire populace which is being addressed, but only the German *Volk* as delineated by the Nazi regime. It is interesting that James Murphy, in his foreword to Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, states that the word *Volk* is sometimes translated as People:

but the German word, Volk, means the whole body of the people without any distinction of class or caste. It is a primary word also that suggests what might be called the basic national stock... the concept of Das Volk came into prominence as the unifying co-efficient which would embrace the whole German people.³⁰³

However, it was clear during the Nazi period that they drew the distinctions between what they accepted as German and what they decried as being *undeutsch*.

The *Chorliederbuch* contains a mixture of classical poetry, from Goethe and Schiller, to well-known *Kunstballaden* like Ludwig Uhland's 'Ich hatt' einen Kameraden' (45), Theodor Körner's 'Lützows wilde Jagd' (28), old folksongs like the East Prussian 'Der Preußenkönig' (18-20) and traditional ballads like 'Es ritten drei Reiter zum Tore hinaus' (188) which was written down in 1777, 'Prinz Eugen, der edle Ritter' collected in 1719, and 'Die Königskinder' which was in circulation in the 15th century. Alongside these traditional songs are more typical songs that the Nazis had adopted wholesale: Max von Schenkendorf's 1814 'Das SS-Treuelied' (81) and Ernst Moritz Arndt's 1812 song 'Der Gott, der Eisen wachsen ließ' (88). Many of the traditional ballads and folksongs are about hunting, departing for battle and about the glory of war in general, however, others, such as the 'Königskinder' ballad, present simple tragedy. The importance of the ballad lies more

³⁰³ *Mein Kampf* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1939).



in its existence in the folk canon and the likelihood that soldiers would have learnt it in school, thus contributing to the feeling of an innate shared possession.

As traditional ballads brought with them the air of antiquity, or at least a pedigree of several hundreds of years, the Nazi propaganda machine deliberately drew on them and on the work of well-established ballad collectors like Clemens Brentano and Ludwig Uhland along with ballad writers such as Matthias Claudius and Joseph von Eichendorff, all of whose work is included in the *Chorliederbuch*. It is perhaps therefore unsurprising that they did not stress contemporary ballads to a great extent, because the traditional ballads were already well-known and could be used to establish an awareness of the history of the German people, and therefore could be used to strengthen the feeling of a German national past. This desire to emphasise the past and draw legitimacy from it was present within the Nazi flag, with its Aryan fire symbol and the stress within Nazi ideology on relics, runes and Germanic tribes, on the Ur-existence of the German *Volk* before the problematic process of German nation building began.

This merging of the German with the Germanic has been commented upon by Ernst Loewy.³⁰⁴ He stresses that this is a clear indication of the Nazi party trying to construct an earlier history for their concept of the German nation and thus increase its authenticity and strength. The National Socialist use of the ballads is one of the many strands of this aim. This conflation was also written into the pedagogical goals of the late 1920s. A school book issued in 1927 contains the entire text of the esteemed Germanist Helmut de Boor's inaugural lecture at the University of Leipzig on 'Gemeingermanische Kultur'. He concludes by stressing that:

³⁰⁴ *Literatur unterm Hakenkreuz*, p. 60.



Die 'gemeingermanische Kultur' ist kein Faktum sondern eine nie verwirklichte Idee, nicht ein Anfang, sondern ein nie erreichtes Ziel.³⁰⁵

Despite there being an awareness at this point that the Germanic theory was not watertight, it was propagated as such by the Nazis, and the unfulfilled goal, as de Boor called it, was seen as being simultaneously pre-existent and to be fulfilled.³⁰⁶

Poetry, in its many forms, including ballads, folksong and authored poetry was used as a way to link into the pseudo-historicist mythical realm of the Germanic past. Here the Nazi party highlighted the romantic notion of the spontaneous outflow of the voice of a people. The words which commonly occur, i.e. blood, spirit and fate are typical of the Nazi period and are useful in that they are open concepts into which many opinions and emotions could be poured. They also lend the ideology of the Nazis a mythical aspect, which is easy to emotionalise and to manipulate.

One of the other most useful collections of songs for looking at the role of the ballad in Nazi song is the officially-sanctioned *Liederbuch der Nationalsozialistischen Deutschen Arbeiterpartei*,³⁰⁸ which first appeared in 1926 and had already run through eighteen editions by 1933. It bears the epigram:

Trotziger Stolz und heiliger Glaube

³⁰⁵ 'Gemeingermanische Kultur: Antrittsvorlesung an der Universität Leipzig', in *Neue Jahrbücher für Wissenschaft und Jugendbildung*, vol.3, ed. by Johannes Ilberg (Leipzig: Teubner, 1927), pp. 284-300. Here p.300.

³⁰⁶ Jost Hermand deals with the same concept specifically in relation to the visual arts in 'Bewährte Tümligkeiten. Der völkisch-nazistische Traum einer ewig-deutschen Kunst', in Horst Denkler and Karl Prümm's *Die deutsche Literatur im Dritten Reich: Themen, Traditionen, Wirkungen* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1976), pp. 102-117.

³⁰⁸ *Liederbuch der Nationalsozialistischen Deutschen Arbeiterpartei*, ed. by Hans Buchner, [1926] 18th edn., (Munich: Franz Eher Nachf., 1933). All references in brackets will be to this collection. There were many more impressions of it.



sind die Lieder eines hoffenden Volkes³⁰⁹

The songs are presented to strengthen the backbone of the German people and to motivate them to support the National Socialist cause. The book contains many famous songs, like the infamous ‘Horst Wessel Lied’ (5-6),³¹⁰ ‘Brüder in Zechen und Gruben’ (10-11), Dietrich Eckart’s ‘Deutschland, erwache!’ (28), older songs such as Ernst Moritz Arndt’s 1812 song ‘Der Gott, der Eisen wachsen ließ’ (37), Ludwig Bauer’s 1859 ‘O Deutschland hoch in Ehren’ (52-53), and Matthias Claudius’ 1731 ‘Stimmt an mit hellem, hohem Klang’ (54),³¹¹ as well as reworkings of ‘Die Wacht am Rhein’ (40) and the ‘Deutschlandlied’ (37-38).³¹² In addition there is a selection of ballads. It is typical of the Nazi desire to create a mythical past for their songs that many of the songs that were in fact authored, appear as anonymous, in an attempt to incorporate them into an ‘authentic’ folk tradition.³¹³ The process of *zersingen*, by which authored songs lose their connection to the author’s name and become anonymous, is a well-established feature of folksong.³¹⁴ This is clearly, however, a deliberate attempt to make these songs appear as spontaneous outpourings of the *Volk*, rather than songs which have been deliberately chosen for these purposes.³¹⁵

³⁰⁹ Ibid, inside cover.

³¹⁰ The ‘Horst Wessel Lied’ was also used as a method of psychological assertion of power, as was clear when the anti-fascist writers Erich Mühsam and Carl von Ossietzky were forced to sing it as they were marched into the Sonnenburg concentration camp. For more details see Guido Fackler, ‘Lied und Gesang im KZ’, in *Lied und Populäre Kultur / Song and Popular Culture: Jahrbuch des Deutschen Volksliedarchivs Freiburg*, 46 ed. by Max Matter & Nils Grosch (Munich & Berlin: Waxmann, 2001), pp. 141-198. Here p. 143.

³¹¹ This was also the subject of parody by the Weimar satirists.

³¹² Although it is an authored song, the entire ‘Deutschlandlied’ (38) is included here as an anonymous song, with an additional fourth stanza which ends ‘Deutschland, Deutschland über alles, und im Unglück nun erst recht.’ This makes the song more appropriate for the troubled times that Germany was facing. ‘Die Wacht am Rhein’ (40) was also rewritten by Heinz Schauwecker and was consequently changed from a song of defence into a song of attack.

³¹³ It is also significant that they drew on Heinrich Heine’s oeuvre, yet removed his name from his work because he was a Jew, and therefore could not be considered to be part of their new Germany.

³¹⁴ For more information see the entry on ‘Volkslied’ in the *Oxford Companion to German Literature* (Oxford: OUP, 1997).

³¹⁵ This can be seen in clear opposition to the unofficial national anthem of Scotland, Roy Williamson’s ‘Flower of Scotland’, which was adopted by the people and has now largely lost its authored status.



The *Liederbuch* includes Theodor Körner's early 19th century Kunstballade 'Lützows wilde Jagd' (57-58) which raises the idea of the heroic death for the German fatherland, Ludwig Uhland's 'Ich hatt' einen Kameraden' (45-46) and Schiller's call to arms 'Wohlauf, Kameraden, aufs Pferd, aufs Pferd' (61) which praises militarism. These ballads conflate the modern Nazi songs with a tradition of freedom fighters and militant nationalism, although they were motivated by very different political ends.

The repetition inherent in propaganda is clear in the repeated intertextual links to 'Die Wacht am Rhein' and the 'Deutschlandlied' in many songs.³¹⁶ Unlike in the Weimar period, when these same songs were bases for parody of German militarism and national pride, in the case of Nazi songs and poems, the songs and these concepts are taken entirely seriously. Although the ballad form is not prevalent throughout the propagandist verse, ballad motifs do appear and are subtly changed. For example, in 'Es ist ein Held gefallen' (16), the motif of wild roses blooming on the grave of the dead lover is made heroic whereupon, instead of the briar and the rose intertwining to prove true love, roses bloom over the grave of the hero and revenge is sworn.³¹⁷

The modern ballads that do appear in the collection are all short, none extending to more than three stanzas. Although they are contemporary, they have a markedly old-fashioned style. The beginnings 'Es ziehen die Standarten hinaus zum alten Tor' and 'Es zog ein Hitlermann hinaus' tie these ballads in with an older tradition of fighting ballads. The two

³¹⁶ There are several examples of this. See 'Haltet aus' (15-16) which quotes 'Es braust ein Ruf...' and is sung to the tune of 'O Deutschland hoch in Ehren.' Also 'Gebt Raum, des Hitlers tapfere Schar' (18) which quotes from both songs.

³¹⁷ Flowers also burst into bloom as the SA march past in the song 'Du kleiner Tambour, schlage ein' (13-14). This motif of nature blossoming in response to the coming of Hitler and his followers is a common thread through the Nazi songs. It is also to be found in 'Wenn Hitlerleut marschieren' (19).



ballads in this collection from which these opening lines are taken, 'Für Deutschland soll es sein' (17) and 'Es zog ein Hitlermann hinaus' (17-18) tell the story of the women who are left behind when the men go off to war and it is stressed that the women's duty is to be brave while the man's duty is to fight. Both ballads are written in rhyming couplets and standard 4444 rhythms and both put emphasis on the heroic death for the fatherland. It is interesting that these ballads appear in the pre-war period, as Hitler came to power, and therefore are already preparing the people for battle. As the young soldier says to his love, 'Und wenn wir sterben müssen, für Deutschland soll es sein.' (17), the mother similarly says to her son, 'Hitlergardist, tu deine Pflicht!' (17). As he dies, her son tells his comrades to tell his mother not to mourn for him for he died bringing honour to the swastika. The ballads are not really sustained narratives, they exist purely to provide a snapshot of a narrative situation where the heroes and heroines respond in the way prescribed them by Nazi ideology and therefore they exist to propagate a clear message. They are an attempt to exemplify, in the lives of the ballad characters, the sacrifices that will be demanded of Germany's ordinary citizens when battle comes. It is significant that this collection was published six years before the start of World War II, yet the ground was already being prepared for the war.

The ballad 'In Preußen' (23) tells the story of two German soldiers who are fighting the Russians in Prussia. One is killed and the other is left with the task of informing his parents. Upon swearing that blood will be spilt in revenge for their son's death, the ballad closes with the evocation of the heroic death for the fatherland and for the honour of the swastika:

Und bist du in Preußen gefallen und starbst du für Hitler als Held,



[:so bedeckt dich die Fahne, die rote, mit dem Hakenkreuz auf schneeweißem Feld.:] (23)

There is nothing creative or artistic about these ballads. They illustrate clearly the decline of poetry (*Dichtung*) into writing (*Schrifttum*), the poetical being put at the service of the political. The heroic death is a constant theme, whether as a direct propagandistic statement like ‘Der Tod im Feld ist doch der schönste Tod’,³¹⁸ or ‘der Heldentod fürs Vaterland ist schönste deutsche Pflicht’,³¹⁹ or as a simple story illustrating the principle. In this way the ballads or ballad fragments functioned as a kind of straightforward brainwashing, illustrating the outworkings of Nazi ideology but also cloaking it in glory and in the propaganda of the fatherland. In this way, the people were being prepared for war through songs that conflated World War I with Hitler’s planned war, for the battle on the Eastern Front, described in the ballad, could refer to the fighting on that front which took place in World War I. Interestingly their heroes are seen as dying for Hitler and being covered with the Nazi flag, which at that time, obviously did not yet exist. In this way all wars become a war for Germany, which is seen as being ruled over by Hitler, in the present tense and retrospectively.

The songs and ballads raise the question of what it really means to be German. In similar tones to those which Hitler used in his speech of 1921 when he took over leadership of the German Workers’ Party, Dr D. Kernstock’s song ‘Das Hakenkreuz’ (12-13) contrasts those who are ‘deutsch mit Seele / Sinn und Art’(12) and do not just pay lip service to their nationality, ‘Und nicht bloß mit dem Munde’ (12). The Nazi songs introduce a wealth of symbolism and imagery that encompass all that it means to be ‘actually’ or ‘truly’ German.

³¹⁸ ‘Auf, auf zum Kampf’ (34).

³¹⁹ ‘Wir sind die Radfahrkompanie’ (31).



This German-ness is presented as a homogenous entity; all those who look to the swastika for salvation become one *Volk*. The songs are a call to unite, to join the marching and leave previous loyalties or political allegiances behind. As the song ‘Hessen-Weckruf’ (20-21) states:

In des Hakenkreuzes Zeichen blüht die deutsche Einigkeit. (21)

The German language is also used as a uniting factor in the new national identity. In the song ‘Laßt tönen laut den frohen Sang’ (49) it is stated, ‘Soweit die deutsche Zunge klingt, soll gelten unser Bund!’ (49). German culture, the German way of life and the homeland itself are constant subjects of praise, culminating in the reworking of Goethe’s ‘Kennst du das Land’ in the song ‘Kennst du das Land so wunderschön’ (48) which clarifies, ‘Das schöne Land ist uns bekannt, es ist das deutsche Vaterland’ (48). It is significant that this was a subject for parody during the Weimar Republic in Kästner’s ‘Kennst du das Land, wo die Kanonen blühen?’, but in the Nazi period is being taken seriously. The German *Heimat* is praised above all other lands and cultures. In the Nazi songs, there is no other land that even warrants comparison.

The opening song in the book, ‘Das Horst Wessel-Lied’ (5-6) became the most famous song of the Nazi era, one stanza being incorporated into the ‘Deutschlandlied’ and sung on many public occasions. It sounds as if it should be the ballad of Horst Wessel, the leader of the SA who was allegedly shot under suspicious circumstances and subsequently died on 23rd February 1930. The song, however, is not a ballad in the strict sense and does not tell his story but is the song that he composed, calling on German citizens to join the marching



SA and look to the swastika as their salvation.³²⁰ Despite this not fitting into the clear balladesque categories of this thesis, the uses to which the Nazi party put the song and the narrative which surrounds Horst-Wessel and its repeated appearance in other ballads, make it worthy of note.

In particular, the final stanza took on additional meaning in certain circles because Wessel came to be regarded as a martyr for the National Socialist cause:

Die Fahne hoch! Die Reihen dicht geschlossen!
SA marschert mit ruhig festem Schritt.
Kameraden, die Rotfront und Reaktion erschossen,
marschier'n im Geist in unsern Reihen mit. (6)

Here Wessel draws upon a concept which became embedded in Nazi thinking, that of the German nation being an assembly of like-minded people, whether living or dead, past or present. Thus the spirit of Horst Wessel was able to remain alive and breathe life into many more Nazi songs. It is a mark of the reverence that was felt for the 'Horst Wessel Lied' and similar songs that Joseph Goebbels introduced a law, the 'Schutz nationaler Symbole und Lieder' in February 1940 which banned the singing and playing of songs like the Horst Wessel-Lied and the Deutschlandlied, unless on a state-sanctioned official occasion. The wording of the law reveals something of its impetus. It forbids:

das Singen und Spielen des Deutschlandliedes, des Horst-Wessel-Liedes und anderer durch Tradition und Inhalt geheiligter vaterländischer Lieder oder nationalsozialistischer Kampflieder....³²¹

The Nazi party made the songs sacred, attempting to raise them into a mystical world where their effect could still be closely controlled by the propaganda machine. Songs of

³²⁰ Although the footnote to the song in the songbook gives the Nazi version of his death, that he was shot by Communists and died of his wounds, there is no definite agreement as the motivation for his death.

³²¹ *Völkische Musik-Erziehung*, 1940/2, p. 51.



the fatherland and Nazi fighting songs were ‘made holy’ both by tradition and by content, by the coherency of songs which had been handed down through generations and by the content which had national worth of its own. However, the actual oral ballads which were sung were limited in their efficacy and remained a small part of the sung Nazi oeuvre. Their approach to the ballad was much more apparent in the literary sphere and is most clear in the following two writers. As the *Gleichschaltung* levelled the differences between writers, it makes sense to use Agnes Miegel and Hans Friedrich Blunck as examples of writing of the period.

2.4 Agnes Miegel

The Nazis were careful in their choice of which writers they would include in their concept of a new Germany. After having expelled or disempowered the writers that they disagreed with, they called suitable authors to the Preußische Akademie der Künste in 1933, inviting the already eminent ballad writer, Agnes Miegel, to become a member of the section for poetry.³²² Miegel’s origins in East Prussia, which had been cut off from the rest of the German Homeland by the Polish corridor after the hated Treaty of Versailles, made her a useful political tool in supporting irredentist politics. In addition, her popularity and conservatism were both beneficial to the Nazi party in terms of its need for populist support. Miegel’s ballads were taught in schools and were greatly favoured among young people in the *Hitler Jugend* and *Bund deutscher Mädel* movements, thus influencing the future generation of Germany.

³²² Others called with her included Hans Friedrich Blunck, Hans Carossa, Hans Grimm, Börries von Münchhausen and Will Vesper.



Agnes Miegel was born in 1879 in Königsberg in what was then East Prussia, and received her first literary prize for her ballad 'Elfkönig' when she was only 20 years old. Her first collection *Gedichte*, including poems as well as ballads, came out in 1901 and her second collection *Balladen und Lieder* in 1907 which then was reprinted many times. Her *Gesammelte Gedichte* of 1927 had already been published before the Nazis came to power. Upon reading her unpublished early work *Börries von Münchhausen* declared her 'der größte lebende Balladendichter unseres Volkes'³²³ and was instrumental in her first collection being published with the renowned Cotta Verlag. She quickly gained a reputation as 'die bedeutendste deutsche Balladendichterin des 20. Jahrhunderts'³²⁴ or occasionally, at least the greatest since Annette Droste-Hülshoff.³²⁵ During the Nazi period she was honoured with many literary prizes, including both those not explicitly political, such as the 1936 Herder prize of the Johann-Wolfgang-Goethe Stiftung and the 1940 City of Frankfurt Goethe prize, as well as those directly linked to the party, like her 1939 honour from the Hitler Youth movement. Miegel was steeped in folksong and the German *Kunstballade*, having learnt folksongs from her mother at a very young age. Her father instilled in her a deep-seated love for her home city and her homeland which was to figure so predominantly in her work.

Born in Königsberg in East Prussia, now Kaliningrad in Russia, Miegel's position as a voice from the German East had great emotional resonance because Königsberg was the site of the creation of the powerful German state of Prussia which, after the Treaty of

³²³ <http://www.agnes-miegel-gesellschaft.de/biographie/index.html> date of access 110107.

³²⁴ See Gero von Wilpert, *Deutsches Dichterlexikon*, 2nd edn. (Stuttgart: Kröner Verlag, 1976) p. 492.

³²⁵ See Franz Lennartz, *Deutsche Schriftsteller des 20. Jahrhunderts im Spiegel der Kritik*. Vol. 2. (Stuttgart: Kröner Verlag, 1984) p. 2213.



Versailles, was separated from the German homeland by the Polish Corridor. So her unique slant on *Heimatlidung* became even more poignant. As Anni Piorreck says: 'Die Nähe der Grenze färbte die Liebe zur Heimat tiefer.'³²⁶ In East Prussia the feeling and desire for the home / homeland was so strong because there was a real potential of losing it. Miegel also sees East Prussia as the keeper and preserver of authentic Germanic ancestry which is dying out in the rest of the nation. She prioritises East Prussia claiming in her poem 'Mutter Ostpreußen', first published in 1932, that:

Längst verklungen wie sie sind über der Weichsel drüben
Weise und Wort des Lieds, das Dir allein noch vertraut³²⁷

and suggesting that her own country was the only keeper of what it 'really' meant to be German. This attempt to claim one 'authentic' view of a nation over any alternative views links directly into the most dangerous elements of nationalism and provided fertile ground for the development of her thinking and writing along National Socialist lines.

In his book *Literatur unterm Hakenkreuz* Ernst Loewy comments of Miegel:

Ihre nationalistisch-übersteigerte Heimatverbundenheit ließ sie später in das
Kielwasser der NS-Ideologie geraten.³²⁸

The *Heimatlidung* movement of the end of the 19th and start of the 20th centuries drew on a theory of regional literature formulated by two German scholars, August Sauer and Josef Nadler, who investigated the variants of national literature, dividing Germany into its different traditions. They put emphasis on the literary traditions of the various regions and expressed conservative ideas which generally focused on rural life and attempted to capture the 'intact' rural spirit of an organic community. Despite Miegel's love for the city of

³²⁶ Agnes Miegel, *Ihr Leben und Ihre Dichtung* (Munich: Eugen Diederichs, 1990), p. 190.

³²⁷ *Gesammelte Gedichte*, vol.1, (Düsseldorf: Diederichs, 1952), pp. 131-134, here p. 131.

³²⁸ *Literatur unterm Hakenkreuz*, p. 319.



Königsberg and the urban rather than the rural, she still came to be very closely associated with this movement due to her conservative, national and traditional ballads.

Agnes Miegel began to be published at the very end of the 19th century. She was central to a new wave of ballad popularity, which was spearheaded by Börries von Münchhausen and involved other writers of the *Göttinger Musenalmanach*, as it had done in the late 18th century.³²⁹ While Miegel's ballads were traditional, romantic and conservative, they also included more 'mythisch-tragisch Substanz' and more stress on 'Kampf und Untergang' than other writers within her group.³³⁰ It was these elements that made her such a useful writer for the Nazi regime.

The notions of tragic or heroic death are common throughout Miegel's oeuvre and were present in her writing from the very beginning and developed throughout her career. For example, in the early ballad of 1907, republished in 1935 'Die Frauen von Nidden',³³¹ Miegel retells the legend of a town in East Prussia, where seven women, the survivors from a town decimated by the plague, ask the sand dunes of Nida to come and cover them and their dead. They become a kind of sacrifice, not a human sacrifice to pacify the gods and avoid further tragedy, but to complete the tragedy of the town. A similar concept of the *Untergang* of an entire dynastic line is contained in her historical ballad 'Die

³²⁹ Börries von Münchhausen included Miegel's work in his *Göttinger Musenalmanach* of 1898. 1901 saw the publication of Agnes Miegel's first volume of poetry *Gedichte*. Lulu von Strauß und Torney's *Balladen und Lieder* followed in 1902 and Münchhausen's own *Ritterliches Liederbuch* in 1903. From being an isolated literary phenomenon at the start of the 20th century, the mood started to change and the ballad became popular again.

³³⁰ Piorreck, p. 66.

³³¹ *Balladen und Lieder*, pp. 6-7. This poem also appeared in *Deutsche Balladen* (Jena: Diederichs, 1935), pp. 30-31.



Nibelungen’,³³² based on the classic German heroic epic, *Das Nibelungenlied*. Miegel’s ballad happens after the event, when the characters are coping with what life can be left after the tragedy has been fully played out.

The Nazi party was keen to utilise Miegel because, when it came to power in 1933, she was already a famous representative of a certain traditional vein of German-ness, a symbol of the *Heimat* itself; she was ‘Mutter Ostpreußen’. The German Historical Museum in Berlin claims that:

... die beliebte ostpreußische Heimatdichterin AM (1879-1964) [avancierte] im NS-Regime zu einem literarischen Aushängeschild. In ihren zuvor unpolitischen Balladen spiegelte sich ab 1933 eine erkennbare Blut- und Boden-Romantik wider.³³³

Although her work was originally largely apolitical she is still a much-disputed figure in Germany. Hermann Weiß echoes the sentiments of the museum, claiming in his *Biographisches Lexikon zum Dritten Reich* that it was ‘ein Gewinn’ for the Nazis to have this ‘seit über dreißig Jahren etablierte und bekannte Heimatdichterin’³³⁵ in the German Poetry Academy and to be able to benefit from her public role and the fact that she was long-established and hugely popular. Weiß also notes that her work shows ‘Elemente einer mythologisierenden Blut-und-Boden-Romantik, die eine Affinität zu nationalsozialistischen Ideen erkennen lassen.’³³⁷ Again this shows the close relationship between poetry of the home / homeland and its corruption into Blood and Soil Romanticism.

³³² *Balladen und Lieder*, pp. 1-3.

³³³ www.dhm.de/lemo/html/nazi/kunst/nsliteratur/ date of access 26.07.06.

³³⁵ Hermann Weiß, *Biographisches Lexikon zum Dritten Reich*, (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1998), pp. 319-320.

³³⁷ *Ibid*, p. 320.



Despite the agreement among the majority of critics of the Third Reich and its literature that Miegel was a Nazi writer, Miegel's friend and biographer Anni Piorreck, spends much of her book *Agnes Miegel, Ihr Leben und Ihre Dichtung* explaining that Miegel was not a Nazi and understood so little of politics that she remained oblivious to the political climate during the Nazi period. This seems rather implausible, but is a view that is still held by certain circles today, most prominently by the Agnes Miegel Gesellschaft in Bad Nenndorf, where Miegel lived from 1948. This debate has been inconclusively argued between scholars of the National Socialist period and is not of specific relevance here.³³⁸ However, the facts are that Miegel did join the Nazi party in 1940 after having been closely involved with the *Bund deutscher Mädel* in 1937 and also had very close links with the *Hitler-Jugend*. It is also significant that Miegel's first collection of poems was republished as *Frühe Gedichte* in 1939. This would only have been possible with support from the Nazi party, because all works were being censored at the time. This shows that the party believed that her poetry was useful for, or at least not harmful to, its purposes.

As Piorreck is at pains to point out, Miegel's Nazi oeuvre in the strictest sense of poems written specifically for Nazi purposes constitute only six poems: the panegyric 'An den Führer' that all members of the Reichsschrifttumskammer were required to write, 'Hymne an Ostpreußen', and 'Heilige Heimat', that reveal her continuing links with the Heimatdichtung movement, 'Sonwendregen. Danzig 1939', which is the only poem of the six to find its way into her collected poems, 'Viktoria' and 'An Deutschlands Jugend', which she wrote for the *Hitler Jugend*. It is very difficult to find these poems, for the collection *Ostland* of 1940 in which they are printed, is seen as her 'Nazi' volume and is

³³⁸ Information can be found in *Literatur unterm Hakenkreuz*, p. 227 and Piorreck's reaction to this comment in *Agnes Miegel, ihr Leben und ihre Dichtung*, pp. 190ff.



consequently not easily available.³³⁹ ‘Sonnwendreigen’ is included in her collected poems but loses the specific details of Danzig in the title and some of the others appear sketchily in documentary sources of the Nazi period, like Ernst Loewy’s *Literatur unterm Hakenkreuz, Das Dritte Reich und seine Dichtung*. It is also relevant that Miegel’s *Gesammelte Gedichte*, the first volume of her *Gesammelte Werke*, stressed in the introduction that each poem had been specifically chosen and sorted by Agnes Miegel herself.³⁴⁰ Therefore she also chose which poems to exclude. As the Nazi poems do not feature in the collection, it is safe to assume that the decision to exclude the explicitly Nazi poems was a strategic one.

Miegel’s ballads draw mainly on the historical or the supernatural vein of balladry. Her historical ballads draw very much on English, French and Scottish events and personages, using Bothwell, Mary Queen of Scots and Anne Boleyn as mouthpieces for her storytelling. She often uses characters which are marked by fate or destined for tragic ends. She draws on mythical / classical traditions of ancient Greek tragedy as well as the complexities of familial relations. The majority of Miegel’s early ballads are written in straight, traditional strophic forms of 4343 rhythms and abcb rhymes.³⁴¹ She also varies this to include ballads written in rhyming couplets³⁴² and with 3333³⁴³ and 4444³⁴⁴ rhythms.³⁴⁵ Her supernatural ballads include her most heavily anthologised poem ‘Schöne Agnete’³⁴⁶ which recounts the story of a girl who has fallen in love with the ‘schlammschwarzen Wassermann’ and

³³⁹ *Ostland* (Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1940).

³⁴⁰ *Gesammelte Gedichte* (Düsseldorf: Diederichs, 1952).

³⁴¹ See ‘König Manfred’, (*Gedichte*, p. 83-84), ‘Kynstudt’ (*Gedichte*, p. 76), ‘Die Staufen’ (*Gedichte*, pp. 85-86), ‘Agnes Bernauerin’ (*Gedichte*, pp. 87), ‘Peter Harden’ (*Gedichte*, pp. 123-127).

³⁴² See ‘Griseldis’ (*Gedichte*, pp. 88-89) and ‘Marie’ (*Gedichte*, pp. 94-95).

³⁴³ See ‘Mainacht’ (*Gedichte*, p. 11) and ‘Anna Bullen’ (*Gedichte*, pp. 90-91).

³⁴⁴ See ‘Elfkönig’ (*Gedichte*, pp. 115-116) and ‘Henning Schindekopf’ (*Gedichte*, pp. 77-80).

³⁴⁵ Miegel also varies these within a ballad to change the pace of the action, see ‘Mary Stuart’ (*Gedichte*, pp. 92-93).

³⁴⁶ *Balladen und Lieder*, pp. 4-5. This story has similarities with the selkie motif in Scottish balladry.



can no longer pray in church. Another well-known ballad ‘Die Mär von Ritter Manuel’³⁴⁷ tells the tale of a knight, who is entranced by a magician and trapped in another time. Ballads such as the ‘Chevalier Errant’³⁴⁸ play on the shapeshifting concept common in the traditional ballads³⁴⁹ except in this ballad Miegel reverses the gender of the protagonists so that instead of the woman holding fast to the man in order to save him, here the man must rescue the woman.³⁵⁰

These ballads explain Miegel’s popularity, but none of these ballads reveal specific National Socialist tendencies or suggest why the Nazi party was so keen to appropriate her work. Indeed, her closeness to the Jewish community and her background in the traditional tolerant and liberal nature of East Prussian society make her an unlikely candidate.³⁵¹ However, when Hitler decided to seek power by legitimate means, he sought allies in all spheres of life who could be appropriated or used for his purposes.

It is however, possible to trace tendencies within Miegel’s earlier work which allowed the Nazis to exploit her writing and to abuse the sentiments contained within it. Although Miegel’s ballads were indeed genuinely largely apolitical, some sentiments can be found that proved useful for constructing a National Socialist national identity for Germany. It is worth noting that Miegel’s motivation for becoming involved with National Socialist

³⁴⁷ *Balladen und Lieder*, pp. 25-28. Despite being apolitical, this ballad was included in Börries von Münchhausen’s *Meisterballaden: Ein Führer zur Freude* (Stuttgart & Berlin: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1940).

³⁴⁸ *Gesammelte Balladen* (Düsseldorf: Diederichs, 1953), p. 45.

³⁴⁹ The most familiar ballad with this motif is the Scottish ballad ‘Tam Lin’.

³⁵⁰ The shapeshifting motif also appears in her ballad ‘Das Märchen von der schönen Mete’ (*Gesammelte Balladen*, pp. 88-90).

³⁵¹ East Prussia was a land of refugees as during the 17th and 18th centuries many Huguenots, Dutch Mennonites and Salzburgers came to the country. Miegel describes her own ancestry of Salzburg immigrants who fled to East Prussia in 1732 after their town was wiped out by the plague in her poem ‘Meinen Salzburger Ahnen’ (*Ostland*, p. 13). See also ‘Die Erde Spricht’ (*Gesammelte Balladen*, pp. 206-08) which speaks of previous generations and ancestors who founded East Prussia.



politics was a love for the fatherland. In a letter to Lulu von Strauß und Torney of the 28th May 1933 she says:

Ich wende mich täglich mehr dieser neuen Zeit zu. Sie ist für Deutschland, am allermeisten aber für uns im Ostland nicht nur der neue Weg – sondern der einzige Weg...³⁵²

For those in the border regions of Germany, especially those with borders with Russia, the Nazis' propaganda which stirred up fear of Bolshevik takeovers struck home especially forcefully. Miegel did embrace this new era for Germany, but embraced it believing that there was no other choice.

Miegel's supernatural ballads reveal a world where humankind and the gods or ghosts mixed freely. This thinking underpinned a poem (which is effectively a ballad fragment) called 'Mainacht' from her 1901 collection which was later reprinted in her 1939 *Frühe Gedichte*, showing that the thoughts and opinions contained in the collection still held relevance and were allowed to be published at that time. Here the speaker of the poem is treated to a display of the natural powers of the Prussian gods of war who come to bless the herds and fields:

Und über den Lindenwipfeln
Führten im Blitzesschein
Die alten Preußengötter
Ihren ersten Frühlingsreihn

Herden und Saaten segnend...³⁵³

By 1939 however, in 'An Deutschlands Jugend',³⁵⁴ her song of praise for the youth of Germany, instead of the ancient Prussian gods blessing the land to make it yield fruit, the

³⁵² Agnes Miegel, p. 190.

³⁵³ *Gedichte*, 3rd edn. (Stuttgart & Berlin: Cotta, 1908) p. 11.



seed sown in the ground is the lives of the youth of Germany and the ground is already fertile due to 'das Blut ihrer Väter' (49), showing a definite progression from ancestral reverence to *Blut- und Boden* thinking.³⁵⁵

Miegel stresses too, however, the power of song and the great cultural role that it played in the *Hitler Jugend*. The Germans are raised above all other nations because they lead the other nations 'Singend voran den Völkern' marching into the 'Tag der Zukunft!', the 'Herrlicher Frühling' (48), standing together as Germans 'Volk das zu Volk fand, folgend dem Ruf des Führers' (49). She places responsibility for German warmongering firmly at the feet of Germanic 'Schicksal', for the German people are 'zeichnend / Mit der Rune des Kampfs' (48) although their desire is for peace. She harks back to a Germanic heroic past when the Germans distinguished themselves from all other peoples by their strength and glory in war and desires that it should be the same again; 'nun wieder / Über die Welt hinhallend wie damals!' (48). It is clear from this selection of incredibly militaristic verse that Miegel's poetry has fully assimilated the Nazi vocabulary and ideology because it tied in so easily with her own deeply-held ideas about the German nation.

Miegel's ballad 'Die Schlafenden Götter'³⁵⁶ first published in 1907, also talks of ancient gods, gods whose names have been forgotten. Miegel's gods wait for someone to cry out in despair from the earth to rouse them 'Dann wird die Schar der Unsterblichen wieder erwachen' but she despairs of them awakening and consigns them to slumber and to history. However, the Nazi call of 'Deutschland Erwache!' echoed by the marching SA

³⁵⁴ Agnes Miegel, *Ostland* (Jena: Diederichs, 1940), p. 48-50. Following references unless otherwise indicated will be to this edition.

³⁵⁵ This is akin to, but not quite the same as, the vegetation myth notion of fertility through sacral blood as described notably in Frazer's *Golden Bough* and elsewhere.

³⁵⁶ *Balladen und Lieder*, 2nd edn. (Jena: Diederichs, 1910), pp. 55-56.



and the exploitation of legends like that of Barbarossa by the Nazi party show that such concepts could be used fruitfully to herald a new beginning.³⁵⁷ As early as 1901 Miegel had included the legend of Barbarossa in her historical ballad 'Die Staufen',³⁵⁸ explaining how the oral tradition continued as each German mother tells her child the story of 'Rotbart, dem schlafenden Kaiser' (85). In her historical ballad 'Die Nibelungen',³⁵⁹ the central Germanic heroic epic becomes the site for a folksong when Kriemhild demands that the court musician sing her a song about the curse on the Nibelung gold.

Miegel deals with death, war and the destruction of peoples even in her earliest poems and ballads. For her, death is a return to the earth, to the homeland, a turning from this life into the eternity of the next. In her prophetic poem 'Der Sterbesegen' (12-13) she desires 'Sterb ich ferne meiner Heimatstadt' (12) that her younger brother should pour sand from the Baltic shores over her dead heart. The concept of the return to the dearly-beloved earth of the homeland shows traces of the *Heimatsdichtung* which then developed into a fully-fledged *Blut- und Bodenliteratur*. Miegel also includes the concept of heroic fighting for the fatherland. In her ballad 'Heimkehr des Kriegsgefangenen' (*Ostland*, 19-21) the soldier returns from war, having done his duty, to claim his inheritance which is the fatherland, even if it is ravaged:

Und ein Feld
Auf magrem Boden, dünn und schlecht bestellt,
Und Heimat doch und seiner Väter Land. (*Ostland*, 19)

While the return of the soldier became a motif for the reworking of trauma in post-war German drama, Miegel's soldier returns battered but triumphant to realise that

³⁵⁷ 'Die schlafenden Götter' was reprinted in the 1922 edition of *Balladen und Lieder* (Jena: Diederichs, 1922).

³⁵⁸ *Gedichte*, pp. 85-86. Following references in brackets are to this edition.

³⁵⁹ *Balladen und Lieder*, pp. 1-3.



‘Wirklichkeit war nichts als dieses Land’ (*Ostland*, 21) Her soldier enters into the romanticised sphere of the reality she creates for him.

