COLD WAR CAPITAL: CONTESTED URBANITY IN WEST BERLIN, 1963-1989

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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This dissertation explores the relationship between urban space, protest, and identity in West Berlin by investigating the politics of urban renewal in the Berlin district of Kreuzberg. In 1963, the West Berlin government announced a comprehensive program of urban renewal, which entailed the clearance of the nineteenth-century housing stock, its replacement with modern apartments, and a clear separation of urban functions. As was the case across West Germany and in West Berlin, modernist urban planning emerged in the late 1950s as a potent spatial expression and political tool of postwar capitalism and democracy. Given its status as a divided city, Berlin more than any other German city became a key site in postwar developments and discourses of modernization, urbanism, capitalism, and democracy. By the early 1970s, plans to transform and rehabilitate Berlin's urban environment became inextricably linked to broader West German fears and anxieties about "foreignness," the urban poor, and political radicalism. In this context, the cultural and political importance of Kreuzberg as a locus of West German anxieties cannot be underestimated.

In the same period, vocal opposition and protest against the city's renewal plans took shape revealing the interplay between the urban environment and the possibilities of political action in postwar German history. This study sets out to investigate the historical counter-narratives beneath the iconic image of West Berlin as the symbolic capital of the "free world."

I argue against customary representations of left-alternative protest in 1970s and 80s West Berlin as the work of a radical group of self-indulgent squatters, punks, eco-freaks, and dropouts, and offer a different reading of these 'anti-establishment' actors. My research demonstrates that this brand of urban radicalism of 1980s West Berlin had its roots in long-standing, broad-based political and cultural struggle with parallels in other Western European cities, all of which were attempts to redefine urban spaces from below.

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Introduction: A "*Weltstadt*" on the Margins

Cities change. But how do they change and for whom? Political, economic, social, and aesthetic developments and trends have all had a hand in the making and remaking of cities, particularly capital cities. Though comparatively young by European standards, Berlin's tumultuous history from capital of the German Empire in 1871 to a democracy in 1919 to dictatorship in 1933 and to a city of competing ideological systems after World War Two offers the historian a unique perspective on politics and power and their relationship to the urban environment.[1]

Much has been written of late about the efforts, both government and private alike, to redefine the "New Berlin." For the past twenty years, the revived capital has been negotiating not only its place as the capital city of a reunified Germany, but as the capital of a country now recognizing its potential as a global economic and political powerhouse. Since 1990, the city has become the subject of numerous essays and monographs, not to mention heated public debates. In this context, urban geographers and sociologists have taken the lead in examining the ways in which expressions of national identity are spatially and architecturally given form.[2] Not surprisingly, the politics of memory and coming to terms with Germany's National Socialist and divided pasts

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[1] Reinhard Rürup, "'Parvenu Polis' and 'Human Workshop' Reflections on the History of the City of Berlin, *German History*, 6:3 (Dec. 1988): 217-248; Wolfgang Ribbe, ed., *Geschichte Berlins, vol. 2: Von der Märzrevolution bis zur Gegenwart,* 3rd rev. and exp. ed. (Berlin: Berliner Wissenschafts Verlag, 2002); Alexandra Richie, *Faust's Metropolis: A History of Berlin* (New York: Carroll & Graf, 1998); David Clay Large, *Berlin* (New York: Basic Books, 2001); Wieland Giebel, *The History of Berlin* (Berlin: Berlin Story Verlag, 2010).

[2] Karen E. Till, *The New Berlin: Memory, Politics, and Place* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001); Elizabeth Strom, *Building the New Berlin: The Politics of Urban Development in Germany's Capital City* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2001); Jennifer A. Jordan, *Structures of Memory: Understanding Urban Change in Berlin and Beyond* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006); Hartmut Häussermann and Elizabeth Strom, "Berlin: The Once and Future Capital," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 18, no. 2 (1994): 335-46.

continue to be the central focus of public debates on the building and/or flattening of monuments, memorial sites, government buildings, and museums in the capital city.[3] Alongside these public and international debates about rebuilding, remembering, and forgetting, Berlin's drive to once again become a world city has focused largely on marketing itself as the cultural capital of a reunified Europe.

This Berlin, too, has a very recent history. It can be found not only in academic treatments of government buildings, or large state-sponsored public monuments or memorials, but also in the city's neighborhoods, tenement houses, and streets. This dissertation, "Cold War Capital: Contested Urbanity in West Berlin 1963-1989," takes the politics of urban renewal in West Berlin to examine the historical counter-narratives beneath the iconic image of West Berlin as the shining capital of the "free world," a mythology of the city that still has a hold on the public imagination.[4] At its broadest level, this dissertation focuses on the relationship between urban planning and social control. It asks how governments see control of the urban environment as tantamount to the control of its people and thus a barometer of its own level of control and

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[3] Brian Ladd, *The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); Rudy Koshar, *Germany's Transient Pasts: Preservation and National Memory in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Koshar, *From Traces to Monuments: Artifacts of German Memory, 1870-1990* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Jane Kramer, *The Politics of Memory: Looking for Germany in the New Germany* (New York: Random House, 1996); Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003); Belinda Davis, "Monuments, Memory, and the Future of the Past in Modern Urban Germany," review of *Germany's Transient Pasts and From Monuments to Traces*, by Rudy Koshar, *Journal of Urban History* 30, no. 4 (2004): 583-93.

[4] For recent studies on Cold War Berlin see Paul Steege, *Black Market, Cold War: Everyday Life in Berlin, 1946-1949* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). Steege describes how the myth of an impenetrable Berlin and a heroic airlift that "saved" West Berliners continues sixty years later to dominate popular narratives of the first Cold War battle. Andreas W. Daum, "Capitals in Modern History: Inventing Urban Spaces for the Nation," in *Berlin-Washington, 1800-2000: Capital Cities, Cultural Representations, and National Identities*, ed. Andreas Daum and Christoph Mauch (Washington, D.C.: German Historical Society and Cambridge University Press, 2005): 3-30; Andreas W. Daum, *Kennedy in Berlin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Belinda Davis, ""Everyday" Protest and the Culture of Conflict in Berlin, 1830-1980," in *Berlin-Washington, 1800-2000*, 263-284.

effectiveness. But just as important here is how people wrest control from the

government, why they do it, and how that in turn influences the government and its

policies.[5] Who has the power to control, to occupy, to reuse, or to amend space(s) or

places within the urban environment? In this context, this project examines opposition

and protest against urban renewal practices in postwar West Berlin, above all in the

Berlin district of Kreuzberg. I explore the interplay between the urban environment and

the possibilities and potentialities of political action in postwar German history. To me,

these are particularly interesting issues in relation to West Berlin, since it was an

occupied city and a symbol of the "free" (i.e., capitalist) world. As I argue, this makes

any "anti-Western/capitalist" protests in West Berlin particularly visible but also

particularly trenchant.

I lived in the Berlin district of Kreuzberg for over two years before deciding to

focus on the neighborhood as the subject of my dissertation. In those two years, I strolled

through its streets with visitors trying to keep my neighborhood tour lively with a

patchwork of anecdotes about Kreuzberg. For the most part, I had picked up interesting

tidbits of information from conversations I had with German and North American friends

who had lived there longer. Most of these partial stories I had collected revolved around a

particular historical moment in Kreuzberg –the 1980s– a time when most of those friends

retelling the stories had been children or teenagers. Two things struck me: Firstly, the

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[5] Manfred Gailus, *Straße und Brot. Sozialer Protest in den deutschen Staaten unter besonderer Berücksichtigung Preußens 1847-1849* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990); — — —, ed., *Pöbelexzesse und Volkstumulte in Berlin. Zur Sozialgeschichte der Straße, 1830-1980* (Berlin: Europäische Perspektiven, 1984); — — —, "Food Riots in German in the Late 1840s," *Past and Present* 145 (November 1994): 157-193; Alf Lüdtke, *Police and State in Prussia, 1815-1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); Alf Lüdtke, "Sicherheit" and "Wohlfahrt": Polizei, Gesellschaft und Herrschaft im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1992), Thomas Lindenberger, *Straßenpolitik. Zur Sozialgeschichte der öffentlichen Ordnung in Berlin 1900 bis 1914* (Bonn: Dietz, 1995).

mythology built up around the neighborhood as a space/site of resistance. Secondly, the centrality of the buildings, parks, and courtyards to this mythology, and to the very active left-alternative political subculture that still today calls Kreuzberg its home left a deep impression on me. Still very much a migrant and alternative neighborhood in terms of its visible population and character, I began to wonder how this neighborhood came to be *the* symbol for both ethnic and political difference in Germany. Reflecting on the neighborhood's reputation as a space of difference led me to the possibility of exploring the interweaving histories of leftist activism and migration in Kreuzberg against the backdrop of urban planning and renewal in West Berlin. At the same time, I was interested in the neighborhood's importance for the city's Cold War history. From this vantage point, my research shows how the contestation of public and domestic space in the Berlin district of Kreuzberg articulated with a range of broader issues, from fears related to urbanity, to claims to citizenship, to the construction of German national identity.

In 1920, city officials reorganized the borders of Berlin and created Greater Berlin. As a result of this reorganization, parts of three historic neighborhoods merged to form the district of Kreuzberg, the southern part of Luisenstadt, Friedrichstadt, and Tempelhofer Vorstadt. Historically, the eastern part of the neighborhood was predominantly poor and working class. This part of Kreuzberg had been the final stop for many economic migrants from the far eastern reaches of the German Empire seeking work in the booming industrial capital. The construction of the Wall in 1961 consigned the district to the easternmost corner of West Berlin, surrounded on three sides by East Berlin. Its reputation as a home to migrants from Turkey, punks, squatters, anarchists,

and artists was established in the 1970s and 1980s. In terms of the history of housing politics in West Berlin, Kreuzberg is to West Berlin what West Berlin is to the Federal Republic: a more pronounced and perhaps intense example of phenomena that were more widespread in other parts of the city and West Germany.

Capital cities in the modern era have proven to be important sites for the formation and display of national identities. Historical studies of Berlin, however, have demonstrated that many Germans at various points never fully warmed to the idea of Berlin as their national capital and, in fact, its assigned role was often questioned.[6] Instead, Germans' loyalties remained regional.[7] Thus, successive regimes continually and quite deliberately invested in *making* Berlin the capital. At the end of World War Two, the political fate of Berlin rested in the hands of the occupying powers, in particular the United States and the Soviet Union. As a direct result of its occupied and insecure status, among other reasons, officials chose the city of Bonn as the provisional capital of West Germany until the country reunified, as American, British, and French officials perceived it. Officially, between 1949 and 1989, West Berlin was not a part of the Federal Republic of Germany. Instead for many people in West Germany and around the world, West Berlin became a figurative symbol of democratic and capitalist values. Its "showcase" function had clear ramifications for the built environment, since these values and ideals were given expression in the city's postwar urban design and architecture.

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[6] Andreas W. Daum, *Capitals in Modern History*, 14; Wolfgang Ribbe and Jürgen Schmädeke, *Berlin im Europa der Neuzeit: Ein Tagungsbericht* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co, 1990*)*; Horst Matzerath, "Berlin, 1890-1940," in *Metropolis, 1890-1940*, ed. Anthony Sutcliffe (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 289-318.

[7] Alon Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württenberg, Imperial Germany and National Memory 1871-1918* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997); Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

It was the response of the Western powers to the Soviet blockade of their sectors in 1948-1949 that assured the West's commitment to Berlin. For the remainder of the Cold War, West Berlin's geographical location and its legal status necessitated military and financial assistance to keep the city afloat. The city's main industries had decamped to West Germany, with thousands of its residents following the same trend year after year. This left a shrinking population comprised mainly of people and families with limited income: pensioners, students, and economic migrants. Migrants who arrived in the city after 1961 were the main source of cheap labor after East Germany built the Berlin Wall, leaving West Berlin with a shortage of semi- and low-skilled workers. And since residents of West Berlin were exempt from military service, the city became a magnet for young men of university age looking to avoid the draft. Still, its status as the "capital of the free world" meant that it had to appear prosperous and successful, even when, in reality, it was not.

Efforts to rebuild West Berlin in line with the government-endorsed vision of the city brought its own set of complications. Building and construction operated differently in the city given its isolated geographical location roughly 70 km inside East Germany. For instance, building materials were more expensive since they had to be "imported" from West Germany. From the 1950s through to the 1980s, a small group of companies worked closely with government agencies to supply the needed equipment and materials to the city. This system eventually led to corruption, with a number of construction scandals brought to light in the 1980s. Tax concessions and other forms of financial assistance from Bonn fuelled the city's building and construction projects. Due to the volatile political situation in the first decade after the war, comprehensive rebuilding in

the city did not begin until the mid-1950s. For this reason, the pace of reconstruction in

West Berlin lagged behind that of West German cities. The first major housing projects

got underway in the early 1960s on the open tracts of land on West Berlin's periphery.

This dissertation focuses on the 1970s and 1980s because these decades constitute

a valuable, and until now overlooked, historical moment for exploring the tensions

between competing visions of the city. It was during these decades that vocal opposition

and protest against the city's urban renewal program took shape claiming a "right to

[define] the city."[8] In the context of an ideologically driven Cold War contest, the degree

to which Cold War propaganda resonated with the West Berlin public, but also how it

reflected Berliners' daily realities is an important piece of West Berlin's history. This

story began in 1963. That year the West Berlin Senate announced the First Urban

Renewal Program (*Stadterneuerungsprogramm*) that set out to address the city's urban

and social problems.[9] In doing so, the program prescribed its official vision of the

"modern" city onto Berlin's nineteenth-century cityscape. The city's housing authority

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[8] See David Harvey, *Social Justice in the City,* rev. ed. (Atlanta: University of Georgia Press, 2009); Edward W. Soja, "The Socio-spatial Dialectic," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 70, no. 2 (1980): 207-225; Edward W. Soja, "On Spuistraat: The Contested Streetscape in Amsterdam," in *The Unknown City: Contesting Architecture and Social Space*, ed. Iain Borden (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001), 281-296; Henri Lefebvre, "The Right to the City," ed. and trans. Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas, *Writings on cities* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 1996), 147-160; Manual Castells, *The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-Cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

[9] For other studies on urban renewal in divided and post-1990 Berlin see Andreas Schmidt, *Vom steinernen Berlin zum Freilichtmuseum der Stadterneuerung: Die Geschichte des größten innerstädtischen Sanierungsgebietes der Bundesrepublik: Wedding-Brunnenstraße 1963–1989/95* (Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovac, 2008); Roland Strobel, "Before the Wall Came Tumbling Down: Urban Planning Paradigm Shifts in a Divided Berlin," *Journal of Architectural History* 48, no. 1 (Sept. 1994): 25-37; Florian Urban, *Neo-historical East Berlin: Architecture and Urban Design in the German Democratic Republic 1970-1990* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2009); Andrej Holm, *Die Restrukturierung des Raumes. Stadterneuerung der 90er Jahre in Ostberlin. Interessen und Machtverhältnisse* (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2006); Hartmut Häußermann, Andrej Holm, Daniela Zunzer, *Stadterneuerung in der Berliner Republik. Modernisierung in Berlin-Prenzlauer Berg* (Opladen: Leske und Budrich, 2002); Christopher Klemek, *The Transatlantic Collapse of Urban Renewal: Postwar Urbanism from New York to Berlin* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011); Peter Gerlach, *Space-related Identity Formation in the City: Potentials, Conflicts, and Scenarios of Activating Urban Renewal: Results & Findings of the Berlin-Friedrichshain Case Study* (Berkeley: University of California at Berkeley, Institute of Urban and Regional Development, 1997).

slated large-scale urban renewal projects for its inner-city neighborhoods. Concretely this

meant applying the principles of modern architecture and rational city planning to replace

the blocks of five-story tenements (the so-called rental barracks or *Mietskaserne*)[10] built

around paved courtyards that had housed Berlin's inner-city working class population

since the last third of the nineteenth century. Such a program was not unique to Berlin.

Across Western Europe and North America, postwar governments embarked on massive

renewal projects, sometimes called "slum clearance," to clear away the old, congested

inner-city neighborhoods to bring in a new, "cleaner" form of urbanism.[11]

This brings me to another important focus of this project. And that is the notion

that a controlled urban environment is one that is orderly and clean, both in a literal and

figurative or moral sense.[12] The assumption that literal cleanliness is connected to moral

cleanliness, especially with relation to housing, was a widely circulated idea amongst late

nineteenth and early twentieth-century social and housing reformers. If one detects a

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[10] For the most part, I will use the German term *Mietskaserne* throughout since it is central to the story I am telling. At times, I will use tenement and *Mietskaserne* interchangeably.

[11] For studies on urban renewal cities in Western Europe or North America see Michael Miller, *The Representation of Place: Urban Planning and Protest in France* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003); Abdul Khakee, Paola Somma, and Huw Thomas, *Urban Renewal, Ethnicity, and Social Exclusion in Europe* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 1999); Samuel Zipp, *Manhattan Projects: The Rise and Fall of Urban Renewal in Cold War New York* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Thomas H. O'Connor, *Building A New Boston: Politics and Urban Renewal, 1950-1970* (Boston: Northeastern Press, 1993); Rosemary Wakeman, *Modernizing the Provincial City: Toulouse 1945-1975* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997); Patrick Dunleavy, *The Politics of Mass Housing in Britain, 1945-1975: A Study of Corporate Power and Professional Influence in the Welfare State* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981); John F. Bauman, *Public Housing, Race, and Renewal: Urban Planning in Philadelphia, 1920-1974* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987); Roberta S. Gold, "City of Tenants: New York's Housing Struggles and the Challenge to Postwar America, 1945-1970," (PhD diss., University of Washington, 2004); Greg Hise, *Magnetic Los Angeles: Planning the Twentieth Century Metropolis* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).

[12] For studies on nineteenth- and twentieth-century social reform issues see Andrew Lees, *Cities, Sin, and Social Reform in Imperial Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002); Clemens Zimmerman and Jürgen Reulecke, eds., *Die Stadt als Moloch? Das Land als Kraftquell? Wahrnehmungen und Wirkungen der Grossstädte um 1900* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 1999); Jean Paul Burdy, "Social Control and Forms of Working-Class Sociability in French Industrial Towns between the Mid-Nineteenth Century and the Mid-Twentieth-Centuries," in *Social Control in Europe 1800-2000*, eds. Clive Emsley, Eric Johnson, and Pieter Spierenburg (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2004).

common thread throughout the history of (West) Berlin's twentieth-century urban development that certain building types and urban arrangements will produce a certain social orders, behaviors, and values in individuals, then the Berlin *Mietskaserne* and its back courtyard or *Hinterhof* are of particular significance. In the early part of the twentieth century, reformers and officials perceived the tenements and their courtyards as the root of all urban social problems and in turn fertile ground for socialist agitation.

To many in the post-World War Two era, the West German and West Berlin youth who squatted the run-down tenements lacked any apparent sense of "order." As one elderly West Berlin woman put it after being asked randomly on the street if she felt sorry for the young squatter at a demonstration who had been run over and killed by a transit bus, "No, I don't feel bad at all. What's that West German doing here anyway and smashing everything up (*alles kaputtschlagen*). We rebuilt Berlin and they [those squatters] get so much support. Why should I feel bad?"[13] Another bystander on the street responded that "the young man doesn't deserve any compassion since [those squatters], they don't work."[14] The lifestyle of these "unproductive" squatters living in so-called squalor inside run-down old buildings stood in stark contrast to the desired image of an affluent and orderly city. Migrants also came to represent the social problems associated with the inner-city "slums." Veiled and not-so-veiled references to the "dirty foreigner" residing in the *Mietskaserne* rejecting German "conventions" of orderliness and cleanliness must be placed within a larger context of a general uneasiness vis-à-vis the permanence of immigrants in Germany. As a part of this, the *Hinterhof* and what it

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[13] U.K. Heye, S. Nawroth, and L. Rosh, "Räumung und danach," a production by Kennzeichen D, October 5, 1981.0

[14] Ibid.

symbolized is particularly important. The fact that it is "hidden" from view appears to be part of why critics found it objectionable, even if they did not explicitly acknowledge this. It is a place where people can escape the watchful eye of the forces of social control (e.g., police or nosy neighbors).

The squatters' movement, central both to the history of postwar Berlin and to contemporary political debates in Germany about the disposition of urban space, has not been told.[15] My project makes several contributions to a variety of literatures. Firstly, it corrects popular and scholarly misperceptions of radical leftist activism in West Berlin. Secondly, it links the story of one of the most important architectural events of the 1980s (International Building Exhibition or IBA) to grassroots activism and ideas around participatory planning and design. Thirdly, in creating a more inclusive narrative of protest in Berlin, it asks questions about the striking absence of the category of "race" in radical leftist politics. It also challenges a widespread preconception that in the 1980s

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[15] Some important works on protest movements in West Germany and West Berlin include Martin Klimke, *The Other Alliance: Student Protest in West Germany and the United States in the Global Sixties* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); Michael Schmidtke, *Der Aufbruch der jungen Intelligenz: Die 68er Jahre in der Bundesrepublik und den USA* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2003); Nick Thomas, *Protest Movements in 1960s West Germany: A Social History of Dissent and Democracy* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2003); Belinda J Davis, et al, *Changing the World, Changing Oneself: Political Protest and Collective Identities in West Germany and the U.S. in the 1960s and 1970s* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010); Rob Burns and Wilfried van der Will, *Protest and Democracy in West Germany: Extra-parliamentary Opposition and the Democratic Agenda* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988); Roger Karapin, *Protest Politics in Germany: Movements on the Left and Right since the 1960s* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007); Christina von Hodenberg and Detlef Siegfried, *Wo "1968" liegt: Reform und Revolte in der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006); Wolfgang Kraushaar, *1968 als Mythos, Chiffre und Zäsur* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2000). For work on squatters' movements in other Western European contexts see Justus Uitermark, "Framing Urban Injustices: The Case of the Amsterdam Squatter Movement" *Space and Polity*, 8, no. 2 (2004): 227-244; Lynn Owens, *Cracking Under Pressure: Narrating the Decline of the Amsterdam Squatters' Movement* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009); Hans Pruijt, "Is the Institutionalization of Urban Movements Inevitable? A comparison of the Opportunities for Sustained Squatting in New York City and Amsterdam" *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 27, no. 1 (2003): 133-157; Lila Leontidou, "Urban Social Movements in 'Weak' Civil Societies: The Right to the City and Cosmopolitan Activism in Southern Europe" *Urban Studies*, 47, no. 6 (2010): 1179-1203.

migrants from Turkey passively accepted their disadvantaged position in West German society.

In historical analyses of postwar German debates on urban planning and reconstruction (e.g., historical preservationists vs. modernist planners), urban and architectural historians have rejected the long-standing myth of a supposed "fresh" start or "zero hour" for German cities. Similarly, Brian Ladd's *The Ghosts of Berlin* does an admirable job in revealing the extent to which the past continues to influence and shape architectural and planning debates in the present. In addition to historians, literary scholars, sociologists, and geographers have taken up the more recent work on memory work in Berlin. The focus of these rich and theoretically engaging studies has primarily been on monuments, memorials and civic buildings, in particular since the surge of rebuilding in the 1990s. My project differs in that I turn to the rebuilding and rehabilitation of neighborhoods, with a focus on a particular type of housing, the *Mietskaserne* to enter into historical debates on the identity of the city. I draw on the work of historians who focus on urban politics from the bottom up, such as Pamela Swett's monograph, *Neighbors and Enemies: The Culture of Radicalism in Berlin 1929-1933* and Belinda Davis', *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics, and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin.*[16]

Without a doubt the literature on "race" in German history is vast. Until the late 1990s, however, the majority of studies that historicized the category of "race" in modern German history focused, with good reason, almost exclusively on the virulent and

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[16] Pamela Swett, *Neighbors and Enemies: The Culture of Radicalism in Berlin 1929-1933* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Belinda Davis, *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics, and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000). In another context, see Sharon Marcus, *Apartment Stories: City and Home in Nineteenth-Century Paris and London* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

exterminatory racial ideology of the Nazi period. Recently scholars of modern German history have turned their attention to the period of German colonialism to locate continuities between German colonialist thinking and the Nazi extermination of European Jews. Inspired by interventions made by postcolonial theory, the more recent literature in this field has extended this analysis of "race" and difference into the postwar period.[17] Methodologically, this scholarship reflects the theoretical advances made in recent decades by gender history, the "new" social history and cultural history.[18] It is, therefore, surprising that a major cultural and social force that has shaped postwar West Germany society, culture, and politics has garnered such little attention by historians working on modern Germany. German-based social scientists, including some historians, have contributed greatly to the existing literature on migration in the German context. Their scholarship, however, often takes a more traditional approach to the topic, focusing more on politics and the economy.[19] And the more contemporary work by a set of critical

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[17] See Susanne Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family and Nation in Precolonial Germany* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997); Susanne Zantop, Sara Friedrichsmeyer and Sara Lennox, eds., *The Imperialist Imagination: German Colonialism and its Legacy* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press,1998); Eric Ames, Marcia Klotz, and Lora Wildenthal, eds., *Germany's Colonial Pasts* (Lincoln: The Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska, 2005); Lora Wildenthal, "Rasse und Kultur. Koloniale Frauenorganisationen in der deutschen Kolonialbewegung des Kaiserreichs," in *Phantasiereiche. Zur Kulturgeschichte des deutschen Kolonialismus*, ed. Birthe Kundrus (Frankfurt: Campus, 2003), 172-219.

[18] See Tina Campt, *Other Germans: Black Germans and the Politics of Race, Gender, and Memory in the Third Reich* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2005); Heide Fehrenbach, *Race after Hitler: Black Occupation Children in Postwar Germany and America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Rita C.K. Chin, Heide Fehrenbach, Atina Grossmann, and Geoff Eley *After the Nazi Racial State: Difference and Democracy in Germany and Europe* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009); Maria Höhn, *GIs and Fräuleins: The German American Encounter in 1950s West Germany* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Fatima El-Tayeb, "'Blood is a Very Speical Juice': Racialized Bodies and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century Germany" *International Review of Social History* 44, Supplement 7 (1999): 148-169; Susan Arndt, ed., *AfrikaBilder. Studien zu Rassismus in Deutschland* (Münster: Unrast Verlag, 2006); Katharina Oguntoye, May Opitz, Dagmar Schultz, eds., *Farbe bekennen: Afro-deutsche Frauen auf den Spuren ihrer Geschichte* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuchverlag, 1992); Katharina Oguntoye, *Eine afro-deutsche Geschichte: Zur Lebenssituation von Afrikanern und Afro-Deutschen in Deutschland von 1884 bis 1950* (Kirchlinteln: Hoho Verlag, 1997).

[19] See Klaus J. Bade, *Migration in European History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003); Bertold Huber and Klaus Unger, "Politische und rechtliche Determinanten der Ausländerbeschäftigung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," in Hans Joachim Hoffmann-Nowotny, Karl Otto Hondrich eds. *Ausländer in der*

scholars of migration, many of whom consider themselves both academics and activists, seldom take an historical approach to the question of migration and difference.

These scholars have done much to highlight the racist dimension of postwar Europe's migration policies and of the asylum and immigration policies of a "new" Europe post-1990. Many of these younger scholars are sociologists or political scientists and have been influenced by a more critical, Marxian approach such as Stephen Castles', *Immigrant Workers and Class Structure in Western Europe* or *Here for Good: Western Europe's New Ethnic Minorities*.[20] Rita Chin's monograph, *The Guest Worker Question in Postwar Germany*, is the first comprehensive study of postwar migration in the Federal Republic to be published in English that examines the ways in which the category of "race," thought to have disappeared in a post-Holocaust Germany, still informed government and public discourse in the Federal Republic. Conceptually, my work bridges the literature on Afro-Germans and the extensive literature on migration in Germany by employing a social and cultural history approach to my examination of public discourse on integration and migration in 1970s and 80s West Berlin, specifically in Kreuzberg. My work differs in that I examine these broader issues by investigating how they played out on the local or neighborhood level. My project illuminates the process in which the space

Bundesrepublik und in der Schweiz: Segregation und Integration: eine vergleichende Untersuchung (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 1982); Ulrich Herbert, *Geschichte der Ausländerpolitik in Deutschland: Saisonarbeiter, Zwangsarbeiter, Gastarbeiter, Flüchtlinge* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2001); Anne von Oswald, "Arbeitseinsatz der "Gastarbeiter" im Volkswagenwerk 1962-1975," in *Angeworben-eingewandert- abgeschoben. Ein anderer Blick auf die Einwanderungsgesellschaft,* ed., Katja Dominik (Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot, 1999); Barbara Sonneberger, "IMIS – Schriften 12: Migration steuern und verwalten," in *Die Anfänge der Arbeitsmigration in die Bundesrepublik*, Jochen Oltmer ed. (Osnabrück: Institut für Migrationsforschung und interkulturelle Studien, 2003); Heinz Fassmann and Rainer Münz, *European Migration in the Late Twentieth Century: Historical Patterns, Actual Trends, and Social Implications* (Brookfield, Vt. : E. Elgar, 1994).

[20] See Esra Erdem, "Migrant Women and Economic Justice: A Class Analysis of Anatolian-German Women in Homemaking and Cleaning Services Work on Female Migrant Workers," (PhD diss., University of Massachusetts Amherst, 2008); Manuela Bojadzijev, *Die windige Internationale: Rassismus und Kämpfe der Migration* (Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot, 2008); Serhat Karakayali, *Gespenster der Migration: Zur Genealogie illegaler Einwanderung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2008).

of Kreuzberg becomes a synonym for "foreignness" and difference, which in turn makes it a suitable starting point for understanding the history of the Federal Republic and post-1990 Germany.