In 1938 all the poets in the *Reichsschrifttumskammer* had to write a ‘Huldigungsgedicht’ for Hitler. As Hans Carossa said, ‘Dergleichen Huldigungen wurden damals wie Steuern eingetrieben.’³⁶⁰ While many writers, who had chosen to stay in Germany wrote these and subsequently chose not to publish them, Miegel’s 1938 poem ‘An den Führer’ (*Ostland*, 5-6) was published as the opening poem in her 1940 *Ostland* collection, thus giving it a prominent place. It contains the Christian concept of returning to the earth from which you came but she develops it to encapsulate the Nazi ideology:

Heimkehrend zur Erde,
Draus sie stiegen.
Doch dieses wäre
höchste Erfüllung mir und Ehre den Ahnen:
Heilige Fackel, nie mehr weitergereichte,
Dir zu opfern! (*Ostland*, 6)

Being reunited with the soils of the homeland turns into the Nazi readiness to sacrifice for land, *Volk* and the Führer. This concept of raising the nation to a higher entity which demanded sacrifice was present very early on in the period as Hitler had demanded it in his speech of 1921 long before he came to power. By 1939 Miegel had fully accepted this ideology and had incorporated it into her writing. It is interesting that the later works, primarily from the 1940 *Ostland* collection are less traditionally balladic, as if the ballad was no longer a suitable metier for expressing what had essentially come to be propaganda. There are, nevertheless, still many balladesque and narrative elements within the poems, but the straight, story-telling aspect of the ballad has diminished.

³⁶⁰ Hans Carossa, *Ungleiche Welten* (Wiesbaden: Insel Verlag, 1951), p. 72.



Miegel's poetry also came to be specifically identified with the eastwards expansionist policies of the Nazi regime, the 'Drang nach Osten'. This area of Miegel studies has been the most hotly disputed. Ernst Loewy says:

Im Werk der Agnes Miegel fungierte das alte *Nach Ostland wollen wir reiten* als eine Art Leitmotiv. Nicht nur in ihren historischen, sondern auch ihren zeitbezogenen Dichtungen stilisiert sie unbekümmert Faschistisch-Gegenwärtiges in geschichtsträchtigen Mythos um.³⁶¹

The most obvious example of this motif is her ballad 'Über der Weichsel drüben' (*Ostland*, 22-24) which, interestingly, is also included in her *Gesammelte Gedichte* of 1952 (154-157). The introduction to the ballad quotes from the refrain of the old Flemish folksong 'Nach Ostland wollen wir reiten'³⁶² and which has been used as the inspiration for many fighting songs.³⁶³

Über der Weichsel drüben, Vaterland, höre uns an!
Wir sinken, wie Pferd und Wagen versinken im mahlenden Sand,
Recke aus deine Hand
Daß sie uns hält, die allein uns halten kann! (*Ostland*, 22)

Like many of Miegel's later ballads it is a composite poem which includes a long balladic section which has lost the regular ballad rhythms and stanzaic forms while still presenting a rhythmic narrative. The balladic section here is written in rhyming couplets. Piörreck disputes the claim that this ballad can be used to support expansionist politics and stresses that it was written just after the First World War before the referendum in 1920 when there

³⁶¹ *Literatur unterm Hakenkreuz*, p. 227.

³⁶² Miegel's refrain reads 'Nach Ostland wollen wir reiten, / Nach Ostland wollen wir gehn, / Fern über die grünen Heiden, / Fern über die blauen Seen!' This is also the title of a historical novel by Margarete von Witten, *Nach Ostland wollen wir reiten! Geschichtlicher Roman aus polnischer Zeit* (Lissa: Eulitz, 1909). <http://ingeb.org/Lieder/nachostw.html> gives information about the Flemish ancestry of the song and describes it as being sung to a Dutch melody. Date of access 080706.

³⁶³ See for example, the *Junge Landmannschaft Ostpreussen*'s version of the song on their current website: <http://www.jlosachsen.de/index.php?seite=lieder&lieder=kampflieder> Date of access 080706.



was the risk of East Prussia being given to Poland. She sees the poem as having been twisted by the Nazi party:

Die Ostpreußenlieder, die vor allem aus der Not der Abstimmung entstanden waren, erhielten nachträglich ein nationalistisches Vorzeichen und wurden so verfälscht.³⁶⁴

The poem in the *Ostland* collection does have the subtitle '11. Juli 1920' which provides the specific context of this referendum and lends some support to Piorreck's view. However, it was originally written and published for the 1940 *Ostland* collection, so the combination of historical and contemporary contexts is hard to overlook. Also, despite whether or not Miegel meant it to support Nazi eastwards expansion, it is relevant that the Nazis used it as such. The cry 'Über der Weichsel drüben, Vaterland höre uns an!' was used to support irredentist politics and the calls from Germans living outside the homeland to be rescued. This supported the Nazi concept of fetching outlying groups of Germans 'Heim ins Reich'. The ballad ends:

Recke aus deine Hand
Daß sie uns hält, die allein uns halten kann.
Deutschland, heiliges Land,
Vaterland! (*Ostland*, 24)

Such expressly emotive language makes it easy to see why Nazi supporters, such as Dr Karl Plenzat who wrote Miegel's *Werden und Werk* could quite legitimately claim this aspect of her poetry as evidence for clear Nazi sympathy and highlight the Nazi vocabulary it contained. Along with her ballad 'Königsberg' (*Ostland*, 29-34)³⁶⁵ about the history of

³⁶⁴ Agnes Miegel, *Ihr Leben und Ihre Dichtung*, p. 195.

³⁶⁵ This poem was reprinted without the date of 13th June 1924 which appeared in the *Ostland* version, in *Gesammelte Gedichte*, (Düsseldorf: Diederichs, 1952), pp. 137-143. The *Gesammelte Gedichte* version includes only the balladic narrative section of the poem, while the *Ostland* version is an extended composite poem.



the city, which ends in the *Gesammelte Gedichte* version with the cry ‘der Tod fürs Vaterland!’ (*Gesammelte Gedichte*, 143).³⁶⁶ Plenzat says these poems:

werden Künderrinnen nicht nur der Sendung des deutschen Ostens, sondern der deutschen Zukunftsaufgaben überhaupt³⁶⁷

The use of the word ‘Sendung’, as in mission, was a hallmark of Nazi legitimizing tactics. If something could be established to be a ‘Sendung’ and specifically a national ‘Sendung’, it immediately gained in legitimacy and respectability, if not in moral and ethical logic.

The clearest example of Miegel’s celebration of such expansionist politics is found in her 1939 poem ‘Sonwendreigen. Danzig 1939’ (*Gesammelte Gedichte*, 114-115 and *Ostland*, 44-45). This was published in the *Ostland* collection of her poems and also was the only poem of the six ‘Nazi’ poems she wrote which she retained for her 1952 collected poems. Interestingly, the *Ostland* version of the poem begins in the past tense, while the collected version has been transposed into the present. The *Ostland* version begins:

Es rief durch die helle Sommernacht, es sang von Strand zu Strand:
Ihr Schwestern alle kommt und wacht, zum Reigen reicht die Hand!
(*Ostland*, 44)

While the version in the *Gesammelte Gedichte* begins:

Es ruft durch die helle Sommernacht, es singt von Strand zu Strand: (*Gesammelte Gedichte*, 114)

This has the effect of making the 1940 version historically specific, for the events which she is celebrating: the expansion of the German Reich, the annexation of many former German cities and the call to take back the city of Danzig, are happening as she writes. The

³⁶⁶ It is worth noting that the version of ‘Königsberg’ that appears in the collected poems is a heavily edited version of the original. It leaves out a significant part of the beginning of the poem and concludes entirely differently. It is interesting that the 1952 version ends on ‘der Tod fürs Vaterland’ while the earlier 1940 version ends on a much softer tone.

³⁶⁷ Karl Plenzat, *Agnes Miegel, Werden und Werk*, (Leipzig: Hermann Eichblatt, 1938), p. 50.



change of tense in the collected version has the effect of creating a more folksong-like eternal present, where the ring-dances of the female cities are brought into a timeless realm of myth, rather than bloody historical reality. The collected version also drops the reference to 'Danzig 1939' in the title, thus again stressing the mythological aspect instead of the specific. It is recognisably a ballad although the regular rhythm is camouflaged by the extended length of the lines and the insertion of an extra 4-beat line in each stanza before the rhythm becomes markedly irregular towards the end of the poem.

The narrative frames the call to Danzig to come and join the dance of the irredentist German nation. Again it uses the image of a divided *Volk* calling out to each other:

Heiho, heiho ihr drüben! Ich ruf vom grünen Pommerland!
Heiho! O reicht herüber, ihr Schwestern mir zum Tanz die Hand!
(*Gesammelte Gedichte*, 115, *Ostland*, 44).

The voice calling is that of Königsberg, pictured as a war goddess with 'gepanzerten Füßen' (*Gesammelte Gedichte*, 115, *Ostland*, 44) and she cries in an apocalyptic vision to Danzig:

O Schwester Danzig, die bei uns stand,
Sieh, wir heben unsre Hand,
Unsrer Türme Feuer zuckt und sucht
Über murrende Flut, über dunkle Bucht,
O Allerschönste, in unsren Reihn
Schwester, tritt ein! (*Gesammelte Gedichte*, 115, *Ostland*, 45)

On 1st September 1939 this cry was answered as Danzig returned to the German Reich when Hitler invaded Poland and began the Second World War.

The *Ostland* version of the poem ends with a response from Danzig herself, explaining that she is held distant from the German Reich because of 'schlimmen Zaubers Spruch'



(*Ostland*, 45) but that she awaits her saviour, the ‘Ritter’ who will come and break the spell. Here Miegel incorporates the fairy-tale motif of the woman entrapped or entranced, waiting to be freed. Danzig is seen as ‘eine geschmückte Braut’ (*Ostland*, 45) in a Biblical allusion to the return of Christ, and the original poem closes with a deeply romantic and religious tone of hope. As the freeing is welcomed, it is therefore presented as being legitimate.

Quoting from Hitler’s speech for the Parteitag der Freiheit in 1935, Karl Plenzat sets Miegel’s work firmly in the Nazi vein:

Ist es genug, was Agnes Miegel uns, ihren Landsleuten, ihrem Volk, ihrer Heimat, ihrem Vaterlande gab? – Es ist genug – und nicht genug! Genug, weil wir beglückt erkennen, hier sind uns Werke geschenkt, die zu jener von Adolf Hitler geforderten Kunst gehören, die so hoch ist, „daß sie für jeden einzelnen noch eine letzte Befriedigung als Ahnung übrigläßt.“³⁶⁸

Her works do count among those which were accepted and promoted by the Nazi party and that belong to Hitler’s concept of art or literature. Yet, the fact that the bulk of her work predates the Nazi party’s coming to power, and is more linked into the East Prussian *Heimat* rather than the German nation has led to lasting support for her within Germany.

Many have called for her work to be more honoured as an example of the *vertriebenen*.³⁶⁹

In her poem ‘Es war ein Land’ (*Gesammelte Gedichte*, 186). Miegel describes how she feels *heimatlos*. It is significant that there is a divide between Miegel’s personal notion of national identity, focusing specifically on East Prussia and, by extension, on Germany, and

³⁶⁸ *Werden und Werk*, pp. 206-7, quotation from Hitler’s *Die Reden Hitlers am Parteitag der Freiheit 1935*, 14th edn. (Munich 1936), p. 33.

³⁶⁹ See ‘Im eigenen Land diskriminiert: Die heutige Literaturkritik ignoriert die Dichterin Agnes Miegel und damit auch das Schicksal der Vertriebenen’, by Acar Sevim <http://www.webarchiv-server.de/pin/archiv00/2700ob31.htm> date of access 22/12/2006, article originally published in the *Ostpreußenblatt*, 8th July 2000.



how this country comes to be lost, for the Germany that she believed in, no longer existed after the Second World War. Indeed, the state of East Prussia became Russian and Königsberg became Kaliningrad, making her literally, as well as figuratively homeless.

In complete opposition to this positive appropriation of Miegel as exile, her Nazi past has tended to be stressed by contemporary critics and there have been calls for roads bearing her name to be renamed. As recently as April 2001, the Lord Mayor of Erlangen received a letter suggesting in the strongest terms that the Agnes-Miegel-Straße be renamed the Lilli-Bechmann-Rahn-Straße, after a Jewish intellectual who was deprived of her doctoral title during the Nazi period.³⁷⁰ The debate that rages, even now, over writers like Agnes Miegel shows that their personal and literary legacy remains potent and problematic.³⁷¹

An important question with regards to Miegel's oeuvre is the extent to which the nationalistic elements of her work are inherent to her thinking. What had begun in Miegel as a love of her nation and specifically of her region and *Heimat* developed into a poetry which showed the characteristics of Nazi ideology and indeed became National Socialist. It took, of course, the political ramifications of the Nazi period to breathe a more threatening life into the theory that Miegel expounded. In some ways, Miegel's responsibility for the 'gloss' put on her work by the Nazis, or her involvement in the regime, is not central to this thesis. Of more significant import is the skill with which the Nazis incorporated other

³⁷⁰ See the letter of the 30th April 2001 from Herr Büßmann to the Lord Mayor, www.gruene-liste-erlangen.de/antrag/2001/miegel.htm. Date of access 110107.

³⁷¹ This is still a very relevant concern as a forum debate on 110107 on the website shows: <http://www.seniorentreff.de/diskussion/threads4/thread1384.php> - one reader posted a Miegel poem, only to be strongly advised by another contributor that she should research Miegel's past and bear in mind her Nazi connections.



types of writing and other authors' work into their national canon and how they layered the original writing with enhanced meaning.

Agnes Miegel is of much use as a case study of how the Nazi regime assimilated and influenced authors and indeed, the ballad form, for her route is a fairly clear one. From a background in the love of her *Heimat* and a specific geographic location which came to be politically important, her interest in the romantic past of ancestors and of the German nation made her useful to the Nazis and with their interest in her the presence of Nazi elements within her writing increased, sometimes subtly and at other times, very explicitly. The re-publication of her early works shows that they contained the seeds of thoughts which were then embraced by National Socialist thinking. After the war, she chose to retain some of her writing during the Nazi period that clearly reflected this thinking. In a strange way she both anticipated and assimilated the language and themes familiar to the Nazi party, making her a success story of the intellectual force behind the *Gleichschaltung*.

2.5 Hans Friedrich Blunck

The second individual case-study for the use of the ballad in the Nazi period is one who is no less of interest, though he is politically far less ambiguous and therefore now less well-known, namely Hans Friedrich Blunck. Born in Hamburg in 1888, Blunck was called to



the Preußische Akademie der Künste at the same time as Agnes Miegel after it had been purged of all unwanted writers.³⁷² In a similar way to Miegel, his writings already chimed in with National Socialist thought, as he had become famous as a historical novelist whose writings drew on North Germanic and *völkisch* elements, fairy-tale and ballad structures, the world of the Germanic gods and Germanic heroism. Before he was invited to join the academy on 5th May 1933, he had published two trilogies: *Das werdende Volk* (1922-24) and *Die Urvätersage* (1926-28) as well as a two-volume collection of *Märchen von der Niederelbe* (1922-23).³⁷³ Blunck also held a very public role in the National Socialist world. Despite not being a member of the party and never officially joining the party, he was made President of the *Reichsschrifttumskammer* when it was founded in November 1933 and held the post until ousted by Hans Johst in October 1935. In 1936, after leaving the *Reichsschrifttumskammer* he founded the *Stiftung Deutsches Auslandswerk* and was responsible for spreading Nazi propaganda abroad.

In his book *Hans Friedrich Blunck. Leben und Werk*, Christian Jenssen stresses the centrality of the ballad to Blunck's work:

Für Hans Friedrich Blunck sind Anfang und Ende und reinster Erweis aller Dichtung das lyrische Gedicht und die Ballade.³⁷⁴

Blunck's prominence as a ballad writer and editor established itself from 1931 onwards. 1931 saw the publication of his collection *Neue Balladen*, which was followed in 1934 by *Fru Holle un de Mönk. Ungelehrte hoch- und plattdeutsche Ballade*, and then by his

³⁷² Hans Johst referred to this 'Säuberung' as the cleansing of German literature and society from 'artfremden und damit zersetzenden Elementen'. See *Das Wort*, Moscow 1937, Heft 4-5, p.12.

³⁷³ *Werdendes Volk. Die Romane der Niederdeutschen Trilogie Stelling Rotkinnsohn, Hein Hoyer, Berend Fock* (Munich: Langen, 1934), *Die Urvätersaga* (Jena: Diederichs, 1934), *Von klugen Frauen und Füchsen. Märchen von der Niederelbe*, (Jena: Diederichs, 1926).

³⁷⁴ Christian Jenssen, *Hans Friedrich Blunck. Leben und Werk* (Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, 1942), p. 94.



collection *Balladen und Gedichte* in 1937,³⁷⁵ showing him working within a traditional genre interestingly with a focus on the Low German Platt dialect but moving it firmly into the field of *Blut- und Boden* writing. It was as a strong exponent of this genre that Blunck came to be so well known. He was awarded prizes by the Nazi party, gaining the Goethe medal and the Wartburg Poetry Rose in 1938. His ten-volume *Gesammelte Werke* also came out during the Nazi period in power, showing, as with Miegel, his favour with the authorities.³⁷⁶ During the denazification trials in March 1949 Blunck famously defended himself, claiming that he was an ‘Antifaschisten auf dem Sessel der Schrifttumskammer.’³⁷⁷ Despite this causing much anger within Germany, he was subsequently categorised as a ‘Mitläufer’.³⁷⁸

Blunck’s oeuvre includes politically-neutral supernatural and revenant ballads like ‘Der Gonger’³⁷⁹ (75-76), ‘Die Osterley’ (77-78) and ‘Der Qua’ (83-85), as well as character ballads about Galileo, Michelangelo, Parzival and Paracelsus. However, his other ballads are more relevant to this study because they reveal a predilection towards a National Socialist *völkische Weltanschauung*, favouring the roles of the Aryan race and the Nordic Renaissance.³⁸⁰ The reawakening of Germany is described in his historical ballad, ‘Erfurt 1808’ (91-93), where ‘Deutschland wacht brennend auf’ (93) in the face of the Napoleonic

³⁷⁵ *Neue Balladen*, (Jena: Diederichs, 1931), *Fru Holle un de Mönk. Ungelehrte hoch- und plattdeutsche Ballade*, Die kleine Bücherei No. 31 (Munich: Langen, 1934). *Balladen und Gedichte* (Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, 1937).

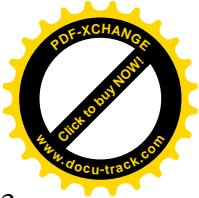
³⁷⁶ *Gesammelte Werke* (Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, 1936-37).

³⁷⁷ Hans Friedrich Blunck, *Unwegsame Zeiten, Lebensbericht*, Vol. 2 (Mannheim: Kessler, 1952), p. 289.

³⁷⁸ This claim, along with the defence contained in his memoirs caused uproar and great anger amongst those who were aware of how much Blunck and his writings had contributed to Nazi ‘Schriftum’. The entry on Blunck in Robert Wistrich’s *Who’s Who in Nazi Germany* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1982), p. 21, says that these memoirs are ‘notable mainly for their unrepentant, callous whitewash of Hitler’s Germany.’

³⁷⁹ Unless otherwise referenced, numbers in brackets refer to the page references in Blunck’s *Balladen und Gedichte, Gesammelte Werke X* (Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, 19XX).

³⁸⁰ Ernst Loewy identifies Blunck as ‘einer der Hauptrepräsentanten der nordischen Renaissance’, *Literature unterm Hakenkreuz*, p. 62.



wars. In the ballad, Goethe, the epitome of German Romanticism, is equated with ‘Stahl’ (92), a word which becomes a keyword in Nazi ideology.³⁸¹

Blunck’s writing also remains close to the soil, as he claims there is a deep mystical magic which links the true German to the land. In his essay ‘Volkstum und Dichtung’, Blunck speaks of how the poet represents the true *Volkstum* and how he has to rediscover the ancient magical origins and keep them alive:

...indem er sich alter, magischer Ströme, die Erde, Mensch und Himmel füllen,
innefühlt und ihnen innebleibt...³⁸²

One of Blunck’s ballads that reveals this strand of *Blut- und Boden* Romanticism most clearly is ‘Ein Bauer pflügt’ (27-29). In the collection this is categorised as a ‘Heimatliche Ballade’ and deals with an historical consideration of the *Heimat*. It is a revenge ballad, telling the story of Karl the Great and the Saxon Wittichin in an extended ballad stanza of abccb with irregular rhythms. The farmer in the field is Wittichin who has lost his homeland to the Carolingians and who is ploughing his fields, thinking about his *Heimat* and sowing his fury into each furrow:

Die Scholle bricht. In jede Furche pflügt
Der Riese seinen Grimm. (27)

Wittichin explains how twenty years ago he ‘Verlor den Hof der Heimat’ (27) when he and his family were moved from their homeland into the west. Wittichin is poisoning the new land with his anger, waiting for the prophecy to be fulfilled which said that one of his line would overthrow the Carolingian line. This occurred when Hugo Capet defeated the

³⁸¹ The Nazis wanted the youth of Germany to be ‘hart wie Kruppstahl’.

³⁸² Kindermann, Heinz (ed.), *Des deutschen Dichters Sendung in der Gegenwart* (Leipzig: Reclam, 1933), p. 199.



Carolingians. This fits in with the idea of the earth as a holder and sustainer of history, waiting for revenge to be meted out on the enemies. As the harvest will grow out of the soil, so the overthrow of the Kaiser will come to pass from one of his seed.

The development of this concept throughout Blunck's work is apparent in two of his Nazi poems, 'Der Garten' (309-12) and 'Nun brause Sturm' (192). The final stanza of 'Der Garten' focuses on the harvest that occurs when blood is spilled on the ground:

Denkst du wohl dran, daß Blut aus Erde blüht?
Aus losen Sande leuchtet's rot empor,
Wunder des Lichts. Staunend steh ich davor,
Unfaßbar, wie's aus grauem Boden gor. (312)

In the poem the harvest is that of strawberries, an image of fruitfulness and fertility, but also one which symbolises blood. 'Nun brause Sturm' however, is more openly a call to the Nazi cause. The old German gods have fallen but they herald a new era:

Harfe uns Sturm, zu tausend Opfertoden,
Das Land gebiert sich neu aus dem, was fällt.
Zu deutschem Frühling kreißt der alte Boden,
Aus junger Mütter Schoß die neue Welt. (192)

This call is for a violent uprising, to force the earth to give birth to a new world, a new Germanic world. This poem also introduces the concept of the heroic death for the fatherland, so common in war and Nazi poetry and also apparent in Blunck's work.

The poem 'Tod in der Jugend' (193-194) is a treatise on death and fate. Blunck represents life as ruled by fate, which is 'dunkel' (193). He romanticises death as 'ein Sprung in uraltes Licht' (194), as a return to a previous state of existence. He glorifies death for the Führer and the *Volk*, disparaging those who die without this motivation:



Tod ist dem Tode nicht gleich. – Wer sein Leben gewagt,
Führer und Krieger, um Recht für sein Volk zu empfangen,
Wird vorm ew'gen Gesetz in Ehren prangen,
Und vorm Lebendigen stirbt nur, wer sich versagt. (194)

The majority of Blunck's clear statements about elements of Nazi ideology are found in his poems, rather than his ballads, but the poems can be used to illuminate the traces that are present in the ballads. It remains a matter of debate whether the ballad form can be usefully monopolised or manipulated for propagandistic purposes. The clarity often necessary in ideological discourse does not always sit comfortably with the narrative ballad form. There are, however, some aspects of Blunck's writing that do utilise the ballad form successfully in conveying a message.

The ballad 'Das heilige Land' (196-96) is categorised as a poem in the *Gesammelte Balladen und Gedichte* collection despite being a narrative ballad written in rhyming couplets and with a regular rhythm. This is typical of the confusion between literary forms which is often found when dealing with ballads. It tells the story of a weary soldier approaching a town in the morning fog and discussing the state of the war with the old man who is leading his horse. The old man has already lost one son in the battles and is hoping for news of his other sons. Despite the likelihood of all his sons being lost in the war, it becomes apparent that the father still holds firmly to the right of the Reich and the land to demand everything:

Und las das harte Wort: Sieg oder Tod.
Und spürt': hoch über allem Schmerz gebot
Das Land, das heilige Land. (196)

In Blunck's ballads, as in Nazi ideology, the holy land of Germany is raised up as being all-encompassing, all-demanding and the source of both pride and honour.



Other elements of Nazi thinking are found in Blunck's attitude towards the German *Volk* and their language. Again, he lays down the clearest statements in his poetry, which are then reflected in his narrative ballads. In 'Reich deutscher Sprache' (228) he defines the German Reich as those who speak the same language:

„Wir alle, die vom gleichen Wort,
Sind deutsch, sind einer Heimat Kind.“

Oh, süße Sprache mein, o Lied
Des Volks aus tiefem Urbeginn... (228)

The language is the song, is the *vox populi*, the cohesion that brings peoples together who live outside the contemporary geographical boundaries of the Reich. Blunck's Reich knows 'keinen Rain noch Grenze' (228), which allows for justified invasion of other countries, because the people belong to the overarching concept of the German Reich. Blunck gives the language mystical depth, as he claims it comes from the ancient hidden origins of the people and that his *Heimat* is populated with a genealogically-linked race. Blunck links the language to song; the language is the song, is intrinsic to the *Volk*.

In 'Deutsch Volk' (230) Blunck explains that the *Heimat* is the source of all the songs 'Brunnen seiner Lieder' (230) and the place to which the Germans will always return. This is a common theme, of the Germans going out from the Reich to spread civilisation and bring enlightenment and then returning to the source to be renewed. This is illustrated in the ballad 'Walter von der Vogelweide' (93-95) about the 13th century court poet. Blunck describes how 'Deutschland zieht / Ruhlos den Dichter heim' (95)³⁸³ for it is the German Reich that is the fount of all inspiration. In this way, the German song is inseparably linked

³⁸³ This also has echoes of the Nazi 'Heim ins Reich' ideology.



with the language and with the German *Volk*. This closeness means that in the post-war period, as German folksong wanted to throw off this tainted inheritance, it proved very difficult to do so.

These concepts are all echoed in his marching song 'Deutsches Marschlied' (229). Here the Germans are 'Eines Volkes ohne Grenze' (229) who are accompanied in their marching by German songs: 'Deutsches Lied wird uns geleiten' (229). The German language as well as the German land has been made holy 'Heilig Wort, das uns verbindet' (229) and has united the people into a common fate, 'Alle trägt ein einzig Los' (229). For Blunck, as for the Nazi party, the three essential elements of life as a German were 'Gott, Vaterland und Ehre' (232).³⁸⁴

Blunck's ballads show a prioritising of the *Heimat*, the *Volk* and the *Vaterland* in ways that move from being simply a feature of nationalistic poetry with a so-called 'neutral' pride in your own country, to embracing all the principles of Nazi thinking and justifying the carrying out of atrocities in the name of the fatherland. As Blunck's nation is borderless, linked by a common ancestry and language, he legitimises the Nazi intention to fetch its people 'Heim ins Reich'. Just as he praises the ruthlessness of the Kaiser in the ballad 'Vater und Sohn' (101-04), he also justifies the Führer principle. Having been an officer in World War I, he supports militarism and boasts of Germany's achievements, linking honour with dying for one's country, sacrificing your life for the good of the *Volk*. The thinking is underpinned with a romanticised belief in the *völkisch* and the *Völkstümlichen*. In his epic poem 'Sage vom Reich' he says:

³⁸⁴ Quoted from the poem 'Merkwort' (232).



Es heißt aber, daß er aus dem Volkstümlichen, mit dem er verbunden ist, das Magische, das Urtümliche aufzudecken und lebendig zu erhalten habe.³⁸⁵

By using ballads, seen as being an old and long-established form of folkloric expression, Blunck links in with a tradition of song taken directly from the *Volk*, a tradition which can allow recourse to the magical and to the origins of being, and hence give a romanticised and deliberately untouchable legitimacy to political theories and actions.

2.6 Hans Leip

A useful example of the ballad form being used in a way that could be perceived as being anti-Nazi, or at least, realistically observing the consequences of the war effort on Germany is Hans Leip's 'Lied im Schutt'.³⁸⁶ This poem is very closely linked to the ballad tradition. Wilhelm Duwe writes 'Das Lied im Schutt schließt sich erneut "im besten Sinne an die Überlieferung der Volksballade an"' ³⁸⁷ Leip's own political background was somewhat varied; he met regularly with Hans Friedrich Blunck, yet fostered good relations with socialists, communists, Jews and Nazis. After the war he distanced himself from those who were in power during it, led the PEN club in Hamburg and stressed his alternative credentials. Already famous for his song 'Lili Marleen', Leip had a background in the *Wandervogelbewegung* and deliberately used folksong phraseology and motifs within his work. As Rüdiger Schütt describes:

³⁸⁵ *Sage vom Reich* (Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, 1941-42), p. 51.

³⁸⁶ *Das grosse deutsche Balladenbuch*, pp. 603-605.

³⁸⁷ Wilhelm Duwe, 'Leip, literarkritisch gesehen', in *Hans Leip, eingeleitet von Wilhelm Duwe*, (Hamburg: Christians, 1968), pp. 12-28, here p. 21.



Sehr gezielt hat Leip die Stilmittel des Volksliedes eingesetzt: die Parataxe („und steht sie noch davor“), die direkte Rede („Kam’rad ich komm’ ja gleich“), das Symbol („unser beiden Schatten“), die Personifizierung („Alle Abend brennt sie, mich vergaß sie lang“).³⁸⁸

Leip wrote the ballad in response to a visit to Hamburg in July 1943 when he was inspired to write the truth of what he saw. As he said, ‘In mir sagten sich die ersten Zeilen des „Liedes im Schutt“ her.’³⁸⁹ The ballad begins in typical folksong style ‘Und als ich über die Brücke kam’ which is repeated with the incremental repetition of ‘Als ich über die tote Brücke kam’ around the monotonous refrain of ‘Schutt, nichts als Schutt’ in each of the eight regular stanzas of the journey through the city. The narrator meets his entire family, his teacher, his lover and finally himself in each of the stanzas, all gazing on the destruction of their home and lives.³⁹⁰

To speak out so clearly about the cost of the German war effort whilst the war was still raging was hugely dangerous, as people had been executed for such statements, and both Leip and his publisher, Walter Foitzik, took the risk of speaking out about the situation, although the ballad includes nothing specifically against the regime. Leip summed up his experience in a letter to Kläre Buchmann of 12th October 1943:

Ich schicke dir das Lied im Schutt, das ich vor ein paar Tagen aufschrieb und es in Bützow schon vorgelesen hab, so daß die Armen dort ganz ängstlich wurden, ob man dergleichen wohl so offen sagen darf. Hab es auch an den Simplicissimus geschickt und bin kaum neugierig, ob er es druckt für viele Augen und Ohren. Dich soll es nicht erschrecken, laß es, laß es, ich mußte es so schlicht und recht von der bedrückten Seele schreiben.³⁹¹

³⁸⁸ *Dichter gibt es nur im Himmel: Leben und Werk von Hans Leip – Biographie und Briefedition 1893-1948* (Hamburg: Dölling & Galitz, 2002), here p. 34.

³⁸⁹ Hans Leip, *Zehn Kreidezeichnungen und das Lied im Schutt* (Hamburg: Axel Springer, 1963) (unpaginated).

³⁹⁰ *Das grosse deutsche Balladenbuch*, pp. 603-605.

³⁹¹ *Dichter gibt es nur im Himmel*, p. 222.



It was a brave act to read the ballad in public in October 1943 and when 'Lied im Schutt' was published in *Simplicissimus* on 13th November 1943 it showed that literature had not been fully standardised and that the voice of criticism could still be raised. When the ballad was published in *Adelphi* in England after the war by Hermann Sinsheimer, who had fled to exile in London, it was embraced by a country who wanted to hear an alternative voice coming out of Germany.

The ballad closes with a final regular stanza before breaking down into a 12-line free verse conclusion. The regular stanza presents a parallel vision of the destruction of the city coupled with the potential beauty of her resurrection:

Und als ich über die Ferne kam,
Schutt, nichts als Schutt,
als ich über die tote Ferne kam,
da sah ich die tote Stadt von fern
und sah sie aufleuchten wie einen Stern
und sah ihre Not und Trübsal vergehn
und sah die Erschlagene auferstehn,
schöner, als ich sie je gesehn. (604)

The closing section of the ballad functions as an envoi, following the French ballade tradition, and is an apostrophe to hope:

Welchen Ruhm und Preis
Forderst du, unerforschliches Walten?
Wie weit
Sind wir gekommen,
Was hast du uns genommen,
Ungeheuerlichkeit!
Bist du noch das ewige Licht?
So mach uns wieder jung!
O schmales grünes Reis,
Das unsere Hände halten,
Welke nicht,
Hoffnung! (605)



This slightly strange ending makes it difficult to put this ballad in an exclusively anti-Nazi category. It certainly shows the ballad being used contemporaneously for different purposes than those to which the Nazi regime put it, but there is still an element of hoping against hope, of refusing to acknowledge that there is something to blame for the consequences of the war, and that that something could lie within the German *Vaterland*.

Perhaps the key to the ballad lies in Leip's assertion about 'Der große deutsche Ausverkauf'.³⁹² The ending of the ballad remains in the defiant spirit of the Blitz, while the repeated 'Schutt, nichts als Schutt' heralds the *Trümmerliteratur* of the post-war period. It is perhaps ironic that the resurrection that Leip predicted in 'Lied im Schutt' did come to pass in the shape of the German *Wirtschaftswunder*, which enabled them to put the physical repercussions of the war behind them, if not the cultural ones.

An aspect of the ballad during the Nazi period that is of peripheral interest here, although warranting of further study, is the role of the ballad within the Nazi concentration camps. Sterling work in this field has been carried out by Inge Lammel, Günter Hofmeyer and Guido Fackler.³⁹³ In Fackler's essay 'Lied und Gesang im KZ' he describes the use of song and forced singing in various concentration camps.³⁹⁴ The 'Horst Wessel Lied' for example, was used as a means of humiliation for the anti-fascist writers Carl von Ossietzky and Erich Mühsam, who were forced to sing it while marching towards the

³⁹² Leip visited Hamburg in July 1943 and commented 'Der große deutsche Ausverkauf hatte begonnen. In mir sagten sich die ersten Zeilen des „Liedes im Schutt“ her' Quoted in *Zehn Kreidezeichnungen und das Lied im Schutt* (Hamburg: Axel Springer, 1963) (unpaginated.).

³⁹³ See Inge Lammel and Günter Hofmeyer, *Lieder aus den faschistischen Konzentrationslagern*, Veröffentlichung der Deutschen Akademie der Künste zu Berlin, Sektion Musik, Abteilung Arbeiterlied, (Leipzig: VEB Hofmeister [1962]).

³⁹⁴ *Lied und Populare Kultur / Song and Popular Culture: Jahrbuch des Deutschen Volksliedarchivs Freiburg*, 46 ed. by Max Matter & Nils Grosch (Munich & Berlin: Waxmann, 2001), pp. 141-198.



Sonnenberg camp where they were imprisoned.³⁹⁵ Fackler stresses that in the early years of the Nazi regime, i.e 1933-36, the songs that the prisoners were made to sing were primarily ‘traditionelle Volks- und Heimatlieder sowie Lieder aus dem Umfeld der Jugendbewegung’ (145) as well as ‘patriotische bzw. »väterländische« Lieder, Soldatenlieder und nationalsozialistische Massenlieder’ (146). Interestingly in regard to the German folk revival, it was the songs of the *Wandervogelbewegung* that provided many of the songs which came to be associated with torture and exercising of power over the prisoners. Although some of the songs were used as subversive rebellion within the camps, these tended to be folksongs more so than ballads.

Both Kästner and Brecht comment explicitly in their ballads on the rise and the establishment of the Nazi party. Most of these ballads have been covered in the first chapter, but some became more widespread into the Nazi era and therefore are included here. One of Brecht’s ballads which was explicitly critical of the attitude of the state is ‘Zu Potsdam unter den Eichen’ (11, 205) which was written in 1927 and published in John Heartfield’s³⁹⁶ communist-satirical magazine *Der Knüppel*, under the name ‘Die Ballade vom Kriegerheim.’ It was included, along with ‘Legende vom toten Soldaten’ and ‘Die Ballade vom ertrunkenen Mädchen’,³⁹⁷ in the 1929 production of *Berliner Requiem*. It gained greater anti-Nazi resonance when it was republished in Brecht’s collection *Lieder Gedichte Chöre* in 1934. It is sung to the tune of a slow march. Brecht wrote the ballad after seeing a report about an anti-militaristic demonstration in Potsdam by the group the

³⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 143.

³⁹⁶ John Heartfield also provided the photomontages for Tucholsky’s satirical take on the Weimar Republic, *Deutschland, Deutschland über alles*.

³⁹⁷ Note again the fluidity of the terms; here the poem ‘Vom ertrunkenen Mädchen’ is called a ballad.



Roten Frontkämpferbundes.³⁹⁸ The demonstrators carried a coffin with the inscription 'Jedem Krieger sein eignes Heim' upon it. The poem turns upon knowing that the parade is a parodic protest at the attitude of the state who honour the dead with such an empty epitaph. Instead of the procession taking place 'unter den Linden' it takes place 'unter den Eichen', (11, 205) emphasising the stability and endurance of the German oak tree, which is symbolic of the German state. Equally immovable are the German statesmen who insist on praising the *Vaterland* at the expense of the lives of many men:

Gekrochen einst mit Herz und Hand
Dem Vaterland auf den Leim
Belohnt mit dem Sarge vom Vaterland:
Jedem Krieger sein Heim! (11, 205)

Again, the 'Herz und Hand' reference is to the 'Deutschlandlied':

Einigkeit und Recht und Freiheit
für das deutsche Vaterland!
Danach laßt uns alle streben
brüderlich mit Herz und Hand!³⁹⁹

These references show that, at least obliquely, Brecht does refer to a concept of national identity, in that he disagrees strongly with the sense of identity that those in power are trying to maintain, by attacking the militaristic *pro patria mori* concept of *Heimat* and the *Vaterland*. Instead of fighting gloriously for the fatherland, Brecht has his soldiers crawling through the mud in the service of the state. The irony of the phrase 'Jedem Krieger sein Heim' (11, 205),⁴⁰⁰ when the home is death, is striking.

³⁹⁸ The *Roten Frontkämpferbundes* were a group of armed working class revolutionaries who swore allegiance to the workers and to socialism.

³⁹⁹ *Politische Lyrik*, p. 10.

⁴⁰⁰ *Werke*, 11, p. 205.



Once Brecht's perceived Mahagonny arrived, in the shape of Hitler's accession to power in 1933, Brecht went into exile, travelling through many countries before settling in the United States. Some of his works, written during the Nazi era, are explicitly anti-Nazi. For example, his 'Ballade von der <<Judenhure>> Marie Sanders',⁴⁰¹ written in 1935, deals with the Nazis' *Judengesetze*, in particular the *Gesetz zum Schutze des deutschen Blutes und der deutschen Ehre* and the ensuing pogrom.⁴⁰² The ballad is a clear attack on the Nazis' policy of shaming those who were married to or had extra-marital relations with Jews. It tells the story of Marie Sanders, who did not believe that these laws could be carried out, but learns to her cost that they will be. The ballad begins:

In Nürnberg machten sie ein Gesetz,
darüber weinte manches Weib,
das mit dem falschen Mann im Bette lag. (230-231)

And includes the refrain:

<<Das Fleisch schlägt auf in den Vorstädten,
die Trommeln schlagen mit Macht,
Gott im Himmel, wenn sie etwas vorhätten,
wär' es heute nacht.>> (230-231)

which is varied in the final stanza to:

<<Das Fleisch schlägt auf in den Vorstädten,
Der Streicher redet heut nacht.
Großer Gott, wenn sie ein Ohr hätten,
Wüßten sie, was man mit ihnen macht.>>

The contemporary detail of Streicher, the renowned anti-semitic editor of the Nazi newspaper *Der Stürmer* and the Nazi *Gauleiter* of the province of Franconia and the open-ended threat of what will be done with these people, makes the ballad topical and

⁴⁰¹ Brecht *Liederbuch*, pp. 230-233.

⁴⁰² The ballad was first published with the inverted commas around the word 'Judenhure' in 1951 in Brecht's *Hundert Gedichte: 1918-1950* (Berlin: Aufbau, 1951).



contemporary in its critique. Such specific details would, of course, have been impossible to publish or express in Germany and could only be vocalised from a position of exile.

The ballad contains a narrative core and an apostrophe to the mother, common in ballads such as ‘Lord Ronald / Randal’ (Child 12) whereby, the address to the mother, always forecasts doom:

Mutter, gib mir den Schlüssel,
Es ist alles halb so schlimm.
Der Mond schaut aus wie immer. (231-232)

There is a striking detail in the fact that the moon continues to shine, and to watch over them, yet such atrocities are about to happen. The final stanza sees Marie Sanders being marched through the town dressed solely in a shirt, with her head shorn to show her betrayal of the Nazi cause.

A collection of ballads, collected by one of Scotland’s major ballad experts, sheds some light on anti-Nazi army ballads, which are otherwise, very difficult to find. Hamish Henderson’s *Ballads of World War II* includes ballads that were collected in the field and were rarely state-sanctioned or supportive of the state. These were songs that were actually sung by the soldiers, rather than those included in army songbooks that they were meant to sing and thus they tend to be very subversive and undermining of patriotism. Henderson explains:

The balladry of World War II developed in conditions quite unlike those of previous major wars. It grew up under the shadow of – and often in virtual combat with – the official or commercial radio of the combatant nations.⁴⁰⁴

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid, iii.



Included in the book is Leip's 'Lili Marleen', which is relevant as it 'sprouted variants and parodies galore in the authentic ballad manner.'⁴⁰⁵ Henderson includes many parodies in English, Italian and German. Although several parodies are included, the most relevant to the purposes of this thesis is the following:

In dem Westen Moskaus, vor dem grossen Tor
steht die deutsche Wehrmacht, und kommt ja nicht
mehr vor.
Und alle Leute solln es sehn
Wie Adolf Hitler zu Grunde geht
wie einst Napoleon,
wie einst Napoleon.

Auf der Strasse westwärts marschirt ein Bataillon.
Das sind die Überreste der zehnten Division.
Moskau haben sie nie gesehen,
Denn sie mussten stufen gehen
wie einst Napoleon,
wie einst Napoleon.

Schon rief der Posten die Russen kommen gleich!
Das kann dein Leben kosten. Kamerad drum lauf
sogleich!
Und sollte dir ein Leid geschehen,
Muss du zu dem Verbandsplatz gehen
wie einst la grande Armée
wie einst la grande Armée.⁴⁰⁶

Interestingly, there is another version of the ballad which is not included in the collection. It was sung by Lucy Mannheim and played on BBC radio in 1943. It presents the view of a woman who is left behind while her husband is fighting in the war which was a voice which was not often raised:

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid, p. 35.



Vielleicht fällst Du in Rußland,
Vielleicht in Afrika,
Doch irgendwo da fällst Du,
So will's Dein Führer ja.
Und wenn wir doch uns wiederseh'n,
Oh möge die Laterne steh'n
In einem ander'n Deutschland!
Deine Lili Marleen.⁴⁰⁷

The clear message that is anti-Hitler and also anti-Hitler's expression of Germany is very evident from the desire for the lovers to be reunited in a different Germany to the one in which they were living in the early 1940s.

The sentiments expressed in the ballad are defeatist, anti-Hitler, desertist and hugely subversive. Another German ballad included in the collection is the 'Lied des deutschen Afrika Korps'⁴⁰⁸ from the 5th Light Motorised Division, the first German formation to land in Africa in February 1941.

In der lybischen Wueste die Fuenfte einst stand
die Fahrzeuge begraben die Schnauze im Sand
sie sprachen von Deutschland, von Bier und von Wein
in der lybischen Wueste da gibt es kein.

Fahr mich nach Neapal, nach Rom und nach Hause
da gibt es Bier, auch Wein und auch Brause.
Der Sandsturm ist trocken, die Sonne brennt heiss,
und das Maedel in der Heimat von allem nichts weiss.

In der Frueh um halb sechse da wird man geweckt
man kriecht aus dem Zelte und ist gaenzlich verdreckt
gewaschen wird garnichts, das Wasser ist knapp
genau zwei Liter muessen reichen pro Tag.

Zur frueh Karo – einfach, schlechten Kaffee dazu,
zum Mittag gibts garnichts, nur zwei Stunden Ruh,
Und abends Macaroni mit Backobst und Wein,

⁴⁰⁷ The text of this song is available on <http://ingeb.org/Lieder/ichmussh.html> and a very encompassing overview of variations of the song on <http://ingeb.org/garb/lmarleen.html>. Date of access 250107.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid, p. 47.



das ist leider alles was in den Magen kommt rein.

Der Kopf wird geschoren, der Bart wird gepflegt –
wie Kahlarsch mit Ohren durch die Wueste man fegt
wir fangen Skorpione und Schlangen dazu
und jammern die Hoffnung, Reserve hat Ruh.

Such songs undercut the propaganda of the Nazi ballads by exposing the reality of a soldier's life in its dreariness and hardship when the idealised presentation of Germany as 'von Bier und von Wein' is very distant. Such songs show that the ballad form could equally be used against the Nazi regime.

2.7 Conclusion

After the war, a literary and musicological consequence of the Nazi party's abuse of literature and song meant that the folksong and the ballad were contaminated with the seeds of Nazi propaganda. Both of the writers dealt with in this chapter show how the seeds were present and grew within their own writing, combining to create a taintedness from which it would prove difficult to recover. It is difficult to draw out the particular strands of thinking which were parallel or confluent to Nazi ideology and to argue that therefore folksong per se was eternally tainted but the cumulative effect of the Nazi marching songs, the SA songs, the established ballad writers expounding Nazi theories and themes within their ballad writing and their poetry, as well as the use of traditional ballads in Nazi songbooks led to a situation where the cumulative impression was that folksong had been taken over wholesale by the Nazis and would therefore need a seismic shift in order to reclaim it. It would therefore be some time before the German folk revival even attempted to reclaim



some of the ground that had been lost. As the Scottish situation was so different during the Second World War, it is therefore no surprise that the Scottish folk revival was able to begin long before the German revival began to gather momentum. The issue of Scottish national identity was not so relevant during this time period as the war effort conspired to expand the sense of Britishness to include and embrace Scottishness.

The Nazi party wanted to undo the ‘rupture brought about by defeat’⁴⁰⁹ in the First World War and to create a new Germany in the mould of an earlier Germania, but in so doing, they created their own disruption. Their literary tradition was interrupted; broken by the expulsion of many of the best German writers and their oral tradition lost so much credibility that the neutral strands of its nationalist elements could not be separated from those which had been corrupted by Nazi ideology, thus rendering the whole tradition suspect. There is a strange irony in the lines from Heinrich Anacker’s 1935 poem ‘Brüder, was bleibt...’

Brüder, was bleibt von unserer Zeit?
Runen, die leuchten in Ewigkeit!
Unsere Leiber werden vergehen,
Werden als Staub in die Winde wehen.
Unsere Lieder werden verklingen –
Anders werden die Kommenden singen.⁴¹⁰

After the Nazi era passed into history, problematising the notion of the German nation and the German people for decades to come, it was not the glowing rune of the Führer’s name which remained, but the destruction, the Holocaust and the songs that would sound differently because they could no longer be sung or received as they were before.

⁴⁰⁹ Wolfgang G. Natter, *Literature at War, 1914-1940: Representing the “Time of Greatness” in Germany* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 3.

⁴¹⁰ Heinrich Anacker, ‘Brüder, was bleibt...’, in *Das Schwarze Korps*, 14th August 1935, p. 9.





Chapter Three

Tot sind unsre Lieder, / Unsre alten Lieder

The German and Scottish Folksong Revivals



3.1 Introduction

This chapter will provide an overview of the development of the German folksong revival, highlighting the most relevant artists and events, with the Scottish folk revival being used as a comparator where relevant. The contested ‘recovery’ of the folk tradition will then be investigated through a series of specific songs which have been grouped into themes. The term ‘Liedermacher’ will be used throughout to refer to modern folk singers who both write and perform their own work, despite protestations of specific artists that the term is misleading. Arguments around the terminology are side issues here; it is more relevant to note that the term was first used of Degenhardt and invented by, or at least credibly attributed to, Wolf Biermann, who based the word on the same concept as Brecht’s ‘Stückeschreiber’, as an anti-elitist description for the artist who ‘makes songs’. It was invented due to the lack of a suitable word within the German language to translate the French *chansonnier*, which was very much to the fore at the beginning of the revival. The term will not be italicised because it has become a commonplace within the period and is accepted within the English language.⁴¹² In Scotland singers were more simply called folksingers, revival singers or, if they had learned their songs from the oral tradition, tradition bearers.

⁴¹² See Bernhard Lassahn, *Dorn im Ohr: Das lästige Liedermacher-Buch. Mit Texten von Wolf Biermann bis Konstantin Wecker* (Zürich: Diogenes, 1982), p. 206.



It would be difficult to write a chapter on the German folk revival without beginning with the words of one of its most central singers, Franz Josef Degenhardt. In his song 'Die alten Lieder', written in 1965, he deals directly with the difficult inheritance of the Nazi period:

Wo sind eure Lieder,
eure alten Lieder?
fragen die aus andren Ländern,
wenn man um Kamine sitzt,
mattgetanzt und leergesprochen
und das high-life-Spiel ausschwitzt.

Ja, wo sind die Lieder,
unsre alten Lieder?
Nicht für'n Heller oder Batzen
mag Feinsliebchen barfuß ziehn
und kein schriller Schrei nach Norden
will aus einer Kehle fliehn.

Tot sind unsre Lieder,
unsre alten Lieder.
Lehrer haben sie zerbissen,
Kurzbehoste sie verklampft,
braune Horden totgeschrien,
Stiefel in den Dreck gestampft.⁴¹³

It is relevant that it is the outsider, the foreigner, who asks the pointed question as to why the Germans have no songs of their own. This highlights clearly the culturally-specific issue that Germany has to face when dealing with the folk tradition in the post-war era. While many other countries are able to embrace the folksong and oral traditions of their own country and use them to bolster and underpin their own sense of national identity, Germany has a more difficult and problematic recourse to the tradition. It is worth noting at this stage, that this problem actually pre-dated the Nazi period and its aftermath although it obviously becomes much more extreme in the post-war period. It was a question which

⁴¹³ Franz Josef Degenhardt, *Spiel nicht mit den Schmuttelkindern: Balladen, Chansons, Grotesken, Lieder*, new revised edn (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1969), first published 1967, p. 84. This is also included in the Appendices No. 1.



was already being asked in the 18th century by Bürger, Goethe and their peers. However, the abuse of the folksong by the Nazi party, as outlined in the preceding chapter, has moved this problem onto a separate and much more complex level.

The term 'German folk revival' will be used in this chapter because it retains the emphasis central to the singers' agenda, i.e. to revive the German folksong.⁴¹⁴ This chapter focuses on the specific difficulties that the songwriters faced in the post-war years during the German folk revival and on how they attempted to overcome the Nazi legacy. In the second stanza of his song Degenhardt illustrates this problem by name-checking German folk songs that now cannot be sung as an example of how these songs have been destroyed by a combination of forces highlighted in the final stanza.⁴¹⁵ Degenhardt lays the blame for the impossibility of using German folk song at the feet of the teachers, for wrongly cultivating the folk tradition, the 'kurzbehoste' of the German youth groups and the armies of National Socialist soldiers and supporters who destroyed them through their aggressive usage of the songs and the tradition. It is this combination of issues, and in particular the Nazi legacy which has made the German approach to the use of the ballad and folksong in constructing their national identity so problematic.

⁴¹⁴ In Scotland the term Scottish folk revival was in common parlance, although some commentators prefer constructions such as 'post-Second World War stage of rediscovery and re-creation', which, while more accurate, is a rather awkward expression for the purposes of this chapter. Ailie Munro has written the most encompassing history of the Scottish Folk Revival. First published in 1984 as *The Folk Music Revival in Scotland* (London: Kahn & Averill, 1984), this was reworked and republished in 1996 as *The Democratic Muse: Folk Music Revival in Scotland* (Aberdeen: Scottish Cultural Press, 1996), here *The Democratic Muse*, p. 157.

⁴¹⁵ Two traditional German songs: 'Feinsliebchen, du sollst mir nicht barfuß gehn' and 'Ein Heller und ein Batzen' are conflated in this stanza, along with a WWI oppositional German army song by Walter Flex; 'Wildgänse rauschen durch die Nacht' which includes the lines 'Wildgänse rauschen durch die Nacht / Mit schrillum Schrei nach Norden'.



It has been claimed that no article or piece of writing dealing with the issue of folksong in post-war Germany has omitted this opening quotation, as it succinctly sums up the issues at hand. David Engle says:

It is interesting to note that these lines by Degenhardt hardly escaped quotation in any article dealing with the German folk scene up until 1977; since then they have become dispensable.⁴¹⁶

This chapter will focus on the German folksong revival of the 1960s and 1970s and will draw its parameters around the most relevant phase of the revival, between 1963 and 1978. It will also consider whether, at the end of 1977, it is accurate or justifiable to claim that Degenhardt's statement that the songs are dead, can be or has been refuted. This timeframe encapsulates the strategic development of the revival through the years of the festivals at Burg Waldeck (1964-69) and is built around the period of international and national rupture in the political and social upheavals of 1968. The German folksong revival is a very wide and varied movement, established on the basis of the interests and work of individual singers and musicians who were all trying to deal in some way with the legacy of the Nazi period rather than a consistent and strategically planned event.⁴¹⁷ Therefore it is difficult to draw strict boundaries around the movement, as it had precursors and successors. However, the dates indicated will cover the most important and strategic phases of the developments and songs.

The German folk revival is predated by the American, English and Scottish folk movements. The Scottish folk revival brought the ballad form, traditional and

⁴¹⁶ David G. Engle, 'A Sketch of the German Folk Revival Singer, Katzi Ritzel', *Lore and Language*, Vol. 3, No 4/5, Jan / July 1981, pp. 67-79. This reference is to footnote 14, p. 78.

⁴¹⁷ The terms German folksong revival and German folk revival are used interchangeably in the literature of the period. Here the term German folk revival will occasionally be used for brevity with the association with folksong being taken by implication.



contemporary, more directly into the public sphere during the decades of the 1950s and '60s. Although there is debate amongst critics as to the precise dates of the revival, these dates encompass the most significant events and songs. Ailie Munro dates the folk music revival to 1945, while Hamish Henderson's song of 1948, the 'John MacLean March', written for the 25th anniversary of the Communist revolutionary John MacLean's death, is heralded as 'the first swallow of the folk revival'.⁴¹⁸ 1947 saw the publication of Henderson's *Ballads of World War II* which stressed the international nature of folk song and the cross-fertilisation between countries and between the oral and literary traditions. Others claim that it was the American Alan Lomax's arrival in Scotland in 1950 to collect for the 'World Library of Folk and Primitive Music' series which brought in an external catalyst for Scotland's own revival. It seems likely that it was the conflation of these unique events, personages, influences and social situations that created the necessary conditions for the folk revival to take root.

It is well established that the *Volkslied*, before the German folk revival, was seen as 'suspekt und langweilig'. It was linked to agrarian, pre-industrial times and was therefore not seen as being in any way relevant to post-war modern, largely urban societies. At the beginning of the Scottish folk revival this was also the case. Raymond Ross states:

Along with Hamish Henderson, Morris Blythman sought to bring the industrial as well as the political experience to bear upon the Folk Revival which, in its infancy, tended to look upon Scotland's agrarian past...⁴²⁰

⁴¹⁸ Ewan McVicar, *One Singer, One Song: Old and New Stories and Songs of Glasgow Folk* (Glasgow: Glasgow City Libraries, 1990), p. 30.

⁴²⁰ Raymond Ross, foreword to *Aa Brenghe in! Rebel Scottish Songs and Poems*, ed. by Thurso Berwick (Glasgow: Gallus Music, [n.d.]).



This was to change in both folk revivals as contemporary social issues allowed the ballad form to be used to give voice to protest and concerns. In Germany, the stale teaching and learning of folksongs by rote in schools, making them a 'lästige Singübung' did not encourage the younger generations to pay attention to the songs. This contrasted strongly with the situation in Scotland where the schools were the fertile ground for the Scottish folk revival.⁴²¹ In Germany there is the additional problem of the 'Blut und Boden Geruch' and of the broken tradition. While in Scotland, the tradition is truly, in the words of Hamish Henderson, a 'carrying stream',⁴²² in Germany, the stream had been dammed and the water used to nourish the aims of the National Socialist regime. It is these issues, both general and particular to Germany, which will be confronted in this chapter.

If it were possible to include the music as well as the text, there is no doubt that the understanding of the listener / reader would be enhanced. However, within the limitations and academic area of this thesis, it is not possible to do the musical elements justice. During the research for this chapter, songs were approached on both musical and textual levels where possible, but it has not been possible to source copies of all of the songs. If there are specific musical elements that contribute strongly to the meaning of the words, or which oppose the textual levels of the song, these will be commented upon. Otherwise, the musical side of the folk song revival must, of necessity, be left to the musicologists. It is worth noting, in support of this decision, that during the period in question, the musical dimension of the songs was very much servant to the meaning of the text, and occupied

⁴²¹ This was largely due to the work of individual teachers, like Morris Blythman (Thurso Berwick) whose Ballads and Blues club in Allan Glen's Glasgow secondary school was a formative influence from 1953 onwards. Likewise Norman Buchan's ballad club in Rutherglen, established in 1958 had a huge impact on generations of young people.

⁴²² Hamish Henderson, *Alias MacAlias: Writings on Songs, Folk and Literature* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1992), p. 20.



predominantly an accompanying function. As Degenhardt explained: ‘Sie [die Musik] ist dem Text untergeordnet, soll bewirken, daß sich dem Zuhörer der Text einprägt.’⁴²³ This is backed up by Budzinski who clarifies ‘Anders als im Kunstlied dominiert [in linken Liedern] der Text.’⁴²⁴ As the artists further developed into the 1980s and the electronic era, this changed and musical settings became more significant, but that is a later development which is not the focus of this chapter.

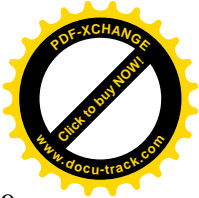
Ballad collectors and academics have long been split on the importance of music for the ballads. Bertrand Bronson famously quipped ‘When is a ballad not a ballad? When it has no tune’, in his introduction to *The Traditional Tunes of the Child Ballads* while Hamish Henderson commented that many of the ballad collectors in the 18th and 19th centuries were poets and therefore were more interested in the texts rather than the tunes.⁴²⁶ In 1963 he remarked; ‘Ballad scholarship in Scotland consequently has had – until this century – a very strong literary – as opposed to musical – bias.’⁴²⁷ Artists during the Scottish folk revival utilised many familiar tunes for their songs and ballads, counting on the music to convey their message more speedily to their listeners and to encourage communal singing. However, the music still had the function very much of accompaniment rather than of interest in its own right.

⁴²³ Quoted in Rolf Ulrich Kaiser’s collection *Songbuch* (Ahrensburg: Damokles, 1967) p. 75.

⁴²⁴ K. Budzinski, *Linke Lieder* (Munich: Scherz, 1966), p. 7.

⁴²⁶ *The Traditional Tunes of the Child Ballads*, l.ix.

⁴²⁷ ‘A Plea for the Sung Ballad’, *Alias MacAlias*, p. 44.



In Michael Hornig's thesis *Die Liedermacher und das zeitkritische Lied der 60er Jahre*⁴²⁸ which was published in 1974, towards the end of the time period of this chapter, he stresses the ballad nature of many of the 'zeitkritische' songs from the revival saying:

Darüberhinaus verwenden die Texter gerne eine "balladeske" Struktur, die dem Publikum einen "roten Faden" liefert und das Zuhören erleichtert.⁴²⁹

This balladesque nature of many of the songs is apparent throughout the revival with a common use of strict rhyme schemes, set stanzaic structures and refrains. The singers, however, may not use the word ballad with any accuracy or coherence. Various the following terms are used of the songs: 'Lieder' (Biermann, Degenhardt, Mey), 'Bankelsongs' (Degenhardt), 'Stücke' (Hedemann), 'Sprechgesänge' (Hüsch), 'Chansons' (Mossmann), 'Politisches Chanson im weitesten Sinne' (Süverkrüp) and 'Von der europäischen und amerikanischen Folklore beeinflusste Strophenlieder' (Degenhardt). Scotland encountered similar problems with the term ballad being used fairly loosely and the all encompassing term 'Scottish political song' is also seen as being very flexible. As Ewan McVicar says:

The term Scottish Political Song is a loose one, which can encompass protest, political comment, social comment, social history and narrative that supports a political stance.⁴³⁰

While every effort has been made to focus on the ballads in the folk revival, as has become apparent throughout this thesis, the ballad has been and continues to be, a flexible term. In this chapter, songs which have a largely narrative function, or which exhibit ballad rhymes and rhythms, or specifically balladesque features, continue to be the focus of the work. It is

⁴²⁸ Michael Hornig *Die Liedermacher und das zeitkritische Lied der 60er Jahre* (unpublished thesis for the Ruhr University of Bochum, 1974).

⁴²⁹ Ibid, p. 11.

⁴³⁰ 'We'll Ne'er Forget the People: Notes on the nature of Scottish Political Song'. Date of access 211106. <http://polsong.gcal.ac.uk/articles/mcvicar2.html>.



also worth noting at the outset that while every effort has been made to date the songs accurately, older traditional songs cannot be dated due to their oral nature, while modern songs from the revival singers may be dated to composition, if the artist has made this information available, or may be dated from their first published / recorded / performed experience. As the dating of these texts is important for the arguments within the chapter, this will be spelled out in each case as clearly as possible.

The most significant triumvirate of Liedermacher, Franz Josef Degenhardt, Dieter Süverkrüp and Wolf Biermann will be central to this chapter.⁴³¹ Many studies of the German folk revival focus solely on these three Liedermacher, arguing that they are representative of the period. As Michael Hornig wrote:

Es kann gesagt werden: Das Prisma der drei vorzustellenden Sänger enthält im wesentlichen das Spektrum der zeitkritischen Liedermacher der 60er Jahre.⁴³²

While this is a fairly accurate statement, it also narrows the focus of the revival too much. Therefore this chapter will deal with the development of the revival and then will look specifically at some of the most important ballads from a wide range of artists to broaden the focus of the work. These will be organised thematically according to frequency of the themes within the revival.

The early Liedermacher in the folk revival scene were all born before the Second World War and grew to maturity in the aftermath of Germany's defeat. Wolf Biermann is

⁴³¹ Glasgow folksinger Adam McNaughtan also considers the most important trio in Scotland to be Hamish Henderson, Matt McGinn and Ewan MacColl. This chapter will however, include examples from other singers where relevant. See 'The Poet, The Worker and the Professional', Date of access 25/11/06. <http://polsong.gcal.ac.uk/politicalsong/research/mcnaughtan.html>.

⁴³² *Die Liedermacher und das zeitkritische Lied der 60er Jahre*, p. 33.



included in this chapter because, despite moving to the former East Germany in 1953 and living and writing about the DDR during the German folk revival, his influence on the revival was enormous. His input into the strategic development of folksong in the period was central, long before the publicity attracted by his spectacular *Ausbürgerung* in 1976. It would not be possible to do this topic justice without acknowledging his role. It is evident that these older artists had more difficulties with the legacy of the Nazi era as they or their families had been personally more impacted by it. Each of these artists belonged to what Helmut Schelsky termed the 'skeptical generation'.⁴³³ The younger generation, especially those who were performing from 1976 onwards, found it easier to move away from these issues to focus on other, more contemporary problems.

Within Scotland, the cultural inheritance was of a very different colour. Unlike the situation in Germany, Scottish folk singers were building on a foundation of a strong Scottish sense of national identity, which had been established afresh during the modern literary renaissance in the 1920s. It is tempting to style what happened in the 1950s and '60s then as a nationalist revival, forming a bridge between this renaissance and contemporary Scottish culture.⁴³⁴ Finlay rightly acknowledges the Scottish folk revival as the 'second flowering of Scottish culture' in the 20th century, and a flowering which 'can be seen to widen the scope of its predecessor.'⁴³⁵ In Germany, the focus was much more on recovering the very concept of a German culture from the abuses of the Nazi era by reaching back to a distant or recreated past.

⁴³³ Helmut Schelsky, *Die skeptische Generation. Eine Soziologie der deutschen Jugend* (Düsseldorf: Eugen Diederichs, 1957).

⁴³⁴ To some extent this is true; in so far as one accepts the complicated nature of the Scottish nationalism which comes into play during this period of Scottish history.

⁴³⁵ Alec Finlay (ed.) *The Armstrong Nose: Selected Letters of Hamish Henderson* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1996), p. 300.



With the exception of Biermann, the role of the ballad in the DDR will not be the focus of this chapter. Although in the earlier chapters of this thesis, the focus was on Germany as a whole entity, it is essential to note that post-war, the concept of a 'national identity' in East Germany had a completely different complexion from that of the West for the allegiance was to the socialist state on an international basis rather than to a specific sense of an East German national identity. As Benedict Anderson claims, nationalism is an anomaly for Marxist theory.⁴³⁶ There were, however, definite overlaps between the folk movements in the West and the East of Germany; East Germany's *Singbewegung* in the 1960s for example, was a very strategic part of the second stage of the socialist cultural revolution.⁴³⁷ The ballad was also not a genre which was of particular importance in East Germany; the *Freie Deutsche Jugend* which organised many of the Hootenanny clubs and *Singeklubs* where songs were shared lists the following as their major genres: 'Song, Chanson, Couplet, Rundgesang, Agitations- und Massenlied'.⁴³⁸ As would be expected from a worldwide socialist movement, the international song was very much in evidence, and the closeness of many of the West German Liedermacher to communism and socialism brings the two nations together. The East German experience of the folk revival was also very different as they did not have a problematic relationship to communal singing, therefore many of the songs were sung in choirs and communally in clubs. Despite the interesting material with regards to East Germany, the comparison for the purposes of this thesis will be maintained as West Germany and Scotland.

⁴³⁶ *Imagined Communities*, pp. 3-4.

⁴³⁷ For a useful overview of this issue see Hermann Strobach, *Deutsches Volkslied in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Berlin: Akademie, 1980), p. 113 ff.

⁴³⁸ *Ibid*, p. 115.



3.2 Nazi Legacy

In the immediate post-war period and into the 1950s, the German population and in particular her singers and writers were extremely wary of anything which could be seen to have elements of the *völkisch*, of the concept of *Heimat*, the *Volk*, the nation per se and of communal singing. Tom Kannmacher describes the problem of communal singing as follows:

Die Generation, die Zwischen 1933 und 1945 sang, sang zu oft im ‚doppelten Sinn‘ und der Zusammenbruch 1945 brachte ihr jäh zu Bewußtsein, daß man beim unbefangenen oder begeisterten Mitsingen Ungeheuerliches verinnerlicht hatte, Grund genug, betroffen oder feige zu verstummen.⁴³⁹

This silencing of the voice of the German people was something that the Liedermacher tried to redress, even if it created a tendency towards individual performance in which their voices came to be representative for the German people. The abuses perpetrated by the Nazi party were still too recent to be ignored and the takeover of the folksong tradition had been too extensive for its recovery to be straightforward. The response of many artists to this problem was to find legitimate sources in different or in earlier traditions. Michael Brocken highlights this attempt to rediscover an untainted tradition in his book *The British Folk Revival* saying:

A tradition can be perceived to be older than the immediate past; hence the endorsement of tradition always implies a rejection of that immediate past in the interests of something uncontaminated, original.⁴⁴⁰

⁴³⁹ Tom Kannmacher, 'Das Deutsche Volkslied in der Folksong- und Liedermacherszene seit 1970', *Jahrbuch für Volksliedforschung* XXII (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1978), pp. 33-42. Here p. 33.

⁴⁴⁰ *The British Folk Revival, 1944-2002* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2003), p. 43.



This issue is therefore not exclusive to Germany but the Nazi legacy makes this principle all the more pertinent.

In one of the most important books on the subject, *Auf der Suche nach der verlorenen Tradition*, the author Florian Steinbiß highlights the necessity of linking into an ‘other’ tradition in order to deliberately create something which could be accepted as being German:

Man ging davon aus, dass es etwas Vergleichbares auch bei uns gegeben haben müsste. Also wurde versucht, Anknüpfungspunkte an eine unterbrochene oder „verlorene“ Tradition zu finden. Aus Texten und Melodien von alten Liederbüchern und lebendigen Beispielen aus Nachbarländern wurde eine neue „Deutsche Folklore“ geschaffen.⁴⁴¹

Again, in a similar way to the 18th century ballad collectors, there had to be a strategic search to find a source for future songs which could ‘become’ German or become accepted as German. The major impetus for the German folksong revival was essentially to find a German chanson and to find a way of allowing the German people to sing again, without fear of emotional manipulation.⁴⁴²

3.3 Precursors of the Revival

The most important precursors of the German folksong revival were Peter Rohland and the twins, Hein and Oss Kröher. The Kröhers were deeply rooted in the German *Jungenschaften* and focused mainly on excavating old songs in the hope of linking into an

⁴⁴¹ Steinbiß, Florian, *Deutsch-Folk: Auf der Suche nach der verlorenen Tradition (Die Wiederkehr des Volksliedes)* (Frankfurt: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1984), pp. 10-11.

⁴⁴² The focus in particular on the chanson was a result of the personal interests of many of the founding fathers of the revival, rather than an awareness of something intrinsic in the chanson per se.



earlier unblemished tradition. For example, the oppositional soldier song ‘Die große Hungersnot’ which they sang at Burg Waldeck in 1967 was widespread in Silesia and Saxony during the 19th century, although it is not clear to which war it refers. In this way, the complaint of the soldiers against the treatment by the Kaiser comes to be the voice of mistreated armies across the world, rather than expressing an explicitly national sentiment. The Kröherers were traditionalists in the Burg Waldeck scene and did not want to be seen as Liedermacher, but rather as *Volkssänger*, stressing their connections to the folk and oral traditions. Whereas most of the other singers wrote their own songs, the brothers had no interest in this but instead wanted to breathe new life back into old songs and make them contemporary and relevant. The cassette series *Liedermacher in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, describes how they attempted to re-engage with an earlier tradition:

Sie griffen die Tradition frühzeitig wieder auf und sonderten mit kritischem Verstand das Kompromittierte und unbrauchbar Gewordene von dem, was in seiner Substanz nicht beschädigt worden war.⁴⁴³

Whereas many of the other singers wanted to use a ‘foreign’, i.e. non-German folk or musical tradition as their motivation, the Kröherers, along with Peter Rohland, were some of the few who tried to revive the native German folksong, complicated by the fact that their songs stemmed often from the same sources from which the Nazis drew their songs.

The Kröherers had an established reputation as being anti-Nazi and anti-fascist. They belonged to the anti-fascist grouping founded by Eberhard Koebl in November 1929, which

⁴⁴³ An excellent, although difficult to find, source for this information is the cassette series *Liedermacher in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, published with accompanying transcriptions and song texts by Inter Nationes Kultureller Tonbanddienst in 1978. This quotation is included in the accompanying transcription pamphlet to cassette 2: *Auf der Suche nach der verschütteten Tradition: Peter Rohland und die Gebrüder Kröher*, pp. 2-3.



came to be known as dj.1.11.⁴⁴⁴ Having been steeped in this tradition as young men (they were born in 1927), they were open to outside influences from the *Arbeiterbewegung* and from internationalism. Hence they adopted the ballad ‘Die Moorsoldaten’ which was written in 1933 in the concentration camp at Börgermoor where primarily political opponents of the Nazi regime were imprisoned.⁴⁴⁵ This song reached a widespread audience as well when Pete Seeger sang it in the 1960s at the legendary Folk Festival in Newport, Rhode Island. In terms of nationhood, the song is primarily of importance for its reclaiming of the word *Heimat*. The hope of the Peat Bog Soldiers is that eventually they will be released and will be able to return home:

Doch für uns gibt es kein Klagen.
Ewig kann nicht Winter sein.
Einmal werden wir froh sagen:
Heimat, du bist wieder mein.⁴⁴⁶

The following quotation from Oss Kröher exemplifies the process of seeking and finding songs in order to bring them to a thinking and critical audience:

Unsere Mutter hat uns erzählt von der Heckler-Zeit, von der 48er, 49er Jahren bei uns in der Pfalz und drüben im Badischen, aber es war nichts da. Aber dadurch, daß wir von Brecht und Eisler die ersten Impulse bekommen hatten zu den Liedern der Arbeiterbewegung, dann auch zu der internationalen sozialistischen Bewegung, konnten wir davon ausgehen und konnten, als wir dann Steinitz entdeckt hatten mit seinen Forschungen über die demokratischen Volkslieder Deutschlands, dann konnten wir weitermachen und konnten diese Lieder, die bisher ja nur in Liederbüchern und in wissenschaftlichen Arbeiten waren, die konnten wir dann auch singen, arrangieren und bekanntmachen.⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴⁴ The name stems from the date the group was founded, on the 1st November 1929. Hence ‘Deutsche Jungenschaft vom 1. 11. 1929’ abbreviated to dj.1.11.

⁴⁴⁵ With words by Johann Esser and Wolfgang Langhoff and music by Rudi Goguel, the song came to Hanns Eisler’s attention in 1935 and is now taught in schools as an example of the horrors endured by KZ prisoners and the punishment meted out upon its opponents by the Nazi party.

⁴⁴⁶ For the text of the whole song see Appendices No. 2. It is also quoted in Inge Lammel, *Das Arbeiterlied* (Leipzig: Reclam, 1975), pp. 206-07.

⁴⁴⁷ Accompanying transcription of *Liedermacher in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, 2, pp. 8-9.



The story of the folk revival is very much one of artists creating an impulse for other singers and writers to encourage them to discover other songs, or to write their own. It is telling that the main motivators are democratic songs, songs linked in various ways with struggles for freedom and with communism and socialism, themes far removed from the narrowly nationalistic National Socialist use of the folk tradition.

The folk revivals are an excellent example of the attempt to rediscover and reshape a sense of national identity. While Scotland has been held up as a marker of positive national identity, it is worth noting at this stage that in a similar way to Germany, Scotland experienced a loss of nationhood and national pride and attempted to compensate for this by preserving and valuing their oral and folk traditions. In Scotland this began in 1603 when the Royal court moved to England under James I and culminated in the Act of Union of 1707, therefore the Scots had several centuries to realise the importance of their traditions, preserve them and to become the envy of other nations. As Ailie Munro describes:

The exceptional richness of collection and publication is connected with the sense of loss of nationhood experienced by many Scots after the unions with England. It was felt that preserving their native traditional music in this way would also help to preserve their national identity.⁴⁴⁸

Similarly Tom Crawford stressed the importance of the folk revivals in creating and preserving national identity:

Each resurgence of the creative spirit in Scotland since 1707 has been associated with renewed interest in popular culture, and with something of a folk revival: each has felt the need to tap the popular tradition, which is, perhaps, the most abidingly *national* part of our culture.⁴⁴⁹

⁴⁴⁸ *The Democratic Muse*, p. 13.

⁴⁴⁹ *Alias MacAlias*, pp. 3-4.