My study of the politics of urban renewal in Kreuzberg draws on research in a number of alternative archives and city libraries including the *Senatsbibliothek*, the *Zentrum für Berlin Studien* at the *Zentral und Landesbibliothek Berlin*, *Papiertiger Archive and Library*, *Sammlung Berlin* (a private archive of radical politics), the *Kreuzberg Museum*, and papers from private collections. With its interdisciplinary blend of history, urban studies, and historical geography, this dissertation draws on new and neglected sources ranging from academic and government reports on urban planning and redevelopment, to urban planning and architectural journals, to tenant newspapers and newsletters, to the underground literature produced by the squatters' movement, much of it drawn from not-yet-utilized personal collections and private archives.

This examination of previously unexplored materials offers a different reading of these "anti-establishment" actors and the importance of these protests in offering both a counter-model of German urban life and a redefinition of the city. In addition, I place these social and political activists in a longer trajectory, moving beyond the upheavals of the 1960s into the subsequent decades. Among other things, this study shows how the upheaval of "1968" became transformed into the concrete politics of the left-alternative

movement (*Alternativbewegung*) in West Germany.[21] More generally, it examines the

neglected history of the 1970s and 1980s in the context of the "Second Cold War."[22]

This dissertation begins with a discussion of urban development in Berlin from

the last decades of the nineteenth century up to the early 1960s. I contextualize the

postwar planning and building ethic by looking back to the nineteenth century to

understand how this "tenement city" came about. I then trace the various social and

political demands for its reform that emerged over the course of a century. Regardless of

political persuasion, politicians and reformers were almost unanimous in their loathing of

the *Mietskaserne*.

The second chapter explores the first "break" with the official vision of the "new"

West Berlin. In the first part of the chapter I outline the government's wholesale

redevelopment plans for West Berlin generally, and Kreuzberg specifically. I then turn to

a discussion of why and how urban planners and architects began to question these

postwar urban policies. The last section of the chapter focuses on the International

Building Exhibition 1984/87 or IBA. The two directors (Paul Josef Kleihues and Hardt

Waltherr Hämer) of the world-renowned building exhibition rejected the official

modernist orthodoxy of demolishing the nineteenth-century urban texture and instead

promoted an architectural postmodern approach to the city by repairing and restoring.

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[21] Bernd Hüttner, Gottfried Oy, and Norbert Schepers, eds., *Vorwärts und viel vergessen. Beiträge zur Geschichte und Geschichtsschreibung neuer sozialer Bewegungen* (Neu-Ulm: SPAK Bücher, 2005); Roland Roth and Dieter Rucht, eds., *Die sozialen Bewegungen in Deutschland seit 1945. Ein Handbuch* (Frankfurt: Campus, 2008).

[22] This generally refers to the period of renewed hostility between the United States and the Soviet Union in the years 1979 to 1985. See Fred Halliday, *The Making of the Second Cold War* (London: Verso, 1986); Stefan Berger and Norman LaPorte, *Friendly Enemies: Britain and the GDR, 1949-1990* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2010).

The IBA directors and its architects are located in between the institutions of power and the more grassroots opposition groups.

Chapter Three explores the role of grassroots opposition in more depth. I examine the modes of protest and oppositional practices of activists, their day-to-day rhythms, and the inter- and intrapersonal dynamics both on the street and inside the squats. I first situate the radical protest that has long marked the West Berlin district of Kreuzberg within a broader context of opposition to modernist urban renewal. I then show how these activists, both moderate and radical, formulated a third voice in between the government officials and the planners and architects who distanced themselves from the official "burn and build" approach to the inner city.

Chapter Four has two goals. First, I make a case that Kreuzberg has cultural and political importance as a locus of West German anxieties around difference. To do this, I demonstrate how Kreuzberg was continually constructed in both the mainstream media and the popular imagination as a "Turkish ghetto."[23] The second part of the chapter turns its attention to the squatters' movement to interrogate the limitations of community as articulated the leftist rhetoric and political practices. In doing so, I draw attention to the underlying racialized and ethnicized assumptions embedded in leftist political struggles in 1980s West Berlin.

I conclude my analysis in the fifth and last chapter of this dissertation with an examination of competing images and representations of West Berlin that emerged most forcefully in the 1980s. A 1979 *Der Spiegel* report on the West Berlin "scene" declared

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[23] Considerable research has been done on the racialized representations of urban neighbourhoods. For a selection see Kay Anderson, *Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995); Alan Mayne, *The Imagined Slum: Newspaper Representations in Three Cities, 1870-1914* (London: Leicester University Press, 1993); Steve Pile, Christopher Brook, Gerry Mooney, eds., *Unruly Cities?* (London: Routledge, 2000).

that, "the left is alive. But the "scene" has replaced the "streets." Protest has changed its appearance – now its seen in shared living (*Wohngemeinschaften*) and work collectives, in the *Mietskasernen* and back courtyards (*Hinterhöfen*) of Kreuzberg, Neukölln, and Wedding's working-class neighborhoods."[24] Chapter Five challenges such assumptions and shows how the "scene" privileged both the streets and the neighborhoods to practice their oppositional politics. The "scene" took the opportunity on the occasion of two U.S. state visits in 1981 and 1982, by Secretary of State and President Reagan respectively, to disrupt West Berlin's global image and attack the city's postwar special relationship to the United States.

During the late 1970s and 1980s, the district of Kreuzberg specifically but West Berlin more generally came to symbolize the highly charged debates over leftist radicalism, immigration, and the related supposed disintegration of traditional German values. As one disgruntled journalist concluded in 1983, West Berlin is "kaputt."[25] In the 1980s, the "old industrial metropole" was now "synonymous with riots and scandals (*Randale und Skandale*)."[26] Together these five chapters attempt to tell the story of the social and cultural forces at play in a neighborhood located on the margins of a city itself strangely inhabiting a politically marginal position, yet still defined as a symbol of the West.

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[24] "Report über die West-Berliner Szene," *Der Spiegel* 11, March 12, 1979.

[25] Karl-Heinz Krüger, "Ich lerne langsam, dich zu hassen," *Der Spiegel* 33, August 15, 1983.

[26] Ibid.

Chapter One

**From the 'City of Stone' to the 'City of Tomorrow': Urban
Development in Berlin between 1871 and 1963**

In his 1930 book entitled *Das steinerne Berlin* (Berlin: City of Stone*),* left-liberal

urban planner and architectural critic Werner Hegemann made the following observation

about Berlin's urban development up to 1914: "[unlike] a snake that sheds its skin when

it grows too big for it, [or] like some larvae […] trapped as it were in a self-built coffin

only to colorfully burst out of it, Berlin is suffocating in its stony casket, one it was not

only forced into but which it also helped to build."[27] The "stony casket" to which

Hegemann referred was constituted by the rows of four- to five-story tenements located

on generous street blocks. These tenements were designed in order to maximize building

lots by including a front house with side and rear wings to enclose a narrow courtyard.

By the last decades of the nineteenth century, such tenement blocks had come to

dominate Berlin's urban form and shaped popular perception of the cityscape. In this

context, as Hegemann's casket metaphor was meant to suggest, the German capital could

never truly claim international standing until it ridded itself of this "suffocating" urban

form, replacing with a "healthier housing type."[28]

Echoing Hegemann's sentiment almost five decades later, a 1964 urban renewal

pamphlet distributed by the West Berlin Senator for Building and Construction directly

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[27] Hegemann's critique, although first published as a collection of essays in 1930, was widely known in urban planning circles since 1911. He had published many of the essays separately and in his role as editor of *Städtebau* he had ample opportunity to advocate in professional circles his views on architectural and planning reforms. For more on his critique see Werner Hegemann, *Das steinerne Berlin: Geschichte der größten Mietskasernenstadt der Welt*, 4th Edition (Braunschweig: Vieweg, 1988), 16.
[28] Hegemann, *Das steinerne Berlin*, 343.

addressed the so-called "evils of urban development" that had produced a "city of stone."

In it the reader was informed that the existing inner-city housing stock, above all the "rear

wings and air shafts of Berlin's tenements, have [in fact] always been used as a warning

and example to generations of architectural students of bad urban design."[29] Schwedler's

evaluation of this housing type, specifically its rear wings and back courtyards, cast it as

incompatible with the promise of prosperity in the "new" West Berlin. For Schwedler,

the "rental barracks" or *Mietskaserne* served as an emblem of working-class misery of an

era now decidedly over. Fixated for over a century on removing these objects of scorn,

housing reformers, government officials, urban planners, and architects had developed

plans of various stripes to replace Berlin's *Mietskaserne*. Thus, the issue over what to do

with these "stone caskets" was a mainstay in housing and urban planning discussions

from the late nineteenth-century through to the 1970s. What united planners and

politicians across time and the political spectrum was a distinct loathing of this urban

form, rather than a consensus on what should eventually replace it.[30]

In order to fully understand the post-WWII urban planning ethic that was so intent

on "sweeping away the *Mietskasernenstadt*,"[31] one has to understand how this "tenement

city" came about, as well as the varied social and political demands for its reform that

emerged over the course of a century. After 1945, given the desire of Germans to

distance themselves from the Nazi past, it is not surprising that architects and planners

saw in their plans to remake West Berlin the opportunity to architecturally embody their

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[29] Rolf Schwedler, *Stadterneuerung in Berlin* (Senator für Bau-und Wohnungswesen, Aus der Sitzung des Abegeordentenhauses von Berlin am 18. Juni, 1964), 2.

[30] Brian Ladd makes this point in his chapter on the "Metropolis" in his book, *The Ghosts of Berlin*, 83-126.

[31] "Das Berliner Hansaviertel und die IBA 1957, " *Deutsche Bauzeitung* 6 (1957): 526.

own "Stunde Null" or "zero hour."[32] To be sure, the post-Nazi urban form of German cities was passionately debated between modernists, traditionalists and historic preservationists; yet all parties agreed on ridding every German city of its *Mietskasernen*. In fact, as historians have now solidly established, the year 1945 did not represent a fresh start in German architecture and urban planning any more than it did in other realms of German society, culture, and politics. It would be wrong then to view the postwar treatment of extant nineteenth-century residential neighborhoods as solely construed to produce this architectural "zero hour."

Instead, as this chapter will make clear, West Berlin's reconstructionist tendencies to rid the city of the *Mietskaserne* must be placed in the context of an urban planning ethos with a long history in German planning and urban design.[33] The first part of this chapter deals with the period before WWI –the period in which the *Mietskaserne* became a fixture on the urban landscape in Berlin. The remainder of the chapter looks at the varied architectural and political responses to Berlin's tenement neighborhoods, ranging from the "Neues Bauen" movement in the Weimar period to the revival of modernist urban design in postwar West Germany exemplified in two architectural competitions for the city, the 1957 Interbau (International Building Exhibition) and the 1958 Hauptstadt competition, which was sponsored jointly by the federal government in Bonn and the city of West Berlin.

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[32] Vittorio Lampugnani, *Moderne Architektur in Deutschland 1900 bis 1950 Reform und Tradition* (Stuttgart: Hatje Cantz Publishers, 1993); Klaus von Beyme, *Der Wiederaufbau: Architektur und Städtebaupolitik in beiden deutschen Staaten* (Munich: Piper, 1987); Klaus von Beyme, Werner Durth, and Niels Gutschow, *Neue Städte aus Ruinen. Deutscher Städtebau der Nachkriegszeit* (Munich: Prestel Verlag, 1991); Jeffry M. Diefendorf, *In the Wake of War: the Reconstruction of German Cities after World War II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); Gavriel Rosenfeld, *Munich and Memory: Architecture, Monuments and the Legacy of the Third Reich* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

[33] Gavriel Rosenfeld, "The Architects' Debate: Architectural Discourse and the Memory of Nazism in the Federal Republic of Germany, 1977-1997," *History and Memory* 9, nos. 1-2 (1997): 189-225.

Until the mid-nineteenth century Germany was a largely rural society and Berlin a sleepy, provincial capital. An industrial economy in Germany developed rapidly if unevenly from the mid to late nineteenth century. By 1900, the young German nation-state had transformed into one of Europe's leading industrial powers, with the capital city Berlin acquiring a corresponding importance. Urban growth rates matched the transition of Germany from a primarily agrarian state to an industrial powerhouse; the number of Germans in the last decades of the nineteenth century living in rural areas declined exponentially, matched with a dramatic explosion in populations of large cities. Fuelled by technological improvements and innovations, the rate at which the German economy industrialized and society urbanized brought about significant socio-economic dislocations. Early critics of Berlin's tenement neighborhoods such as Hegemann were responding to the social discontents that they associated with modern urban life at the turn of the century.

Pronounced levels of urban growth occurred in the two decades following German unification as mass migration occurred from the countryside to larger towns and cities. An uneven physical and economic development of urban centers gave rise to housing shortages, as most cities could not adjust quickly enough to accommodate the pace of growth.[34] In Berlin, the most populous city in Germany and the one with the highest rate of industrialization, private builders and developers capitalized on this housing demand and began constructing large tenement complexes that contained a high

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[34] Richard Lawton and W. Robert Lee, *Urban Population Development in Western Europe from the Late-Eighteenth to the Early-Twentieth Century* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1989); Jan de Vries, *European Urbanization* (New York: Routledge, 2007); Andrew Lees and Lynn Hollen Lees, *Cities and the Making of Urban Europe, 1750-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Friedrich Lenger, ed., *Towards an Urban Nation, Germany since 1780* (Oxford: Berg, 2002); Carl E. Schorske, "The Ringstrasse, Its Critics, and the Birth of Urban Modernism," in *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Vintage, 1981), 24-115.

proportion of one-room apartments to maximize their profits. However, even this new

housing construction could not match the pace of urban growth, and by the late

nineteenth century, many of the troubles associated with modern life and a new urban

culture had become all too evident. Poor sanitation, overcrowding, inadequate housing

and widespread poverty characterized everyday life in Berlin's growing proletarian

neighborhoods.[35]

The writings of contemporaries in late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-

century Berlin articulated explicit concerns and apprehensions over the visible effects of

an expanding urban, industrial society, ruminating on ways to control or contain

disruptions to the traditional social order. The late nineteenth-century saw the

Mietskaserne, located on unsanitary streets with overcrowded back and side wings that

received little natural sunlight, emerge as an unambiguous signifier for the alienating and

negative features of the modern, industrial city. Life in the close quarters of the

Mietskaserne, sometimes bringing together strangers in the same apartment, fed

bourgeois fears of sexual impropriety, sexual deviance, particularly female sexuality, and

a breakdown of gender hierarchies. Inadequate heating and plumbing and shared toilets

located in stairwells or in the back courtyard conjured up anxieties over proper hygiene

and health standards, issues that contemporary observers understood as a pillar of moral

and physical health. It was at this historical moment in Germany that the housing

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[35] Jörg Vögele, *Urban Mortality Change in England and Germany, 1870-1913* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1998); Anthony McElligott, *The German Urban Experience, 1900-1945: Modernity and Crisis* (New York: Routledge, 2001); Sabine Hake, *Topographies of Class: Modern Architecture and Mass Society in Weimar Berlin* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008).

problem (*Wohnungsfrage*) became the dominant theme in reform discussions about the social consequences of industrial capitalism.[36]

In the three decades before Hegemann published his acerbic condemnation of the *Mietskaserne* and the Prussian urban plan that he held responsible for the widespread construction of these residential buildings, Berlin was one of the most densely populated European cities. Once designated the capital of a formally unified Germany in 1871, Berlin's population had grown exponentially. As the capital of Prussia, the city's population had already risen steadily, from 200, 000 inhabitants in 1817 to 800, 000 at the time of German unification in 1871. Unification only heightened this trend and just thirty years later, Berlin's population had reached two million. The establishment of Greater Berlin in 1920 extended the city limits to include neighboring municipalities and villages, and the amalgamation positioned Berlin as the second largest European city after London. In the years leading up to the outbreak of the Second World War, the city boasted a population of four million residents.