It was in this way that it became possible for the Germans to begin to tap into a more healthy national part of German culture, for the folk revival brought to light many kinds of songs that stood in opposition to the Nazi party. The Kröherers prepared the way for the development of the socially-critical song, which gained such impetus during the revival. International influences were also extremely strong. Many of the artists travelled extensively throughout Europe and Asia and brought their experiences back to their 'new Germany'. The extent to which the international dimension contributes to the national and vice versa is one of the most interesting tensions in the period. However, despite this, during the 1950s the Kröherers were described as:

so etwas wie Rufer in der Wüste... Ihre Vorstellungen von einer Liedkultur, in der sich das Beste aus der nationalen Tradition mit den neuentdeckten internationalen Einflüssen verbinden sollte, wurden von niemandem ernstgenommen⁴⁵⁰

Although the Kröherers were initially seen as being nostalgic, retrospective, eccentric and somewhat outmoded, they were in fact, before their time and, along with Peter Rohland, they created the circumstances that led to the festival on the Burg Waldeck from 1964-69.

Peter Rohland was perhaps the unsung hero of the German folksong revival, or paradoxically, the tragic hero, who contributed hugely to the rediscovery of German folksongs before his early death in 1966. Like many of the Liedermacher, Rohland was very influenced by the 15th century chansonnier and poet, François Villon, and he translated many of his ballads into German and set them to music. Rohland focused on finding an older tradition of oppositional songs that could be used in the service of the modern day, songs which captured something universal in their themes and protests. Thus he unearthed many protest songs from the 1848 revolution and from the German democratic tradition,

⁴⁵⁰ *Liedermacher 2*, p. 16.



researched Yiddish songs in depth and collected what he called 'Landstreicherballaden' (vagabond ballads) on his travels along the *Landstraßen*. As a folksong researcher, Rohland was the first to discover Wolfgang Steinitz's *Deutsche Volkslieder demokratischen Charakters aus sechs Jahrhunderten* which was completed in 1962 and realise its untapped potential for the folk revival.⁴⁵² Steinitz clarified what he meant by democratic folksongs saying:

Unter demokratischen Volkslieder verstehe ich... Lieder des werktätigen Volkes, die den sozialen und politischen Interessen der durch Feudalismus, Kapitalismus und Militarismus unterdrückten Werktätigen eine klaren Ausdruck geben. Dabei kann der Grad der Bewusstheit der eigenen Interessen sehr verschieden sein und von der Klage über die elende Lage bis zur flammenden Anklage der Unterdrücker und zum Fanal des Aufstandes reichen.⁴⁵³

This type of song found a willing audience in the left-wing, anti-fascist Liedermacher. It is a mark of the continuation of the German tradition, that songs, which could be seen as historical documents, were used as weapons of contemporary protest.⁴⁵⁴

In the *Liedermacher* cassette series, the author Max Nyffeler speaks of the impact of the collection on what he calls Germany's 'verschüttete Tradition':

Mit seinen Untersuchungen öffnete der Wissenschaftler Steinitz vielen Liedermachern...den Blick auf jene Traditionslinien, die von Schul- und Liederbüchern vorher nur ungenügend oder überhaupt nicht berücksichtigt worden waren: auf die Lieder mit sozialkritischen und politischen Aussagen, die in den untersten Bevölkerungsschichten entstanden.⁴⁵⁵

⁴⁵² Wolfgang Steinitz's *Deutsche Volkslieder demokratischen Charakters aus sechs Jahrhunderten* (2 vols) (Berlin: Akademie, 1954/1962).

⁴⁵³ *Deutsche Volkslieder demokratischen Charakters aus sechs Jahrhunderten*. Vol. 1. (Berlin, Akademie-Verlag, 1954). p. XXII.

⁴⁵⁴ Wolfgang Steinitz worked mainly in East Berlin during the DDR era and collected many songs of opposition which are collected in the Arbeiterliedarchiv in Berlin.

⁴⁵⁵ *Liedermacher* 2, p. 9.



Steinitz's collection alongside Erk & Böhme's 1893/4 *Deutsche Liederhort* had a major impact on the Liedermacher in the revival period.⁴⁵⁷ This also encouraged the publication of many smaller publications such as the Cologne-based *Die Mundorgel* (founded 1953) and the *Liederbuch* series from the *Student für Europa / Student für Berlin* collective all of which are still being reprinted at the start of the 21st century.⁴⁵⁸ Other important collections included Rolf Ulrich Kaiser's *Songbuch* (1967)⁴⁵⁹ and the Kröher's 1969 collection *Rotgraue Raben: Vom Volkslied zum Folksong*.⁴⁶⁰ Each of these books was used to spread the songs and make them more accessible to a wider audience. Scotland is also interesting in this regard, for when Rohland was discovering old German folk songs in dusty archives, Alan Lomax, the American folksong collector, observed the same phenomenon during his field trips throughout Scotland. He claimed, 'the Scots have the liveliest folk tradition of the British Isles, but, paradoxically, it is the most bookish.'⁴⁶¹

Rohland was one of the first to attempt to discover Yiddish songs and it was these songs that brought him most recognition in his lifetime.⁴⁶² While these cannot be dealt with in this thesis, it is relevant that, although his performances of these songs were generally

⁴⁵⁷ Erk, L. & F. M. Böhme, *Deutscher Liederhort: Auswahl der vorzueglicheren deutschen Volkslieder, nach Wort und Weise aus der Vorzeit und Gegenwart* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Haertel, 1893/4).

⁴⁵⁸ *Die Mundorgel: ein Liederbuch für Fahrt und Lager* (Cologne: CVJM, 1953). The impact of the folk revival is evident in the fact that at the start of the 1970s, 50% of all children in Germany (between the ages of 10-15) owned a *mundorgel* songbook. The legacy of the revival is also clear as reprints and new additions of these smaller books continue to be published in the 21st century. Source: <http://www.mundorgel-verlag.de/mundorgel/index.htm>. Date of access 241006.

⁴⁵⁹ Rolf Ulrich Kaiser, *Songbuch* (Ahrensburg: Damokles, 1967).

⁴⁶⁰ *Rotgraue Raben: Vom Volkslied zum Folksong* (Heidenheim: Südmarkverlag Fritsch, 1969).

⁴⁶¹ Alan Lomax, Sleeve-notes for *World Library of Folk and Primitive Music*, Vol. VI, (Scotland), Columbia Masterworks LP KL-209. This is somewhat ironic as Scotland has such a vibrant oral tradition and surviving tradition bearers. However, even singers like Jeannie Robertson learned parts of their repertoire from singers and parts from old song books. The emergence of Jeannie Robertson in 1953 created great interest in the oral traditions of Scotland that had been preserved within the travelling communities.

⁴⁶² Rohland performed these songs with Hanno Botsch in Berlin in 1963 to great acclaim and widespread acceptance from the Jewish community.



greeted very positively, some people felt that as a German, Rohland should not be allowed to sing songs in Yiddish or attempt to speak for the Jewish remnant in Germany. When he sang the Jewish partisan song ‘Shtil, die nacht ist oysgeshternt’ which was written by the Jewish poet and resistance fighter Hirsh Glick in 1943 to commemorate the uprising in the Vilno ghetto,⁴⁶³ he received criticism from some elements of the Jewish community. They argued that Glick would not have wanted a German to sing his song and that after the Holocaust Rohland’s German national identity had limits which should preclude him from giving voice to the Jewish community. It was felt that he had overstepped ‘eine unsichtbare Grenze [...] die ihm als Deutschen gesetzt sei.’⁴⁶⁴ Despite this specific reaction from some parts of the Jewish community, it was felt that Rohland had broken through the post-war silence over the Nazis’ persecution of Jews and made some kind of positive gesture of reconciliation.⁴⁶⁵

Rohland’s international influences took him to Greece, to Israel and then to Paris, to the Left bank of the Seine, where he was so inspired by the French chanson that he returned to Germany aiming to set up a festival to further the renaissance of the chanson in Germany. However, his chanson programme ‘Vertäut am Abendstern’ was seen as ‘an example of the backward-orientated, escapist mentality that was widespread in the 1950s youth movement and which constituted their alternative world.’⁴⁶⁶ This alternative worldview did not ring true with the generation of young people who were trying to come to terms with the legacy

⁴⁶³ This song, ‘Shtil, di nakht iz oysgeshternt’ is also known as the ‘Partisanerlid’ and recounts the heroic deeds of Vitke Kempner, the female resistance fighter who participated in blowing up a train carrying 200 German soldiers, the first successful diversionary sabotage act of the Jewish partisans of Vilna.

⁴⁶⁴ Schalom Ben Chorim, in *Yedioth Ahronot* (Tel Aviv), 26th February 1965.

⁴⁶⁵ For more information see Rita Ottens, “Der Klezmer als ideologischer Arbeiter,” in Gisela Probst-Effah, *Lieder gegen “das Dunkel in den Köpfen.” Untersuchungen zur Folkbewegung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Essen: Die Blaue Eule, 1995).

⁴⁶⁶ Eckehard Holler, ‘The Waldeck Festivals from 1964-1969’, unpublished chapter in *East and West German Political song since the 1960s*, edited by David Robb, publication pending (Columbia: Camden House, 2007), unpaginated.



and guilt of Nazism. Having realised this, Rohland then developed this work to include oppositional revolutionary songs, songs of repressed minorities and, most strikingly, songs from the anti-Nazi resistance. It was these songs that were central to his programme 'Der Rebbe singt', which brought him his major breakthrough in 1963.

Before looking in detail at the festivals on the Burg Waldeck, it is worth setting in context the desire for there to be a German song which could convey some sense of national identity for Germany once again. Although later discredited as a serious political figure, in 1962 at the *Bundessängerfest* in Essen, Bundespräsident Heinrich Lübke made the following statement:

Es scheint mir bezeichnend für die innere Verfassung unseres Volkes zu sein, daß es bei uns noch nicht wieder zu einem neuen vaterländischen Lied gekommen ist... Die Teilung unseres Vaterlandes und die Zerreiung unseres Volkes müten uns eigentlich dazu drngen, immer und immer wieder unsere Liebe zum ganzen Deutschland auch im Lied Ausdruck zu geben.⁴⁶⁷

Within this quotation there is a specific call to a reunited Germany, but there is also the awareness that Germany is lacking because it does not have a strong native song tradition which can express, as Lübke puts it, 'our love for the entirety of Germany.' There existed, of course, the fear of attempting to create any kind of song that could be perceived as being 'vaterländisch' but there was an awareness at the IEST (Internationale Essener Song Tage) and at Burg Waldeck that if a more creative way could be found to express a sense of Germany, then this confidence could be used for good. Picking up on Lübke's quotation in 1966 in *Song* magazine, the editor queries the feelings struggling to find expression and concludes:

⁴⁶⁷ Kaiser, *Songbuch*, p. 4.



Nicht die Liebe zu ganz Deutschland ist es, die da nach Ausdruck sucht, sondern das Unbehagen an den politische und soziale Zuständen in der Bundesrepublik und anderswo.⁴⁶⁸

It is very clear later in this chapter, that despite the large number of songs dealing with Germany and the Nazi legacy, there are few songs dealing with the issue of uniting Germany once again and the most widespread theme is in fact the political and social conditions prevalent in Germany at the time.

It has already been mentioned that the desire to create a German chanson was central to the initial stages of the folk revival. Other outside influences would also become hugely significant. The folk revivals occurring in the USA,⁴⁶⁹ in Britain⁴⁷⁰ and in Scotland, all played their part in inspiring the German folk revival.⁴⁷¹ With the Scottish folk revival well underway in the early 1950s, the People's Festival Ceilidhs starting in 1951 and the establishment of the School of Scottish Studies in Edinburgh were an indication of the seriousness with which the revival was regarded.⁴⁷² In Germany the impetus for the festivals on the Burg Waldeck was already present in disparate form in the early 1960s, with events like the 1961 *Bauhaus der Folklore*, which aimed to bring young people together from all across Europe to encourage mutual understanding and also with the existence of the scattered communities of different youth organisations following in the tradition of the dj.1.11. In the *Baslerturm* in Karlsruhe-Durlach the *Deutsche Jungenschaft*

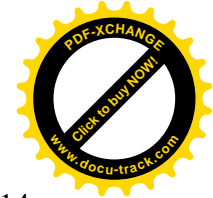
⁴⁶⁸ *Liedermacher* 1. Transcription p. 13.

⁴⁶⁹ The American folk music revival took place in the 1950s and was followed by a roots revival which continued throughout the 1960s and '70s. The roots revival paralleled the folk revivals in England, Scotland and Germany because it was characterised by newly-composed songs with socially and politically aware content.

⁴⁷⁰ The British folk revival, (which was essentially English) with the inspiration of Cecil Sharp was said to start in 1903 and the folk dance revival in 1899. What is known as the second English folk revival started in the late 1940s but came to prominence during the early 1950s.

⁴⁷¹ The focus will obviously be primarily on the Scottish influence.

⁴⁷² The Festival Ceilidhs died out by 1955 primarily because they were regarded with suspicion because of their alleged Communist tendencies.



e.V. had one of their many groups where it was possible to hear Wolf Biermann recordings which had been smuggled in from the East, and where Peter Rohland performed his Yiddish songs during his 1963 tour. Also in Karlsruhe, Peter Bertsch ('Der Fuchs') ran a festival in 1963 which featured the new breed of German political songwriters. There was enough interest in the media for the SDR to propose running a series of youth radio shows featuring Liedermacher. The first recording, in December 1963 in Pforzheim featured Rohland, the Kröhers and Christoph Stählin amongst others, who would become central to the revival.

The *Ostermarschbewegung* was already gaining impetus during the early 1960s following the first march in Britain in 1958 from London to Aldermaston,⁴⁷³ which increased the level of political songs that were becoming current. Initially songs appeared in translation from the French and the English and gradually as the marches gained momentum, songs were written in German and reached a wider public.⁴⁷⁴ Many of these songs dealt with broader issues than Germany, or its troubled nationality, focusing on the campaign for nuclear disarmament, on the struggles of other countries against fascism in its many forms and other significant environmental issues, and few were ballads or possessing of ballad characteristics.

⁴⁷³ Around 10,000 CND demonstrators joined the march from the capital to Aldermaston, the centre of the nuclear research industry. This then sparked similar demonstrations throughout Western Europe.

⁴⁷⁴ The 1961 EP *Ça ira* featured Dieter Süverkrüp singing songs of the French Revolution translated from the French by Gerhard Semmer. Later albums such as the 1963 *Ostersongs* featured Süverkrüp, Fasia (Jansen) and the Conrads and Hanns Dieter Hüsch's first EP *Carmina Urana: Vier Gesänge gegen die Bombe* (also 1963) included German songs.



3.4 Burg Waldeck

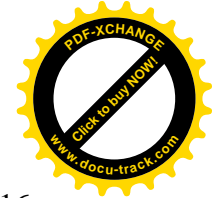
Thirteen years after Scotland had held its first People's Festival Ceilidhs, the first festival of the German folk revival took place. The first festival on the Burg Waldeck in 1964 only numbered around 350 people, yet it was highly significant for the further development of the German folk revival. It was titled 'Chanson Folklore International: Junge Europäer singen' and deliberately aimed to have an international flavour. However, underpinning this was the question as to the location of or existence of Germany's contribution to the folksong movement. The festival organiser Diethard Kerbs expressed it as follows in terms that have become familiar:

[wir] fanden, daß eine bestimmte Art von Musik, für die wir eine ganz besondere Vorliebe haben, in Deutschland längst noch nicht genug beachtet und gepflegt wird. Wir meinen das Chanson, den Bänkelsang, die unverkitschte Volksmusik. Wir haben uns gefragt, warum wir in unseren Breiten keinen Yves Montand oder Georges Brassens, keinen Pete Seeger und keine Joan Bæz haben. Wir möchten gerne herausfinden, welche Möglichkeiten das Chanson bei uns hat oder haben könnte.⁴⁷⁵

The aim was to further a renaissance of the German chanson, which should be differentiated from German *Schlager*, as well as from opera and classical singing, and should definitely not incorporate the maligned communal singing. It also aimed to rescue folk music from being seen as kitsch and irrelevant to modern life and issues.⁴⁷⁶ Artists of the new Liedermacher school were hailed as a great new phenomenon although they were very disparate in their approaches and interests. Dieter Süverkrüp, who was one of the few who came firmly from Communist stock, sang from his translations of French revolutionary songs, and satirised political naivety, while the Easter March activist Fasia

⁴⁷⁵ Quoted in *Rotgraue Raben*, p. 65.

⁴⁷⁶ This desire was also the case in Scotland where folk music was haunted by the presence of a 'mawkish, kitsch element' creating what Tom Nairn calls 'cultural sub-nationalism'. See *The Red Paper on Scotland*, ed. by Gordon Brown, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Students' Publication Board, 1975), p 42 and 25.



Jansen attacked the laissez-faire attitude to the atomic bomb at large in the populace. It was, however, as the mouthpiece of Wolf Biermann's anti-militaristic ballad 'Ballade vom Briefträger William L. Moore aus Baltimore' that she gained most renown. Franz Josef Degenhardt performed his own songs including 'August der Schäfer' and 'Rumpelstilzchen', which established him as 'der ungekrönte König' of Burg Waldeck.⁴⁷⁷ Walter Mossmann sang his own chansons which then entered the oral tradition, becoming folksongs. Peter Rohland was present, singing German songs of the 1848 revolution along with his Yiddish songs, while Christoph Stählin exemplified the diversity of the festival playing songs from Elizabethan England and the German baroque period.

1965 saw the second festival on the Burg Waldeck which was dominated by the question of what actually constitutes a chanson. While Diethard Kerbs' opening speech defining a chanson as 'ein Lied, das nicht im Chor gesungen werden kann'⁴⁷⁸ revealed that the fear of the brainwashing of communal singing was still present, it did not clarify what was understood by 'chanson'. Numbers had more than doubled to 800 people, and the major artists had become more established. Degenhardt's 'Spiel nicht mit den Schmuddelkindern' provided the journalists with an easy nickname for the Liedermacher. The term 'Schmuddelkinder' entered the popular language as a quick reference for the singers. Momentum built during the festival with the workshop based on Biermann's new songs which had been smuggled into West Germany, as Biermann had been banned from travelling or performing. The other turning point in the festival was Peter Rohland's presentation of songs from the 1848 revolution.

⁴⁷⁷ *East and West German Political song since the 1960s* (unpaginated).

⁴⁷⁸ *Ibid.*



Rohland commented on the German folksong in particular saying:

Wir müssen diesen Begriff endlich berichtigen. Deutsche Volkslieder haben weder mit "Volksseele" noch mit "ewigen Werten" etwas zu tun. Es sind einfach Lieder, die den ganzen Aspekt menschlichen Lebens umfassen.⁴⁷⁹

It was this attempt to rescue or revive the German folksong that provided the groundwork for the revival. In stressing the universal human aspect of folksong, and by exposing people to democratic rebel or revolutionary songs, Rohland was able to begin to break through the pall that hung over the tradition. It is telling that two of the songs he revived, 'Das Bürgerlied' and 'O König von Preußen' had entered the repertoires of almost every folk singer by the high point of the revival in the 1970s.⁴⁸⁰ As Rohland presented the songs in a workshop format, he was able to explain the German democratic tradition from which the songs came, and hence, actively to re-engage his listeners with an earlier, unsullied tradition. Holler explains this as presenting 'a new, realistic concept for the German folk song which should replace the old romantic concept with its nationalistic overtones.'⁴⁸¹ This aim could not be reached through the work of one artist, or the relevance of one set of songs. Rather, the multiplicity and variety of the songs, old and new, anonymous and authored, began to contribute to the recovery of the folksong.

The 1966 festival was the high point. Despite taking place in the wake of the untimely death of Peter Rohland, the issue that he had been campaigning to see raised came to be central. The song which provides the title of this chapter, Degenhardt's 'Die alten Lieder' caught intellectual and journalistic attention with the question of the Nazi destruction of the

⁴⁷⁹ The music academic Gisela Probst-Effah has researched this thoroughly in her book *Lieder gegen „das Dunkel in den Köpfen“ Untersuchungen zur Folkbewegung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Essen: Die Blaue Eule, 1995) p. 18.

⁴⁸⁰ Peter Rohland, quoted in *Lieder gegen „das Dunkel in den Köpfen“* p. 18.

⁴⁸¹ *East and West German Political song since the 1960s* (unpaginated).



folksong being addressed seriously for the first time.⁴⁸² The numbers had grown to 3000, with the number of artists increasing also. Hannes Wader arrived on the scene, influenced by American folksong as much as by French chanson. The first stirrings of the protest movement against the war in Vietnam and many other social issues were present in the style of Bob Dylan, with the American outsider influence becoming very obvious. Walter Mossmann was touted in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* as ‘die Entdeckung’, while Ann Thönnissen wrote in the magazine *TWEN*:

Was Moßmann bringt, ist von intellektueller Schärfe, widerhakig, schmerzhaft, böseartig, plattenreif. Ich bin beeindruckt, wittre Morgenluft, höre: Ist das endlich das neue deutsche Lied?⁴⁸³

Thus there was still a feeling of looking for the ‘new German song’ rather than adopting the styles and traditions of other countries.

By 1967 events had begun to overtake the questioning of the German national tradition. The awareness of the horrors being perpetrated in Vietnam, the work of revolutionary Che Guevara⁴⁸⁴ and the Grand Coalition of the CDU and the SPD rendered opposition in the German political system useless, created the setting for a politically-charged festival on ‘Das engagierte Lied’. The first representatives from the emergent student movement that would play such a role in 1968 were already present in 1967, along with official representation from the DDR, who had to answer to the continuing ban against Wolf Biermann and the suppression of the Liedermacher scene in the DDR.⁴⁸⁵ The first alternatives to the Burg Waldeck festival also appeared in the form of the International

⁴⁸² The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* dedicated a whole page to the festival, claiming to have discovered ‘a new generation’ which they set in a historical context alongside other great German generations.

⁴⁸³ See http://www.walter-mossmann.de/WM_Chronologie/wm_chronologie.html. Date of access 241006.

⁴⁸⁴ This led to Guevara’s murder on 9th October 1967.

⁴⁸⁵ The official representation included Brecht singer Hermann Hähnel with Inge Lammel and Erna Berger from the Institut für Arbeiterlieder of the Akademie der Künste in East Berlin.



Folklore Fest in Osnabrück. Artists were all asked to answer questions as to the relevance and efficacy of the political song. None of these questions referred to the issue of Germany's relation to its own tradition or the strength of its emerging new scene.⁴⁸⁶ At the end of the fourth Burg Waldeck festival, the political song had gained ground but it was still possible to conclude, with Brednich:

Trotz dieser wohlgemeinten Bemühungen um einen Neuansatz scheint es den Folksong deutscher Prägung noch nicht zu geben, und es bleibt abzuwarten, ob ihn die Folklore-Welle hervorbringen wird⁴⁸⁷

The scepticism is apparent in this quotation, as is the feeling that the German folk revival had still not reached fruition or maturity.

The penultimate festival in 1968, entitled 'Lied 68' took place amongst mass demonstrations and political upheaval. The previous year had seen the death of student Benno Ohnesorg⁴⁸⁸ at the protests in Berlin, the assassination of Che Guevara in Bolivia and the use of napalm against civilians in Vietnam. April 1968 saw the assassination of Martin Luther King, the assassination attempt on Rudi Dutschke and the violent Easter riots against the Springer Press. May 1968 saw the Paris student revolt and the French general strike which took place immediately before the festival. The artists therefore faced their sharpest critique yet against the role of song in a time of such political turmoil. The mantra 'Stellt die Gitarren in die Ecke und diskutiert' governed the festival, with many artists voluntarily leaving the stage to make way for political discussions. It is ironic that some of

⁴⁸⁶ The artists were asked to answer the following four questions: Does the political song have a relevance over and above its current success? How does artistic quality relate to directness of message and its ability to convince? Can the political song have an effect on its social and political environment? Do success and integration in the culture industry corrupt the function of the political song?

⁴⁸⁷ Rolf Wilhelm Brednich 'Noch kein Folksong deutscher Prägung', *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 63, 1967, p. 67.

⁴⁸⁸ The student protester Benno Ohnesorg was killed on 2nd June 1967 at a demonstration in Berlin against the Shah of Iran (a supporter of American foreign policies).



the songs that the audience did not want to hear, were actually highly political and topical. For example, Wolf Biermann provided an illegal voice of protest as he sang his ballad 'Drei Kugeln auf Rudi Dutschke' down the telephone to Walter Mossmann, who only just managed to convey it to the festival attendees before leaving the stage to make room for a 'teach-in'. Likewise, Degenhardt's songs explicitly addressed the war in Vietnam and the attempt on Rudi Dutschke, yet were still considered not active enough. The 'Waldeck Festival Action Group' was formed, criticising the unpolitical nature of the festival, questioning its lack of political relevance and calling for political action rather than singing.

The presence of American folk singers at the festival also changed the atmosphere, removing the focus once and for all from the French chanson and situating it firmly in the realms of the protest song.⁴⁸⁹ Again, it showed the necessity for an outside force to be used to catalyse the German tradition, which was not yet strong enough to hold its own. Although Burg Waldeck was political and often politicised, 1968 effectively signalled the end of the festival. It took place in 1969 under new management but moved more in the direction of underground rock and alternative cultures which sidelined the Liedermacher. Although some of the artists were present, they played no role and did not perform. The festival had become a 'Teil internationalen Widerstandes', which did to some extent mitigate the negative legacy of the Nazi period as the German students were able to prove that they would stand up against other fascist regimes (or regimes they perceived as fascist). Hannes Wader perhaps summed it up best when he described the role of the Burg Waldeck festivals as 'im Grund genommen war die Waldeck ein Katalysator.'⁴⁹⁰

⁴⁸⁹ American singers Phil Ochs, Guy Carawan, and African-America singer Odetta (born Odetta Holmes) were present at the festival.

⁴⁹⁰ *Auf der Suche*, p. 39.



Although Waldeck did not achieve the desired emergence of the German chanson the emergence of the Liedermacher became a movement which took on its own momentum which was to continue into the 1970s. The German folksong likewise had not become as widespread as had been hoped by some of the founders. Carsten Linde, who founded the Irish Folk Festival in Germany in 1974 described this as follows:

Das nationale Volkslied spielt nicht die Rolle wie neue Lieder, die Ausdruck gaben von Hoffnung, von Vorstellungen, wie man leben wollte und was man in dieser Gesellschaft erleidet. Deshalb war Funkstille in der Aufbereitung des deutschen Volksliedes.⁴⁹¹

Even if the German folksong had been overshadowed by the emergence of the *Liedermacherszene*, the commercialisation of the scene and the existence of recorded examples of the songs meant that many songs which had previously been unheard, were now freely available to those interested in the area.

The 1970s saw the increasing popularity of the new German folksong with a wave of new festivals flourishing across Germany ranging from the apolitical Ingelheim festival, the Ludwigshafen folk festival (1973), the Tübingen folk festival (1975) and the Open-Ohr-Festival in Mainz (1975). Influences from America brought the word 'Folk' into common usage and integrated the word *Folksong* or *Deutschfolk* into the German language. Ireland and Scotland were particularly strong influences with the Celtic music proving especially popular in Germany. Some German performers even started life as Irish traditional folksingers before discovering their own heritage afresh.⁴⁹² Irish and Scottish music were

⁴⁹¹ Ibid.

⁴⁹² This was the case with Fiedel Michel.



seen as being interlinked; as Hamish Henderson explained, it is a ‘closely-related but non-identical twin tradition.’⁴⁹³

After the turbulence of the late 1960s, different social issues came to the fore. The German folksong took on a very active role as an accompaniment to demonstrations and protests. The most famous and controversial example of this was the protest at Wyhl on the Rhine in the mid 1970s, where the regional government of Baden Württemberg planned to build an atomic energy plant. The variety of the forms of protest and not least the successful prevention of the building of the atomic reactor made Wyhl the cradle of the anti-nuclear movement in Germany. Paralleling the burgeoning CND movement across the UK, protests against the building of nuclear power plants sparked a series of demonstrations and provided the circumstances for some particularly good songs and in particular, allowed for the specific use of the narrative ballad. These will be considered in more detail in the International Solidarity section of this chapter.

Wyhl was also a peculiarity because it became a supranational protest with a non-national language; the Alemannic dialect of the ‘Dreyeckland’ was used as a language of ‘the people’ against the language of ‘the empowered’ while at the same time enabling an alliance across national boundaries. The overriding importance of the issue meant that national differences became irrelevant and alliances were built across national divides. Also intriguingly at Wyhl and in a way that never was repeated, there was a confluence or at least a peaceful co-existence of the traditional *Volkskultur* of the area and the contemporary German folk revival song. In Scotland, the use of Glasgow patois in the

⁴⁹³ Introduction to Ulster Scot Freddy Anderson’s collection of poems and ballads *At Glasgow Cross and Other Poems* (Glasgow: Clydeside Press, 1987).



Glasgow schools and the Holy Loch protests was essential to the Scottish folk revival. In an interview with Josh McRae, Morris Blythman explains that the use of local Glasgow songs ‘made us realise the Glasgow patois was a weapon to be used.’⁴⁹⁴ In his book *Song and Democratic Culture in Britain*, Ian Watson talks in 1983 about the impact of the regional and its relation to the working class, industrial culture:

In a sense, Glasgow is a symbol for the renaissance of industrial folk song, for the past few years have seen the re-emergence of a vital regional culture in all shapes and sizes, and a regional culture closely linked to a working class culture.⁴⁹⁵

This correlation of regional identities and accents proved to be a feature of both the Scottish and the German folk revivals.⁴⁹⁶

During the 1970s a vast variety of new folk groups were formed, while the established Liedermacher from the 1960s continued to produce studio and live albums and perform on tours across Germany and beyond. Names such as Zupfgeigenhansel, Elster Silberflug, Fiedel Michel, Tom Kannmacher and Liederjan became familiar in certain circles. Each combined his own musical influences with his desire to breathe new life into songs which had been taken largely from archive sources.⁴⁹⁷ The desire to regain the German folksong, to revive and to write songs which would become new songs of the German people, was widespread. Combined tours such as the ‘Volkslied 76’ brought publicity to the folksong cause. The artists use of the term ‘tradition’ was often cautious and loaded with caveats,

⁴⁹⁴ The interview took place on 11th February 1977 and is quoted in *The Democratic Muse*, p. 31.

⁴⁹⁵ Ian Watson, *Song and Democratic Culture in Britain, An Approach to Popular Culture in Social Movements* (London: Croom Helm, 1983), p. 10.

⁴⁹⁶ In Scotland, the regional identity was also linked more closely with the class issue prevalent in British society. Both class and national identity interrelate in the revival, although the class issue may be slightly more pertinent. Ironically however, many of the main protagonists of the revival were from a middle class background.

⁴⁹⁷ Some songs were still found in the living oral tradition, for example Liederjan’s visits to *Zimmergesellenstammtischen* and Fiedel Michel’s songs from the North *Spielmannstradition*, but material still largely came from archives and from books on Scottish, Irish and American traditions.



yet showed a determination that Germany should have a way of continuing its folk tradition and celebrating it. Florian Steinbiß quotes from the folk group Moin saying:

Um diese Volksmusik in traditioneller Art wieder lebensfähig, d.h. für Musiker und Zuhörer erlebbar zu machen, versuchen wir an die Tradition, sofern diese noch existiert oder überliefert ist, anzuknüpfen. Jedoch wollen wir diese Musik nicht einfach restaurieren, sondern sie, wo es uns notwendig erscheint, kritisieren, sie weiterentwickeln, wo es möglich ist, und schließlich eine Grundlage für neue Volksmusik schaffen, d.h. Lieder der Gegenwart finden, die die Tradition des Volksliedes in Deutschland fortsetzen.⁴⁹⁸

The tradition was occasionally continued through rewrites of important political songs, such as the 'Bürgerlied' from 1845 or 'Die Wacht am Rhein', changing the words to make them relevant to present day situations. Both Fiedel Michel and Walter Mossmann rewrote the 'Bürgerlied' from Steinitz's collection, while Mossmann also famously redrafted 'Die Wacht am Rhein' for the demonstrations at Wyhl.⁴⁹⁹ Mossmann's song is dealt with later in the section of Wyhl songs.

Consideration of the many songs that were sung during the German folk revival permits the distinguishing of three main categories under which the ballads in particular could be gathered. Firstly, Social Issues, then Germany and finally International Solidarity. These groups have been condensed from around ten separate areas that the ballads in the folk revival cover. The predominant issues to be dealt with during the revival were social issues, comprising songs dealing with Communism and Socialism, modern social problems, injustice in any form, usually involving state or institutionalised injustice or hypocrisy. The role of the common man, or 'little man in the street', also appeared. The majority of the social issues, however, dealt with the issues surrounding Communism or Socialism. As is

⁴⁹⁸ *Auf der Suche*, p. 54.

⁴⁹⁹ Mossmann did not include himself in the new realms of 'Deutschfolk'. He was more interested in the songs of other countries and saw nothing new in the German folksong. He explains this in detail in the interview published in *Auf der Suche*, pp. 85-89.



evident in the title of this chapter, the role and history of Germany was also a major topic. The contemporary condition of the nation of Germany during the folk revival appeared while the particular problems of the Nazi legacy were also addressed in song. Finally, the third category of international solidarity includes the CND songs, specifically those written or performed at Wyhl, the *Ostermarschlieder*, songs of the student revolt and anti-war songs, specifically anti-Vietnam songs.

3.5 Social Issues

The first category of song illustrating the use of the ballad during the German folk revival is the most widespread. The issues of political allegiance, of the Communist and Socialist systems and world views, of modern social problems and the injustice or impotence of the state were common themes. In Scotland the issue of Communism was also to the fore, as many of the Scottish folksingers had Communist or Socialist leanings.⁵⁰⁰ Other important topics for songs were contemporary national social issues like the Auchengeich mining disaster in 1957,⁵⁰¹ the Ibrox Stadium Disaster in January 1971⁵⁰² and protests from the

⁵⁰⁰ Many ballads were written for the Communist revolutionary hero, John MacLean, ranging from Matt McGinn's 'The Ballad of John MacLean' (*McGinn of the Calton: The Life and Works of Matt McGinn, 1928-1977* (Glasgow: Glasgow City Libraries, 1987), pp. 102-103), Norman MacCaig's 'Til the Citie o' John MacLean' (*Aa Brenge In!*, unpaginated) to Hamish Henderson's 'The John MacLean March' (*Collected Poems and Songs*, pp. 126-127). This is a tradition which is continuing into the 21st century with Alistair Hulett and Dave Swarbrick's tribute to MacLean in the aforementioned 2002 ballad musical *Red Clydeside*. John MacLean was also honoured by major Scottish poets Hugh MacDiarmid, John Kincaid and Sydney Goodsir Smith. The impact of MacLean also inspired theatre, the Glasgow company 7.84 produced *The Game's a Bogey* in 1973 (a rock musical based on MacLean's story). It was said of MacLean that 'he unites the national sense and the international sense of the Scottish people' (T. S. Law and Thurso Berwick, *Homage to John MacLean* (Glasgow: The John MacLean Society, 1973), p. 3) which is so much a feature of Scottish national identity.

⁵⁰¹ The ballad 'The Auchengeich Disaster' tells the story of the 47 miners who died. *101 Scottish Songs*, p. 130.



Upper Clyde Shipbuilders' (UCS) 'work-in' in 1971-72 to the short-lived establishment of the *Scottish Daily News* in 1975.⁵⁰³ Research has not yielded any direct German comparisons to these Scottish songs.

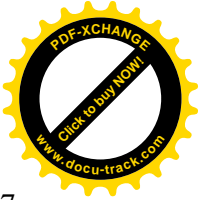
The main voices in this section are Franz Josef Degenhardt, Wolf Biermann and Dieter Süverkrüp, although there is one song by Reinhard Mey which is worthy of a mention in this context. Mey's 'Die Ballade vom sozialen Aufstieg'⁵⁰⁴ cannot be dated to its composition but it was first recorded on *Reinhard Mey Live* in 1971 after the student revolts and the Burg Waldeck period. Mey's style of rapidly enunciated narrative story-telling fits better into a modern ballad format with its more complex rhyme scheme (ababccdd) and 8-line stanzaic structure than into the traditional ballad form more familiar to the earlier Liedermacher.

The social climbing described in the ballad occurs, ironically, on the back of the wave of protest actions taking place across Germany during the late 1960s and early 1970s. The ballad is the provocative response of a capitalist to the new social situation. In the second stanza the protagonist Fred Kasulzke describes how he invented a business proposition to rent a group of protesters to any organisation needing a crowd:

⁵⁰² This football disaster was immortalised by Matt McGinn in his ballad 'The Ibrox Disaster', *McGinn of the Calton*, p.132. This follows in the tradition of disaster ballads, often within the mining communities of Scotland, like 'The Starlaw Disaster' of 1870, collected by Hamish Henderson and 'The Blantyre Disaster' of 1877.

⁵⁰³ The *Scottish Daily News* (SDN) was a left of centre daily newspaper published in Glasgow from 5th May-8th November 1975. It was hailed as Britain's first worker-controlled, mass-circulation daily, formed as a workers' cooperative by some of the newspaper workers made redundant when the *Scottish Daily Express* moved its operation to Manchester in April 1974.

⁵⁰⁴ The full text of this ballad is included in the Appendices No 4.



Und zum erstenmal seit Jahren schaltet er vor neun Uhr ab
Und entschließt sich, heute früh zu Bett zu geh'n,
Geht bis drei Uhr morgens grübelnd in seinem Bette auf und ab
Und hat schließlich einen Plan vor Augen steh'n:
Wenn er Müßiggänger, Rentner, Pensionäre drillen läßt,
Kann er eine Firma gründen für gemieteten Protest,
Und am nächsten Tag ist's schon in jeder Zeitung inseriert:
Fünfundzwanzig, null, null, dreißig, Fred Kasulzke protestiert!