The economic upturn in the 1870s that accompanied the German wars of unification supported a building boom in the newly declared capital. Many distinct populations seeking better employment flooded Berlin, and needing appropriate accommodations. To keep up with the housing demand brought about by a steady stream of German and Polish migrants from the eastern provinces, four- to five- story residential buildings were built. As mentioned, these dwellings consisted of a front house, side

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[36] For more on the *Wohnungsfrage* see, Ulla Terlinden and Susanna von Oertzen, *Die Wohnungsfrage ist Frauensache!: Frauenbewegung und Wohnreform 1870 bis 1933* (Berlin: Reimer, 2006); Thomas Koinzer, *Wohnen nach dem Krieg: Wohnungsfrage, Wohnungspolitik und der Erste Weltkrieg in Deutschland und Großbritannien (1914 - 1932)* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2002); Karl Johannes Fuchs and Karl von Mangoldt, *Vorwärts in der Wohnungsfrage! Wohnungsfrage und Krieg* (Berlin: Heymann, 1916); Friedrich Engels, *Zur Wohnungsfrage: die grundlegende Schrift zur Wohnungsfrage im kapitalistischen Staat und in der Übergangszeit,* 1st ed. (Singen: Oberbadischer Verlag, [1948]).

wings and a rear wing that encircled an inner courtyard; depending on the size of the

building lot, this pattern was repeated to include two additional sets of side and rear

wings so that two more courtyards followed the first; alternatively, a small factory was

erected in the back courtyard to make use of the remaining space. The eagerness of

private builders and speculators to make a profit resulted in the hasty construction of a

housing type whose dense physical form filled the prescribed building lot. By the turn of

the century, this type of dwelling had become the prototype of urban housing in Berlin.[37]

The term *Mietskaserne*, literally rental barracks, is used in reference to any

apartment house built between 1860 and 1914 that architecturally adheres to the

abovementioned form. (**Figure 1.1**) The military reference reveals Berlin's long-standing

status as a garrison city in which its military barracks housed generations of Prussian

soldiers. The word first appeared in the mid-1860s as shorthand, albeit with pejorative

connotations, for any newly and hastily constructed multi-story dwelling in Berlin that

housed multiple families or residents much like a military barrack.[38] Critics of the

Mietskaserne have applied the term to a wide range of buildings that indeed share

common architectural characteristics but differ substantially in quality. Despite sharing

the same ground plan and historicist style façade, the buildings differed greatly in the

width and depth of the lot, the size of the courtyards, the number of rooms and size of

apartments, and the façade ornamentation.

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[37] This form was also common in other German cities, but has become synonymous with Berlin due to the size of the buildings in the city and because the city contains the highest density of such apartment houses. For the earliest statements on the tenement, see Architekten-Verein zu Berlin, ed., *Berlin und seine Bauten, Wohnungsbau*, 2nd ed. of 1896 (Berlin: Ernst, 1988). I will use "tenement" as a translation for the German *Mietskaserne*.

[38] According to the authors of a three-volume series on the Berlin apartment house, the term *Mietskaserne* first appeared in the writings of housing reformers in the mid-1860s. Johann Friedrich Geist and Klaus Kürvers, *Das Berliner Mietshaus*, vol. 2 (Munich: Prestel, 1984), 198-220.

Moreover, who lived in these buildings and where within them varied from city district to city district. In some, middle-class or lower middle-class residents occupied the front building, while just behind it in the side wings lived the servants, skilled artisans or tradesmen. Unskilled and often unemployed workers inhabited the rear wings of the first or second courtyard. Toward the back of the tenement complex, living conditions worsened: The courtyards became narrower and thus darker and the apartments were smaller. However, the division between social classes was not strictly defined by the front and back wings; it was not uncommon to see sharp social differences inside the front house, with the more well-to-do residents on the first few floors of the tenement and the very poor in the small cellar or attic apartments. In terms of apartment size, in the more affluent areas of the city such as Wilmersdorf, the *Mietskaserne* contained apartments with a minimum of five rooms; in contrast, in the district of Wedding, an area along the river Spree where a large portion of Berlin's major industries had their first factories, tenements were comprised largely of two-room apartments.[39]

As the pace of urbanization continued and Berlin's overcrowded housing conditions worsened, some late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century reform-minded architects designed alternate housing with the goal of improving housing conditions for the city's working classes. Motivated by the idea that the role of the architect was to negotiate between economic constraints, requirements of the authorities, and the needs of the residents, turn-of-the-century architects hoped that the structural reforms to inner-city housing such as the ground and floor layout would in turn engender better living

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[39] Geist and Kürvers, *Das Berliner Mietshaus*, vol. 2, 507.

conditions.[40] The successive reforms by Weimar architects and planners placed an even greater emphasis on the social and political task of architecture in providing decent housing for the masses, primarily by reducing the density of working-class quarters.

By the interwar period, decades of both conservative and reformist observations, writings, and ruminations on the visible effects of an urban industrial society had solidified the view the Berlin *Mietskaserne* represented the poverty and the working-class milieu. When, in the 1950s, reconstruction plans proposed a full-scale razing of these buildings, this conflation had become by and large so commonplace that no official distinction was made between a tenement in Wilmersdorf and one in Wedding or Kreuzberg. In the mindset of postwar government officials, planners and architects, the *Mietskaserne* represented the unsavory elements of a supposedly bygone industrial age: overcrowded and squalid housing conditions, working-class radicalism, and social outcasts (the prostitute, the beggar, the criminal).[41] Indeed, the specter of the nineteenth-century industrial city could not be so easily erased.

In postwar West Berlin the *Mietskaserne* was profoundly implicated in attempts to transform West German urban space and society. Planners, architects, and politicians who sought to shape the urban appearance of the former capital tied their visions to a new and "better" future. Suspicious of the social blight of the poor they identified with the *Mietskaserne*, these observers collapsed their fears of the radicalized worker onto the architectural form most closely associated with this population. In its function as both a physical building and a social space, the *Mietskaserne* represented the various

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[40] Thorsten Scheer, Josef Paul Kleihues, and Paul Kahlfeldt, *City of Architecture, Architecture of the City: Berlin 1900-2000* (Berlin: Nicolai, 2000); Albert Gessner, *Das deutsche Mietshaus: ein Beitrag zur Stadtkultur der Gegenwart* (Munich: Bruckmann, 1909).
[41] Richard J. Evans, *The German Underworld: Deviants and Outcasts in German History* (London: Routledge, 1988).

communities that had been deemed a "threat" to the German body politic defined and redefined by public discourse between the Kaiserreich and the "new" Germany of the postwar era.

The Hobrecht Plan in the Prussian Capital

Berlin's modern urban form dates back to the 1862 city plan developed by and named after its principal designer James Hobrecht.[42] Appointed by the Prussian police planning authority to create a new street plan and sewer system for Berlin in 1859, Hobrecht drew up a master plan to include the newly incorporated areas of Berlin that lay just outside of the old city wall. Once completed, his 1862 approved plan encompassed an area twice the size of the existing developed urban space, anticipating an eventual urban population of up to four million.[43] Although Hobrecht and his team conceived of the plan for future land use, the actual building regulations fell under the authority of the Berlin police presidium, a body that answered to the Prussian Interior Ministry. In other words, Hobrecht provided the layout that would govern the physical development and zoning of Berlin as it was predicted to develop over the next century, but how the spaces inside those lines would be used and what form the structures built in those spaces would take was decided upon by Prussian officials.[44]

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[42] James Hobrecht was born in 1825 and was a building engineer by training. He undertook trips to Paris, London and Hamburg to observe urban developments and planning in those cities before drawing up the Hobrecht Plan.

[43] Prussian police authority responsible for town planning and street. Håkan Forsell, *Property, Tenancy, and Urban Growth in Stockholm and Berlin, 1860-1929* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2006); Claus Bernet, "The 'Hobrecht Plan' (1862) and Berlin's Urban Structure," *Urban History* 31, no. 3 (2004): 400-419; Klaus Strohmeyer, *James Hobrecht (1825-1902) und die Modernisierung der Stadt* (Potsdam: Verlag für Berlin-Brandenburg, 2000); Thomas Hall, *Planning Europe's Capital Cities: Aspects of Nineteenth-Century Urban Development* (London: E & FN Spon, 1999) Available online at http://www.ebrary.com.

[44] Bernet, *The Hobrecht Plan*, 402.

The Hobrecht Plan divided Berlin and its surrounding undeveloped areas into fourteen sections. In each section, the plan assigned large lots for buildings, streets, and squares, and parks while integrating the existing layout of streets and main travel roads into the new plan. Hobrecht anticipated that his design for wide streets and generous building lots would encourage the allocation of gardens and green spaces strewn in amongst the carving up of the large lots into smaller parcels.[45] Instead, the plan's generous block size, together with the modest building codes and regulations made it possible for private developers to exploit the building conditions and maximize the use of lots to accommodate the needs of the market. A row of large five story tenements faced the street and medium to small-scale factories took up the remaining space in the interior of the lot layout. At the most basic level, Hobrecht was interested in developing a pattern for the future expansion of the city and left aesthetic guidelines up to the single builders or stock corporations. While the typology of the *Mietskaserne* has been closely associated with the Hobrecht Plan, the plan did not specify such a building form and similarly styled tenements can be found in Leipzig, Dresden, Vienna, and Cologne, albeit in lesser numbers.[46] Thus, by the turn of the century, the Hobrecht Plan came to be primarily identified with Berlin's densely built neighborhoods that were characterized by a multi-functional use of the block, in particular the rear courtyards.

Hobrecht's vision however was not responsible for the widespread development of the densely built tenements. And as Claus Bernet has indicated, critics of the Hobrecht Plan have failed to acknowledge the generous green spaces and multi-functional squares

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[45] Forsell, *Property, Tenancy and Urban Growth in Stockholm and Berlin*, 116; Brian Ladd, *Urban Planning and Civic Order in Germany, 1860-1914* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 83.
[46] Bernet, *The Hobrecht Plan*, 404.

for which the plan allowed.[47] In fact, it was not the Hobrecht Plan but rather the lenient

Prussian building regulations, including nonexistent municipal or state regulation of land

speculation, together with the capitalist interests of private developers and investors that

encouraged the maximum use of the building lots and floor plans. In turn, the high cost of

purchasing the land determined not only the property owner's use of the allotted space

but also the inflated rents charged for the average worker's apartment that consisted of a

basic room and a kitchen. The most evident result of late nineteenth-century market

forces combined with negligible state intervention was the rapid growth of overcrowded

tenement districts whose residents lacked any immediate access to green gardens or

courtyards as Hobrecht himself had envisioned.[48]

The minimal provisions of the Prussian building code (*Bauordnung*) of 1853

restricted the height of a building to 22 meters and the size of an inner courtyard to a

minimum of 5.34m x 5.34m; these measurements were consistent with the official fire

regulations at the time.[49] The prescribed size of the inner courtyard just had to be wide

enough to turn a fire engine, while the maximum height of the buildings together with the

standard size of the courtyards guaranteed that in case of fire, parts of a burning building

would not collapse and damage the other wings of the tenement. Thus developers would

adhere to the modest building codes while maximizing the lot coverage (average size of

one block 75 x 120m or approximately 400 square meters with an average lot size of 10

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[47] Bernet, *The Hobrecht Plan*, 405.
[48] Bernet, *Hobrecht Plan*, 408.
[49] Prussian authorities slightly modified these dimensions in 1875, 1887 and again in 1897. See Horst Matzerath, "Berlin, 1890-1940," 294.

meters wide and 56 meters deep), which set up the built conditions for a crowded, unsanitary, dark, and poorly ventilated living environment.[50]

Blamed by housing reformers for the "inevitable" construction of the *Mietskaserne* and, therefore, the ills of urban housing in Berlin, the Hobrecht Plan encountered sharp criticism for the remainder of the nineteenth century and well into the second half of the twentieth. Contemporary criticisms of the *Mietskaserne* blamed Hobrecht's master plan as the main hindrance to any further construction that would, among other things, remedy the large residential blocks that were home to the *Mietskaserne*. Hobrecht responded to such assessments by insisting that it was not the job of the planner to determine aesthetic or building guidelines but to provide a master plan for future growth.[51] Furthermore, he maintained that a mix of social classes within one building or on one building lot would inevitably lead to social harmony, i.e., the working classes would see the errors of their ways and change their living situations simply by being in the mere presence of upright middle class professionals.[52]

This ubiquitous contempt of the *Mietskaserne* across a century was as much cultural as it was architectural. Subsequent criticisms ranged from the purely architectural to ones that advanced a social critique that tied the real and perceived social problems of Berlin's working-class tenement neighbourhoods to the built form. To put it another way, architectural determinism would dominate the discourse on housing reform from the late nineteenth century until the late 1960s. And though Werner Hegemann's 1930 polemic

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[50] The most extreme example of maximizing the allotted space was Meyer's Court (Meyers Hof) on Ackerstrasse in the Berlin district of Wedding with its six rear courtyards. Meyer's Court was demolished in 1972 as part of the city's 1963 urban renewal program.
[51] For Hobrecht's defense of his plan, see Geist and Küvers, *Das Berliner Mietshaus 1740-1862*, vol. 1 (Munich: Prestel, 1980).
[52] Vögele, *Urban Mortality and Change in England and Germany*; Forsell, *Property, Tenancy, and Urban Growth*, 118.

was not the first to blame the *Mietskaserne* and the Hobrecht Plan for the widespread misery of the late nineteenth-century industrial city, his loathing of the city plan and its architectural legacy would advance from being an exaggerated professional opinion to unquestioned dogma. Most importantly, this orthodoxy provided a thread that connected advocates of urban reform at the end of the nineteenth century through to city planners in both postwar German states, the common goal being to do away completely with the *Mietskasernen*.[53]

The working-class tenement and its 'Hinterhof'

To the turn of the century German contemporary observer, e.g., the social reformer, clergyman, writer, intellectual, or administrator, the housing question was at the center of their reflections on the modern, urban environment. Chronic poverty, residential overcrowding and disease characterized the Berlin's working-class tenement neighborhoods. This was an unfortunate albeit not an unusual consequence of the city's late nineteenth-century private building boom and speculative investment. The maximum utilization of the building lots, the division of the side and rear wings into smaller units and the exorbitant rents helped bring about the dismal overcrowding inside the working-class tenement districts. On the eve of World War One an average of 76 people would call one Berlin tenement house home.[54]

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[53] Dietrich Worbs, "The Berlin Mietskaserne and its Reforms," in *Berlin/New York: Like and Unlike, Essays on Architecture and Art from 1870 to the Present*, eds. Josef Paul Kleihues and Christina Rathgeber (New York: Rizzoli, 1993), 147.

[54] Günther Schulz, "Von der Mietskaserne zum Neuen Bauen: Wohnungspolitik und Stadtplanung in Berlin während der zwanziger Jahre," in *Im Banne der Metropolen: Berlin und London in den zwanziger Jahren*, ed. Peter Alter (Göttingen : Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), 52. For a comparison, Manhattan at the time was 20 and London 8.

Until the introduction of state-sponsored housing policies in the interwar period, this unregulated private market continued to dictate the construction and variation of the *Mietskasernen* in their size, form, and quality.[55] In the bourgeois sections of Charlottenburg, Wilmersdorf, and Schöneberg (all three had independent city status until incorporated into Greater Berlin in 1920), one could find examples of *Mietskasernen* whose apartments contained anywhere from five to ten rooms that extended from the front house into the side wings of the buildings. Smaller apartments in the rear wing were used to house the servants. The façades of these *Mietskasernen* were prominently endowed with historicist ornamentation; each apartment had large double-paned windows to brighten the front rooms and a balcony or loggia. Once inside the tenement, the foyer leading to the stairwell featured decorative motifs and marble floors. There was one unit to each of the five floors and all apartments had a bathroom and central heating in every room.

In comparison, the façades of the working-class tenements were plainly adorned but not completely without ornamentation. Within the working-class sections of Wedding, Friedrichshain or Kreuzberg, for example, the size, quality, and prestige of apartments still varied from front to back and from the first floor to the top. In the front house, where factory managers, low-level civil servants, small-business owners, or sometimes upwardly mobile skilled workers resided, the façade was moderately decorated, some apartments had balconies, and stucco adorned the ceilings of the main rooms facing the street. In the front building there were two, sometimes three, apartments on each floor with at least one heated room. Skilled artisans and tradesmen often resided

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[55] Forsell, *Property, Tenancy and Urban Growth in Stockholm and Berlin*; Gert Kähler, Thomas Hafner, et. al., *Geschichte des Wohnens 4. 1918-1945. Reform-Reaktion-Zerstörung* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2000).

in one or two room apartments in the side wings adjoining the front building. Unskilled

workers and the lower classes inhabited the rear wings and side wing apartments in the

first or second courtyard that had one room and a kitchen (Stube und Küche), one or two

smaller windows that faced onto a dim courtyard, no central heating, and a shared toilet

in the stairwell or an outhouse in the yard. The one room functioned mutually as the

family living room and bedroom and as a workspace for working-class women who took

in piecework to supplement the family income.[56] Undoubtedly, housing conditions in the

fast-growing working-class districts of the industrial city were less than ideal. In 1900,

there were areas of Moabit, Wedding, Friedrichshain and Kreuzberg with more than 42

percent of the residents living in apartments with just one heated room and a kitchen.[57]

Throughout the last decades of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, these

small, dark, poorly ventilated and scantily equipped courtyard apartments were in high

demand due to a recurring shortage of housing together with rising rents disproportionate

to workers' wages. As such, the working classes in Wilhelmine Berlin could barely

afford to pay market rents for small, unheated or modestly heated apartments.[58] It was not

unusual for large families to live in a one-room apartment with a kitchen or, in extreme

cases, a similarly sized basement or attic apartment with no windows. Moreover, renters

were dependent on the good will of landlords who had complete power over contractual

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[56] Rosemarie Beier, "Leben in der Mietskaserne: Zum Alltag Berliner Unterschichtsfamilien in den Jahren 1900 bis 1920," in *Hinterhof, Keller und Mansarde: Einblicke in Berliner Wohnungselend 1901-1920*, ed. Gesine Asmus (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1982), 258.

[57] In 1900 70 percent of all Berlin dwellings consisted of two rooms with a kitchen and 50 percent of only one room and a kitchen, quoted in Hsi-Huey Liang, "Lower-Class Immigrants in Wilhelmine Berlin," *Central European History* 3, nos. 1-2 (March 1970): 105.

[58] Hans-Jürgen Teuteberg, "Ursachen der 'Wohnungsfrage' und Steuerungsmittel einer Wohnungsreform," in *Stadtwachstum, Industrialisierung, sozialer Wandel: Beiträge zur Erforschung der Urbanisierung im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, eds. Peter Borscheid and Hans Jürgen Teuteberg (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1986), 31.

obligations.[59] This uneven power relationship between property owning organizations or house owners and tenants eased slightly with the introduction of the Rent Protections Law in 1917. Wartime conditions helped augment reform. Until then, when house owners would arbitrarily increase the rents, this placed an added strain on the working classes who already faced a shortage of affordable accommodation. Two practices were common to offset the high costs of rent for the poorest members of the working classes. Families would take in single male boarders or lodgers who would share a bed to sleep in –one occupying the bed during the day and other at night– depending on when the factory shift ended. By the mid-1890s nearly one-quarter of working-class tenants relied on this practice in which a stranger shared the same room with the family.[60]

Another common practice taken up by lower working-class families was to move into newly built tenements where they could occupy an apartment rent-free or with a reduced rent for half a year until the house dried.[61] The property owners relied on these so-called *Trockenwohner* to heat their apartments, which in turn would speed up the process of drying the tenement until it could be "officially," that is, legally occupied. Thus, poor working-class families in Berlin would regularly move from one damp apartment to the next, often contracting tuberculosis and other communicable diseases due to poorly heated and poorly ventilated apartments. Both practices were strongly discouraged by the Prussian authorities as well as eliciting strong misgivings on the part of social reformers alarmed by severe urban overcrowding and disease. By the 1870s and

[59] Teuteberg, "Ursachen der 'Wohnungsfrage' und Steuerungsmittel einer Wohnungsreform," 40.
[60] Andrew Lees, "Berlin and Modern Urbanity in German Discourse, 1845-1945," *Journal of Urban History* 17, no. 2 (February 1991): 159; McElligott, *The German Urban Experience*, 71; Hans-Jürgen Teuteberg and Clemens Wischermann, eds., *Wohnalltag in Deutschland 1850-1914: Bilder, Daten, Dokumente* (Münster: F. Coppenrath, 1985); Anthony Sutcliffe, ed., *Multi-Storey Living: The British Working-Class Experience* (London: Croom-Helm, 1974).
[61] Hsi-Huey Liang, "Lower-Class Immigrants in Wilhelmine Berlin," 104; Martin Düspohl, *Kleine Kreuzberg Geschichte*, 62.

1880s, middle-class reform movements started identifying above all improvements to the

living conditions of the urban working classes as essential to the worker's "family life,

stability and patriotism."[62]

Central to the anxiety that permeated bourgeois thinking concerning the

discontent of the urban proletariat was the association of housing misery with the

physical space of the tenement's *Hinterhof*. However, more than just a location of

material squalidness as defined by middle-class reformers, the *Hinterhof* also represented

a space of working-class sociability. It met a wide range of social and practical needs for

the majority of the rural to urban migrants whose attachment to communal or village

customs did not immediately recede once arriving in the cities. Particularly prevalent in

Kreuzberg's tenement blocks was the mixed use of the courtyard and street block space.

In addition to the pubs and small shops that occupied the first floor or basement of the

tenement facing the street, artisan workshops and small to medium sized manufactories

were located in the back courtyards. These factories and workshops employed local

residents from the neighborhood providing a workplace in close proximity or literally in

the backyard to the homes of the artisans, factory managers, and working-class families.[63]

Since the end of the nineteenth century, this practice in Kreuzberg of establishing

places of work and production in the courtyards or on street blocks alongside the

Mietskasernen was called the Kreuzberg Mix (*Kreuzberger Mischung*). In other parts of

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[62] Teuteberg, "Ursachen der 'Wohnungsfrage' und Steuerungsmittel einer Wohnungsreform," 18.
[63] For more working-class living and housing in the late nineteenth century see, Adelheid von Saldern, *Häuserleben. Zur Geschichte städtischen Arbeiterwohnens vom Kaiserreich bis heute* (Bonn: J. H. W. Dietz, 1995); Adelheid von Saldern, "Von der "guten Stube" zur "guten Wohnung." Zur Geschichte des Wohnens in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 35 (1995): 227-254; Lutz Niethammer, "Wie wohnten Arbeiter im Kaiserreich?" *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 16 (1976): 61-134; Håkan Forsell, "'Paying the Rent:' A Perspective on Changes in an Everyday Pattern Stockholm, Berlin and Vienna," in *Wohnen in der Grossstadt, 1900-1939. Wohnsituation und Modernisierung im europäischen Vergleich*, eds. Alena Janatkova and Hanna Kozinska-Witt (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2006), 421-436.

the city where large-scale industry developed this close mix of functions was the

exception rather than the rule as it came to be in Kreuzberg. Kreuzberg sustained its

nineteenth-century Mix into the 1960s, until postwar economic and political

transformations rendered the Mix ineffectual. Likewise, other informal aspects of the

back courtyards helped ease the transition to life in the city for new arrivals. Face-to-face

social interactions and the use of shared facilities (which included the toilets but also

caring for communal livestock kept in the courtyard) functioned as a social network that

could provide information on jobs, rumors of rent increases, or as base for political

mobilization.[64] These pre-industrial structures and the social networks, often with women

at the center, characteristic of the Kreuzberg *Hinterhof* formed a picture that stood in

sharp contrast to the middle-class cult of domesticity.

Remarked upon by contemporary critics and observers, the physical form of

Berlin's working-class districts thus produced a spatial arrangement in which the most

conspicuous signs of working-class poverty were hidden in the back courtyards.[65] It was

in these hidden courtyards that middle-class social reformers, much like their

counterparts in other European cities, envisioned a direct connection between

overcrowding and disease and a fear of social unrest.[66] The enclosed courtyard of Berlin's

tenements, and the concomitant material suffering of its residents, was conceived as a

likely place for the dissemination of socialist ideas. As historians of working-class culture

in Germany have pointed out, middle-class concerns that the visible contradictions of the

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[64] Beier, "Leben in der Mietskaserne," 264.

[65] Liang, "Lower-Class Immigrants in Wilhelmine Berlin," 99. In his study, Liang quotes a newspaper article by Werner Hegemann.

[66] Friedrich Lenger among others has discussed middle class anxieties vis-à-vis urban developemnt. "Building and Perceiving the City," in *Towards an Urban Nation,* ed. Friedrich Lenger, 96; Harald Bodenschtaz, "Die Berliner 'Mietskaserne' in der Wohnungspolitischen Diskussion seit 1918," in *Massenwohnung und Eigenheim: Wohnungsbau und Wohnen in der Grossstadt seit dem Ersten Weltkrieg,* eds. Axel Schildt and Arnold Sywottek (Frankfurt: Campus, 1988), 130.

capitalist order, i.e., squalid living conditions, would lead to class warfare were particularly sharp in Berlin where members of the middle- and working-classes lived in close proximity to each other. The explanation for this anxiety is that the spatial separation of social classes was not as pronounced in Berlin as was the case in other industrial areas in Germany given the socio-economic mix typical of the Berlin *Mietskaserne*.[67]

Set in the context of European developments in the medical and social sciences such as eugenics, demography, sociology, and anthropology, reformist concerns over Berlin's overcrowded tenements, high-density neighbourhoods, and the lack of parks, sunlight and greenery were configured in terms of moral health and degeneration.[68] Conservative commentators in particular viewed the working classes and urban poor housed in the large tenement buildings as a "rootless" population dangerously cut off from the traditional institutions of social control.[69] Responding to the intensity and rate of urban growth, these observers associated modern life in the big city with a social and moral decline that they articulated as directly related to a weakening of traditional social hierarchies and community (read rural) networks. Commentators collapsed their anti-urban hostility onto the bustling capital, the place where young rural out-migrants were

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[67] Jürgen Reulecke, ed., *Fabrik, Familie, Feierabend. Beiträge zur Sozialgeschichte des Alltags im Industriezeitalter* (Wuppertal: Hammer, 1978); Beier, "Leben in der Mietskaserne"; Katharina Borsi, "Drawing and Dispute: The Strategies of the Berlin Block," in *Intimate Metropolis: Urban Subjects in the Modern City*, eds. Vittoria Di Palma, Diana Periton, and Marina Lathouri (New York: Routledge, 2009), 132-52.

[68] Daniel Mattern, "Creating the Modern Metropolis: The Debate Over Greater Berlin, 1890-1920," Ph.D. diss. University of North Carolina, 1991.

[69] Lutz Niethammer, "Some Elements of the Housing Reform Debate in Nineteenth-Century Europe; Or, on the Making of a New Paradigm of Social Control," in *Modern Industrial Cities: History, Policy, and Survival*, ed. Bruce M. Stave (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1981), 133; John Gillis, *The Development of European Society, 1770-1870*, (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1983); McElligott, *The German Urban Experience*; Lenger, *Towards an Urban Nation*; Andrew Lees, "Debates about the Big City in Germany, 1890-1914," *Societas* 5, no. 1 (1995): 31-47.

arriving daily and where class conflicts were perceived as volatile.[70] Plainly embedded in these conservative critiques of urbanism was a fear of the radicalized proletariat. The overcrowded working-class neighborhoods of Berlin, specifically the back courtyards of the tenements, embodied the threat of socialist or communist agitation.

Grounding their views in biological, social Darwinist thinking, conservative urban intellectuals and reformers held overcrowding in Berlin's working-class tenements largely responsible for the threat to "the health, the size, and even the survival of the German Volk as a whole."[71] By the 1920s, eugenics would become the dominant mode through which responses to modernity were mediated. Thus, the overcrowded, dark, and unsanitary wings and courtyards of the *Mietskasernen* endangered the health of the families residing in them, and by extension, threatened the health of society on the whole. And as historians have emphasized, in the decades before the Second World War anti-urban sentiments in Germany were not only ubiquitous but also virulently articulated.[72] And more than any other German city, Berlin served as an emblem of the moral and spiritual degeneration that worried conservative critics. According to this rhetoric, in the fast growing "metropolis," urban "rootlessness" replaced a healthy and solid connection to nature, the land, and to the family.

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[70] At the turn of the century, every year close to 40,000 young women arrived in Berlin from the eastern provinces to work in the service or domestic industry. See Martin Düspohl, *Kleine Kreuzberg-Geschichte* (Berlin: Berlin Story Verlag, 2009), 61. On rent strikes, see Forsell, "'Paying the Rent.'"

[71] Andrew Lees, "Berlin and Modern Urbanity in German Discourse," 160; Andrew Lees, "Debates about the Big City"; Harold Poor, "City versus Country: Urban Change and Development in the Weimar Republic," in *Industrielles System und Politische Entwicklung in der Weimarer Republik*, vol. 1, eds. Hans Mommsen et al. (Düsseldorf, 1974), 111-127.