The business becomes so productive that in the final stanza Kasulzke decides to broaden his goals to include an international remit. The irony of this character exploiting the current social unrest and then expanding his horizons to include the rest of the world struck a chord with the audience at the time who were largely from socialist backgrounds. The humour, but also the questioning of the authenticity of some of the protest actions, was an issue which had not been raised before.

A Liedermacher of a different ilk, Dieter Süverkrüp, was a KPD communist, long before others of his peers joined the party; Süverkrüp wrote children's ballads with pointed political messages. Two of his ballads of most relevance here are 'Der Baggerführer Willibald' (1973) and 'Erschröckliche Moritat von Kryptokommunisten' (1966), which is of especial interest because of the existence of two versions of the ballad.⁵⁰⁵ Firstly, however, 'Der Baggerführer Willibald'⁵⁰⁶ tells the story of Willibald, the JCB driver, who protests against the injustice of the workers building houses for the rich, without seeing any of the profit themselves. Using humorous internal rhymes, Süverkrüp outlines a socialist manifesto that the workers should also benefit from the end product of their own work.

The ballad concludes:

⁵⁰⁵ Scotland also had a Communist singer who wrote humorous children's songs, with political content, in Matt McGinn of the Calton. With songs like 'Corrie Doon', 'The Big Orange Whale' and 'The Foreman O'Rourke', McGinn addressed issues from the conditions for miners to religious bigotry. See *McGinn of the Calton: The Life and Works of Matt McGinn, 1928-1977* (Glasgow: Glasgow City Libraries, 1987).

⁵⁰⁶ See Appendix No. 5.



Das hat doch keinen Zweck, der Boß geht besser weg;
dann bauen wir uns selber ein schönes Haus mit Keller,
da ziehn wir alle ein - au fein!"

Wie Willibald das sagt, so wird es auch gemacht:
Die Bauarbeiter legen los und bauen Häuser, schön und groß,
wo jeder gut drin wohnen kann, weil jeder sie bezahlen kann,
der Baggerführer Willibald baut eine neue Schwimmanstalt,
da spritzen sich die Kinder naß, das macht sogar den Baggern Spaß!

Although the message is straightforward, it was not universally greeted with good humour.

The *Landtag* in North Rhine Westphalia actually debated in 1975 whether the song should be banned from being used in school lessons as it was an attack against private property.⁵⁰⁷

His second ballad, originally called the 'Moritat von Kryptokommunisten' and then changed to 'Erschröckliche Moritat von Kryptokommunisten' was even more controversial as there were two separate versions.⁵⁰⁸ The original version 1966 version 'Moritat von Kryptokommunisten' included references to Heinrich Lübke's signing of the construction plans for a concentration camp, thus tying him in firmly with the Nazi regime.⁵⁰⁹ The relevant part of the stanza in question reads as follows in the original version:

Am Nachmittag platzt eine Bombe in Bonn,
aber da hat er sich geirrt!
Weil, wenn einer nur an KZs mitentworfen hat,
daraus kein Staatseklat wird.
 Und wer ein Kommunist ist, kriegt man niemals richtig raus,
 so ein Kryptokommunist sieht immer agitproper aus.
 Huhu, huhu...!⁵¹⁰

⁵⁰⁷ See <http://www.geschichte.nrw.de/artikel.php?artikel%5Bid%5D=693&lkz=de> for more details. Date of access 271006.

⁵⁰⁸ Both versions are provided in Appendix No. 6.

⁵⁰⁹ This is also directly alluded to in Degenhardt's song 'In dieser Saison' where he sings 'In dieser Saison / beginnt auch die erste KZ-Lager- / Bauperiode. / Doch es wird nicht gebaut nach den Lübkeplänen, / sondern nach der neuen Ganzheitsmethode.' *Kommt an den Tisch unter Pflaumenbäumen, Alle Lieder von Franz Josef Degenhardt* (Munich: Bertelsmann, 1979), Song 41, unpaginated.

⁵¹⁰ Alternative text for stanza 3 quoted in Inke Pinkert Sältzer, *German Songs* (New York: Continuum, 1992), pp. 117-121, here p.119.



Süverkrüp criticises the government for covering up the Nazi past of its Bundespräsident, while demonising those within the country with so-called ‘radical’ views. This culminated in the *Notstandsgesetze* of May 1968 which became the object of much criticism amongst left-wing Liedermacher. The original version of the ballad questions the real identity behind any figure. If Lübke’s former political affiliations can be covered up and ignored, so that no ‘Staatseklat’ occurs, Süverkrüp questions astutely whether you can ever really tell ‘wer ein Kommunist ist’ and so highlights the dangers of presuming to label individuals with loaded political titles.

The song investigates the prejudices of the bourgeoisie, attacking their presumptions with humour. The play on words in ‘so ein Kryptokommunist sieht immer agitproper aus’ when the fear at the time was of literature and song being ‘agitprop’ is coupled with the joke throughout the song that the man they call a Communist is, in fact, only a ‘Kryptokommunist’, a secret Communist or a sort of Communist. Even the lines which then replaced the original stanza and depoliticised the ballad to some extent, poke fun at the seriousness with which the West German government was confronting alternative thinkers:

Am Nachmittag schleicht er zum Herrenfriseur
in dem Hinterhof-Ladenlokal.
Er zieht die Pistole, nimmt Platz und befiehlt:
»Einmal Haarschnitt und zwar radikal!«⁵¹¹

It is interesting that the song is called a ‘Moritat’ when the only death in the ballad, that of a suspiciously Aryan-looking child in the Kindergarten which he eats for breakfast, can almost be overlooked. The title suggests that the song will be about the dreadful death of the Crypto-Communist, yet what presents itself is an exaggerated, deliberately grotesque

⁵¹¹ *Dorn im Ohr*, pp. 43-44.



vision of accumulated stereotypes that people hold against Communists. Süverkrüp challenged the widespread anti-communist feeling prevalent in Germany during the Cold War period in Europe. Süverkrüp was not especially interested in the ethos of Burg Waldeck or the student revolts. He was very concerned about the threat of nuclear war and the issue of atomic armament and his ballads had less of a national and more of an environmental or political concern.

Franz Josef Degenhardt (1931-) became one of the most famous political Liedermacher in Germany, and is still writing and performing today.⁵¹² A long-term SPD supporter, Degenhardt's songs are explicitly although not simplistically political.⁵¹³ He says this is self-evident because he is 'nahezu ausschweifend politisch interessiert, und das zeigt sich selbstverständlich in meinen Liedern, und darum sind meine Lieder politische Lieder.'⁵¹⁴ A great many of Degenhardt's songs are ballads which deal with Germany, with political themes and with injustices. Some keep to a straightforward ballad framework and rhyme scheme, but others show how he plays with the song forms. As Heinrich Vormweg explains:

Er hat die Abhängigkeit von den Konventionen des Lieds und der Ballade abgestreift und sich damit in die Lage gebracht, neue Anordnungsweisen für Lied und Ballade auszuprobieren.⁵¹⁵

This freedom and variety in the ballad becomes apparent throughout the following songs which are arranged as far as possible in chronological order, either taking the date from

⁵¹² A new collection of all his songs called *Franz Josef Degenhardt, Die Lieder*, edited by his son Kai Degenhardt has just been published by Eulenspiegel Verlag in Berlin for Degenhardt's 75th birthday. (Berlin: Eulenspiegel, 2006). His new album *Dämmerung* was also released by Koch in 2006.

⁵¹³ Degenhardt was a SPD supporter until he was thrown out of the party in 1971 for recommending people should vote KPD in the Schleswig-Holstein Landtag elections. He later joined the KPD.

⁵¹⁴ *Franz Josef Degenhardt: Politische Lieder 1964-1972*, ed. by Heinz Ludwig Arnold (Munich: Richard Boorberg, 1972), p. 19.

⁵¹⁵ *Politische Lieder*, p. 42.



established printed sources, or where indicated with a <, from the date of the first album on which they were recorded. It is more than likely that the first date of recording is not a completely accurate dating for composition.

- 'Tonio Schiavo' – 1966
- 'Irgendwas mach' ich mal' – <1968
- 'Die Ballade von den Weißmachern und was mit ihnen geschehen muß' – <1968
- 'Monopoly' – 1970
- 'Rudi Schulte' – 1971
- 'Natascha Speckenbach' – 1972
- 'Mutter Mathilde' - 1972
- 'Ballade vom verlorenen Sohn' – <1977

In each of these ballads Degenhardt reveals his capacity for commenting directly or obliquely on current social issues within Germany. The earliest ballad in this selection, 'Tonio Schiavo'⁵¹⁶ from 1966, deals in a satirical and humorously poignant way with the difficulties faced by *Gastarbeiter*, who come to Germany to work and discover not paradise, but a very flawed social situation. However, lessons are not learnt and the ballad makes it clear that there will always be more desperate hopefuls who come to Germany, hoping to better themselves.

The ballad begins in storytelling fashion with simple scene setting:

Das ist die Geschichte von Tonio Schiavo,
geboren, verwachsen im Mezzo-giorno.
Frau und acht Kinder, und drei leben kaum,
und zweieinhalb Schwestern in einem Raum.
Tonio Schiavo ist abgehaun.
Zog in die Ferne,
ins Paradies,
und das liegt irgendwo bei Herne. (101)

⁵¹⁶ *Politische Lieder*, p. 101-102.



The ballad does not have a strict ballad stanzaic form with associated rhyme scheme, yet it maintains a regular aabcbcd pattern with incremental repetition of the final lines throughout the text. The bathetic drop at the end of each stanza parallels the irony of paradise being located in Herne in the heart of the industrial Ruhr region. Although the situation in Herne is actually worse than at home in Mezzo-Giorno, for a time Tonio Schiavo works hard and sends money home as planned. However, when the foreman insults him, calling him 'Itaker-Sau',⁵¹⁷ he attacks him with a knife and is then in turn attacked by four men who beat him to death, before throwing him to the ground at the feet of the next intake of workers from Mezzo-Giorno. The opening 'Das ist die Geschichte' implies that this is a true story, but regardless, it is certainly representative for the conditions under which the Gastarbeiter worked in the post-war period.

In 1971 Degenhardt wrote an extra commentary on this ballad. Calling the song, with a certain note of irony 'ein sogenannter guter, alter Degenhardt',⁵¹⁸ he claims that it is lacking an extra verse which would diminish the specific comment on Germany, stress an internationalist communist position and strengthen the critique of the exploiting classes:

Wenn die Arbeitenden aller Länder sich darüber verständigen, daß sie einer Klasse angehören, also das gleiche Interesse haben, dann werden sie sich nicht mehr gegenseitig beschimpfen und erstechen. Dann werden sie ihre Waffen gegen ihren wahren Feind richten. Dieser Prozeß der Verständigung ist längst in Gang gesetzt. Und er läuft von Hanoi bis San Franzisko, von Leipzig bis Kapstadt. Und er wird ganz sicher zu Ende geführt werden. Amen.⁵¹⁹

⁵¹⁷ A pejorative expression for an Italian which was widespread in the Second World War and commonplace in the slang of the 1960s and 70s.

⁵¹⁸ *Politische Lieder*, p. 102.

⁵¹⁹ *Ibid.*



Another ballad of the working man is found in 'Irgendwas mach' ich mal' (<1968).⁵²⁰ This narrative is similar in ethos to Kästner's 'Kurt Schmidt statt einer Ballade', discussed in the first chapter of this thesis, for it reveals the impotence of the working man and the pointlessness of the actions with which days are filled. The repeated refrain:

Irgendwas mach' ich mal,
irgendwann,
und dann,
dann komm' ich ganz groß,
ganz groß
raus.

is shown as being futile talk because it does not result in action. There is a comparison of the two brothers, one who has chosen the established middle class life of a wife, home, own business and the attempt to climb the social ladder while the other just works to earn money and tries to find his fulfilment in partying and sexual adventures after the shift finishes. As with the brothers in Degenhardt's famous song 'Spiel nicht mit den Schmuttelkindern', neither brother achieves what he is looking for, and the road to success promoted by the middle classes is shown to be deeply flawed. As in 'Tonio Schiavo', the working classes are seen as being oppressed and victimised.

In the song 'Die Ballade von den Weißmachern und was mit ihnen geschehen muß',⁵²¹ these themes are taken up again.⁵²² The Kästner-like tragic figure works faithfully and unquestioningly for over thirty years in a soap factory before he falls into the vat and is made into soap himself. The real irony of the ballad lies in the title; those who whitewash

⁵²⁰ *Kommt an den Tisch*, Song 58 [unpaginated]. It is also published in Franz Josef Degenhardt, *Die Lieder*, p. 83.

⁵²¹ *Kommt an den Tisch*, Song 65 and *Politische Lieder*, p. 129.

⁵²² Although the collection *Franz Josef Degenhardt: Politische Lieder* states that the song was written in 1969, it actually appeared on the *Degenhardt Live* album in 1968, so the date of composition must be 1968 or earlier.



the social injustices, i.e. those in power, should be destroyed. The statement ‘was mit ihnen geschehen muß’ is that they should meet the same tragi-comic end as the worker in the ballad. The final stanza makes this explicitly and ironically clear:

In diesem Produktionsprozeß
wird zum Produkt, wer produziert.
Das ändert sich solange nicht,
bis es geändert wird.
Denn ihm gehört der Apparat,
na nennen wir ihn »Arbeiter«,
erst, wenn er ihn sich genommen hat,
dann ist er keine Ware mehr,
wenn er sie in die Hölle schickt, die Weißmacher.

The final couplet in the ballad is a direct call to action:

Und das sei nicht nur so gesagt,
Es kommt drauf an, daß man es macht. (129)

In these ballads it is evident that the narrative form of the ballad functions well in addressing a specific political issue and illustrating the human cost of the social and political situation in which the characters find themselves. There are also similarities here to the French ballade form, in that the final envoi is often used to provide the moral of the story, the motivation to change, to think and here, to redress the balance of power.

A ballad which provides an ironic microcosm of the situation of the workers is the 1970 ballad ‘Monopoly’.⁵²³ This illustrates clearly Degenhardt’s development from straightforward sung ballads to a mixture of song, spoken song and spoken commentary. In his theatrical director-style interjection, Degenhardt states that this is a *Moritat* and that it is a true story from 26th January 1970 which takes place in West Berlin between two young

⁵²³ *Politische Lieder*, pp. 135/138, *Kommt an den Tisch*, Song 78. Numbers in brackets will refer to the page reference in *Politische Lieder* unless otherwise indicated.



work colleagues. There is a regular abab, 4-beat stanza which is complicated by Degenhardt switching between singing and speaking within the stanza. The sung refrain suggests that there is a ‘richtige Lösung von diesem Problem’ which is not revealed until the end. The directorial voice explains that the two men are competitors within the workplace:

Warum? Weil das nützt denen, von denen sie ausgenützt werden. Und jetzt wollen die ausgenützten Arbeitskollegen so sein wie die, die sie ausnützen. Was wollen sie sein? Monopolisten. Das geht natürlich nicht in Wirklichkeit. Also spielen sie. (136)

Degenhardt sets the scene for the two men and their wives to illustrate the principles behind ‘das beliebte Gesellschaftsspiel Monopoly’ (136), which, in its turn, encapsulates their own lives. The competitive streak between the two had already been fuelled before the game began, because one of the workers had just been given a pay rise due to his many hours of overtime. As the man who was losing to his colleague in real life then also lost the game of Monopoly to him, a fight breaks out between the two men in which both of them are killed. The director of the company speaks at the funeral about how all men are in the same boat:

Aber das Leben ist Kampf, hat er paar Mal gerufen.
Aber Klassenkampf hat er wohl nicht gemeint. (138)

It is class struggle which should reveal the ‘richtige Lösung von diesem Problem’, i.e. to unite against the oppressor instead of fighting each other. The final varied refrain makes this explicit:

Weil die richtige Lösung von diesem Problem,
die solln wir vergessen
die solln wir vergessen,
Weil die richtige Lösung von diesem Problem,
ist für einige – nicht für die Krauses -,
nur für sehr wenige – für die Krupps undsoweiter -,
nicht angenehm. (138)



This stresses that it is the minority who are in power, while the majority of people work for them and suffer under their system. If the workers did unite, it would be most unpleasant for the rich industrialists like the Krupp dynasty. Degenhardt uses the ballad form, humour and irony to bring his message across, so that the solution is not, in fact, forgotten.

By 1971 in the song 'Rudi Schulte'⁵²⁴ Degenhardt's communist leanings are becoming more and more apparent, as is the movement towards the fluidity of the ballad form. There is a distinct narrative with a refrain and again, Degenhardt breaks in with a spoken narrative voice. This ballad tells the story of Rudi Schulte who is an unromantic, ugly hero with a model CV; a real communist who began fighting at twelve years old, was persecuted through the Nazi era, thrown out of his job at Krupps because they were anti-communist, became one of the Moorsoldaten from Börgermoor, was imprisoned in a concentration camp and then had to deal with post-war Germany and after that the changing times and the young enthusiastic students who had just discovered communism for the first time. There is also an interesting throwaway line in Degenhardt's commentary, 'Dann folgt die Diktatur des Hitler-Faschismus. Und aus dieser Zeit, da gibt es nichts zu singen.'⁽¹⁴⁹⁾. The refrain, which remains unchanged throughout emphasises how long and hard the struggle for a workers' revolution is:

Denn der Kampf ging weiter,
weiter Tag für Tag
und manchmal eben auch des Nachts
für die Sache, die so einfach –
aber schwer zu machen ist
vor und nach dem Sieg
des Proletariats. (147-151)

⁵²⁴ *Kommt an den Tisch*, Song 82, *Politische Lieder*, pp. 147-151.



Degenhardt stresses the real truth of communism that, despite the idea being simple, the reality of trying to put the theory into action remains a continuing struggle. Rudi Schulte dreams of going to his heaven, to Red Square and meeting Lenin, who will greet him, God-the-father-like with 'Schulten, Rudi, hast du gut gemacht' (151). This, however, also proves to be a dream, as he is woken by the alarm clock and has to go back to work. This song marks a turning point for Degenhardt in that he begins to present characters that are not victimised or seen as victims of oppression, but rather as more realistic, if sometimes larger than life, figures who took part in real struggles.

This is also the case in the following two ballads from 1972, 'Mutter Matilde' and 'Natascha Speckenbach'. The opening lines of the ballad 'Mutter Mathilde'⁵²⁵ echo the quintessential German ballad 'Lili Marleen'. Leip's ballad begins 'Vor der Kaserne / Vor dem großen Tor' while Degenhardt's starts 'Vis à vis vom Tor der großen Fabrik' but instead of meeting the female figure who epitomises longing, we are confronted with a stout, formidable Grand Dame who will not be cowed by any of the big industrial powers. In her pub gather the human refuse from the factory across the road, men whose lives have been destroyed by working in the factory, men who have become unimportant 'Dividendenschrott' (152) as their bosses keep their eyes on the profits and not the human cost. This ballad was written around the time of the major industrial action, especially in the chemical and clothing industries in 1971, so talk of strike action and rebellion was hugely relevant. Despite all the attempts that are made to close down Mutter Mathilde's pub, from building a road over the land to calling in a 'Nazitrupp' (154) to destroy the pub, the loyalty and cooperation of Mathilde's regular clients, her important contacts in the town

⁵²⁵ *Kommt an den Tisch*, Song 97, *Politische Lieder*, pp. 152-154.



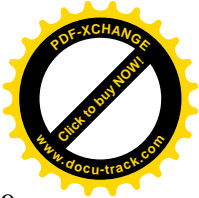
and the factory workers foil the plans of the bosses and the pub remains as a meeting place for people to relax and drink and talk of politics:

Komm mal rein! Das heißt, wenn du mitmachen willst,
denn im Nebenzimmer gibts Politik
bei Mutter Mathilde. (154)

The ballad closes on this injunction to join in this diverse and unusual but extremely human group and become politically aware and active.

In a manner akin to Brecht, Degenhardt introduces his ballad 'Natascha Speckenbach'⁵²⁶ with the words 'Das ist das erste Lehrstück der Natascha Speckenbach, nämlich, wie sie eine gute Arbeit machte im Glühlampenwerk Halle II.' Again, this is a female character who brooks no resistance. The ballad has a straightforward narrative abcb 4444 structure, with Degenhardt shifting from song to the spoken word to emphasise Natascha's words. She is also a larger than life and empathetic character 'mit Haaren wie Tomatensaft, / und die kennt Marx und Engels / und wie man's richtig macht.' She takes on the authorities in the lightbulb factory where she works when they try to increase production without improving the conditions. Then when the boss calls in the consultants who make laughable trivial changes, playing hula music and painting murals of Hawaii on the walls in order to try and distract the women from their conditions, the ladies stage a female revolution, putting on hotpants and dancing around the factory as their production quota for that day decreases. The men from the neighbouring hall even join them and Natascha calls on them to start a brawl. As a result, she gains an audience with the 'Betriebsversammlung' where she protests against the conditions and, as strikes are also threatened, she achieves her goals:

⁵²⁶ *Kommt an den Tisch*, Song 95, *Die Lieder*, pp. 130-131.



>>Aus unseren Kraftreserven
Wolln die jetzt noch mehr Profit,
mit vierzig sind wir fertig
und kommen auf den Schrott.<<
Weil die Belegschaft Streiken rief,
war das Ergebnis auch bald klar:
Die zweite Pause gibt's pro Schicht,
Akkordsatz bleibt so wie er war. (131)

However, Degenhardt stresses that this was not the most important victory, for as well as improving conditions within the factory, Natascha then collects a group of twelve disciples around herself, who meet weekly at her home in order to read Marx, Engels and Lenin, and learn 'wie man's richtig macht' (131).

The final ballad which is relevant in this section of Degenhardt's political and social issue ballads comes just at the end of the German folk revival period as defined in this chapter. It is the opening song on the 1977 album *Wildledermantelmann* and is called 'Ballade vom verlorenen Sohn'.⁵²⁷ Here Degenhardt expands his range of social themes to address what seems to be a very modern issue, although the Biblical allusion belies this, the possible murder of a problematic child by his father. The ballad opens with a pleasant vision of a journey ballad when father and son set off on an adventure:

An einem Sonntag, so blauweißgestreift,
legten sie ab vom bewimpelten Kai.
Abfallen, killen und Segel fest – los,
Vater und Sohn und 'ne Katze dabei. (165)

However, it is immediately stressed that no-one saw what happened but the stanza ends with the words 'Es fehlte der Sohn. / Der kam nicht mit, / der kam nicht mit.' (165). The remainder of the ballad explains how the normal middle class family fell apart under the

⁵²⁷ *Kommt an den Tisch*, Song 118, *Die Lieder*, p. 165-66.

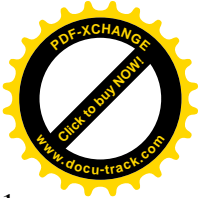


stress of having a son who was different and whose behaviour changed from being amusing and childlike to being threatening and dangerous. The family tries to manage the situation and pay to send the son to expensive boarding schools but he runs away continually and finally burns down the last institution in which he had been incarcerated. The final stanza of the ballad repeats the journey that the father and son take and repeats his subsequent disappearance. While Degenhardt does not make the boy's fate explicit, it is suggested that the boy has been removed from the equation because the society and the family could not cope with such deviance from the norm. Degenhardt uses the extreme example of a destructive teenager who sleeps with cats and boys and the desperate parental attempts to maintain the status quo and their public face, to illustrate the strength of societal pressures on the outsider and on those who want to conform. This development in his work shows that the ballad form can be used to explore complex and diverse contemporary issues.

Wolf Biermann has also written many ballads which deal with Communism / Socialism and modern social issues.

Die Ballade von der Briefträger William L. Moore aus Baltimore – 1964
Die Ballade von dem Drainage Leger Fredi Rohsmeisl aus Buchow – 1965
Die Ballade von der Buchower Süßkirschenzeit – 1965
Die Ballade vom Mann, der sich eigenhändig beide Füße abhackte – 1965
Bilanzballade im dreißigsten Jahr – 1966
Drei Kugeln auf Rudi Dutschke – 1968
Ballade vom Traum – 1969
Romanze von Rita - 1970

The earliest ballad that is relevant here is the song which was very significant at Burg Waldeck in 1964 when Fasia Jansen performed it on behalf of Biermann who was not allowed to travel into the West; 'Die Ballade von dem Briefträger William L. Moore aus



Baltimore'.⁵²⁸ Written about a postal worker who travelled to the southern States of America to protest against racial discrimination in 1963, the ballad has a regular 4343 abab rhythm and rhyme scheme and a refrain after each stanza. Biermann varies the ballad form somewhat by beginning each stanza with the relevant day of the week, ending in English with Moore's 'LAST DAY'. The ballad therefore chronicles the last week in the life of William L. Moore who sets off on his protest journey one Sunday and is shot dead by the following Sunday. The final stanza utilises the ballad cliché of flowers growing out of the corpse:

LAST DAY

Sonntag, ein blauer Sommertag,
lag er im grünen Gras –
blühten drei rote Nelken blutrot
auf seiner Stirne, so blaß.

BLACK AND WHITE, UNITE! UNITE!

Steht auf seinem Schild.

White and black – die Schranken weg!

Und er starb ganz allein.

Und er bleibt nicht allein. (29)

In the traditional ballad world, flowers grow to symbolise hope and heroism as well as poignant sacrifice. The ballad explains how an ordinary man one day decides that he wants to make a difference to the political situation and takes it into his own hands to do so. Despite being attacked with stones and confronted with his whiteness as evidence that these issues should not concern him, Moore journeys to Birmingham, Alabama to express his solidarity with black Americans. Biermann raises the problem of secretive support in the ballad, for a white woman comes to Moore:

gab ihm ein'n Drink, und heimlich sprach sie:

›Ich denk' wie Sie ganz genau.< (28)

⁵²⁸ Wolf Biermann, *Die Drahtarfe: Balladen, Gedichte, Lieder* (Berlin: Wagenbach, 1965), pp. 26-29.



Biermann contrasts this level of protest with what amounts to the paramount protest, as the protester loses his own life in the process of asserting solidarity with the ‘opposing’ side. The variation in the final stanza ‘Und er starb ganz allein / Und er bleibt nicht allein’ (29) can be read either as a dark foreboding that he will not be the only one to die, or, as Biermann likely intended it, that in his death he was not alone because he became part of the generations of those who laid down their lives in support of their cause. The use of the ballad form and motif to highlight a contemporary issue is evidence of the flexibility of the ballad form. By announcing Moore’s death in the title of the ballad, Biermann also follows a method of the traditional ballad when the narrative voice pre-empts the tragedy so that suspense is removed and the focus is on the reason for or justification of the death.

Like William L. Moore, the following ballads were all published in *Die Drahtarfe* which included poems written between 1960-65. The first two ballads ‘Die Ballade von dem Drainage-Leger Fredi Rohsmeisl aus Buchow’ and ‘Die Ballade von der Buchower Süßkirschenzeit’ (both 1965) are included in ‘Die Buchower Balladen’ section of the collection. Playing on Brecht’s *Buchower Elegien* of 1953 these ballads offer details of life in the DDR. These ballads brought Biermann widespread attention and led to the total ban on his writing or performing. In a similar vein to William L. Moore, these ballads highlight injustice, often state institutionalised injustice.

‘Die Ballade von dem Drainage-Leger Fredi Rohsmeisl aus Buckow’⁵²⁹ tells the story of a worker who is attacked and arrested for no reason, then sentenced to 12 weeks in prison for

⁵²⁹ *Die Drahtarfe*, pp.10-13.



being a counter-revolutionary, although he is innocent. Biermann uses the story to comment on the state of the nation in the following stanza:

Und er glaubt nicht einen Faden
Mehr an Gerechtigkeit.
Er ist für den Sozialismus
Und für den neuen Staat
Aber den Staat in Buckow
Den hat er gründlich satt. (13)

Biermann's voice comes through clearly in his character who believes in Socialism and the new state, but not as it is being lived out in Buchow and in the DDR. He also questions the complicity of the citizens of the state who stand by and watch as Rohsmeisl is attacked. He draws attention to the hypocrisy of the legal system and the lawyer who celebrates the flight of the 10th Russian Sputnik in 1961 by dancing wildly, the same 'crime' of which Rohsmeisl was guilty. Biermann's closing refrain problematises the notion of change, a topic to which he will return throughout his work. Although 'Nur wer sich ändert, bleibt sich treu',⁵³⁰ the change at the end of the ballad, i.e. that the lawyer dances, does not benefit Rohsmeisl, but simply serves to highlight the injustice meted out against him:

Junge, ich hab Leute sich ändern sehn
Junge, das war manchmal schoneinfach schön.
Aber nützt uns das? (Ja.) (13)

The irony implicit in this quotation, that changing does benefit us, is not borne out by the ballad, but change is what Biermann demands from the socialist state. The ballad contains a straight narrative with a more complex rhyme scheme, proving that Biermann uses the ballad form but is not constrained by its formalities, but rather adapts it to suit his purposes. Jay Rosellini stresses this saying:

⁵³⁰ This concept became central to Biermann's work and was the title of his 1991 album.



Daraus ist zu schließen, daß die Bezeichnung „Ballade“ in diesem Rahmen keine formale Kategorie sein soll, sondern eine inhaltliche: Es handelt sich um singbare Gedichte, die eine ausgefallene Geschichte erzählen.⁵³¹

‘Die Ballade von der Buckower Süßkirschenzeit’ (14-16) also exemplifies this. Each stanza has a regular 4343 abab rhythm and rhyme while the refrain has two quatrains which rhyme abab/ccdd with a more complex 4444/4422 rhythm. The first stanza creates a simple yet romantic setting:

Die kleine Kammer unterm Dach
Hat Bett und Stuhl und Tisch.
Die Dielen rot und blau die Wand,
das Laken weiß und frisch. (15)

The rosy atmosphere ‘in Buchow zur Süßkirschenzeit’ (15) is harshly broken by the irony of the capitalised sign hung on the cherry trees ‘DAS VOLKSEIGENTUM WIRD STRENG BEWACHT!’ (15). The theories of socialism are contrasted starkly with the fact that the cherry trees are theoretically the property of the ‘Volk’ yet this really means they belong to the LPG (*Landwirtschaftliches Produktionsgenossenschaft*). However, it is the girls from the LPG who strip the trees in the middle of the night when they should be guarding them. The theme of misplaced blame is central again in the ballad, as the narrator is blamed for the theft by the farmer at the end of the ballad.

Biermann’s political colours become more clear through the late sixties, but already in 1965 in ‘Die Ballade vom Mann, der sich eigenhändig beide Füße abhackte’ (72-73), his opinions are evident. This forms part of the ‘Beschwichtigungen und Revisionen’ section in *Die Drahtarfe*. This is a highly comic ballad about a man who chops off one of his feet because he stepped in a pile of dung. Having realised that he had cut off the wrong foot, he

⁵³¹ Jay Rosellini, *Wolf Biermann*, Beck’sche Reihe; 626: Autorenbücher, (Munich: Beck, 1992).



quickly cuts off the other as well. Biermann deliberately plays with his performance of this ballad, with emphasis falling continually on the word 'Fuß' or irregularly on final syllables of words that should not be stressed e.g. 'Scheiß-hau-FEN' (73). The final two stanzas provide a very direct and pointed critique towards the party:

Es hackte die Partei
sich ab so manchen Fuß
so manchen guten Fuß
abhackte die Partei. (74)

Biermann is being cut off by the party because they presume or assume that he is the tainted article, rather than recognising that he is the sound part of the body. Thus throughout these songs, Biermann uses the ballad to tell a story incorporating social, political and personal criticism.

Biermann's next collection of poetry, *Mit Marx- und Engelszungen* (1968),⁵³² published in the west in defiance of his publication ban, includes two ballads which are important for the purposes of this section. Unsurprisingly the collection contains virulent attacks on the regime of the DDR. The first ballad is a very personal reflection of his own life experiences in the midst of politically turbulent times. The 'Bilanzballade im dreißigsten Jahr' (58-60) sees Biermann taking stock of his life upon turning thirty, which he did in 1966. He addresses his strange combination of glorification and martyrdom with a contrasting mixture of humour and pathos. Perhaps the most important statement for the purposes of this thesis lies in the second stanza when he conflates his personal life purpose with the need to sing ballads:

Warum hat mich der Vater bloß

⁵³² Wolf Biermann – *Mit Marx- und Engelszungen. Gedichten, Balladen, Lieder* (Berlin: Wagenbach, 1968). The version quoted from here is (Munich: dtv, 2000). Page numbers quoted in brackets refer to this edition.



Mit diesem folgenschweren Stoß
Gepflanzt in meiner Mutter Schoß
Vielleicht, damit ich später
Der deutschen Bürokratensau
Balladen vor den Rüssel hau
Auf rosarote Pfoten hau
Die fetten Landesväter (59)

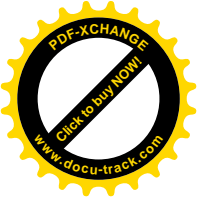
The circumstances of Biermann's life are well documented and he has often explained that he is ideally placed to make personal statements and observations that are unavoidably political, because his life has combined both from a very early age. He explains this in his 1994 interview *Gebranntes Kind* as follows:

Das ist der Stoff aus dem meine Lieder gemacht sind. In der Liebe wie im Haß,
im privaten wie im politischen ... Das ist keine reine Poesie. Sie werden sich auch
daran gewöhnen müssen, daß in mein Liedern immer alles leider stimmt.⁵³³

This combination of public and private often gives Biermann an enhanced legitimacy when dealing with sensitive political topics because he speaks of political events from his own personal experience. The following ballad is one of Biermann's most explicitly topical. 'Drei Kugeln auf Rudi Dutschke' (75-77) was written in 1968 shortly after the assassination attempt on Dutschke. Biermann sang it down the telephone to Walter Mossmann who managed to perform it on his behalf at Burg Waldeck in 1968, despite the prevailing feeling against songs as a means of political protest. In many ways the ban on Biermann's performing and publishing liberated his voice so that his songs and ballads became much more emphatic and direct. The ballad assigns blame for the attempt on Dutschke and calls for a revolution. It begins:

Drei Kugeln auf Rudi Dutschke
Ein blutiges Attentat

⁵³³ *Gebranntes Kind: wie Wolf Biermann seine Lieder macht* (Munich: Goethe Institute, 1995). Cassette recording, recorded 201294 in Hamburg.



Wir haben genau gesehen
Wer da geschossen hat

Ach Deutschland, deine Mörder!
Es ist das alte Lied
Schon wieder Blut und Tränen
Was gehst Du denn mit denen
Du weißt doch was Dir blüht! (75)

The irony implicit in the attack on Dutschke being the same old story, 'Es ist das alte Lied', suggests that attacks on those who stand against the powers that be have been a constant issue throughout the history of Germany, East and West. The ballad directly accuses the regime of being bedfellows with Axel Springer's publishing house:

Die Kugel Nummer Eins kam
Aus Springers Zeitungswald
Ihr habt dem Mann die Groschen
Auch noch dafür bezahlt. (75)

The man who shot Dutschke, Josef Bachmann, was a 23 year old, unskilled worker who had been influenced by the campaign that the media directed against the student protests and against Dutschke in particular. He is seen as being metaphorically in the pay of the Springer dynasty. Bachmann shot Dutschke three times, but Biermann uses the image of the three shots to address the guilt of the three significant powers in Berlin complicit in the attempted murder.

The blame for the second shot is placed at the feet or in the mouth of Klaus Schütz, the Lord Mayor of Berlin at the time of the shooting:

Des zweiten Schusses Schütze
Im Schöneberger Haus
Sein Mund war ja die Mündung
Da kam die Kugel raus. (75)



The third shot addresses the political motivations of the German Chancellor Kurt-Georg Kiesinger who very quickly sent a letter of sympathy to Dutschke's wife. The speed of this response was seen at the time as being an indicator of the readiness of the regime for such an incident to take place:

Der Edel-Nazi-Kanzler
Schoß Kugel Nummer Drei
Er legte gleich der Witwe
den Beileidsbrief mit bei. (75)

Biermann highlights the fascistic methods employed by those asserting that they are democratic and turns the ballad into a warning that such methods can only spread if people do not stand up against them.

Drei Kugeln auf Rudi Dutschke
Ihm galten sie nicht allein
Wenn wir uns jetzt nicht wehren
Wirst Du der Nächste sein. (77)

The ballad ends with a call to rise up against the forces that do these things:

Es haben die paar Herren
So viel schon umgebracht
Statt daß sie *Euch* zerbrechen
Zerbrecht jetzt ihre Macht!

Ach Deutschland, deine Mörder!
Es ist das alte Lied
Schon wieder Blut und Tränen
Was gehst Du denn mit denen
Du weißt doch was Dir blüht! (77)

The apostrophe to Germany which formed the refrain throughout the ballad starkly questions why Germany is consorting with such people. The final line of the ballad provides a causal threat, for if Germany continues to go down this route, they know that there will be trouble in store. Despite the disputes at Burg Waldeck over the efficacy of



songs as a means of protest, this ballad shows the extent to which the narrative form can be used not only to tell the story, but to pass political judgement and to call for a political reaction.

The final three ballads in this section by Wolf Biermann were published in 1972 in his collection *Für meine Genossen*.⁵³⁴ This collection includes *Hetznieder*, *Gedichte*, *Balladen* and is peppered throughout with prose political statements from Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Marx and Lenin. Biermann employs a combination of different song types to continue his criticism of the actual communist state in which he lives, as contrasted with the theories put forward by those he regards as true Communists. This leads to the amusing title of the first ballad in this section: 'Romanze von Rita – Moritat auf die sozialistische Menschengemeinschaft – Ballade auf die plebejische Venus' (26-32). Combining elements of each of these genres, Biermann's song takes the form of an 8-line stanza with irregular rhymes and enjambement. There is a clear narrative line, however, which tells the tale of Rita whose drink-fuelled husband murders her baby on her doorstep in the first stanza because he believes that the child is not his. Biermann highlights the positive human side of socialism, as Rita's work colleagues treat her gently after the death of the child and a work team tries to cater for her practical needs, renovating her dark, damp flat in one weekend.