[72] Andrew Lees, in *Cities Perceived: Urban Society in European and American Thought, 1820-1940* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), points out that the link between conservatism and anti-urbanism is seen in the US context but that Germany produced the most extreme polarization of opinion and anti-urban hatreds most pervasive)? see also Harold Poor, Anton Kaes, Martin Jay, and Edward Dimendberg, eds., *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Daum and Mauch, eds., *Berlin-Washington, 1800-2000;* Eric A. Johnson, *Urbanization and Crime, 1871-1914* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1995).

As historian Andrew Lees has suggested, parallel to the concerns over individual behavior in the big city was the fear of new forms of social and political organizing that could challenge the "established patterns of political authority and social stratification."[73] Conservative cultural and political observers identified this challenge with the growing popularity of social democracy in Berlin. This social and political peril, both real and imagined, extended to the physical places in which the worker lived, worked, and socialized. As indicated earlier, the middle-class reform discourse in the late nineteenth century was overtly expressed in terms of the corrupt morality of the urban poor and the built environment inside which this supposed immoral and deprived lifestyle flourished. Rather than focusing on the root causes of urban poverty and inadequate housing, official reports and investigations continued to hold the working-class populations and especially their housing in suspicion.[74] (**Figure 1.2**)

By the mid-twentieth century, this set of anxieties may have lost much of its classist and eugenic orientation; however, a belief that the evils of urban workers were located in the *Hinterhof* was shared by both turn of the century observers and their postwar counterparts. This was perhaps the most important and influential legacy of these early urban theorists to the cultural assumptions of the *Mietskaserne* found in postwar West Germany. In 1968 Rolf Schwedler, Berlin's Minister for Building and Construction, gave a speech at Notre Dame University on the current status of Berlin in international urban development. In his speech, he provided his audience with a cursory account of Berlin's urban development. He pointed out that "after 1871, Berlin became the center of

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[73] Lees, "Berlin and Modern Urbanity," 162.

[74] Scientists and reformers in this period not only pathologized the urban poor but exoticized the supposed underbelly of the urban experience. See McElligott, *The German Urban Experience*; Peter Fritzsche, "Vagabond in the Fugitive City: Hans Ostwald, Imperial Berlin and the *Grossstadt Dokumente*," *Journal of Contemporary History* 29, no. 3 (July 1994): 385-402.

a rapidly developing industry. This industry needed workers, the workers housing. Thus

began the misery of the tenement. Their suffering [working-class families] provided the

fuel for dangerous radicalism [*Ihr Elend bot Nährstoffe für gefährlichen Radikalismus*].[75]

Here we see the continued discourse of the Berlin *Hinterhof* as a caldron of social

instability. In Schwedler's reference to the *Mietskaserne* and its associated "ills," he

reveals the cornerstone of postwar urban planning in West Berlin. It was based on the

belief that the form of housing recognized as the "hallmark of proletarian Berlin"[76] was

fundamentally incongruent of with the vision of a "new" West Germany purportedly

capable of providing adequate and affordable housing for all its citizens. As Brian Ladd

has pointed out, the "image of the *Mietskaserne* embodie[d] a set of beliefs about the

history and identity of Berlin."[77] This set of beliefs may have had its origins in the

nineteenth century, but it continued to shape perceptions of the capital city for over a

century. The remainder of this chapter will provide a sketch of the most important

architectural alternatives to the *Mietskaserne*, and by extension approaches to the city's

physical form inspired by the idea of a "new" Berlin.

Bringing light, air, and sun to the 'city of stone'

Late Wilhelminian social and housing reformers all recognized the need to

alleviate the problems of Berlin's overcrowded working-class districts. Irrespective of

their individual or group motivations –be it bourgeois altruism, economic development,

or biological considerations– all reformers advocated at the very least a stark reduction in

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[75] Rolf Schwedler, *Berliner Forum: Ein Vortrag. Die Stellung Berlins im internationalen Städtebau*, Volume 3 (Berlin: Presse- u. Informationsamt, 1968), 7.

[76] Liang, "Lower-Class Immigrants in Wilhelmine Berlin," 97; Ladd, *Ghosts of Berlin*, 100.

[77] Ladd, *Ghosts of Berlin*, 100.

building density. Ideally, they aspired to a total eradication of the *Mietskaserne* and the construction of new dwellings that would guarantee light, air, and green spaces.

Anticipating this modernist principle of the 1920s that emphasized the value of the natural environment, progressive architects also strove to design better housing that would reflect the social responsibility of their profession to improve living standards for all. However, the extent to which architects and housing reformers of the Wilhelmine period could implement comprehensive reform was limited. Two interrelated reasons contributed to this restriction: firstly, the housing market was in the hands of private developers, and secondly, the generous dimensions of the lot coverage had been established by the 1853 Hobrecht Plan and ratified by the Prussian state with only minor amendments to limiting its measurements in the following decades.[78]

Long before the inter-war construction of the more famous housing estates (*Siedlungen*), turn of the century architects had focused on introducing reforms to the urban blocks already laid out in the Hobrecht Plan. Between 1900 and 1914, architects such as Albert Gessner, Paul Mebes, and Alfred Messel put their reform ideals into practice, albeit on a modest scale, by designing apartment complexes that reduced housing density.[79] Their endeavors provided theoretical alternatives to the *Mietskaserne* for the next generation of architects rather than real, tangible alternatives for workers. A much larger percentage of improved housing for the masses would first be built during

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[78] Both Michael Honhart and C. Edmund Clingan have pointed out that although the national government did little in the way of providing housing for the urban masses before the 1920s, individual states and cities did advocate public housing and some made interventions in the private market in order to take some responsibility for providing low-cost housing. See Michael Honhart, "Company Housing as Urban Planning in Germany, 1870-1940," *Central European History* 23, no. 1 (March 1990): 3-21; C. Edmund Clingan, "More Construction, More Crisis The Housing Problem of Weimar Germany," *Journal of Urban History* 26, no. 5 (July, 2000): 630-44.

[79] Worbs, "The Berlin Mietskaserne and its Reforms;" Wolfgang Sonne, "Dwelling in the Metropolis: Reformed Urban Blocks 1890–1940 as a Model for the Sustainable Compact City," *Progress in Planning* 72, no. 2, (August, 2009): 53-149.

the Weimar Republic when the government prioritized the formation of a national housing program.

In the Berlin districts of Charlottenburg, Schoeneberg, Zehlendorf, Steglitz, Wedding and Friedrichshain, architects Gessner, Mebes, and Messel aimed to reduce high housing densities and to guaranteeing basic amenities that were sorely lacking in the working-class *Mietskasernen*. For example, Gessner's apartment houses differed from the *Mietskaserne* in two distinct ways. To remedy the small, narrow, and dark courtyard enclosed on all four sides, Gessner grouped together the back courtyards of four apartment houses to form an expansive area whose primary function would be that of a garden courtyard.[80] In another project of seven apartment houses Gessner made use of the street courtyard to expose the transverse wing of the apartment house to the street. His goal was to reverse the layout of the *Mietskaserne* so that the courtyard now faced the street to allow more natural light to enter the apartments of the cross wing. Gessner's response to high residential density was to limit the number of apartments per floor to two. To counter the little sunlight that reached the lower level apartments in the *Mietskaserne*, he designed a light well, which would provide natural light to the main and secondary staircases, grouping the apartments around the large, open hallways brightened by the light well.[81]

Drawing on functional principles of the nascent German Werkbund, Paul Mebes built five large apartment complexes between 1906 and 1912 in Schöneberg, Steglitz and

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[80] Worbs, "*The Berlin Mietskaserne and its Reforms*," 148; Claudia Kromrei, "Albert Gessner," historismus.net, page updated April 3, 2003, http://www.historismus.net/texte/kromrei-gessner.html (accessed December 15, 2010).
[81] Worbs, "*The Berlin Mietskaserne and its Reforms*," 148.

Zehlendorf.[82] Given that Mebes rejected the excessive ornamentation associated with

historicism, his apartment complexes were distinguished by smooth lines only broken up

by loggias or balconies and apartment complexes that filled the prescribed building lot

with their irregular but clean geometric shapes comprised of three street courtyards that

circumvented what reformist architects perceived as the monotony of the long row of

tenement façades.[83] Aesthetic concerns notwithstanding, the design of each apartment

complex prioritized adequate sunlight and ventilation; all apartments were lit from two

sides, and were equipped with modern amenities such as bathrooms and finished

kitchens; however, Mebes' reformed vision of the *Mietskaserne* were occupied largely by

members of the lower middle class rather than the urban industrial worker, theoretically

the target audience for such apartments.[84]

Alfred Messel, internationally known for designing the grandiose Wertheim

department store at Leipziger Platz, was commissioned by the cooperative Berliner

Building and Savings Association to build workers' housing in Wedding and

Friedrichshain. Messel, like Gessner and Mebes, conformed to the basic ground layout of

the *Mietskaserne*. Thus, like all architects at the time he worked within the confines of

what the developer or property owner laid down for the dimensions of the dwelling. He

too altered the building form to include larger and greener courtyards, paying attention to

reducing density and providing better sanitation facilities, so that each apartment had an

indoor toilet, a balcony and a kitchen. In contrast to the *Mietskaserne*, all units in the

five-story apartment house were of similar quality and size and the back courtyards

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[82] Mebes joined the Werkbund in 1912.

[83] Worbs, 151; Karl-Heinz Hüter, "Paul Mebes: von der Wohnungsreform zum Neuen Bauen," in *Architektur in Berlin, 1900-1933* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1988), 187-188.

[84] Hüter, "Paul Mebes," 188; Frederic J. Schwartz, *The Werkbund: Design Theory and Mass Culture before the First World War* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1996), 20.

boasted a generous dimension of 30m x 40m.[85] Despite these designs of modest structural

reforms to new urban housing, little progress was made before the interwar period in

implementing major changes to the overall housing conditions of the urban poor.[86]

The ushering in of a democratic form of government in the wake of the German

revolutions of 1918/1919 brought about the political changes needed to push through a

comprehensive housing reform. Although the war years saw the first push towards

implementing a state housing policy, radical changes in both policy and architectural

design would first occur during the tumultuous years of the Weimar Republic. The new

German government led by the Social Democrat Friedrich Ebert, a member of Germany's

largest political party that claimed to represent the interests of the working classes, had to

contend with an already catastrophic housing shortage made even worse by a

construction standstill during the war. At war's end, the total number of new apartments

built between 1914 and 1918 fell below the average of rate of construction in just one

year before the war. Alleviating the magnitude of this shortage, and the related political

need to legitimate the new government by institutionalizing housing reform, became the

driving force of Weimar state housing politics.[87] The appreciation of greater state

involvement in the provision of housing was formally implemented as a postwar social

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[85] Elke Linda Buchholz, *Kaiserzeit und Moderne: Ein Wegweiser durch Berlin* (Berlin: Berlin Story Verlag, 2007), 150.
[86] Lutz Niethammer, ed. *Wohnen im Wandel: Beiträge zur Geschichte des Alltags in der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft* (Wuppertal: Hammer, 1979).
[87] Günther Schulz, "Kontinuitäten und Brüche in der Wohnungspolitik von der Weimarer Zeit bis zur Bundesrepublik," in *Stadtwachstum, Industrialisierung, sozialer Wandel: Beiträge zur Erforschung der Urbanisierung im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, eds. Peter Borscheid and Hans Jürgen Teuteberg (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1986), 139.

policy and decent and affordable housing enshrined as a human right in the Weimar constitution.[88]

The role of Weimar Berlin as the epicenter of German artistic creativity is well known; and included among its cultural riches were members of the architectural avant-garde.[89] The sense of new possibilities that accompanied the downfall of the old order extended to the realms of housing and urban reform. Architects, builders, and socialist politicians combined and supported architectural innovation and social idealism. Indeed, the issue of urban reform was central to the vision of Martin Wagner, a committed member of the SPD and Berlin's municipal city planner between 1925 and 1932. To address the housing shortage and introduce laws that would generate a radical shift in the property owners' stronghold over the rental market, Wagner sought not only to bring "light, air and sun" to the masses, he also set out to redefine the juridical landlord-tenant relationship.

In 1920 Greater Berlin was formed after the administrative boundaries of the city were redrawn to include eight neighboring municipalities, 59 rural communities, and 27 farm districts.[90] This consolidation enabled the possibility of a standardized urban development plan for the entire metropolitan area. In an effort to improve the inner city

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[88] For literature on housing policy in the interwar period see: Schulz, "Kontinuitäten und Brüche in der Wohnungspolitik;" Anne Power, *Hovels to High Rise: State Housing in Europe since 1850* (New York: Routledge, 1993); Adelheid von Saldern, "Die Neubausiedlungen der Zwanziger Jahre," in *Neubausiedlungen der 20er und 60er Jahre: Ein historisch-soziologischer Vergleich*, eds. Ulfert Herlyn, Adelheid von Saldern, and Wulf Tessin (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 1987), 29-75; Richard Bessel, *Social Change and Political Development in Weimar Germany* (London: Croom Helm, 1981); Barbara Miller Lane, *Architecture and Politics in Germany 1918-1945* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968).

[89] The literature on Weimar art, culture, and politics is vast.

[90] This was a long overdue consolidation of the entire settled area and economic activities of the city. The conservative imperial government had not been interested due to the threat of the Social Democratic Party's success in the working-class areas of the outlying municipalities. The amalgamated municipalities included Charlottenburg, Lichtenberg, Neukölln, Schöneberg, Köpenick, Spandau, and Wilmersdorf. As Horst Matzerath has pointed out, the surrounding cities and towns had acquired an urban character since Berlin's building regulations (Hobrecht Plan) were applied to the outlying areas as well. See Matzerath, "Berlin 1890-1940," 297.

housing, the 1925 new zoning plan (*Bauordnung*) provided the legal underpinnings to a definitive shift in urban development, at least on paper. The new building law outlawed the construction of back buildings and courtyards, while fixing building forms and land uses to be implemented throughout the city.[91] Concretely, the explicit goal was to hinder any further construction of the *Mietskaserne*, until this point Berlin's exemplary urban form.

In light of a severe housing shortage and the miserable conditions of existing dwellings, the main objective of state-sponsored Weimar architecture was the construction of inexpensive, low-density housing. Housing reforms and design concepts formulated before the war -and to a small degree implemented- were now at the center of Weimar social policy. Yet the commencement of construction was largely delayed until 1924 by the dismal economic situation and deflation. To compensate, the government introduced legal measures, already presented and debated in parliament during the war, which would give tenants greater protection in economically volatile times. These measures included a law to protect tenants against eviction, a rent control act, and a housing shortage law. The result of all three measures meant a radical shift in the control of the housing market from a largely private one, where land or property owners had complete control in determining rental fees and rentals, to a state-regulated market.[92] Under a volatile succession of political leaderships and a still greater economic

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[91] Horst Matzerath, "Berlin 1890-1940," 306.