Rita discovers the power of her beauty and puts it to good use, so that before long she has a team of men who try to fix her flat until she has a brand new home where she holds great

⁵³⁴ Wolf Biermann, *Für meine Genossen: Hetznieder, Balladen, Gedichte* (Berlin: Wagenbach, 1972).



celebrations. Biermann conflates her story ironically in a self-referential literary progression into the following stanza:

Blutrot von der Moritat fiel
Rita bleich in die Romanze
Und von da sank Rita tiefer
In die fröhlichste Ballade (29)

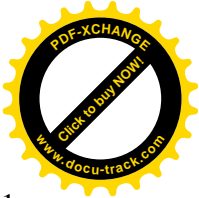
While her husband lies in prison, Rita exploits men to achieve her own ends and so stages her own small feminist revolution:

Männlich sind die Machtorgane
Die Organe der Gesellschaft
Alle staatlichen Organe
Sind aus Männern. Gegen Menschen
Hilft der Mensch nicht. Gegen Männer
Helfen Frauen. (31)

Her *pièce de resistance* is that, when she hears that her husband is due to be released from prison, she knows that she will have to move from her suspiciously renovated flat, so she seduces a man high enough up in the system so that he can mistakenly put her block of flats on the demolition list. In the final stanza Rita takes her husband back and leads him directly from the prison doors to their new flat. Biermann ends the song with a movement from the *Moritat* towards prose:

Und hier strauchelt die Romanze
Und die Moritat verendet
Und hier schrumpft auch die Ballade
Ein Roman schluckt Mann und Frau, und
Ihre neue Kinder – leben (32)

The song (*Romanze/Moritat/Ballade*) is amusing, entertaining and shows ironically how the socialist system can be manipulated and worked to the advantage of the individual.



In his section 'Unzurechnungsfähigkeit' Biermann includes the self-fulfilling prophetic dream 'Ballade vom Traum' (73-74). Written in 1969 the ballad tells of the nightmare of being ejected from the DDR which becomes reality in 1976. Coupled with this, 'Die Stasi-Ballade' (68-71) expresses his fears and his frustrations at the situation in which he has been placed in the DDR. He outlines the strange interdependent relationship he feels with the Stasi who are instructed to observe him and the strange irony that 'ihr allein kennt all mein Leid' (69). Being under constant surveillance, Biermann amuses himself by thinking that the cassettes that they record of him actually provide a new outlet for his work:

Und ich weiß ja: Hin und wieder
singt im Bett ihr meine Lieder (69)

Biermann uses the ballad form to capture his experiences and to put them into a form which is easily accessible to people, and can get a pointed message across while providing entertainment. 'Die Stasi-Ballade' illustrates well Biermann's personal and artistic predicament in the early 1970s:

Wenn wir singen oder grad
Konjak kippen, das wär schad
ach, bedenkt: ich sitz hier fest
darf nach Ost nicht, nicht nach West
darf nicht singen, darf nicht schreien
darf nicht, was ich bin, auch sein (71)

Biermann continues to comment on the state of the DDR both before and after his *Ausbürgerung*. Often he uses the ballad form and the personal narrative. His songs sum up succinctly the difficulties and complexities of the political and social situations facing people, in particular people of his ilk, in Germany during the post-war period.



The final collection which can be considered within the time frame of this chapter includes one very significant ballad about Biermann's expulsion from the DDR and his consequent thoughts on the state of the two nations. It is 'Deutsches Miserere (Das Bloch Lied)' (199-206) published in 1978.⁵³⁵ It refers to Ernst Bloch, the East German philosopher who decided to stay in the West after being cut off by the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961 while on a lecture tour of West Germany. The ballad exemplifies Biermann's take on dealing with history, whether personal or national; in *Blatt für Deutschland* he writes 'Es gibt nur einen Weg des Umgangs mit eigener Geschichte: sich immer in die Wahrheit retten.'⁵³⁶ This ballad exhibits this clearly:

Und als ich von Deutschland nach Deutschland
Gekommen bin in das Exil
Da hat sich für mich geändert
So wenig, ach! und so viel
Ich hab ihn am eigenen Leibe
Gemacht, den brutalen Test:
Freiwillig von Westen nach Osten
Gezwungen von Ost nach West

Die Völker drumrum um Deutschland
Die haben vielleicht ein Glück!
Großdeutschland, es ist zerbrochen
In zwei verfeindete Stück
Die beiden häßlichen Helden
Sie halten einander in Schach
Der Kleinere gibt nicht Ruhe
Aber der Größere gibt nicht nach. (199)

Neither East nor West Germany escape critique in Biermann's ballad and the German misery is not limited to either state. Being a 'true' Communist, Biermann's nations are not national, but rather those of Disraeli's rich and poor and it is the division amongst the left-wing socialists that he criticises as much as the division of Germany:

⁵³⁵ Wolf Biermann, *Preußischer Ikarus, Lieder / Balladen / Gedichte / Prosa* (Cologne: Kiepenhauer & Witsch, 1978)

⁵³⁶ Quoted in *Freitag* 38, September 2003, <http://www.freitag.de/2003/38/03380301.php>. Date of access 021106.



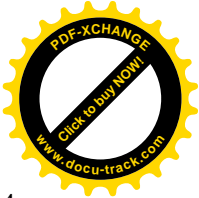
Und die Linken hassen einander
Mehr als den Klassenfeind!
Eh wir uns selber einen
Wird Deutschland auch nicht geeint (201)

Each of these ballads by Süverkrüp, Degenhardt and Biermann show the flexibility of the ballad form, the extent to which it functions as a foundation for each of the artists to build upon and to deviate from and also its ability to be the carrier of a wide range of social and political themes and criticisms.

3.6 Germany

The second section of ballads dealing with Germany and specifically with the German Nazi past incorporates some older ballads but primarily focuses on ballads written by Degenhardt, Biermann, Süverkrüp and Mey. As discussed earlier in the chapter while looking at the influence of the Kröher brothers, the song ‘Die Moorsoldaten’ was very significant in highlighting the fate of oppositional thinkers during the Nazi period. Hans Drach’s ballad ‘Mein Vater wird gesucht’,⁵³⁷ written in the mid-1930s similarly reveals the atrocities meted out by the Gestapo and the SA on those who did not agree with the National Socialist position. It became a very popular song and was performed by Peter Rohland as part of his ‘Lieder Deutscher Demokraten’ series, and later by Zupfgeigenhansel and Fiedel Michel. It tells the story of a father who has run away because he was in danger from the SA:

⁵³⁷ The full text is included in the Appendix No. 8.



Mein Vater wird gesucht, er kommt nicht mehr nach Haus,
sie hetzen ihn mit Hunden, vielleicht ist er gefunden
und kommt nicht mehr nach Haus.

The song explains that the SA put about the rumour that he had committed suicide, but an alternative story spread by his friends claimed that he had been shot by the SA. The final stanza has something of the ethos of the Horst Wessel Lied in it:

Heut' weiß ich ganz genau, warum sie das getan.
Wir werden doch vollenden, was er nicht könnt' beenden -
Und Vater geh voran

The legacy of those who were martyred or presumed martyred by the Nazi forces finds its inheritance in the successive generations who are committed to challenging injustice and fascism wherever they find it. This ballad shows how post-war Germany, and in particular the Liedermacher and new German folk groups, drew on oppositional songs from the past to provide a challenge for the present.

Although all of the songs which feature in this chapter exhibit balladesque features, an early Wolf Biermann song deliberately evokes a traditional ballad. 'Das Barlach Lied' (1963)⁵³⁸ contains the apostrophe to the mother in a time of danger, familiar from well-known traditional ballads such as Lord Randal / Lord Ronald (Child 12)⁵³⁹ and Edward / Son David (Child 13) which was translated into German in the 18th century.⁵⁴⁰ It becomes apparent that the style of 'Das Barlach Lied' is deliberately old-fashioned, evoking the poignancy of the murder ballad. The repeated conversation between mother and son in both Biermann's and the traditional ballad stresses the impending threat. In the Scottish

⁵³⁸ The full text of the ballad is found in the Appendix No. 3.

⁵³⁹ The text of the ballad is quoted in Emily Lyle's *Scottish Ballads*, pp. 257-58.

⁵⁴⁰ Child 13, the ballad 'Edward' / 'Son David', was reworked as 'Die Schlangenköchin'.



ballad, this takes the form of the certainty of death, and in Biermann's song, the all-pervasiveness of the oppressive regime in its many forms. The apostrophe of the mother to the son 'O, where have you been to, Lord Ronald my son?' is echoed in the opening lines of 'Das Barlach Lied' 'Ach Mutter mach die Fenster zu'.⁵⁴¹

The incremental repetition of 'mach die Fenster zu', 'mach die Türe zu' and the final ominous 'mach die Augen zu' echo the constant questioning of the mother to the son in the Lord Ronald ballad. In the traditional ballad murder and death are revealed in the final stanza, whereas in Biermann's ballad the angels fall to the earth dead in each of the refrains. The key to Biermann's ballad lies in the title with its reference to Barlach, the sculptor, most famous for his 1927 angel sculpture 'Der Schwebende' which was displayed in Güstrow Cathedral as a memorial to the fallen soldiers of the First World War. It was seized by the Nazis in 1937 and melted down as an example of degenerative art, because it did not reveal the glory of war. Biermann's song questions the lessons that have or have not been learnt despite the atrocities of war and of the Nazi regime. Just as during the Third Reich artists were persecuted and banned, Biermann at the time of writing was also forbidden to write or perform as the East German state exercised its control over its most critical voices. Biermann draws the parallels between both states in his song, with the threat of state oppression and violence being symbolized in the final stanza and refrain:

Ach Mutter mach die Augen zu
Der Regen und die Ratten
Jetzt dringt es durch die Ritzen ein
Die wir vergessen hatten

⁵⁴¹ This is echoed even more directly in Bob Dylan's song of the same year, 'A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall' which begins: 'Oh, where have you been, my blue-eyed son?' on *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan*, 1963. It was also very familiar in Scotland where the ballad 'Son David' was one of Jeannie Robertson's most poignant ballads. Perthshire singer Sheila Douglas also wrote a ballad 'O Mither, Mither' based on the same structure.



Was soll aus uns noch werden
Uns droht so große Not
Vom Himmel auf die Erden
Falln sich die Engel tot

That the East German Liedermacher draws such parallels shows that the same problematic legacy of the Nazi period also affected the DDR, only in a more subtle form.

A very clear parallel with the specifically Scottish folk tradition lies in Biermann's adaptation of a Burns song. Seen as the epitome of Scottishness, Robbie Burns lends his words to a tradition of German determination and survival. Stemming from Ferdinand Freiligrath's translation of Burns' 'A Man's a Man For a' That' in 1843, by the height of the 1848 revolution, Freiligrath had turned his translation into a new song 'Trotz alledem'.

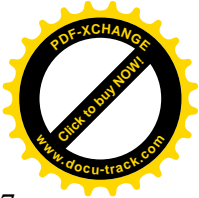
The final verse establishes a common humanity, similar to Burns:

Nur was zerfällt, vertretet ihr!
Seid Kasten nur, trotz alledem!
Wir sind das Volk, die Menschheit wir!
Sind ewig drum, trotz alledem!
Trotz alledem und alledem!
So kommt denn an, trotz alledem!
Ihr hemmt uns, doch ihr zwingt uns nicht –
Unser die Welt trotz alledem!⁵⁴²

This version became widespread during the 1970s and was actualised for the Wyhl protests in the following anonymous stanza:

Das was ein heißer Erörterungstermin,
Trotz Regen, Schnee und alledem!
Nun aber, da es Blüten schneit,
Nun ist es kalt, trotz alledem!
Trotz alledem und alledem –
Trotz Wilster, Wyhl und alledem.
Ein schnöder, scharfer Winterwind
Durchfröstelt uns trotz alledem!

⁵⁴² *Lieder der Revolution von 1848*, also quoted in *Deutsch-Folk*, p. 81.



Further versions by singers like Hannes Wader followed before Wolf Biermann wrote his ballad of the same name for his 1978 collection *Für meine Genossen*. He addresses the Nazi legacy directly in the following stanza:

Die Nazis kriechen aus dem Loch
Mit Hakenkreuz und alledem.
Die Ratten kommen wieder hoch,
Trotz Grundgesetz und alledem.
- Trotz alledem und alledem!
Schlimmer sind die Nazis, die so schön
Die Kurve kriegen, hier im Staat,
als Demokrat, trotz alledem!

After his expulsion from East Germany, he called his first album made in the west *Trotz alledem* (1982) and added a foreword to the song to express his definitive position on Germany:

Dies Deutschland ist mein Vaterland
Und ist mir kalt, trotz alledem
Zerrissen wie ich keines fand
Und doch mein Land – trotz alledem
Trotz alledem und alledem:
Wer sich wehrt, lebt eh sehr unbequem!
Die Wahrheit tut im Osten weh
Im Westen auch! trotz alledem.⁵⁴³

Biermann thus embraces a new sense of personal national identity, in which both parts of Germany become his and both are realistically seen as having their own difficulties. In the album liner notes he describes his attachment to the Scottish concept of common humanity despite everything saying that they have no history of being misused, not even by the Nazis, and can therefore be safely appropriated:

⁵⁴³ Wolf Biermann *Trotz Alledem!* CBS 82975 (1982).



...deswegen nahm ich für mein neues TROTZ ALLEDEM die schottische Weise (...). Und ich habe bisher nirgendwo gefunden, daß dieses wunderbare Wort jemals von Reaktionären in den Mund genommen wurde. Die Nazis haben viele Lieder und Organisationsformen der Arbeiterbewegung erfolgreich mißbraucht, aber dieses Wort nicht. Das kommt wohl, weil in diesem optimistischen Wort zuviel Schmerz gebunden ist, zuviel Trauer, zuviel Geschichtsbewußtsein: trotz alle dem und dem und dem ...⁵⁴⁴

Biermann thus draws on a central tenet of Scottish national identity in order to present a brave and determined new sense of sensible hope and optimism in the face of all difficulties and injustices. Hamish Henderson also echoed these words when describing the overtly political nature of the Scottish folk revival, explaining in 1973 that it was rooted in the struggles of the 1930s in ‘an aspect of anti-fascism, a rejection of what was already being planned for Europe – a kind of “high heid yins’ paradise” – the revival is “a man’s a man for a’ that”...’⁵⁴⁵ The concept of both revivals being of the people was central to the momentum in both Germany and Scotland after the Second World War.

Many of the Liedermacher in the 1960s and ‘70s used their art to address the problematic issue of Germany after the Nazi period. Many of these themes continued to be relevant after the time frame of the German folk revival. In the work of both Wolf Biermann and Reinhard Mey, the struggle to come to terms with the specifically German past and its issues remained topical. One of the earliest ballads within the frame of the folk revival to deal with the Nazi past is Dieter Süverkrüp’s 1965 ballad ‘Kirschen auf Sahne’.⁵⁴⁶ This includes a narrative but it is couched in a more complex, more impressionistic poem. The song begins:

⁵⁴⁴ Record notes to Wolf Biermann *Trotz Alledem!*

⁵⁴⁵ ‘Resurgimento! An Interview with Geordie McIntyre’, *New Edinburgh Review*, August 1973, p. 12ff. Here p.13.

⁵⁴⁶ The song was published in 1968 in *Da habt Ihr es!* (Hamburg: Hoffmann & Campe, 1968). It is also included in Pinkerneil’s *Das grosse deutsche Balladenbuch*, (Königstein: Athenäum, 1978), pp. 828-829. The full text is provided in the Appendices No. 9.



In dem kleinen Café
mit dem Kopfschmerzenlicht
Sitzt ein Liebespaar drin,
so als wär's in Paris,
aber da ist es nicht.

The romantic setting of the rendezvous is described as being more akin to life in the French capital rather than in Germany, with her troubled history. The characters in the song are not untouched by Nazi history for the most significant person in the song, the 'zitttrige Mann', had spent five years in a concentration camp because he was in the opposition during the war and has been physically and emotionally scarred by the experience.

Süverkrüp places the image of the cherries in the snow at the centre of the song:

Kirschen auf Sahne -
Blutspur im Schnee.
Eine Mark fünfzig
sanftes Klischee
In dem kleinen Café...

The blood on the snow may echo Biblical images of innocence: 'though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow' (Isaiah 1:18), yet the ballad does not deal in simple terms with the good/evil dichotomy. The man who was imprisoned in the concentration camp is also seen as being complicit with the prison guards, for he was paid five Marks a day in Auschwitz for his services which remains as a guilty secret within him:

und der alte Mann,
der mal im Widerstand war.
spricht nicht gerne davon.
Pro Tag Auschwitz fünf Mark;
wieviel macht das im Jahr?

Süverkrüp also introduces the images of the thirty pieces of silver, with which Judas betrayed Jesus in the lines:

Manche war'n Juden –



manche war'n rot,
Dreißig Verletzte –
schimmliges Brot.
Und da denkt er:
es hat sich vielleicht doch gelohnt.

The old man is seen as a very human consequence of inhuman times. Süverkrüp does not apportion blame and describes with pathos the dilemma of the man:

Und der zittrige Mann
wird verlegen und geht.
Denn er schämt sich,
weil all' die verdammte
Erinnerung nicht mehr verweht.

The man becomes an example of the collective guilt which was the topic of much discussion after the war, yet he is also an individual who cuts a tragic figure. Süverkrüp concludes the ballad with a rhyming quatrain which functions as an envoi providing a stark and shocking image of the Holocaust:

Leben ist Leben –
wer hat das nicht?
Zehntausend Tote –
Neon macht Licht.

It is rare in this period that the Holocaust is so directly addressed. In other ballads, for example, Degenhardt's 'Wölfe mitten im Mai'⁵⁴⁷ from 1964 the issue is addressed obliquely in the lines:

»Kinder, spielt, vom Rauch dort wissen wir nichts
Und riechen auch nichts.« (86)

Indirect allusions to Auschwitz are also made in the lines '»Jetzt kommen Zeiten, da heißt es, heraus / mit dem Gold aus dem Mund«' (87) which can be interpreted as referring to

⁵⁴⁷ *Politische Lieder*, pp. 86-87.



the Nazi's removal of gold from the teeth of their prisoners before sending them to the gas chambers. As Degenhardt's ballad is about a people refusing to observe the signs of warning and take action before disaster overtakes them, these interpretations are contextualised. It also includes the familiar allusion to Biblical betrayal. August the shepherd's words '»Rasch, holt die Sensen, sonst ist es zu spät. / Schlagt sie tot, noch ehe der Hahn dreimal kräht«' incorporate images of the scythes of the Grim Reaper and the cock crowing three times while Peter betrays Jesus. Degenhardt portrays Germany as being betrayed by her own complacency and refusal to acknowledge what was happening with the country, both during and after the war.

This complacency is also evident in Degenhardt's 'Ballade von der schönen alten Stadt und von dem listigen Lehrer.'⁵⁴⁸ Despite having lived through the Bauernkrieg, the 1848 revolution and the 1918 November revolution, the beautiful old town still remained cut off from the reality of what was happening in Germany throughout the Third Reich:

Ja, und es wird in alten Mären
heute noch wunders viel geseit,
wie Bischof, Bürger und Banken wachten
über den Schlaf im dritten Reich.

Here Degenhardt places the blame on the important people in the city, those who hold the power and who do not want their own peace to be disturbed. This stultifying attitude to life also comes to the fore in Degenhardt's famous 1965 ballad 'Deutscher Sonntag'.⁵⁴⁹ In the ballad he describes the suffocating niceness and tameness of the socially-respectable Sunday in a small German town where 'da frier ich vor Gemütlichkeit' (91). Allusions to

⁵⁴⁸ *Kommt an den Tisch*, Song 100.

⁵⁴⁹ *Politische Lieder*, 91-92, *Kommt an den Tisch*, Song 18.



the darker side of German history are oblique, symbolised for example in the crows that perch on the garden walls and the strange scream which is ignored:

Hat nicht irgendwas geschrien?
Jetzt nicht auf dem Fenster sehn,
wo auf Hausvorgärtenmauern
ausgefrante Krähen lauern.
Was nur da geschrien hat?
Ich werd so entsetzlich satt.

The attitude of the town is suffocating and self-righteous. Ironic echoes of the ‘Horst Wessel Lied’ are again found in the lines ‘Dann geht’s zu den Schlachtfeldstätten / um im Geiste mitzutreten’ (92)⁵⁵⁰ but it is only the First World War which is remembered by the old men ‘die an Sedan denken’ while the Second is ignored.

The only other ballad in which Degenhardt deals explicitly with the Nazi past is ‘Horsti Schmandhoff’⁵⁵¹ (<1966). Degenhardt introduces the ballad in folksong style saying:

Hier ist die Ballade von Horsti Schmandhoff,
früher HJ-Führer, heute Entwicklungshelfer. (104)

By so doing Degenhardt sets up an explicit comparison between the past and the present, between what appears to be the dark history of days in the Hitler Youth and the positive present of working in the developing world. More important than the actual story of Horsti Schmandhoff with his military glories in the Second World War is the fact that Degenhardt confronts Schmandhoff’s old friends with the repeated ‘da wolltet ihr mal genau wie Horsti Schmandhoff sein’ (104-105). In the song Degenhardt tries to confront a generation with the fact that they wanted everything that Schmandhoff symbolised and that they cannot or

⁵⁵⁰ This echoes the lines ‘Kameraden, die Rotfront und Reaktion erschossen, / marschier’n im Geist in unsern Reihen mit.’

⁵⁵¹ *Politische Lieder*, pp. 104-106. There is a companion song in *Kommt an den Tisch* called ‘Die Kumpanen von Horsti’ (Song 80) which describes his friends sitting in their Stammtisch in old age, but there is little of relevance in the song.



should not hide behind their own hypocrisy and projections of blame onto another. The irony in the ballad is that Schmandhoff's introduction as an 'Entwicklungshelfer' sounds sacrificial and philanthropic, but the picture which appears in a magazine of Schmandhoff surrounded by his thirty naked wives, suggests that he is profiting from the situation and has used the despotic tendencies he exhibited in the *Hitler Jugend* to establish his small empire within the colonial system.

Degenhardt's 1970 ballad which almost tells his own life story 'Fast autobiographischer Lebenslauf eines westdeutschen Linken'⁵⁵² shows an attempt to deal with German history. After travelling round Europe and settling in France, the West German left-winger returns 'Zurück im Deutschland der Naziväter' (141) to face up to life in the post-war era. He tries to find outlets for his 'rote Wut' (141), in Brecht's plays, in politics, in the rebellious drum of Günther Grass's Oskar and he is enraptured by Wolfgang Neuss's timpani and alternative cabaret in the late 60s. He also however, sees the reality behind the times:

Die Pauke vom Neuss hat den Auftakt geschlagen
Zu den späten sechziger Jahren.
Und er sah dann hinter den Barrikaden,
wie weit davor schon wieder mal waren:
die Schüsse auf Dutschke, Bildzeitungshetzen,
Faschistenfaust hinter Notstandsgesetzen.
Die Wut wurde klarer und kalt, wurde Haß.
Hasta la victoria siempre gilt das. (141)

Degenhardt addresses several of the issues that have already been raised in the social issues section of this chapter, namely the assassination attempt on Dutschke, the role of the *Bildzeitung* in the media campaign against the students and the uproar about the so-called Emergency Laws which were seen by many as being a dangerous exploitation of power by

⁵⁵² *Kommt an den Tisch*, Song 74, *Politische Lieder* pp. 141-42.



the government and a reflection that the country had not learnt the lessons it should have after suffering so long under a fascist dictatorship and that horrors of history repeating itself are very present.

Degenhardt uses many of his other songs to highlight issues of national identity, confirming some of the statements that have been made earlier in the chapter. The issue of German national identity only being activated in opposition to another country, or by the encouragement of outside influences, apparent throughout the folk revival, is once again stressed in his song 'Angenommen'⁵⁵³ (<1968) where he comments:

Aber nehmen wir mal an,
Deutschland läge östlich vom Rhein.
Nehmen wir mal an,
Deutschland würde Deutschland sein.
Dann wäre sie plötzlich wieder da,
die ganz große Resignation.
Jeder zog sich mal wieder zurück
In die geschützte Privatbastion,
bejammerte mal wieder Deutschlands Schicksalsleid
und guckte wieder mal nach Frankreich voller Neid. (91)

Degenhardt identifies a deep-rooted problem with German national consciousness, that the inferiority complex, whether it is towards France to the West, America across the Atlantic, or to the Celtic countries, is so deep-rooted that it has become integral to German national identity in the form of an unpleasant thorn in the flesh.

⁵⁵³ *Kommt an den Tisch*, Song 66, *Die Lieder*, p. 91.



As a socialist who became a communist, Degenhardt identifies with the DDR as holding the potential to be a 'Gelobtes Land'. In 'Ja, dieses Deutschland meine ich',⁵⁵⁴ the Germany in question is not the Germany in which he lives.

Ja, dieses Deutschland meine ich,
wo wir uns finden
unter den Linden
und auch noch anderswo.

Und ist kein Traum das Land,
geträumt aus rotem Mohn,
nämlich ein Stück davon
das gibt es schon.

The ideal land of Germany, which combines the beliefs that Degenhardt holds, is idealised in this song, which quotes once again from Goethe's 'Mignon', 'Kennst du das Land, wo die Zitronen blühn' and also from the folk song, already echoed in his own 1966 'Abendlied', 'Kein schöner Land, wohl unter Linden'.⁵⁵⁵ He stresses that it is not a chimera, but that it exists in part already.⁵⁵⁶ Strangely, in terms of the comparison with the Scottish tradition, it is not often that the Scottish political songwriters dealt with Scotland in a positive manner. Matt McGinn's 'I Hae Seen the Hielands' is an exception that encompasses the urban grit of Glasgow tenements and the beauty of the Highlands and expresses a proud nationalist line 'I will brag o' my native land wherever I may go.'⁵⁵⁷

While the Germans were dealing with their difficulties in establishing a healthy national identity, during the Scottish folk revival the Scottish singers focused more on their version

⁵⁵⁴ Ibid, Song 98.

⁵⁵⁵ The folksong begins ,Kein schöner Land in dieser Zeit als wie das uns're weit und breit / Wo wir uns finden wohl unter Linden zur Abendzeit.'

⁵⁵⁶ The notion of a utopian state is also present in Scottish folksong. In particular Hamish Henderson's 'Ballad of the Men of Knoydart' is a battle song against the monied oppressor and the desire for Scots to be free to own their own land. *Collected Poems and Songs* (Edinburgh: Curly Snake, 2000), pp. 128-130.

⁵⁵⁷ McGinn *of the Calton* p. 130.



of contested nationhood, where Scottish national identity reveals its insecurity in comparison with England. The Faslane and CND protest ballads are clear examples, but there are two other main areas where Scottish national identity was stressed through the ballad. These surround the stealing of the Stone of Destiny from Westminster Cathedral on Christmas Day 1950 and the furore caused by Queen Elizabeth's coronation as Elizabeth II in 1951, when she had never been Elizabeth I of Scotland. While of great interest in and of themselves, these ballads are not specifically relevant to this thesis as they do not contribute to the overall comparison as the events are specifically Scottish.

3.7 International Solidarity

The ballad was also used to deal with topics which went far beyond national borders. The final section in this chapter discusses ballads which were used to express international solidarity, from anti-war songs, songs in support of the student revolts, songs against institutionalised injustice, Easter March songs and CND protest songs. The diversity in these themes reveals how variable the ballad form has become. Many of these themes cut across national boundaries, allowing Scottish singers to sing songs in support of the English Aldermaston CND marches, German singers to sing ballads in support of American civil rights campaigners and against the Vietnam War.

The first pair of ballads dealing with international injustice are both by Degenhardt. Peter Schütt describes this stage in Degenhardt's development and the importance of these ballads as folksongs as follows:



Sie bezeugen seine wachsende Volksverbundenheit ebenso sehr wie seinen proletarischen Internationalismus. Lieder wie [...] »Die Ballade von den Untaten der Angela Davis« oder »Sacco und Vanzetti« sind schnell zu Volksliedern demokratischen Charakters geworden.⁵⁵⁸

The first song and the true story of ‘Angela Davis’,⁵⁵⁹ was originally titled ‘Die Ballade von den Untaten der Angela Davis’ and contains the ironic subtitle ‘*Dies ist die Geschichte von den Untaten der Kommunistin Angela Davis und warum sie in die Gaskammer geschickt werden soll.*’ It describes the events that began on 13th January 1970 in California when Reagan was Governor. A racist prison guard shot dead three black men and was subsequently exonerated of their murders. Shortly after the trial he was found dead. Reagan took this opportunity to pin the blame on three Black Panthers who were in prison. During their trial, there was an attempt to storm the court and free them, which went terribly wrong, with all the prisoners and the judge losing their lives. At this point, the government tries to attach blame to Angela Davis.

Degenhardt released this song in 1972 on his album *Mutter Mathilde*, during the time of Macarthyism and Red Scares in the United States. The ballad is written in rhyming couplets with a single motivating final line to each stanza ‘Weiterhören, sag ich, weitersehn!’ The ballad is based around the blaming of Angela Davis, an African American and supporter of the Black Panthers, and also a communist, with complicity to murder, of which she is innocent. Degenhardt asks rhetorically in each stanza ‘Aber was hat das mit Angela Davis zu tun?’ The answer is clearly, that it has little to do with her, but everything to do with fear and power politics. As Degenhardt explains in the final stanza:

⁵⁵⁸ Peter Schütt, ‘Degenhardts Weg and die Seite der Arbeiterklasse’, in *Politische Lieder*, pp. 65-76, here p. 75.

⁵⁵⁹ *Kommt an den Tisch*, Song 89.



Die an der Macht sind, die wissen Bescheid:
Ihr mächtiges Ende ist nicht mehr weit,
wenn die Ohnmächtigen anfangen sich zu befreien.
Und da fiel ihnen Angela Davis ein.
Weil die sagte schon immer, daß das so ist.
Und die sagt das nicht nur, denn sie ist Kommunist.
Darum klagt man sie an wegen Hilfe zum Mord
an dem Richter der Panther von Soledad.
Aber was auch geschieht: Er ist längst gemacht,
der Anfang vom Ende der Mördermacht.
Und lassen sie auch alle John Mills und Leutnant Calleys frei:
Angela Davis
Wird siegen und ihre Partei.

Degenhardt captures the spirit of international resistance to the tactics of the United States in their war against Communism and highlights the state injustice that is being perpetrated by those in the highest positions of power. He concludes, however, that the last word will lie with the Communist party and with Angela Davis, who was finally acquitted.

The second song, 'Sacco und Vanzetti'⁵⁶⁰ is balladesque, although much of the narrative is told by Degenhardt in his long spoken introduction. It highlights the injustice of the deaths of American Trade Union leaders Nicola Sacco and Bart Vanzetti who were put to death by electric chair in August 1927 for a murder they did not commit. Degenhardt parallels their situation with Angela Davis' and stresses that their sacrifices and their struggles will yield fruit eventually:

Dieses Lied, Nicola und Bart,
ist für euch und Angela.
Hinter euch steht die Welt,
in der das Volk die Macht schon hält. (127)

This ballad was translated from Joan Baez's English song and shows how the German folk revival incorporated other traditions and other international issues which had significance

⁵⁶⁰ *Kommt an den Tisch*, Song 93, *Die Lieder*, p. 127.



on a wider scale than purely national matters and often touched on universal human themes.⁵⁶¹

During the student revolts of 1968 the ballad was used as a means of information delivery and protest. Biermann's ballad 'Drei Kugeln auf Rudi Dutschke' has already been discussed and was especially relevant because it was smuggled in and was effectively a voice from East Berlin expressing what had taken place in the capital. Degenhardt's song '2. Juni 1967'⁵⁶² presages the riots and addresses the death of the student Benno Ohnesorg who was killed by a police officer during the protests against the Shah of Persia in Berlin. Ohnesorg's death became a rallying point for many in the left-wing scene in Germany and was also used as a touchstone, to indicate that the days of military violence were not behind the nation. The song again addresses the issue of German guilt, asking 'wer kann noch ruhig schlafen' when the deaths on the streets are 'nicht neu in diesem Land!' (109). This can be taken to refer to the Nazi history of Germany, or also, specifically to a similar death which took place in May 1954 in Essen, when a young man was shot during a demonstration against German rearmament.

The song takes a balladesque abab form and combines commentary and narrative. It highlights the injustice of the Grand Coalition which denies the true meaning of democracy and leaves the voters effectively with no choice. Degenhardt echoes Nazi imagery as the useless crosses on the voting papers become swastikas on the walls:

Jetzt schreiben wir die Kreuze an die Wände
Mit roter Farbe. Warum eure Wut?

⁵⁶¹ Degenhardt's release of the song in 1972 also tied in with songs about Angela Davis released by John Lennon and Yoko Ono and the Rolling Stones in the same year.

⁵⁶² *Politische Lieder*, pp. 109-110.



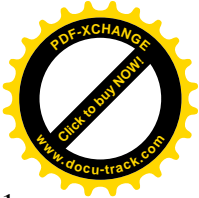
Das ist doch Farbe. Aber eure Hände
sind seit Berliner Tagen voller Blut. (109)

The blame for the death of Ohnesorg is made more explicit in the version of the song included in the *Politische Lieder* collection. Degenhardt includes a final stanza which breaks completely with the ballad rhythm and functions somewhat as an envoi, or a commentary on the situation. In it Degenhardt offers an ironic quotation from the police officer, Karl-Heinz Kurras, who shot Ohnesorg:

»Der Student Benno Ohnesorg hat sich am 2. Juni 1967
selbst erschossen, mit einem langen Messer, was wie 'ne
Armbanduhr aussah.« Kurras (110)

The outrageous excesses of the quotation, with its exaggerated humour, serve to illustrate how impossible it was to believe that Kurras actually thought that Ohnesorg was armed and to belie the claims that he had shot himself. This final comment is not included in *Die Lieder*, the new collection of songs recently released; neither does it appear in *Kommt an den Tisch unter Pflaumenbaumen*. It is suggested that it is only sung in the live versions, and the sanitised version is that included in the other collections. After the above quotation, there is a passage which has become the opening passage in the song 'Notar Bolamus'.

Die zwischen den Zeilen
Widerstand leisteten,
damals
die sich zurückzogen
in das Reich Beethovens,
damals,
und dann wieder herauskamen
und immer noch schreiben,
die heben jetzt mahnend die Stimme:
Maßhalten, sagen sie, maßhalten,
ihr Polizisten,
maßhalten,
ihr Studenten,



maßhalten,
ihr Exploiteure und Gouverneure,
maßhalten,
ihr Arbeiter, Chinesen und Neger,
maßhalten, ihr Mörder,
maßhalten, ihr Opfer.

The call to regard everything in moderation is seen as diluting the responsibility that the authorities should have and encourages a passive approach to serious political problems. It is this approach that Degenhardt criticises in the adjoining song, for Bolamus, the notary, mildly protests '»Nur Auschwitz«, sagt er, »das / war ein bißchen viel.«' (110-11). The implicit criticism is that advocating moderation turns the citizens into 'Mitläufer', akin to the Nazi period, but moderation from the authorities would spare them blood-guilt.

The second subsection is the role of the Easter March songs. These songs exhibit ballad features only loosely, mainly in the stanzaic form. As was observed in the Nazi chapter, if direct propaganda is needed, the ballad form is often not the best means of delivery. Songs like Degenhardt's 'Ostermarschlied '68' is written in ballad stanzas, but has little of narrative about it, likewise Fasia Jansen's Trade Union song 'Lied vom Beitrag' is written in rhyming quatrains but its direct address to the audience is not considered balladesque. Many of these songs were also so topical that they did not become folksongs or exhibit longevity and can only be sourced on contemporary recordings. As Jansen explains, the common identity and common purpose won out over all other national and political opinions:

Das hat uns so entsetzt und bewegt, daß wir es fertigbrachten, alle politischen
Differenzen in den Hintergrund zu stellen, egal ob Christen, Sozialisten oder
Kommunisten.⁵⁶³

⁵⁶³ *Dorn im Ohr*, p. 253.



Jansen was also very involved in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the specific protests at Wyhl in 1973-75. Several of the most important ballads that were central during those protests were written by Walter Mossmann. Here the ballad form did seem to be effective. The 'Ballade von der Rentnerin Anna Mack'⁵⁶⁴ exhibits a clear 4343 abcb form with a refrain and tells the life story of Anna Mack. From her difficult beginnings in the Home Front during the First World War, her rape and subsequent pregnancy, to the traumas of the Second World War, Anna Mack had always been counselled to stay out of trouble:

Halt dich raus, mein Kind,
stell dich taub und blind,
aber laß dich auf keinen Streit ein!
Trag den Kopf nicht zu hoch,
du verlierst ihn noch,
das Leben wird dir Leid sein. (108)

She taught this lesson to her children as well, but when her husband dies she becomes aware that her children are taking part in the political protests happening around her:

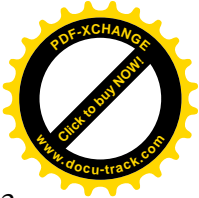
Im Fernseh sah sie die Kämpfe der Zeit,
in Brokdorf, Malville und Wyhl,
und wußte, da warn ihre Kinder dabei,
und sie sagte: Das ist kein Spiel.
Schrieb einen Brief und sie weinte dabei:
Halt dich raus... (110)

Despite this lifelong strategy, when her flat is on the list of dwellings to be demolished,⁵⁶⁵ she suddenly decides to join the protesters:

Dann flog sie aus ihrer Wohnung raus,
das Haus wurde weg-saniert.
Da fanden sich Demonstranten sein,
da wurde laut protestiert.
Und plötzlich war Anna Mack mit dabei
und schrie: Polizei = SS!

⁵⁶⁴ *Dorn im Ohr*, pp. 108-110.

⁵⁶⁵ Anna Mack's experience has its parallels in a protest action carried out mostly by older inhabitants of the Rheinpreußen estate in Duisburg in protest at the demolition of their estate and the privatization of their colliery housing.



Sie kämpfte mit ihrer Scham, aber dann
machte sie kurzen Prozeß.
Sie sagte: Ich hab ja kein Leben mehr,
das ihr mir versauen könnt.
Und das ich mal hatte, das ist versaut!
Sie zeigte die leeren Händ.
Und da stand sie und wußte nicht weiter und wie...
 Ja die hielt sich raus
 Und die hielt das aus,
 da mußte das Leben Leid sein.
Und jetzt kommt sie doch
Aus ihrem Mauseloch
und läßt sich auf einen Streit ein
und läßt sich auf einen Streit ein. (110)

The lesson of Mossmann's song is simple; if an old age pensioner can see the logic of protesting against injustice, and change the habits of a lifetime, then anyone and everyone should be involved.

Throughout this thesis it has been apparent how certain songs have provided good material for parody and subversion. One of the most common, 'Die Wacht am Rhein', featured again during the Wyhl campaign. Walter Mossmann wrote a new version of the song specifically to be used as a 'Gebrauchslied' during the occupation of the site in October 1974. The ballad combines the concept of the Rhine Watch and the chorus of the American Trade Union song, 'Which side are you on?' The first stanza reads:



Im Elsaß und in Baden
war lange große Not
da schossen wir für unsre Herrn
im Krieg einander tot.
Jetzt kämpfen wir für uns selber
in Wyhl und Marckolsheim
wir halten hier gemeinsam
eine andere Wacht am Rhein.
Auf welcher Seite stehst du?
He! Hier wird ein Platz besetzt.
Hier schützen wir uns vor dem Dreck
*nicht morgen, sondern JETZT!*⁵⁶⁶

The use of a military song to raise the standard for a peaceful protest is particularly ironic and effective. The song is topical and addresses specific issues and personalities involved in the protests:

Am zwanzigsten September
da wars schon höchste Zeit,
da machten wir uns auf dem Platz
von CWM schön breit.
Und als er uns behindert hat,
Sicurani, der Wicht,
da machten wir die Grenze
auf den Brücken schnell mal dicht.

The image of betrayal which has been common throughout this chapter is also present in the image of the Mayor of Wyhl who is selling his people out for economic gain:

Es schlafen einige sehr schlecht
in Wyhl, in Wyhl, der Stadt,
weil dort der Bürgermeister
uns glatt verschaukelt hat.
Jetzt sitzt er mit Pistole
in seinem Judas-Haus
und denkt: „Hätt ichs doch nicht getan,
bald ist es mit mir aus!“

⁵⁶⁶ The song is difficult to find in printed form. It is quoted in Barbara's Boock essay 'Regionale Identität als Widerstand. Lieder aus den Auseinandersetzungen um das Kernkraftwerk in Wyhle' in Eckhard John (ed.) *Volkslied -- Hymne -- politisches Lied. Populäre Lieder in Baden-Wuerttemberg* (Münster, Waxmann, 2003), pp. 112 – 139 and is also provided in full in the Appendices, No. 10.



In Wyhl the combination of CND protests and ecological demonstrations created a potent combination. Mossmann describes the *Gebrauchscharakter* of his song in the following personal recollection:

Als die Polizei im Morgenrauen des 20. Februar 1975 den besetzten Platz in Wyhl räumte, mit Wasserwerfer und Prügeln auf die Leute losging, die sich eng aneinandergedrängt hatten, um sie einzeln wegzuschleifen und zu verhaften, sangen alle unablässig dieses Lied, wiederholten die Strophen, immer wieder dann der Refrain. Die Stimmung war extrem erregt, das Gefühl tatsächlich von „höchster Not“ war da, das Singen sollte trösten und Kräfte mobilisieren.⁵⁶⁷

The ballads used in protest actions during the folk revival served many purposes, to encourage, to entertain, to create a common sense of purpose and to motivate. That this was successful is apparent in the following contemporary reference in the *Badische Zeitung* on the 21st February 1975 it states the following:

Das schon in Marckolsheim bekannte Lied ‚Die Wacht am Rhein‘ wird gesungen. Mit jedem Vers scheint das Selbstbewußtsein der Singenden zu steigen.

In contrast, the following ballad encourages by entertaining. It falls into the category of CND songs, and stresses the ecological aspect, which was highly relevant throughout the 1970s. One particular ballad which expresses the fear associated with progress is the final ballad in this section, ‘Achterndiek’ by Hans Scheibner.⁵⁶⁸ The ballad is a very clever take on the mythical three wishes motif and is presented as a retelling of an old fairytale:

Vorspiel
Ihr Kinder dieser großen Zeit,
hört her und lernt was dazu:
Ein uraltes Märchen erzähle ich euch.
Vom Fischer un siner Fru!

⁵⁶⁷ Quoted in Walter Moßmann & Peter Schleuning, *Alte und neue Lieder. Entstehung und Gebrauch, Texte und Noten* (Hamburg: [n. Pub.], 1978). S. 17-80. See also http://www.mediaculture-online.de/fileadmin/bibliothek/mossmann_wachtamrhein/mossmann_wachtamrhein.html. Date of access 021106.

⁵⁶⁸ *Dorn im Ohr*, pp. 114-122.



The use of the dialect, as noted earlier in the chapter, is also a common feature of the Wyhl songs. The ballad tells the ‘mythical’ story of the village of Achterndiek and its Mayor Jonny Hansen and his wife Sybille. When the Mayor meets a talking fish one night his wife advises him to use the strange magic to wish for progress for Achterndiek, for an Autobahn and for industry. These things happen and the village becomes a town with factories, roads, large houses, streets, swimming pools, but also with the negative consequences that progress brings:

Da sah der Bürgermeister rings
Kamine, Silos und Tanks.
Fabriken, Kräne und totes Vieh.
Ihm war so bange und angst. (118)

However, as the Mayor is being praised for the extent of this progress, he continues to listen to his wife’s demands and eventually he is sent to ask the fish for a nuclear power station:

Das Wachstum unserer Industrie,
das funktioniert nicht mehr.
Es mangelt uns an Energie.
Ein Kernkraftwerk muß her!

Da wurde Jonny aber blaß.
>>Nee<<, rief er, >>das geht schief.
Das ist gefährlich, und die Luft
wird radioaktiv.<< (119-120)

As the Mayor goes to seek help from the fish, he discovers that the fish is ailing:

Und Jonny ging zum Strom und rief.
Der Fluß war braun und stank.
Nach Stunden kam der große Fisch
Kurzluftig und sehr krank. (120)

However, the fish is able to grant his wish, the power station is built and the demonstrators gather:



Am Fluß stand schon das Kernkraftwerk.
Und 'ne neue Strafanstalt.
Da saßen auch Demonstranten drin,
die hatten mit Gewalt

nicht vor den Baggern weichen wolln,
den Atom-Bauplatz besetzt.
Und weil sie so gerne sitzen gewollt,
na, da sitzen sie eben jetzt. (120)

The humour and ironic fairytale ending that Mossmann utilises in this ballad would not be lost on the demonstrators, for whom this song is a satirical comedy on the tragic consequences against which they are campaigning. The ending of the ballad is perhaps obvious, instead of being able to ask the fish to turn back the tide of progress and reverse his own wishes, the consequences of his choices have poisoned the fish, so that it dies and the only hope of regaining the rural landscape that had previously existed, dies with it. In accordance with the fairytale motif, the characters in the ballad are seen as receiving exactly what they wanted, and only too late realising that it was not what they actually wanted. Mossmann varies the refrain at the end of the ballad to the following:

Doch das gibt's ja nur in Achterndiek.
Und das liegt hinterm Deich.
Was in Achterndiek in der Nacht geschieht,
das glaubt kein Mensch, daß es so was gibt.
Oder weißt du einen Vergleich?

»Un mine Fru heet Ilsebill.«
Is god, sä de Fisch,
un nu hett se, wat se will! (122)

The German folk revival spawned many types of songs, from *Aktions-* and *Gebrauchslieder* to *Vortragslieder*. This ballad is an excellent example of a *Vortragslied* that would entertain and encourage protesters by ridiculing those responsible for the matter.



There were very clear parallels in Scotland with the extensive use of the ballad and political protest song at the protests in the Holy Loch from 1961 onwards against the siting of the American Polaris Trident submarines at Faslane Naval Base.⁵⁶⁹ Hugh Macdiarmid praised these protest singers saying: ‘These young poets have created a new Scots folk-poetry in their ballads against the siting of the Polaris base in Scotland.’⁵⁷⁰ While the cause of the protest was ostensibly the CND campaign, it was the specific siting of the base within the Scottish borders, which caused the anger against the American submarines to be conflated with a staunch Scottish nationalist position not to be dictated to by either major power, Britain or America. In Germany, the issue remained the ecological / human costs of the nuclear power plants and the matter did not involve additional aspects of national identity.

Interestingly, many well-known songs were re-scripted for the purposes of protest. It is significant that old ballads were also redrafted. The famous ballad ‘Es waren zwei Königskinder’ from the 15th century with the tragic division of the two lovers becomes a song about two farmers who cannot reach the nuclear power station because the protestors block their way:

Es waren zwei Landeskinder,
die planten ein Kraftwerk in Wyhl.

Sie konnten dazu nicht kommen, denn:
Die Widerstand bei Wyhl war viel zu viel.⁵⁷¹

⁵⁶⁹ Some of the most well-known at the time were ‘Ding Dong Dollar’, John Mack Smith’s comic ballad ‘The Misguided Missile and the Misguided Miss’, Freddy Anderson’s ‘The Polis o’ Argyll’) and ‘Queens Park 1962’ all printed in *Ding Dong Dollar – Anti-Polaris Songs*, May 1961 (Glasgow: Glasgow Music Song Guild, 1961).

⁵⁷⁰ Quoted in *Alias MacAlias*, p. 141.

⁵⁷¹ *Ad Marginem*, XXXII / 1975, http://www.uni-koeln.de/ew-fak/Mus_volk/leitartikel/adm32.html, Date of access 201106.



The cumulative effect could be clearly seen in 1977 when 50,000 people turned up to a solidarity concert on 24th September to hear many of the Liedermacher. The impact of commercialisation was also turned to good for the protestors, as benefit LPs, for example *Bauer Maas – Lieder gegen Atomenergie* helped to raise money to support the various causes.⁵⁷³

Mossmann's song 'In Mueders Stübele' also illustrated the strength that could be tapped into by taking a familiar folksong, changing the words and making it relevant to the situation at hand. This song became an anthem for the Wyhl anti-nuclear movement and shows the clear connection between the folk revival and the impact of the new social movements. Song was seen as central in the protest movement in the 1970s and the process of oral transmission allowed the songs to be adapted for different situations, regional accents and protests. It was also the CND movement in Scotland that created what has become Scotland's alternative anthem, Hamish Henderson's 'Freedom Come all Ye' which was originally written for CND marches in 1960 and is often touted as a potential national anthem, should Scotland decide to part company with the official monarchist anthem.⁵⁷⁴

The late 1960s and 1970s were also characterised by international solidarity over the war in Vietnam, events in Chile and experiences in Franco's Spain. Many of these themes were also important topics for the Liedermacher. The following selection is largely from

⁵⁷³ Various artists including Bruno & Klaus Saitenwind, Fiedel Michel, Tom Kannmacher, Frank Baier, Walter Mossmann, Kladderatsch, Schmetterlinge, *Bauer Maas – Lieder gegen Atomenergie*, LP (1978).

⁵⁷⁴ *Collected Poems and Songs*, pp. 143-44.



Degenhardt, with one ballad by Süverkrüp. Süverkrüp's 'Westernballade'⁵⁷⁵ was published in the collection *Da habt ihr es!* in 1968, along with Degenhardt, Neuss and Hüsich, but may have been composed slightly earlier. It tells the story of Jimmy Gray who begins the ballad as an employed worker with an oil company and ends in a soldier's grave after losing his life in Vietnam. The army summons him to Canada and thence to Vietnam where he is injured. Foul play is suggested for his screaming disturbs the sergeant and Süverkrüp describes how:

Erst als es Tag geworden war,
und als Jimmy Gray nicht mehr schrie,
und sein Röcheln auch nicht mehr zu hören war,
kamen zwei Sanitäter von der Kompanie.

Und sie nahmen ihm das Soldbuch ab,
und sie trugen ihn ins Tal
und spendierten ihm ein sehr solides Heldengrab.
Ein ganz alltäglicher Fall.

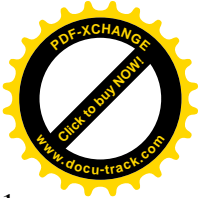
The stress of the ballad is on the conditions for the soldiers, for they are plucked out of their ordinary world and thrust into the army life and forced to fight. The irony lies in the final line, that death has become 'Ein ganz alltäglicher Fall.'

The remaining two ballads are both songs by Degenhardt. 'P.T. Aus Arizona'⁵⁷⁶ appeared on *Väterchen Franz* (1966) while 'Das Ereignis am Mondfalterfluß im Mai 1968'⁵⁷⁷ was recorded for the *Degenhardt Live* album in 1968 at the 'Internationaler Essener Songtagen'. 'P.T. Aus Arizona' provides a contrast to the 'Westernballade' because it is the story of an American GI living in Germany who flees when he is called up to go to Vietnam. Being a

⁵⁷⁵ The text is included in the Appendices No.11 and is also published in the collection *Da Habt Ihr es!* and Pinkerneil's *Das grosse deutsche Balladenbuch*, p. 828.

⁵⁷⁶ *Politische Lieder*, pp. 107-108.

⁵⁷⁷ *Politische Lieder*, pp. 128.



frequent visitor to a brothel in Karlsruhe, they help him escape to France where he masquerades as 'Bauern Pflimi aus dem krummen Elsaß' (108). The repeated refrain 'P.T. / das hat dem P.T. gutgetan.' contrasts the selfishness of the man with those who were sacrificed in Vietnam. The final stanza elaborates further on this:

Und was ist aus ihm geworden?
P. T. zog night lange weiter.
Einer Bauernwittib fehlte auch der Mann.
Na, und P.T. kennt die Erde,
kennt die Tiere, kennt die Weiber,
und jetzt baut er Futtermais in Frankreich an.
Manchmal spielt er mit den Kindern
Indianer und erzählte dann
von dem roten Adler und dem weißen Hund.
Als er mal im Radio hörte,
wieviel GIs täglich fallen,
schob er sich grinsend ein Stück Käse in dem Mund.
P.T.
Das hat dem P.T. gutgetan. (108)

A very different Vietnam ballad is 'Das Ereignis am Mondfalterfluß im Mai 1968', also known as the 'Lehrstück der vier Partisanen'. This ballad has a straightforward narrative, told in regular ballad form and tells the story of four Ho Chi Min partisans who are confronted by the American army as they try to cross a river. The partisans are wily and, as three of them are women, they swiftly undress and leap into the river to tempt the soldiers to join them:

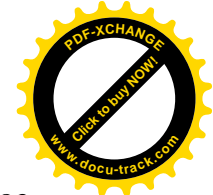
Da vergißt der Soldat sehr schnell seine Pflicht
zur wachsamen Feindbeobachtung.
Also verachtet die sechs Grenadiere nicht.
Sie waren all viel zu jung.
Aus dem Panzer heraus in den Mondfalterfluß
sprangen sechs boys der US-Army.
Doch die drei Mädchen im Mondfalterfluß
am anderen Ufer erreichten sie nie. (128)



The remaining partisan opens fire on the soldiers and shoots them dead. Degenhardt challenges the listener / reader to draw a moral from the story 'überlegt einfach mal, / was die vier Partisanen uns lehren können.' (108). The meaning of this is not clear, whether it means that the only way to win a war is to focus on weakness, to use any means at your disposal in a war situation, or perhaps to stress that the soldiers were only human, and also far too young to be involved in such a war, is left to the audience to decide.

3.8 Conclusion

The importance of dialect has been stressed in this chapter. Regionalism and regional songs provided an outlet during the German folk revival for feelings that were held by the people but were of local importance rather than necessarily of national import. Regionalism has become very much a feature of the late 20th and early 21st century and it is interesting that it was already present in the 1960s and 1970s when the German nation was dealing with its problematic national legacy. The notion of *Heimat* had become largely a local one, as people's allegiances were expressed to the areas in which they lived and the problems particular to their environs as it was more difficult to express a sense of national identity. The use of regional balladry during the German folk revival showed that the concept of *Heimat* had been reclaimed and had shaken off its *Blut und Boden* associations to become an acceptable expression of regional identity. This regional identity was not an anti-national expression but rather a positive expression of identity within the national framework. It could be seen as constituting one of the stages of recovering a positive sense of national identity. If the issues that were dealt with in the regional songs were more



universal, as in the CND protests, it was then possible for groups with their own regional strengths to come together to protest at larger, national or world issues, in events such as the Easter Marches.

The role of the dialect is also relevant in that this shows interesting parallels with the situation in Scotland, originally during Hugh MacDiarmid's attempts in the 1920s to create what he called a 'plastic Scots' to bolster his Scottish Renaissance and also during the later years of the Scottish folk revival when Scots was largely the *modus operandi*. From the Glasgow patois of the protest songs to the North East accent of the traditional balladry, it is true, as Munro claimed that: 'The folk song revival has helped the movement for re-acceptance of Scots language'.⁵⁷⁸

The linguistic richness possessed by both countries is expressed well by singer, Helmut Debus who sings in Plattdeutsch:

Wenn ich eigene Dinge schreibe, dann benutzte ich oft auch Wörter, die aus dem alten Plattdeutschen stammen, weil die richtiger sind. Ich glaube, daß das die Leute anderswo, z.B. in Schottland, auch machen, daß die nicht den Straßenausdruck benutzen, sondern einen besseren, wenn's den in der Sprache gibt.⁵⁷⁹

This desire for dialect finds, as MacDiarmid did, the universal in the local and taps into a vein of folk consciousness which had not been exploited by the Nazi regime. In *Volksmusik, die erinnerte Hoffnung*, Frahm and Alber express the desire to be able to get to grips with identity, which they argue, can more easily be done on a local level:

⁵⁷⁸ *The Democratic Muse*, p. 177.

⁵⁷⁹ Quoted in *Auf der Suche*, pp. 117-8.



Doch jetzt einmal ist der Dialekt wieder da... Wie andere Ausdrucksformen der Volkskultur spiegelt sich insgeheim auch im Dialekt die Sehnsucht nach menschlichen Verhältnissen, nach Überschaubarkeit und regionaler Identität wieder.⁵⁸⁰

The idea of a personal national identity was often too lofty a conception and one that could more easily be replaced with the local and familiar.

By the end of the period chosen here to define the German folk revival, i.e. 1978, the folk scene was undergoing a crisis nationally, with many of the issues about which it had been protesting being incorporated into the burgeoning social movements. The folk and Liedermacher movement experienced depoliticisation after the collapse of the student movement as the protests of the 1968 era were diverted into established political streams with the rise of the Greens in the 1980s and the new reforms of the Brandt and Scheel governments. The increased and increasing impact of commercialisation on the folk revival singers meant that many had become professional performers and were either, like Degenhardt, combining a singing career with practical political work or, like Mey, had moved further away from their earlier roots in the folksong and protest movement and their music had become more commercialised. This is somewhat ironic as the forefathers of the movement were deliberately trying to create a song movement that was very distant from the *Schlager* and popular songs of the day, yet the Liedermacher movement itself moved slowly towards centre stage as the alternative punk and rock movements took over the left wing. The German folk revival was a movement at a particular point in history as a result of a specific set of social and political circumstances. As Michael Brocken highlights in his

⁵⁸⁰ Eckart Frahm and Wolfgang Alber; *Volksmusik, die erinnerte Hoffnung* (Tübingen: Schwäbische Verlagsgesellschaft, 1979), p. 128.



critique of the folk revivals in Britain in the twentieth century, the traditions and suppositions folk communities establish are:

human constructions and, like the very history of the folk revival itself, products of social agency [...] not rediscoveries of the products of nature, but political inventions of particular times and places in the twentieth century.⁵⁸¹

Opinion is split to as whether the German folk revival achieved its aims. It did not see a renaissance of the German chanson, and, in fact, focus on the chanson form faded as the movement progressed. The German folk revival combined many different types of folksongs including the ballad but did not experience a widespread revival of older traditional ballads.

They did however appear disparately, and reworkings of old ballads reveal that there is still a depth to people's connection to the folk tradition and that there is a desire to embrace it, if it is relevant to the modern day. Tom Kannmacher felt that recovery from the Nazi era was not possible:

Ob wir jedoch das je wiederfinden, was wir jetzt im Folk suchen: eine Identität im nicht mißbrauchten nationalen und allgemeinen Lebensinn, wie sie uns aus alten Büchern und anderen Kulturen entgegenleuchtet, erscheint mir sehr zweifelhaft.⁵⁸²

In contrast to this, Barbara Boock who was also very involved in the revival and continues to work with German folksong in the *Deutsches Volksliedarchiv* in Freiburg draws a very different conclusion:

Heute scheint sich das Volkslied vom Mißbrauch in der Zeit zwischen 1933 und 1945 wieder erholt zu haben⁵⁸³

⁵⁸¹ Michael Brocken, *The British Folk Revival 1944-2002* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), p. 2.

⁵⁸² 'Das deutsche Volkslied', p. 42.

⁵⁸³ 'Versuch einer Beschreibung der deutschen Folk-Szene '76', *Jahrbuch für Volksliedforschung* XXII, (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1978) pp. 112-117, here p. 113.



The ‘today’ that she speaks of is 1978, the date chosen in this chapter for the end of the folk revival. In the collection *Liederkarren* which was in its third edition by 1981, the younger generation raise these issues in a measured way:

Daß wir heute kaum Volkslieder kennen und singen, ist auf das gebrochene Verhältnis vieler Deutscher zur Tradition nach dem Zusammenbruch des Faschismus zurückzuführen. Trotzdem sollten wir einen Neuanfang versuchen. Die Vorhaben einiger neugegründeter Volksmusikgruppen ermutigen dazu sehr.⁵⁸⁴

They acknowledge that there is still a problem with the singing of folksongs and that it is still associated with the Nazi period. That they are still using vocabulary like ‘Neuanfang’ at the start of the 1980s does suggest that, despite the progress made by the Liedermacher in the 1960s and ‘70s, the legacy of the Nazi’s abuse of the tradition was far from being overcome. However, the existence of such song books, including German songs such as ‘O König von Preußen’ and ‘Wie schön blüht uns der Maie’ and the desire implicit in the words of the editors that a new generation should be encouraged to sing these songs, does show that the recovery of the folksong tradition continues. This recovery is, however, not explicitly tied to a national agenda. Many of the songs in the *Liederkarren* collection, for example, come from an American folk tradition and border on modern pop songs.

In 1984 in *Deutsch-Folk: Auf der Suche nach der verlorene Tradition*, Florian Steinbiß concludes:

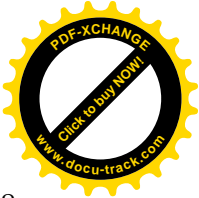
Die Geschichte des Volksliedes ist die Geschichte des Gebrauchs und Missbrauchs durch verschiedene politische Strömungen. Die nationale Bewegung und der Nationalismus haben dafür gesorgt, daß das Volkslied in Misskredit geraten ist. Der Einsatz des Volksliedes für bestimmte Bewegungen, die einseitige Beanspruchung blieb nicht ohne Folgen. (11)

⁵⁸⁴ *Liederkarren* 3rd edn (Bad Soden: Student für Europa, 1981), unpaginated, contents page.



Although it is true that the folksong has been one of the most abused forms of song / poetry that exist, the story of the German folk revival is one of an attempt to face up to the reality of this abuse and to counteract it, or recover songs from the shadows cast by the Nazi abuse. The 1960s and 1970s saw the ballad begin to be used for different *Bewegungen*, for a wide range of social issues and international causes, and in so doing, the overall attitude towards the folksong and the folk ballad had to shift. The recovery of the folksong and its subsection of the ballad was seen as being not just desirable but as necessary in order not to lose a rich vein of German literary history and potential positive source of national identity. It was a mark of the desire of political songwriters to create a more positive sense of Germany that they were prepared to face up to the legacy of the Nazi era. Many tried to express a different view of Germany, pointing the way to a different future. Largely, these futures had political colours and were tied in with a wider agenda than a pure delivery of Germany from a negative national identity.

In contrast, as Scotland did not have this cultural legacy to deal with, it was almost able to ignore the issue of Scottish national identity, because it was a given that Scottishness was associated with its folk traditions. These traditions had, however, become overlooked and were not being used as a potential source of strength for Scotland and particularly for the (small 'n') nationalist movements. Their use of the ballad form to deal with specifically national issues, like the stealing of the Stone of Destiny or the disputes over Elizabeth II, drew on many different traditions from the traditional ballads to the Glasgow music hall tradition, but showed that the ballad could be used powerfully for topical protests and, in the same way as in Germany, could deal with modern and complex social situations, especially within a protest setting.

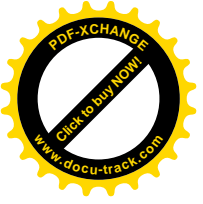


As Degenhardt so succinctly commented in the early 1970s, people need songs:

Das Morgenrot, es streut schon seine Rosen
in den Straßen stehen Leute
und die singen schon.
Und es werden immer mehr. Die brauchen neue Lieder,
neu geschriebene Blätter.
Also los, kommt runter vom Balkon.⁵⁸⁵

The deliberate *Gebrauchscharakter* of the songs featured in this chapter is evident. The ballad has emerged as a form which is still vital and flexible and necessary, able to encompass complicated themes and issues from political systems and their inherent difficulties, the problematic relationship of the German people to their own national identity, to diverse global social and political issues. Within the whole folk revival the ballad was very present, vibrant and, as Degenhardt says, necessary.

⁵⁸⁵ 'Nostalgia' in *Die Lieder*, p. 124. This song was recorded for the 1972 album *Mutter Mathilde* but the actual date of composition cannot be ascertained.



Conclusion



The journey from the Weimar Republic, through the Nazi era into the German folk revival has been a long one, characterised by change, rupture and attempted recovery. It has revealed the ballad as being a constant source of inspiration, challenge and as containing within it the seeds of a positive national identity. The focus in the thesis on Germany and Scotland has revealed both multiple Germanies and Scotlands, as the imagined communities that constitute both nations and the writers within each nation reflect their concepts of the nation. As societies become even more complex and diverse, the tendency is towards there being many concepts of the one nation that must somehow be brought together under one head to create an overriding or an umbrella sense of national identity with which people with divergent opinions can nevertheless identify. Germany at the end of the 20th century and into the 21st is still seen as carrying the weight of its history and its citizens suffer from an unspoken or clearly articulated taboo, both within Germany and from the international community, barring expressions of being proud of being German. Such expressions are treated with suspicion and fear and are seen as being more radical than they may in fact be, as the echoes of the past prove so difficult to overcome.

This thesis has explored the role of the ballad in the Weimar Republic, discovering that it was used as a major instrument of satire and parody, to allow alienated writers to express their frustration, despair and anger at the Weimar state. The German nation at that time was indeed personal and multiple, as warring factions fought for control of the state and the political system broke down with the rise of fascism. The four main writers Tucholsky, Klabund, Brecht and Kästner each used writing, specifically the ballad form, as a weapon, allowing a narrative space for both surface and subversive meaning. In this way the ballad



form proved particularly amenable to the needs of the time. The conflation of the state with the military was specifically targeted in the ballads and the division of *Staatsnation* and *Kulturnation* or indeed of the state and its people, played a central role.

The writers of the Weimar republic drew primarily on literary sources in the German *Kunstballade*, while in Scotland the modern literary renaissance used the Scottish traditional oral ballad as a source of commonly-held national identity and inspiration for the literary attempt to boost Scottish consciousness. While Scotland moved towards expressing its own national identity as distinct from the rest of the UK, the German writers encapsulated the love / hate relationship that many within the Weimar republic held towards Germany and the state. Both Brecht and Klabund stress that the positive elements of German culture had been corrupted while Kästner and Tucholsky use the methods of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* movement to force the population to face up to the realities of life and the alienation of the individual under Weimar rule. While Scotland was free to draw on its rich oral past, Germany had difficulty drawing on its past at all, as the Wilhelmine period which immediately preceded World War I was also viewed with much suspicion. The staunch patriotism of the Wilhelmine and Weimar periods was also the object of much mockery in the parodies on nationalistic songs which flourished during the 1920s. Both Brecht and Kästner continued to write during the Nazi era with many of the themes within their earlier work becoming sharper and more pointed as their enemies move from being the Weimar state and its injustices to the horrors of the rise of fascism and the Nazi regime.



Throughout this thesis it has been stressed that the ballad is a very broad term, one imbued with a certain amount of flexibility. Edwin Morgan, Scotland's poet laureate sums this up well saying:

Ballads and folk poetry are collage texts; there is no finished or ideal text that can escape from the continual state of flux and growth and transformation.⁵⁸⁶

This flux emerges as a feature of the ballad throughout the thesis, but it is especially evident in the writers of the Weimar republic, as they use the word ballad interchangeably with many others within the sung genre. The 'continual state' of transformation that Morgan sees in the traditional oral ballads, remains a feature of the sung ballads that emerge during the Nazi era and the German folk revival. While many of the ballads used throughout this thesis are straightforward narrative ballads, it is often difficult to separate a song which has been designated as balladesque for the purposes of this thesis from the folksong per se. This issue has been a topic of dispute throughout the history of ballad studies and, due to the nature of the ballad itself, is likely to continue to be so. The ballad is characterised by change and without change, it will lose its relevance to contemporary society and become a moribund genre.

The use of the ballad during the Nazi era revealed the limitations of the ballad as an instrument of propaganda and its unsuitability for use in the Nazi's preferred genre of the marching song. However, the preference of the Nazis to establish their regime with its roots in the past, gaining legitimacy from earlier folksong traditions, encouraged the use of traditional ballads and folksongs in Nazi songbooks and repertoires. It is during the Nazi era that the line between the folksong and the ballad becomes most indistinct, as Nazi

⁵⁸⁶ Edwin Morgan, 'Recycling, Mosaic and Collage', *Edinburgh Review*, no. 93, Spring 1995, p. 165.



songbooks contained a wide range of materials from traditional ballads to *Kunstballade*, authored ballads with their authors removed for strategic political reasons and reworked versions of well-known folksongs. The argument emerges that the Nazi regime were responsible for the destruction of the folksong tradition within Germany. Their use and abuse of the songs, within the German army, concentration camps and the populace at large, tainted both the ballad and the folksong with all of their successive forms.

The Nazis' embracing of established ballad writers like Agnes Miegel and Hans Friedrich Blunck with distinct roots in *Heimatsdichtung* and *Blut- und Boden* poetry, coupled with the expulsion of many writers who did not agree with the Nazis' concept of national identity, created a break in the literary traditions of Germany which has weakened and lessened the German literary scene. The extent to which the writers in the Nazi literary canon are culpable for the uses to which their poetry was put, remains an extremely contentious issue, even today. The Nazis' determination to focus on the physical territory of Germany, on its soil and its metaphysical links to the earth also focused on the links to an earlier Germania, to a nation which pre-existed the territorial bounds that had been allocated after the First World War. The Nazi party deliberately set out to manipulate the literary tradition and to eliminate elements that did not fit with their concept of what it meant to be German. They aimed to create their own canon, choosing specific writers from the past, and heavily censoring those from the present. They drew specifically on the Romantic tradition and that period of Germanic glory, choosing ballads to include in their propaganda materials for schools and the home front, which would link them into an earlier national tradition. Each of these steps aimed at using the ballad and its related historical and artistic traditions to create legitimacy for the regime.



Alongside the officially-sanctioned soldier songs and ballads flourished a wealth of parodies and anti-Nazi army ballads. Many of these were topical, situation-specific and have not lasted to make it into post-war song books. The very fact that they existed, however, shows that the ballad was still able to be used as an instrument of parody and satire, following on from the tradition of the Weimar writers. Both Brecht and Kästner, as mentioned above, also continued their work, one from the position of exile, the other from that of the inner émigré. Ballads remained central to their oeuvres. These voices of protest, however, were very much a minority in comparison with the overbearing and widespread destruction of the ballad and folksong tradition by the Nazi regime. This is also partly responsible for the belated start to the folk revival movement within Germany as the Scottish folk revival began in the 1950s yet it took until the 1960s-70s for a similar revival to make an impact within Germany.

When the folk revival began in Germany, it did not take long before the singers had to confront the rupture in the tradition caused by negligence and by the abuse of the folksong and ballad tradition by the Nazi party. Attempts were made to link into separate and earlier traditions that had not been used by the Nazis, in order to create a sense of a German identity built on very different foundations from the Aryan, National Socialist one. The songs of earlier revolutionaries provided fertile ground for establishing an alternative German identity with its roots in previous struggles. Hence, Peter Rohland's ballads of the 1848 rebellion were very popular. The emergence of the regional or dialect song showed that the concept of *Heimat* was being reclaimed from its association with *Blut- und Boden*



ideas which had been the outcome of Nazi ideologies of the soil. In this way, it provided one of the key stages in recovering a positive sense of national identity.

The Liedermacher of the Burg Waldeck struggled with the death of the folksong, or more accurately with the murder of the songs under the Nazi regime. They found outlets for their musical talents and political opinions in the ballads and songs that they wrote dealing with the complexities of German identity after the war, with the social problems facing Germany and society in general and with the wider political ramifications of global issues such as nuclear warfare, social injustice and the war in Vietnam. The very fact that the ballad form which had been so abused during the Nazi period could be reclaimed to deal with such topics, provided hope that the ballad was not completely finished with. The revival of the ballad was not tied to an explicitly national agenda; it tried rather to recover from previous national agendas. The singers were broadly left wing, socialists or communists and were working through their concepts of what Germany could become, rather than expounding a new German nationalism. They were arguing more for the space and the right to discuss such topics.

Liedermacher such as Biermann, Degenhardt and Süverkrüp, along with the initial impetus provided by Peter Rohland and the Kröher twins, brought the ballad to a wider public and challenged them to consider what kind of songs were possible or relevant in a post-war climate. Some found relevance in earlier ballads, others moved away from writing and singing into more direct political action, while still others, most prominently Biermann, used the ballad form to make very direct and explosive political statements and critique. The movement had lost momentum by the late 1970s as the political impetus became



absorbed by new social movements and the increasing shift to the left in German politics. The younger generations who were interested in folksong embraced internationalism, with the songs of the Liedermacher vying for place and interest alongside the American and English songs, which gained kudos as they were from countries which were seen as being very fashionable. Despite the efforts of the early folk revivalists to create a German chanson and to bring back the traditional ballads, what they did achieve was to create songs within a new musical genre which used the ballad form and often became integrated into the anonymous folk tradition in the manner of the traditional ballads. Towards the end of the German folk revival, the movement began to be overtaken among the younger generations by the punk / rock movement which came to be known as the *Neue Deutsche Welle* and lasted from 1976 until 1983-84. This movement kept the German speaking song in centre stage.

During the German folk revival, many singers aimed to create a different future with new concepts, often with strong political colours, of a new Germany. In Scotland, the long lasting effects of the Scottish folk revival, showed how ballads were still relevant to contemporary issues and that ballads, both traditional and contemporary, could be used to shore up national confidence. Ballads were used both to assert Scottish national pride and used in opposition to the English state, and also to protest on global issues such as CND and the American military might. The Scottish folk revival spawned folk clubs across Scotland who continued to be primarily left-wing and concerned with issues of social justice.

There are many angles that would be interesting and fruitful in terms of further study in both Germany and Scotland. Germany in the closing decade of the 20th century



experienced a seismic shift in its concept of national identity when the Berlin wall came down on 11th November 1989 and Germany was (re-)united. These two nations are meant to be brought together under the banner of a Germany which incorporates the East German nation with its different historical and social dimensions. This area would be the subject for an entire thesis in itself which is why it is not possible to deal with the *Wende* within the remit of this thesis. However, the ballad remains important in the attempts to express German national identity and deal with the complex issues thrown up by 1989.

The German cabaret scene in East Berlin was the home of Hans Eckardt Wenzel and Steffen Mensching who used the ballad widely within their work and were central to the political demonstrations which led to the fall of the wall. Their clowning duo Wenzel and Mensching has been thoroughly researched by David Robb in his book *Zwei Clowns im Lande des verlorenen Lachens: Das Liedertheater Wenzel und Mensching*.⁵⁸⁷ Their work would be worth considering in order to ascertain the role of the ballad in their artistic struggles with the politics of the DDR.⁵⁸⁸ The poetry of Hans Eckardt Wenzel writing on his own is also of interest, from his 1984 collection *Lied vom wilden Mohn*, his 1986 *Antrag auf Verlängerung des Monats August* and his 1998 *Ich mag das lange Haar*, which includes Goethe's 'Mignons Lied'.⁵⁸⁹ Another East German Liedermacher, whose work is very balladesque and who was expelled from the DDR in 1988 due to his critical position on the authorities, is Stephan Krawczyk. While no critical text about his work has yet been

⁵⁸⁷ *Zwei Clowns im Lande des verlorenen Lachens: Das Liedertheater Wenzel und Mensching* (Berlin: Christoph Links, 1998).

⁵⁸⁸ See Steffen Mensching and Hans-Eckardt Wenzel, *Allerletztes aus der Da Da eR, Hundekomödie* (Leipzig: mdv, 1991) and *Der Abschied der Matrosen vom Kommunismus, Texte der Revuen* (Berlin: Eulenspiegel, 1999).

⁵⁸⁹ Hans-Eckardt Wenzel, *Lied vom wilden Mohn: Gedichte* (Halle, Leipzig: mdv, 1984), *Antrag auf Verlängerung des Monats August* (Halle, Leipzig: mdv, 1986) and *Ich mag das lange Haar* (Berlin: Buschfunk, 1998).



written, the collection *Wieder stehen: lang genug auf Eis gelegen, lang genug umsonst geheult; Lieder und Texte*,⁵⁹⁰ which was published in 1988 immediately after his expulsion and his 1990 self-published collection *Schöne Wunde Welt* provide suitable materials for investigation.⁵⁹² These songs suggest that the alternative East German scene had already embraced the ballad form, in a similar way to the Weimar writers, to subvert and parody the established regime and provide a satirical counterbalance.