[92] Harald Bodenschatz, *Platz frei für das neue Berlin!: Geschichte der Stadterneuerung in der "grössten Mietskasernestadt der Welt" seit 1871* (Berlin: Transit, 1987), 85; Schulz, "Kontinuitäten und Brüche in der Wohnungspolitik von der Weimarer Zeit bis zur Bundesrepublik," 140; Forsell, "'Paying the Rent': A Perspective on Changes in an Everyday Pattern," 432.

instability, the newly convened republican government would first turn its attention to the construction of large-scale national housing in the years between 1926 and 1932.[93]

Influenced by their Werkbund predecessors, the generation of architects who came to prominence in the interwar period believed that societal ills/social problems were caused by the built environment and subsequently could be amended by constructing new and improved forms of housing and city planning. Prewar Werkbund architectural and design trends such as the rejection of historicism, particularly, eclectic ornamentation, or the attempt to induce cultural and social reform through the redesign of everyday household objects informed modernist architectural thinkers in the Weimar Republic.[94] According to art historian Frederic Schwartz, the political goal of the German Werkbund, a design reform organization of artists, industrialists and architects, was the "creation of a sphere of culture in which class played no visible role."[95] Extending this idea to housing and city planning after 1918, architects associated with the new architecture or New Building (Neues Bauen) responded to the class stratifications by designing housing, neighborhoods, and cities that strove to reflect an egalitarian society. In removing traces of class and class conflict in design and city planning, the modernist architects argued, new housing imparted bold proposals for social change.

Among the many architects that shared Martin Wagner's vision for Berlin were modernist giants such as Bruno and Max Taut, Walter Gropius, Hugo Häring, Mies van der Rohe, Ludwig Hilberseimer, Hans Scharoun and Erich Mendelsohn. Breaking with

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[93] Wolfgang Sonne, "Specific Intentions – General Realities: on the Relation between Urban Forms and Political Aspirations in Berlin during the Twentieth Century," *Planning Perspectives* 19 (July 2004), 287. Larger, comprehensive urban planning projects in the Weimar period were hindered by the economic and political instability. Give numbers of housing complexes etc built in those years.
[94] Paul Betts, *The Authority of Everyday Objects: A Cultural History of West German Industrial Design* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 25.
[95] Schwartz, *Werkbund*, 40.

the construction methods and architectural styles of the nineteenth century, such as façade ornamentation that haphazardly combined different historical styles, these architects introduced and implemented the new techniques in architecture and engineering.[96] Backed by government organizations, building trade unions, or large non-profit housing cooperatives (*gemeinnützige Wohnungsbaugesellschaften*), these architects designed public housing projects, borrowing techniques of mass production from American technological advances.[97] Using the idea of Fordist factory-scale mass production, Weimar architects hoped to combat Berlin's desperate housing shortage with new forms of housing. They believed that decent housing could be made widely available by using non-traditional and inexpensive building materials whose components were factory produced, and thus not dependent on labor-intensive practices.

Weimar planning and construction was shaped by the attempt to move beyond the *Mietskaserne*. Several low-rise housing estates were built between 1924 and 1932, the most famous of these being Bruno Taut's Hufeisensiedlung in the Britz district of Berlin.[98] Doing away with historicist ornamentation, the new housing estates used reinforced concrete, steel, and glass giving the building form an overall look of unity with

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[96] The literature on modernist architecture or the International Style is vast. Nowhere in Europe was this style more visible in the 1920s than in Berlin. See Kathleen James, ed., *Bauhaus Culture: From Weimar to the Cold War* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006); Walter Gropius, *The New Architecture and the Bauhaus* (Boston: MIT Press, 1965); Magdalena Droste, *Bauhaus, 1919-1933* (Berlin: Bauhaus Archive, 2002).

[97] These housing cooperatives were supported by the local authorities and unions and were responsible for much of the public housing in the Weimar Republic. After 1918 these housing/building associations became the alternative to the private market. In addition to housing associations and self-administered cooperatives, Christian organizations and paternalistic-minded industries constructed large housing projects intent to provide decent workers' housing. Michael Honhart credits the construction of AEG's company housing between 1907 and 1914 as having first made the design of workers' housing an attractive line of work for architects. Michael Honhart, "Company Housing As Urban Planning in Germany, 1870–1940," *Central European History* 23, no. 1 (March 1990): 3-21.

[98] Other estates included: Die Weisse Stadt in Reineckendorf, Wohnstadt Carl Legien in Pankow, Onkel Tom Siedlung in Zehlendorf, Siemensstadt in Charlottenburg, and Siedlung Schillerpark in Wedding. The years between 1924 and 1930 were the only years in which building was not interrupted.

its straight lines, austere façade, and clean and sleek angles meant to express control and rationality in contrast to the chaos and disorder associated with Berlin's tenements. This commitment to design newness and progressive politics, however, should not conceal the lingering anxieties or fears that the residents of these hated tenements, too, were disorderly, dangerous, and morally corrupt. The outward design of the new buildings, modernist architects believed, should reflect the inner structure or order, of the individual, the community and by extension society. In an extreme case of projecting order onto the residents of this new and improved housing, Bruno Taut applied inventive color schemes to both the exterior and interior of his buildings and attempted to restrict the color of plants or flowers residents could grow on their balconies, lest they disrupt the aesthetic unity with distasteful behavior.[99] Taut was a firm believer that color reflected not only a sign of better times, but also contributed to a general sense of happiness.

In theory, the built environment of new housing, planned communities and a separation of urban functions were meant to reflect the socialist principles of Weimar social democracy. The new housing estates built on the then periphery of the dense inner city were deliberately built away from industrial or commercial centers to ensure physical distance from an allegedly pernicious mix of industry, housing, and recreation. Housing, the architects of Neues Bauen believed, represented a "machine for living" that should not deny human beings' organic relationship to nature.[100] As such, the new housing estates provided their residents with ample green space, e.g., lawns, garden plots, and small parks. Neues Bauen architects were convinced that their designs could meet the

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[99] Kristiana Hartmann, "Bruno Taut, der Architekt und Planer von Gärtenstädte und Siedlungen," in *Bruno Taut 1880-1938: Architekt zwischen Tradition und Avantgarde* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2001); Winfried Brenne, *Bruno Taut, Meister des farbigen Bauens in Berlin* (Berlin: Braun, 2008).
[100] Walter Gropius for example drew upon ideas that underscored the relationship between the moral and physical health of the individual and the building.

requirements for better housing and community life first proposed by turn of the century housing and social reformers. Each apartment had a bathroom, gas water heater, a loggia or balcony, central heating, and a fitted kitchen. The apartments, albeit small, were designed in such a way that they all had sufficient sunlight and air; each apartment had at least two windows on opposites sides of the room to allow for cross-ventilation.

In reality, the plans of Weimar architects and planners to address the needs of the masses, to design "new, affordable dwellings" using the latest developments in rationalization and scientific management, remained largely unrealized. In terms of redressing the colossal housing shortage, new dwellings comprised only 16 percent of the total housing stock in Berlin in the interwar period.[101] Encumbered by the economic and political instability that hindered the rate of construction in the first years of the Republic, the state of housing for the working-class population remained as dire as it had been before the war. Ironically, the new dwellings built proved to be too costly for the average worker since that interwar tenant laws stabilized the rents in the prewar tenements, and workers had to factor in steep travel costs between the home and the factory. The housing estates instead attracted white-collar and skilled workers. These avant-garde architects and planners, despite their social commitment, failed to recognize the neighborhood structures and networks that most poor workers were unwilling to abandon, e.g., place of work, the pub, family and friends.

For German city planners, the physical destruction of German cities at the end of the war, a sight that prompted Bertolt Brecht to describe Berlin as that "heap of rubble next to Potsdam," was seen as a welcome opportunity to finish off at long last the much

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[101] 210,000 new dwellings were built in the Weimar period, the high point 1922-3, 460.

hated blocks of tenements that lined the city's streets. In 1945 Berlin was hit by allied

bombs twenty-nine times, reducing the city's prewar housing stock by 50 percent and

leaving 80 million cubic meters of rubble on the streets. Planners and politicians viewed

the physical ruins of German cities, above all in Berlin, as a "one-time chance to finally

overcome the *Mietskasernenstadt*."[102] Perhaps more significantly, the opportunity to

rebuild the bombed cities provided planners, architects, and politicians a means to

distance not only themselves but also a "new" Germany from twelve years of National

Socialism. Yet this longing for a decisive break is deceiving.

As attractive as the notion of a supposed "Stunde Null" seemed in 1950s West

Germany, the physical renewal of German cities was in fact based on concepts of city

planning that extended back to the mid-nineteenth century. Both the reformist ideals of

the 1920s and the early twentieth century garden city movement had a decisive impact on

the ways in which German architects and planners, many of them still active under the

Nazis, envisioned the postwar city. And as architectural historians have pointed out, these

prewar concepts had also continued circulating in discussions and formulation of

planning texts after 1933, albeit under "Nazi guises."[103] Under Albert Speer, Hitler's

chief architect and armaments minister, a commission comprised of town planners was

set up in 1943 to design plans for German cities already heavily damaged by Allied

bombs. These individuals and their ideas had a decisive impact on postwar planning in

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[102] von Beyme, *Der Wiederaufbau*, 85; Wolfgang Schäche and Wolfgang J. Streich, "Wiederaufbau oder Neubau? Über die legende der zerstörten Stadt," in *Stadtentwicklung nach 1945,* ISR Diskussionsbeitrag 17, (Berlin: Institut für Stadt-und Regionalplanung der Technischen Universität, 1985); Florian Urban, "Recovering Essence Through Demolition: The "Organic" City in Postwar West Berlin," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 63, no. 3 (September 2004): 354-369. This was also the case in the larger European context. This take on the physical devastation of European cities as an opportunity was not unique to Germany.
[103] Jeffry M. Diefendorf, "The West German Debate on Urban Planning," (paper presented at the conference "The American Impact on Western Europe: Americanization and Westernization in Transatlantic Perspective," German Historical Institute, Washington, D.C., March 25-27, 1999), 4.

West Germany. Indeed, three members of Speer's Reconstruction Planning Task Force,

Hans Reichow, Johannes Göderitz, Hubert Hoffmann, went on to belatedly publish their

ideas formulated during the war in a 1957 book titled, The Structured and Dispersed City

(*Die gegliederte und aufgelockerte Stadt*).[104] The Nazi vilification of modernist

architecture notwithstanding, these planners appointed by Speer to the task force, already

practicing architects before the war, continued to apply modernist principles of

functionalism and standardization to their Nazi-commissioned designs. Their book is

widely recognized as the principal modernist text of postwar West German planning and

redevelopment.[105]

At war's end Berlin politicians and planners faced the daunting task of contending

with the city's catastrophic housing shortage. Within weeks of the German capitulation in

May 1945, the Soviet General Bersarin appointed Hans Scharoun as chief planning

commissioner of a yet undivided Berlin.[106] As the newly appointed city planner, Scharoun

coauthored the first comprehensive reconstruction plan for Berlin, titled the Collective

Plan (*Kollektivplan*). The plan adhered to the functionalist principles reflected in the

Athens Charter whose guiding vision necessitated a separation of urban functions like

commerce, housing, and industry.[107] Officially presented to the public in the 1946

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[105] Written by Johannes Göderitz, Hubert Hoffmann, and Roland Rainer, *The Structured and Dispersed City* influenced an entire generation of planners. It signalled the re-emergence of prewar modernist ideas. Two of the three were not Nazi Party members. On the whole, planners who worked in an official capacity before 1945 continued working in the newly founded West Germany. See Francesca Rogier, "The Monumentality of Rhetoric: The Will to Rebuild in Postwar Berlin," in *Anxious Modernisms*: *Experimentation in Postwar Architectural Culture*, eds. Sarah Williams Goldhagen, et. al. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), 165-90; von Beyme, *Wiederaufbau*, 53.

[106] Hans Scharoun began his career as an architect in the Weimar Republic. He was an early proponent of Weimar modernism. During the war he, like many other modern-thinking architects and planners, remained in Germany essentially unemployed (in 'inner exile'). He designed both the Staatsbibliothek in West Berlin and the Berlin Philharmonic Hall.

[107] At the 1932 meeting of the CIAM (International Congress of Modern Architects) the urban doctrine that would influence postwar planning and urban renewal in Europe (both West and East) and North America

exhibition "Berlin Plant," the Collective Plan proposed creating a "new" Berlin rather than a reconstructed one, that would be developed in linear strips along the rivers Spree and Havel. The aim was to achieve a balance between "buildings and nature, high and low, narrow and wide to create a vibrant yet orderly urban landscape (*Stadtlandschaft*)."[108] An "orderly" urban landscape, that is, that would reflect the modernist planning principles separating urban functions. Both planning professionals and politicians alike, perceived Scharoun's plan as too utopian and in the first set of postwar elections in West Berlin in 1946, Karl Bonatz replaced Scharoun as chief planner.

Bonatz, representing a more practical standpoint, proposed a modified version of an already existing plan. He drew upon ideas put forward in the Zehlendorf Plan, a plan designed by the office of an architect located in the Berlin district of Zehlendorf that had been unveiled at the same exhibition as Scharoun's design. In effect, the Zehlendorf Plan depicted extensive demolition of existing buildings in the process of creating a comprehensive design that would prioritize traffic planning. Yet unlike Scharoun's plan, the Zehlendorf Plan adhered to the basic layout of the historic city. However, until the currency reform in 1948, all plans for a thorough rebuilding of the city remained on paper.[109]

The official division of the city and creation of the two German states in 1949 halted any pressing need to implement a plan that considered the whole city. Although

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was enshrined in the Athens Charter. Le Corbusier edited the document and published it in the 1940s. See Eric Mumford and Kenneth Frampton, *The CIAM discourse on Urbanism, 1928-1960* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000).

[108] Helmut Engel, *Baugeschichte Berlin, Band 3, Moderne, Reaktion, Wiederaufbau: 1919-1970: Städtebau und Architektur in Berlin im Zeichen ideologischer Konfrontation* (Berlin: Jovis, 2007), 249.

[109] Vittorio Magnago Lampugnani, "Architektur und Stadtplanung," in *Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, vol. 3, ed. Wolfgang Benz (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1983), 145. The question of whether or not Berlin would remain the capital also plagued the debate over a city plan, see Diefendorf, *In the Wake of War*, 194.

these early plans to develop a coherent urban design for the entire city of Berlin had been

cast aside by the late 1940s, this early spirit of building rather than reconstructing a new

city hinted at subsequent practices of razing entire blocks and districts in West Berlin. By

the next decade, the term "reconstruction" or "rebuilding" became synonymous with

ridding the city of the *Mietskasernen* and the wholesale construction of new housing

stock.[110] Notably, these early plans had failed not only because of funding problems and

the recent traumas of an official division, but mainly because they ignored everyday

reality for the majority of Berliners. Incredibly, amid the debris and acute housing

shortage, these early plans focused on further demolition. Not one of the plans prioritized

the immediate reconstruction of the damaged, but salvageable housing stock.[111] However,

given the urban postwar context, workers were much more attracted to plans for building

rather than destroying housing given the state of material misery in the cities.