The most well-established of the West German Liedermacher, i.e. Biermann, Degenhardt and Mey continue to write, publish and tour. Their later albums also provide balladesque songs for consideration. Within the cabaret scene, the work of Dietrich Kittner dealt with the post-unification complexities of German identity in his collection *Jaaa! Deutschland balla, balla!*⁵⁹³ The role of the regional ballad remained significant through the rest of the 20th century, with dialect songs from artists such as the Bavarian group Biermosl Blosen being worthy of attention. Moving into the 21st century, the East German Liedermacherin Barbara Thalheim is another ballad writer who has also dealt with the issue of nationality within her work, specifically her 2002 live album *Deutsch zu sein*.⁵⁹⁴ As the two Germanies become one, the issue of home / homeland and belonging are likely to become even more significant in terms of establishing a meaningful sense of national identity. It is also of interest that in 2004, a night in honour of the 30th anniversary of the folk duo

⁵⁹⁰ *Wieder stehen: lang genug auf Eis gelegen, lang genug umsonst geheult; Lieder und Texte* (Munich: Droemer Knauer, 1988).

⁵⁹² *Schöne Wunde Welt* (Berlin: Stephan Krawczyk, 1990).

⁵⁹³ Dietrich Kittner, *Jaaa! Deutschland balla, balla!* (Berlin: edition ost, 1992).

⁵⁹⁴ *Deutsch zu sein...* (Duo-Phon-Records 2002). The book *Barbara Thalheim, Höhlen-, Drachen- und Trotzdem Lieder*, ed. by Fritz-Jochen Kopka (Fulda: Almviva-Verlag Seliger, 1988) provides useful background and song texts.



Zupfgeigenhansl's Erich Schmeckenbecher, gathered in such Liedermacher luminaries as Hannes Wader, Konstantin Wecker, Hans Eckardt Wenzel and Steffen Mensching.⁵⁹⁵

In Scotland the ballad form and the folksong remained part of agitational protest movements, with the 7.84 theatre company's left-wing play *The Cheviot, The Stag and the Black, Black Oil* of 1974 and then proved central to the recovery of Scottish national pride after the failed 1979 referendum. Ballads flourished within the theatre scene, with ballads both traditional and modern appearing in Liz Lochhead's *Mary Queen of Scots Got her Head Chopped Off* (first performed August 1987)⁵⁹⁶ and her 1990 play *Jock Tamson's Bairns*,⁵⁹⁷ which was specially commissioned for Glasgow's year as European City of Culture. The folk revival continued as individuals and folk clubs kept the ballad contemporary and topical, some of these are captured in recordings such as the *Songs under the Bed* series.⁵⁹⁸ Part of the changing nature of the ballad in the 20th Century has been its overspill into the work of writers as opposed to singers. A development in Scotland which has not yet become apparent in Germany is the extent to which women after the folk revival took the ballad and incorporated it into their poetry. A wealth of writers from Magi Gibson⁵⁹⁹ to Sheena Blackhall,⁶⁰⁰ Carol Ann Duffy⁶⁰¹ and Flora Garry⁶⁰² continued to use

⁵⁹⁵ A collection of texts from this evening was published in 2006 with the title *Leben ist Poesie - Festival zum 30-jährigen Bühnenjubiläum des Zupfgeigenhansl Erich Schmeckenbecher : Das es noch möglich ist...* (Lübeck: Conträr Musik, 2006). The publicity material for this book is included in the appendices No. 12.

⁵⁹⁶ Liz Lochhead, *Mary Queen of Scots Got her Head Chopped Off & Dracula* (London: Penguin, 1989). See also *Dreaming Frankenstein & Collected Poems* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1984)

⁵⁹⁷ Conceived along with the Communicado Theatre Company, this play drew on the work of Burns and MacDiarmid to explore the concept of Scottish national identity.

⁵⁹⁸ There were three tapes published in this series, in 1988, 1989 and 1990. The songs included on the recordings cover a lot of ground, nationally and internationally, with the focus on injustice, from the 1984-85 miners' strike in Scotland to CND songs and Free Nelson Mandela songs.

⁵⁹⁹ See primarily Magi Gibson, *Wild Women of a Certain Age* (Edinburgh: Chapman, 2000).

⁶⁰⁰ See Sheena Blackhall, *Fite Doo Black Crow* (Aberdeen: Keith Murray, 1989) and *The Nor' East Neuk* (Aberdeen: Charles Murray Memorial Trust, 1989).

⁶⁰¹ See Carol Ann Duffy, *The World's Wife* (London: Picador, 1999).

⁶⁰² Flora Garry, *Collected Poems* (Edinburgh: Gordon Wright, 1995).



and subvert the ballad, often for humorous feminist purposes.⁶⁰³ The ballad also became relevant to fiction in Andrew Greig's novel *When They Lay Bare*.⁶⁰⁴

The most distinct difference between Germany and Scotland becomes clear in 1999 when the Scottish Parliament was opened in Edinburgh. Central to the proceedings of Devolution day was Sheena Wellington singing Burns' 'A Man's a Man for a' That'. Although the sentiments have been echoed by Biermann in Germany, the close relationship that Scotland has to its folk tradition is evident in the most strategic national change in the country being sung in with the words of its most famous poet. Thus Scotland is able to use its folksongs as a resource to draw upon in times of national importance, as the folk tradition including the ballad is an established feature of society, while Germany's balladeers are still the rebels on the fringes of society.

National identity throughout the 20th century has largely been defined by opposition or aggression. The German national identity in its many forms throughout the century was largely the work of aggressors from within the nation, while Scotland continued to define itself against 'the auld enemy', the English. Scottish folksinger Dick Gaughan speaks significantly about adopting Hamish Henderson's balladesque 'Freedom Come All Ye',⁶⁰⁵ as the Scottish national anthem:

Because apart from anything else it does not once mention England or the English. It talks about the human race, and the fact that although there are only five million of us and we are just a wee country we should be proud to be equal partners in the human race with everyone else.⁶⁰⁶

⁶⁰³ See for example the author's article 'Bearing the Tradition: The Role of Women in 20th Century Balladry in Scotland', *Ballad and Ballad Studies at the Turn of the Century* (Bucharest: Editura Deliana, 2001), pp. 123-134.

⁶⁰⁴ (London: Faber & Faber, 1999).

⁶⁰⁵ The song was written for the CND marchers in 1960.

⁶⁰⁶ Quoted in Ewan McVicar, *One Singer, One Song*, p. 132.



This is interesting both in terms of Germany and Scotland because it represents a desire to move on from negative nationalism that defines by opposition and allows each country to have their own national pride in their own right.

Ironically, the traditional ballads were, as Hamish Henderson says, ‘operating in a zone which ignored national and political boundaries’,⁶⁰⁷ as they moved fluidly between countries, yet this thesis has shown their power in creating a sense of national identity which could be harnessed for purposes good and ill. The ballads and balladesque poems and songs that came out of the work of all the authors contained within this thesis, within their diverse political opinions and social situations, did encourage the creation of a distinct national identity, often not that connected with the state. They did draw on older traditions in order to solidify and provide legitimacy for the ‘authenticity’ of the nation state. They also allowed for the dangerous manipulation of national traditions and canons for the nationalistic purposes of the regime. Finally, both the German and Scottish folk revival singers attempted, with various degrees of success, to continue and recover the folk tradition, the ballad and with them, concepts of national identity.

At the start of the 21st century, the ballad has not been proved to be moribund, irrelevant or belonging to the past, but rather, in its vast diversity, has proved fertile ground for protest, celebration and political change. In Scotland it remains central to the folk tradition which has become exceedingly popular again as fusion music and alternative folk festivals like Glasgow’s Celtic Connections are projected unto the world stage as a national showcase of

⁶⁰⁷ *Alias MacAlias*, p. 53.

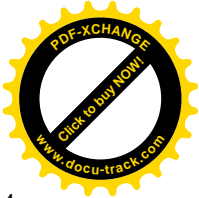


Scotland, while in Germany, it remains the voice of the outsider, the alternative, the left-wing writer who is still struggling with the problematic concepts of the nation within Germany and trying to bring an artistic impulse to bear on the complicated political and social situation in which Germany finds itself in the wake of reunification, immigration and ongoing unemployment. Perhaps the ballad will also remain, as Antonio Gramsci suggested, integral to a folk culture that can never be subsumed into a political identity for 'it is a separate and distinct way of perceiving life and the world, as opposed to that of official society.'⁶⁰⁸ The themes of official and unofficial, state and cultural nations, the people and the regime have been constant throughout this thesis and perhaps the ballad holds the key to provide a distinct and separate way of perceiving, capturing and expressing life, and one which can be drawn upon to begin to wrestle with the complexities of the questions that surround national identity.

⁶⁰⁸ Antonio Gramsci, *Letteratura e Vita Nazionale*, quoted in Duncan Glen, 'Hamish Henderson: Poetry becomes people' *Inter Arts*. 1.7, 1988, p. 335.



Appendices



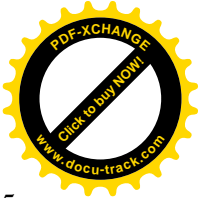
1 – ‘Die alten Lieder’ - Franz Josef Degenhardt

Wo sind eure Lieder,
eure alten Lieder?
fragen die aus andren Ländern,
wenn man um Kamine sitzt,
mattgetanzt und leergesprochen
und das high-life-Spiel ausschwitzt.

Ja, wo sind die Lieder,
unsre alten Lieder?
Nicht für’n Heller oder Batzen
mag Feinsliebchen barfuß ziehn
und kein schriller Schrei nach Norden
will aus einer Kehle fliehn.

Tot sind unsre Lieder,
unsre alten Lieder.
Lehrer haben sie zerbissen,
Kurzbehoste sie verklampft,
braune Horden totgeschrien,
Stiefel in den Dreck gestampft.

Franz Josef Degenhardt, ‘Die alten Lieder’, on LP *Der Senator erzählt* (Polydor 1968).
Written in 1965, published in Franz Josef Degenhardt, *Spiel nicht mit den
Schmuddelkindern: Balladen, Chansons, Grotesken, Lieder*, new revised edn (Reinbek:
Rowohlt, 1969), first published 1967, p. 84.



2 – ‘Die Moorsoldaten’ - Johann Esser and Wolfgang Langhoff

Wohin auch das Auge blicket,
Moor und Heide nur ringsum.
Vogelsang uns nicht erquicket,
Eichen stehen kahl und krumm.

Wir sind die Moorsoldaten
und ziehen mit dem Spaten
ins Moor!

Hier in dieser öden Heide
ist das Lager aufgebaut,
wo wir fern von jeder Freude
hinter Stacheldrahtverhau.

Wir sind die Moorsoldaten...

Auf und nieder gehn die Posten,
keiner, keiner kann hindurch.
Flucht wird nur das Leben kosten,
vierfach ist umzäunt die Burg.

Wir sind die Moorsoldaten...

Doch für uns gibt es kein Klagen,
ewig kann's nicht Winter sein.
Einmal werden froh wir sagen:
Heimat, du bist wieder mein.

Dann ziehn die Moorsoldaten
nicht mehr mit dem Spaten
ins Moor!

The above text is taken from the transcription of the cassette series *Liedermacher in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 2*, p. 8a.

As there are over 30 versions of the song, additional verses sometimes appear. Two extra verses which appear after the second verse in the above version are as follows:

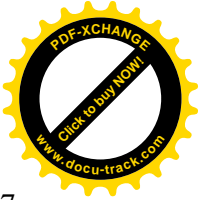
Morgens ziehen die Kolonnen
in das Moor zur Arbeit hin.
Graben bei dem Brand der Sonne,
doch zur Heimat steht der Sinn.



Wir sind die Moorsoldaten...

Heimwärts, heimwärts jeder sehnet,
zu den Eltern, Weib und Kind.
Manche Brust ein Seufzer dehnet,
weil wir hier gefangen sind.

Wir sind die Moorsoldaten...



3. 'Das Barlach-Lied' - Wolf Biermann

Ach Mutter mach die Fenster zu
Ich glaub es kommt ein Regen
Da drüben steht die Wolkenwand
Die will sich auf uns legen

Was soll aus uns noch werden
Uns droht so große Not
Vom Himmel auf die Erden
Falln sich die Engel tot

Ach Mutter mach die Türe zu
Da kommen tausend Ratten
Die hungrigen sind vorneweg
Dahinter sind die satten

Was soll aus uns noch werden
Uns droht so große Not
Vom Himmel auf die Erden
Falln sich die Engel tot

Ach Mutter mach die Augen zu
Der Regen und die Ratten
Jetzt dringt es durch die Ritzen ein
Die wir vergessen hatten

Was soll aus uns noch werden
Uns droht so große Not
Vom Himmel auf die Erden
Falln sich die Engel tot

Wolf Biermann, *Die Drahtharfe* (Berlin: Wagenbach, 1965) p. 37.



4. 'Die Ballade vom sozialen Aufstieg' - Reinhard Mey

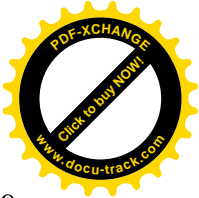
Fred Kasulzke hatte ewig Ärger mit dem Geld,
Doch an Einfallsreichtum fehlte es ihm nicht.
Aber diesmal war es ganz besonders schlecht um ihn bestellt,
Und die rettende Idee erschien ihm nicht.
Bis er eines Abends lustlos vor der Fernsehöhre saß,
Tagesschau ansah und dabei Remouladensoße aß,
Dabei hat ihn dann urplötzlich ein Protestmarsch inspiriert:
Fünfundzwanzig, null, null, dreißig, Fred Kasulzke protestiert!

Und zum erstenmal seit Jahren schaltet er vor neun Uhr ab
Und entschließt sich, heute früh zu Bett zu geh'n,
Geht bis drei Uhr morgens grübelnd in seinem Bette auf und ab
Und hat schließlich einen Plan vor Augen steh'n:
Wenn er Müßiggänger, Rentner, Pensionäre drillen läßt,
Kann er eine Firma gründen für gemieteten Protest,
Und am nächsten Tag ist's schon in jeder Zeitung inseriert:
Fünfundzwanzig, null, null, dreißig, Fred Kasulzke protestiert!

Um halb neun ruft zögernd die Frisörin an
Und bestellt einen Protestmarsch für Haareschneiden.
Fred Kasulzke akzeptiert und schickt fünfunddreißig Mann,
Und sein Honorar ist derzeit noch bescheiden.
Später kommt die Liga gegen Mißbrauch geistiger Getränke
Und der Ringverein gegen die Verbreitung der Panzerschränke:
Jetzt wird disponiert, geplant, ausgehandelt und kassiert
Fünfundzwanzig, null, null, dreißig, Fred Kasulzke protestiert!

In Kasulzkes Hauptquartier steh'n fünf Kolonnen bereit
Für Manifestationen und Krawall:
Pressefreiheit, Antibabypille, Verkürzung der Arbeitszeit,
Für und wider, jederzeit und überall.
Eine Truppe macht nur Sitzstreiks, eine zweite spricht im Chor,
Fackelzüge macht die dritte und die vierte macht Terror.
Nummer Fünf ist die Elite und nur drauf spezialisiert,
Wie man ausländische Botschaften mit Tinte bombardiert.

Fred Kasulzke sitzt im Glashaus, seine Stellung ist gemacht.
Und nach seiner Erfolgsidee befragt,
Hat ein Nachrichtenmagazin ein Gespräch mit ihm gebracht,
In dem er etwa folgendes sagt:
Für die Meinung Freizeit opfern will doch heute kein Mensch mehr,
Gar bei Regen demonstrieren? Mann, wo kommen Sie denn her!
Und so ruft man, ohne, daß man seine Schuhe strapaziert:
Fünfundzwanzig, null, null, dreißig, Fred Kasulzke protestiert!



Abschließend hat Kasulzke seinen Zukunftsplan genannt,
Und hier zeigt er sich als wahrer Pionier:
Er will Tochterfirmen gründen im befreundeten Ausland.
Die Werbeslogans hat er schon dafür:
If your shouting days are through – Fred Kasulzke shouts for you!
Un coup d‘fil et Fred Kasulzke manifesterà pour vous!
Rebellion o alboroto? Llame pronto a Frederico!
Wchny suschna, nix ersatzki? Fred Kasulzke protestatzki!

Reinhard Mey Live, 1971, reissued in 1992 on Intercord (EMI).

Lyrics available on Mey’s website:

<http://www.reinhard-mey.de/index.php?render=track&id=1173&w=1280> date of access
271006.



5. 'Der Baggerführer Willibald' - Dieter Süverkrüp

(1973)

Es ist am Morgen kalt, da kommt der Willibald
und klettert in den Bagger und baggert auf dem Acker
ein großes tiefes Loch - was noch?
Naja, so fängt das an; dann kommen alle Mann.
Sie bauen zuerst den Keller, dann bauen sie immer schneller,
was kommt dabei heraus? - Ein Haus!
Und in das Haus hinein ziehn feine Leute ein.
Die Miete ist sehr teuer, kost' über 1.000 Eier.
Wer kriegt die Miete bloß? - Der Boß!

Der Boß kommt ganz groß 'raus, dem Boß gehört das Haus;
dem Boß gehört der Acker, der Kran und auch der Bagger,
und alles, was da ist - so'n Mist!

Der Boß steht meistens rum und redet laut und dumm.
Sein Haus, das soll sich lohnen, wer Geld hat, kann drin wohnen,
wer arm ist, darf nicht rein - Gemein!

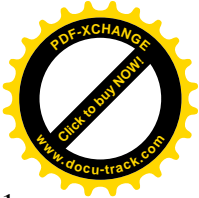
Der Willibald kriegt Wut. Er sagt das ist nicht gut.
Er steigt auf eine Leiter: "Hört her, ihr Bauarbeiter!
Der Boß ist wie ihr seht - zu blöd!

Sein Haus, das bauen wir. Was kriegen wir dafür?
Der Boß zahlt uns den Lohn aus. Die Miete für sein Wohnhaus,
die ist in unsrem Lohn - nicht drin!

Das hat doch keinen Zweck, der Boß geht besser weg;
dann bauen wir uns selber ein schönes Haus mit Keller,
da ziehn wir alle ein - au fein!"

Wie Willibald das sagt, so wird es auch gemacht:
Die Bauarbeiter legen los und bauen Häuser, schön und groß,
wo jeder gut drin wohnen kann, weil jeder sie bezahlen kann,
der Baggerführer Willibald baut eine neue Schwimmanstalt,
da spritzen sich die Leute / Kinder naß, das macht sogar den Baggern Spaß!

Liederbuch 6th edn (Student für Europa - Student für Berlin, 1978)



6. 'Moritat vom Kryptokommunisten' / 'Erschröckliche Moritat vom Kryptokommunisten' - Dieter Süverkrüp

Wenn die Sonne bezeichnenderweise im Osten
und rot hinter Wolken aufgeht,
das ist dann die Zeit, da er flach wie ein Tiger
aus härenem Bette aufsteht.
Er wäscht sich nur ungern und blickt in den Spiegel
mit seinem Mongolengesicht,
er putzt sich die Zähne mit Branntwein und trinkt einen
Wodka – mehr frühstückt er nicht.

Dann zieht der Kommunist die Unterwanderstiefel an,
und dann geht er an sein illegales Untertagewerk ran.
Huhu, huhu ...!

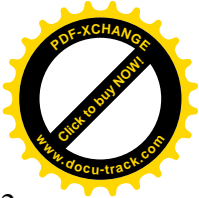
Und dann fletscht er die Zähne, die Hand hält er vor,
denn das darf ja kein Mensch niemals sehn.
Um neun Uhr zehn frißt er das erste Kind (blauäugig,
blond) aus dem Kindergarteehn.
Um elf brennt die Kirche, es drängen sich hilfsbereit
Feuerwehr, Bürger und Christ.
Derweil diskutiert er mit Schwester Theres',
bis die auch für den Weltfrieden ist.

Der Kommunist ist so geschickt, dagegen kann man nicht!
Und zu Mittag schreibt er gar noch ein politisches Gedicht.
Huhu, huhu ...!

Er verstellt sich, spricht rheinisch statt sächisch
und infiltriert meuchlings und nur hinterrücks.
Und wenn du heute verschont bleibst, ist das eine
Frage persönlichen Glücks.
Am Nachmittag schleicht er zum Herrenfriseur
in dem Hinterhof-Ladenlokal.
Er zieht die Pistole, nimmt Platz und befiehlt:
»Einmal Haarschnitt / und zwar radikal!<<

ALTERNATIVE TEXT:

Er verstellt sich, spricht rheinisch statt sächisch
und infiltriert meuchlings und nur hinterrücks.
Und wenn du heute verschont bleibst, ist das eine
Frage persönlichen Glücks
Am Nachmittag platzt eine Bombe in Bonn,
aber da hat er sich geirrt!
Weil, wenn einer nur an KZs mitentworfen hat,
daraus kein Staatseklat wird.



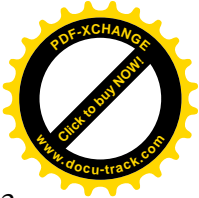
Und wer ein Kommunist ist, kriegt man niemals richtig raus,
so ein Kryptokommunist sieht immer agitproper aus.
Huhu, huhu...!

Zumeist kommunistet er in einer Hütte,
die gleich hinterm Bahndamm versteckt liegt.
Da übt er sich heimlich in Philosophie,
Analyse sowie Dialektik.
Müd kommt er nach Hause, er küßt seine Frau, und
Er spielt mit den Kindern verstecken.
Die Kinder sind auch durch und durch infiziert, denn
Sie kennen im Haus alle Ecken.

Dann hört er sich die Platte mit der h-Moll-Messe an,
weil er nicht einmal privat mehr unverstellt sein kann.
Dann zieht der Kommunist die Unterwandelstiefel aus,
und dann ruht er sich von seinem
schlimmen Untertagwerkj aus.
Huhu, huhu...hu is huuuu?

Sources

Quoted in Bernhard Lassahn, *Dorn im Ohr* (Zürich: Diogenes, 1982) pp. 43-44.
Alternative text for stanza 3 quoted in Inke Pinkert Sältzer, *German Songs* (New York: Continuum, 1992), pp. 117-121.
Dieter Süverkrüp, 'Erschrockliche Moritat vom Kryptokommunisten' on LP
Die widerborstigen Gesänge des Dieter Süverkrüp, Pläne 1967.



7. 'Ballade vom Briefträger William L. Moore aus Baltimore' - Wolf Biermann

**der im Jahre '63 allein in die Südstaaten wanderte
Er protestierte gegen die Verfolgung der Neger.
Er wurde erschossen nach einer Woche.
Drei Kugeln trafen ihn in die Stirn**

(1964)

SONNTAG

Sonntag, da ruhte William L. Moore
von seiner Arbeit aus
Er war ein armer Briefträger nur
in Baltimore stand sein Haus

MONTAG

Montag, ein Tag in Baltimore
Sprach er zu seiner Frau:
>Ich will nicht länger Briefträger sein,
Ich geh nach Süden auf Tour that's sure!<
 BLACK AND WHITE, UNITE! UNITE!
 schrieb er auf ein Schild
 White and Black - die Schranken weg!
 Und er ging ganz allein.

DIENSTAG

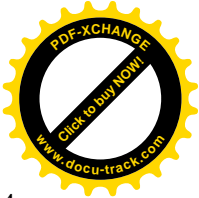
Dienstag, ein Tag im Eisenbahnzug
fragte William L. Moore
manch einer nach dem Schild, das er trug,
und wünscht ihm Glück für die Tour
 BLACK AND WHITE, UNITE! UNITE!
 schrieb er auf ein Schild...

MITTWOCH

Mittwoch, in Alabama ein Tag,
ging er auf der Chaussee,
weit war der Weg nach Birmingham,
taten die Füße ihm weh
 BLACK AND WHITE, UNITE! UNITE!

DONNERSTAG

Donnerstag hielt der Sheriff ihn an
sagte >Du bist doch weiß!<
Sagte >Was gehn die Nigger dich an
Junge, bedenke den Preis!<



BLACK AND WHITE, UNITE! UNITE!

FREITAG

Freitag lief ihm ein Hund hinterher
wurde sein guter Freund
Abends schon trafen Steine sie schwer -
sie gingen weiter zu zweit ...

BLACK AND WHITE, UNITE! UNITE!

SONNA'MT

Sonna'mt, ein Tag, war furchtbar heiß
kam eine weiße Frau
gab ihm ein'n Drink, und heimlich sprach sie:
>Ich denk' wie Sie ganz genau.<

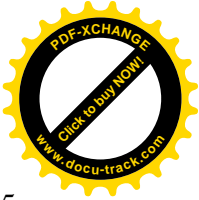
BLACK AND WHITE, UNITE! UNITE!

LAST DAY

Sonntag, ein blauer Sommertag
lag er im grünen Gras
blühten drei rote Nelken blutrot
auf seiner Stirne so blaß

BLACK AND WHITE, UNITE! UNITE!

steht auf seinem Schild
White and Black - die Schranken weg!
und er starb ganz allein
und er bleibt nicht allein



8. 'Mein Vater wird gesucht' - Hans Drach

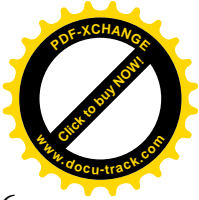
Mein Vater wird gesucht, er kommt nicht mehr nach Haus,
sie hetzen ihn mit Hunden, vielleicht ist er gefunden
und kommt nicht mehr nach Haus.

Oft kam zu uns SA und fragte, wo er sei.
Wir konnten es nicht sagen, sie haben uns geschlagen.
wir schrien nicht dabei.

Die Mutter aber weint. Wir lasen im Bericht,
Der Vater sei gefangen und hätt' sich aufgehangen -
Das glaub ich aber nicht.

Er hat uns doch gesagt, so etwas tät er nicht.
Es sagten die Genossen, SA hätt' ihn erschossen,
Ganz ohne ein Gericht.

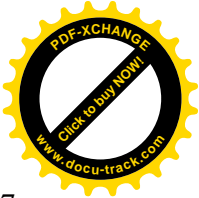
Heut' weiß ich ganz genau, warum sie das getan.
Wir werden doch vollenden, was er nicht könnt' beenden -
Und Vater geh voran



9. 'Kirschen auf Sahne' - Dieter Süverkrüp

(1965)

In dem kleinen Café
mit dem Kopfschmerzenlicht
Sitzt ein Liebespaar drin,
so als wär's in Paris,
aber da ist es nicht.
In dem kleinen Café
sitzt der zittrige Mann
mit der Narbe am Auge
das blickt die Verliebten
so freundschaftlich an
Dieses Auge blieb heil
in fünf Jahren KZ,
sieht am Nebentisch: Sahne
mit Kirschen. Die Dame ist schön, aber fett.
Kirschen auf Sahne -
Blutspur im Schnee.
Eine Mark fünfzig
sanftes Klischee
In dem kleinen Café...
Kriminalfernsehzeit.
Nun der Wilddieb in Öl
im Barockrahmen starrt
auf die Ewigkeit;
und der alte Mann,
der mal im Widerstand war.
spricht nicht gerne davon.
Pro Tag Auschwitz fünf Mark;
wieviel macht das im Jahr?
Wenn die Liebenden gehen müssen,
grüßen sie matt
zu dem Zittermann hin,
weil er ihnen so aufmerksam
zugeschaut hat.
Manche war'n Juden –
manche war'n rot,
Dreißig Verletzte –
schimmliges Brot.
Und da denkt er:
es hat sich vielleicht doch gelohnt.
Und die Schmerzen komm'n wieder;
er setzt sich nur gerade.
Er ist es gewohnt.
Der Geschenkevertreter

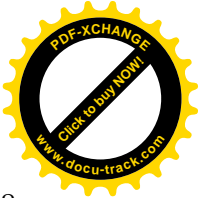


trinkt unentwegt Bier.
Es nistet das Graun
in der Rokokovase
gleich neben der Tür.
Und der zittrige Mann
wird verlegen und geht.
Denn er schämt sich,
weil all' die verdammte
Erinnerung nicht mehr verweht.

Leben ist Leben –
wer hat das nicht?
Zehntausend Tote –
Neon macht Licht.

Da habt Ihr es! (Hamburg: Hoffmann & Campe, 1968)

From Pinkerneil, *Das grosse deutsche Balladenbuch* (Königstein: Athenäum, 1978), pp. 828-829.



10. 'Die Wacht am Rhein' - Walter Mossmann

(1974)

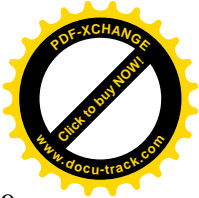
1 Im Elsaß und in Baden
war lange große Not
da schossen wir für unsre Herrn
im Krieg einander tot.
Jetzt kämpfen wir für uns selber
in Wyhl und Marckolsheim
wir halten hier gemeinsam
eine andere Wacht am Rhein.
Auf welcher Seite stehst du?
He! Hier wird ein Platz besetzt.
Hier schützen wir uns vor dem Dreck
nicht morgen, sondern JETZT!

2 Herr Rosenthal hat einen Plan,
der uns gar nicht gefällt.
Dem Rosenthal ist das egal,
den interessiert nur Geld.
Uns aber interessieren
der Fluß, der Wald, das Feld
und unsere Gesundheit
kauft uns keiner ab für Geld.

3 Wer will den bleiverseuchten Wein
Blei-Milch, Blei-Hecht, Blei-Aal?
Wer ißt ein Rindersteak mit Blei?
Vielleicht Herr Rosenthal?
Aber nein, der hält sich sehr gesund
sauber und elegant
Bloß seinen CWM-Mülleimer
stellt er in unser Land.

4 Zu Straßburg auf der Schanz
residiert der Herr Präfekt,
der hat bei der Chemie-Industrie
das große Geld gelect.
Sicurani, Sicurani
du hast uns angeschmiert!
Aber paß bloß auf: das Elsaß
hast du nicht kolonialisiert.

5 Am zwanzigsten September
da wars schon höchste Zeit,
da machten wir uns auf dem Platz



von CWM schön breit.
Und als er uns behindert hat,
Sicurani, der Wicht,
da machten wir die Grenze
auf den Brücken schnell mal dicht.

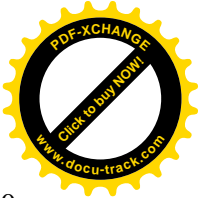
6 Am Limberg über Sasbach
da wächst ein roter Wein.
Der schmeckt nicht schlecht, das ist uns recht
so soll's auch weiter sein.
Am Anfang waren drei erst wach
jetzt wacht der ganze Ort
die schieben mit Traktoren
jeden Rosenthal hier fort.

7 In Endingen ist die Rebumlegung
endlich geschafft,
aber nicht dafür, daß Rosenthal
seinen Bleistaub rüberpafft.
Drum hört den Apotheker,
der laut und deutlich spricht:
Es gibt für vieles Medizin,
doch für Bleivergiftung nicht.

8 In Weisweil im Gemeindehaus
da fing der Kampf mal an,
da wird nicht nur gebetet,
da wird auch was getan.
Und in die „Fischerinsel“
passen EINUNDZWANZIG rein,
da haben wir beschlossen:
KKW + BLEIWERK: NEIN!

9 Es schlafen einige sehr schlecht
in Wyhl, in Wyhl, der Stadt,
weil dort der Bürgermeister
uns glatt verschaukelt hat.
Jetzt sitzt er mit Pistole
in seinem Judas-Haus
und denkt: „Hätt ichs doch nicht getan,
bald ist es mit mir aus!“

10 In Mackenheim, in Mackenheim
da kommt es knüppeldick:
da steht ein großer Galgen
dran hängen sieben Strick.
Darunter steht betreten
der halbe Gemeinderat,



der schon in BAYERS Schlinge
den blöden Schädel tat.

11 Nach Riegel fahren viele
auf Arbeit übern Rhein,
die sagen: „Wenn das Bleiwerk kommt,
fall ich als erster rein.

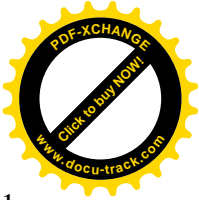
Was nützt mir so ein Arbeitsplatz,
an dem ich bald verreck?
Herr Rosenthal, hau ab, du Sack,
geh weg mit deinem Dreck!»

12 Und kommt der Staatsanwalt
und kommt die blaue Polizei
und kommen sie im Morgenraun -
uns ist das einerlei.

Wir sind uns nämlich einig
und werden täglich mehr,
und wenn wir uns mal einig sind,
dann sind wir immer mehr!

13 Und wenn sie uns auch sagen,
die erste Bürgerpflicht
wär Ruh auf Treu und Glauben,
wir glauben ihnen nicht.
Der Glaube hatte nichts genützt
in Stolberg und Nordenham,
Wir haben nicht vergessen
DDT und CONTERGAN.

14 Im Elsaß und in Baden
war lange große Not
da schossen wir für unsre Herrn
im Krieg einander tot.
Jetzt kämpfen wir für uns selber
in Wyhl und Marckolsheim
wir halten hier gemeinsam
eine andere Wacht am Rhein.
Auf welcher Seite stehst du?
He! Hier wird ein Platz besetzt.
Hier schützen wir uns vor dem Dreck
nicht morgen, sondern JETZT!



11. 'Western Ballade' - Dieter Süverkrüp

Jimmy Gray bekam im vergangenen Jahr
Einen roten Kopf wegen der Marie.
Daran sahn die Nachbarn, wie verliebt er war.
Und er hatte einen Job bei der Erdöl-Company.

Jimmy Gray bekam am Tag darauf
einen Brief von der Armee,
und er mußte nach Vancouver rauf –
und im Urlaub fiel zu Hause Schnee.

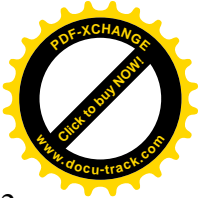
Jimmy Gray bekam einen Extra-Sold,
Und er mußte nach Vietnam.
Und die Sonne war blank wie ein Dollar aus Gold,
als das Schiff in den Hafen Schwamm.

Jimmy Gray bekam eine Woche drauf
einen Bombensplitter in den Bauch.
Und er lag und schrie, und er hörte nicht auf.
Und den Sergeant störte das auch.

Erst als es Tag geworden war,
und als Jimmy Gray nicht mehr schrie,
und sein Röcheln auch nicht mehr zu hören war,
kamen zwei Sanitäter von der Kompanie.

Und sie nahmen ihm das Soldbuch ab,
und sie trugen ihn ins Tal
und spendierten ihm ein sehr solides Heldengrab.
Ein ganz alltäglicher Fall.

From Pinkerneil, *Das grosse deutsche Balladenbuch*, 1978
p. 828. Also published in *Da habt Ihr es!* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1968)



12. Leben ist Poesie - Festival zum 30-jährigen Bühnenjubiläum des Zupfgeigenhansl Erich Schmeckenbecher : Das es noch möglich ist...

DASS ES NOCH MÖGLICH IST...

... sich einer kulturellen Tradition zu bemächtigen, die ach so gern als tot verschrien, von ungeheurer Vitalität zeugt: dem LIED mit deutschen Texten, ohne Unterstützung von Quotierungs- kampagnen, dumpfem Patriotismus oder Altstudienräten!<p>

Einfach getragen von jenen, die sich seit Jahren um dieses Genre bemühen und recht allein gelassen sind von Institutionen, Professoren, Handlungsreisenden und Besserwissern.

... zu erleben, wie sich irische Lieder mit Gedichten, Kabarett und Magie mit Blasmusik, Chanson mit Rock & Akkordeons, wie sich deftigen Klavierattacken mit dem Western-Sound der Gitarren vertragen und sich gegenseitig befördern, als wäre es immer so gewesen.

..., das 30 jährige Bühnenjubiläum von Erich Schmeckenbecher zu feiern, ohne Personenkult, Heiligensprechung oder Verdrehung der Tatsachen der kulturellen Realität Deutschlands!

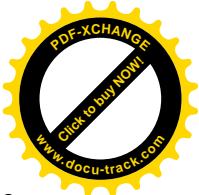
..., daß es ein weites Feld ist, was wir als Volksmusik bezeichnen in diesen Breiten und all zu oft vergessen, daß es auch jenseits des Musikantenstadels ein Welt-Musik gibt, die aus diesem Land stammt! Und in diesem Land lebendig ist.

Fast vier Stunden lang reiht sich, moderiert von Pit Klein, ein Höhepunkt an den anderen:

Neben dem Veranstalter Erich Schmeckenbecher standen unter dem Motto "Leben ist Poesie" Hannes Wader und Konstantin Wecker, Klaus Lage und Kerstin Blodig, Liederjan und Lydie Auvray, Bernies Autobahnband und Barbara Thalheim, Black(Schobert & Black), Wenzel, Steffen Mensching, Peter Maiwald, Manfred Hausin, Matthias Wesslowski und viele andere auf der Bühne, um mit Songs, Gedichten, Lesungen und Zauberstückchen die deutsche Liedermachertradition in Erinnerung zu rufen, die sich auch drei Jahrzehnte nach den großen Erfolgen des Duos Zupfgeigenhansel nicht zu verstecken braucht.

http://deposit.d-nb.de/cgi-bin/dokserv?id=2879586&prov=M&dok_var=1&dok_ext=htm

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List of Abbreviations

CUP: Cambridge University Press

EUP: Edinburgh University Press

OUP: Oxford University Press

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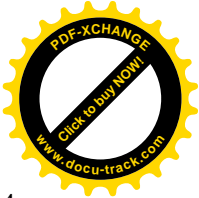
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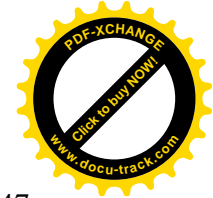
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