Architectural historian Florian Urban has pointed to the discursive continuities in

Imperial, Weimar, and Nazi planning conceptions that culminated in the postwar

formulation of the West German urban design paradigm labeled the "organic city."[112]

First formulated by Hans Reichow in his 1948 publication the *Organic Urban Design*

(*Organische Stadtbaukunst*), and further developed in his 1957 co-authored classic, this

concept depicted the city "as a flowing landscape with abundant open space and

greenery."[113] Reichow advanced a radical design of urban space with the explicit aim of

aligning the city with its natural landscape. The "new" city would be organized in

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[110] Rogier, "The Monumentality of Rhetoric," 168.
[111] Rogier, "The Monumentality of Rhetoric," 168; Josef Paul Kleihues, "From the Destruction to the Critical Reconstruction of the City: Urban Design in Berlin after 1945," in *Berlin-New York: Like and Unlike. Essays on Architecture and Art from 1870 to the Present*," eds. Kleihues and Rathgeber (New York: Rizzoli, 1993), 389-405.
[112] Florian Urban, "Recovering Essence through Demolition," 363.
[113] Francesca Rogier, "The Monumentality of Rhetoric," 166.

accordance with its surrounding environment, a concept that conceptualized the city as analogous to a living organism. In place of the existing "inorganic city," the overcrowded, unhygienic, industrial city of the nineteenth century, the "organic city" was thought to be the foundation for a dignified life.[114]

By the mid 1950s, this urban concept of the "organic city" was not only a projected model for the "renewed" metropolis of Berlin, but also a blueprint for the reconstruction of West German cities in general.[115] However, this concept did not go unchallenged by planners, architects and government authorities, for example, who advocated for historic preservation or more conservative approaches to reconstruction. Yet championed by the community of modernist architects and planners who had risen to prominence in the Weimar Republic, these advocates of an organic concept these exploited National Socialism's famous contempt of modernism to further their own aesthetic cause in postwar West Germany. This postwar rehabilitation of modernist ideas in planning and design had much to do with the vilification of "Bolshevist" modern art and culture by the Nazis.[116] In the early postwar years, proponents of modernist architecture, particularly those who had established themselves in the Weimar period, could point to an architectural or planning tradition that they believed was untainted by the recent Nazi past. This argument corresponded nicely to the emphasis on building anew and resonated broadly in the early years of the Federal Republic as the "new'

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[114] Elke Sohn, "Hans Bernhard Reichow and the Concept of *Stadtlandschaft* in German Planning," *Planning Perspectives* 18, no. 2 (April 2003): 121.

[115] Modernists/Traditionalists would define the planning paradigms of postwar West Germany and West Berlin. See Rosenfeld, *Munich and Memory*; Diefendorf, *In the Wake of War*; von Beyme, *Der Wiederaufbau*; Werner Durth and Niels Gutschow, *Träume in Trummern: Planungen zum Wiederaufbau zerstörter Städte in Deutschland 1945-1950* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1993).

[116] Betts, *The Authority of Everyday Objects*, 12. The older generation of modernists, such as Gropius, Wagner, Hilbersheimer, and van der Rohe after having established careers in the United States did not return to Germany at war's end.

Germany reinvented itself. Not surprisingly, as scholars have noted, the more radical leftist elements of modernism's interwar history received a whitewashing in this West German reworking.

The promise of a "new" Berlin

In the 1950s, two architectural competitions, the International Building Exhibition or Interbau and Hauptstadt Berlin, revealed West Berlin's part in the Cold War propaganda machine. The city was used both as a testing ground and symbol for city remaking in the wake of World War Two. In 1951 the West Berlin Senate began formally discussing the idea of an International Building Exhibition, but it was not until 1953 that it became clear that the main focus of this exhibition would be the Hansaviertel, a heavily damaged area of the inner city bordering the Tiergarten (Berlin's main park in the inner city).[117] Scheduled for 1959, the *Hauptstadt Berlin* organizers solicited entries from international architects, who were all instructed to work entirely on the supposition that the city would soon retain its status as capital. In the volatile climate of the early Cold War, a divided Berlin quickly assumed its role as a stage for "competing ideological showcases."[118] A visible and thus important stage for ideological showcasing was urban planning and housing. Architecture and planning was seen as a means for both West and East Germany to embed their respective ideological values onto the built environment of Berlin as though it were, in fact, a single city.

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[117] The idea of holding an international building exhibition in Berlin was already discussed in 1951. How this exhibition would look and where it would be located in the city however was not decided upon until 1953.

[118] Greg Castillo, "Domesticating the Cold War: Household Consumption as Propaganda in Marshall Plan Germany," *Journal of Contemporary History* 40, no. 2 (April, 2005): 262; Greg Castillo, *Cold War on the Home Front: The Soft Power of Midcentury Design* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

True to this early Cold War showcasing of respective ideologies, the 1955 joint announcement by the federal government and the city of West Berlin of a competition of ideas endorsed Berlin's claim to its prewar status as national capital and Weltstadt. Originally conceived as a part of the Interbau, the Hauptstadt Berlin competition was held two years later, once the organizers had agreed that the competition would garner more international attention if the two planning events were held separately.[119] Despite the reality, which was an occupied and divided Germany, politicians in 1950s West Berlin routinely demonstrated the city's "political will" to recreate itself as capital and thus legitimate itself both to the GDR and to the Federal Republic. This sentiment was also clearly articulated in the early reconstruction plans for the city, which inevitably assumed that Berlin would soon regain its function as a unified capital.[120]

The Hauptstadt competition was located in the old city center, an area of Berlin now with parts in both East and West Berlin. Over a hundred and fifty project ideas were submitted, many of the same architects having participated in the Interbau competition just a year earlier. The common element in every one of the submitted designs was a radical transformation of the prewar street pattern in the competition area.[121] An implementation of any one of these plans would entail a flattening of all existing buildings; many partially damaged but over half left unscathed by the bombs. Given too that all of the submissions deliberately ignored the division of the city, the construction of the Wall just two years later in 1961 relegated the prize-winning proposals to a desk

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[119] Carola Hein, et al., *Hauptstadt Berlin: Internationaler städtebaulicher Ideenwettbewerb 1957/58*, Catalogue of the Exhibit at Berlinische Galerie (Berlin: Mann, 1990), 41.

[120] See the latest general history of the Federal Republic, Eckart Conze, *Die Suche nach Sicherheit: Eine Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland von 1949 bis die Gegenwart* (Munich: Siedler, 2009).

[121] Urban, "Recovering Essence through Demolition," 358; Kleihues, "From the Destruction to the Critical Reconstruction of the City," 40.

drawer. While propagandists on both sides had clearly exploited the political division of Berlin before 1961, the construction of the Wall abruptly ended the traffic of goods and people between both sides and strengthened the importance of keeping West Berlin "alive." This goal remained, in part, tied to planners and politicians' visions of the "new" Berlin – a half city whose built environment should reflect a living and vibrant city, not a dying city bound to the past.

Nonetheless, what remained a significant element of the Hauptstadt competition was the weight it accorded to the principles of the "organic" city as formulated by Reichow. As mentioned earlier, these principles necessitated a complete destruction of the historic city with its rows of *Mietskasernen* and the continued destruction of recoverable housing for thousands of Berliners. This vision of the city as an assemblage of organic, loosely grouped neighborhood units, rezoned urban functions, and flowing greenery may have fit well with the idea of a new beginning, but more than anything else this clean break with the existing buildings and street plans revealed a top-down approach to planning that completely ignored the immediate needs of the city's population.

As historians of material culture and urban design have shown, the initial prioritization of organic design in West Germany by modernists, be it of the city or everyday household goods, was central to the project of modernizing in a post-Nazi West Germany.[122] Ironically, this specific understanding of the ideal urban landscape as

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[122] Betts, *The Authority of Everyday Objects*, 116. See also Axel Schildt and Arnold Sywottek, eds., *Modernisierung im Wiederaufbau: Die westdeustche Gesellschaft der 50er Jahre* (Bonn: J. H. W. Dietz, 1998); Axel Schildt and Arnold Sywottek, "'Reconstruction and Modernization': West German Social History during the 1950s," in *West Germany under Construction: Politics, Society, and Culture in the Adenauer Era*, ed. Robert Moeller (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997); Hanna Schissler, ed., *The Miracle Years: A Cultural History of West Germany, 1949-1968* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Michael Wildt, "Changes in Consumption as Social Practice in West Germany during the 1950s," in *Getting and Spending: European and American Consumer Societies in the Twentieth Century*, eds. Susan Strasser, Charles McGovern, and Matthias Judt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998)

fundamental to both the physical and social reconstruction of Germany not only looked

forward to a new, "cleansed" future, but also backwards, locating the "essence" of a city

in a period preceding the industrial age.[123] Put differently, the future of the city in the

1950s was rooted in a pre-industrial past that was paradoxically superior to the industrial

city of the nineteenth century because of its ability to function in a more rational and

healthy manner.[124] Convinced of the moral and spiritual effect that the lived environment

had on its residents, postwar organic planners demonized the sprawling, polluted, and

overcrowded nineteenth-century city. Though not all modernist planners adhered to this

quasi-mythical idea of a city's "true, ultimately anti-urban essence," the widespread

consensus that the tenement city was single-handedly responsible for urban blight

brought together powerful arguments in favor of flattening the remaining 70 percent of

the prewar housing stock still intact.[125]

Contemporary architects and government officials recognized these highly

publicized plans to rebuild the Hansaviertel, as the "keystone of modern inner city

reconstruction, a symbol of free, democratic building and [perhaps most significantly] a

reply to the officially ordained pomp of Stalinallee."[126] The construction of Stalinallee, a

major boulevard extending eastwards from Alexanderplatz, began in the early 1950s.

East German officials touted the 2.3 km boulevard lined with wide, tree-lined streets and

ornate, seven to ten story apartment blocks as representative of the finest in socialist

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[123] Urban, "Recovering Essence," 364.
[124] Diefendorf, *In the Wake of War*, 190.
[125] Urban, "Recovering Essence," 361.
[126] Kleihues, "From the Destruction to the Critical Reconstruction of the City," 41.

urban architecture.[127] In response to the "first socialist street," West Berlin planners and

politicians put forward the idea of sponsoring a housing project to counter East German

claims to the city. And conveniently for West Berlin leaders this shining example of

Stalinist architecture soon became associated with the repression of workers in the

workers' and farmers' state. Plans to rebuild the formerly bourgeois, heavily bombed

inner city neighborhood bordering the Tiergarten took on dimensions of major

significance, as they were assigned the task of showcasing the urban character of a

successful, modern and democratic Germany in contrast to the socialist GDR.[128] Thus, the

Interbau 1957 and its accompanying exhibition, "The City of Tomorrow" (*Die Stadt von*

morgen) aimed to present a concrete alternative not only to the much-despised

nineteenth-century city, but also as alternative to the postwar "socialist" city as well as

establishing a vision of what could and should be done in German cities and beyond.

      Central to the conception of the Interbau design competition was the promise of

creating a "new" Berlin. Given the city's waning political and economic significance in

the context of escalating east-west tensions. West Berlin politicians pinned high hopes on

the idea of an international building exhibition. Having "temporarily" lost its political

function to Bonn in 1949 and tied to that was its former economic might, the Interbau

provided West Berlin an opportunity to showcase the cutting edge of modernist

architecture and town planning "in [direct] contrast to the false pageantry and pomp of

the Stalinallee."[129] Moreover, by steering domestic and international attention to West

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[127] Bruno Flierl, "Stalinallee in Berlin," *Zodiac* 5 (March, 1991): 76-115; Herbert Nicolaus and Alexander Obeth, *Die Stalinallee: Geschichte einer deutschen Strasse* (Berlin: Verlag für Bauwesen, 1997); Ladd, *Ghosts of Berlin*, Chapter 5; Castillo, *Cold War on the Home Front*, Chapter 4.
[128] Rogier, "The Monumentality of Rhetoric," 162.
[129] The explicit political function of the Interbau distinguished it from the earlier building exhibitions in West Germany, e.g., Darmstadt 1950 and Hanover 1956. Senatsbaudirektor quoted in Sandra Wagner

Berlin, the emphasis on the remaking of a "democratic" city through the example of the Interbau so clearly enacted early Cold War propaganda practices.[130] The Hansaviertel, a central area of the city located adjacent to the Tiergarten and almost visible from East Berlin, was as Mayor Otto Suhr suggested, "not 'only' an exhibition, because with the Hansaviertel a new residential district will emerge. That the new houses (*Häuser*) are being built at the edge of the Tiergarten has symbolic meaning. Every new house is a clear sign of the city's will to the future."[131]

The 1953 competition was won by Berlin architects Gerhard Jobst and Willy Kreuer, who established the master urban development plan for the Hansaviertel. A year later an expert panel was formed whose job it was to comprise a list of local, national, and international architects who were then invited to participate in the design of the individual buildings in the Hansaviertel. From this list, 53 national and international architects were chosen to design and complete projects for the exhibition. The inclusion of renowned architectural giants such as Walter Gropius, Pierre Vago, Alvar Aalto, Max Taut, Oscar Niemeyer, Le Corbusier, and Arne Jacobson guaranteed international recognition. The 1 300 units built on twenty-five hectares of land in the Hansaviertel and designed by this selection of both established and up-and-coming architects served not only a political function as mentioned above, but also a practical one in providing much-

Conzelmann, *Die Interbau 1957 in Berlin, Stadt von heute, Stadt von morgen. Städtebau und Gesellschaftskritik der 50er Jahre* (Petersberg bei Fulda: M. Imhof Verlag, 2007), 11.

[130] On consumption as a propaganda tool in the Cold War, see Katharine Pence and Paul Betts, eds., *Socialist Modern: East German Everyday Culture and Politics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008); Greg Castillo, *Cold War on the Home Front*; David Crew, ed., *Consuming Germany in the Cold War* (Oxford: Berg, 2003). Until 1961, when the Wall was built, the border between East and West Berlin was relatively open. East Berliners also visited the Interbau exhibition.

[131] *Die Stadt von morgen: Zussamenfassung der Ausstellungsabteilung "Die Stadt von morgen" der Interbau Berlin 1957* Catalogue of the International Building Exhibition, 1957 (Berlin-Charlottenburg: Interbau GmbH, 1957)

needed (social) housing for Berliners. All this rhetorical emphasis on West German housing, however, had not solved the concrete dilemmas of West German working classes and poor, who were still unable to find affordable housing in Berlin.

The master development plan envisaged by Jobst and Kreuer for the Hansaviertel adhered to the modernist principles of an orderly, structured, low-density city formulated in the Athens Charter. In the same vein as proponents of modernist rebuilding across the Germany's western sectors, Jobst and Kreuer depicted the "historical city" as epitomizing "disorder, overcrowding, gloominess, and chaos."[132] To counter these so-called "evils" of the nineteenth-century cityscape, Jobst and Kreuer accentuated green, open spaces, bestowing a feeling of "modern" living in a park-like setting, in their layout for the Hansaviertel. A diversity of building types, from single-dwelling houses to low-rise apartment blocks and sixteen-story high-rises, were positioned in relative isolation from one another and scattered amidst green space that should encourage the healthy pursuit of individual development within the nuclear family unit. The selected fifty-three architects from sixteen countries were each assigned to design one of the forty-eight individual buildings proposed in the master plan.

The individual buildings in the Hansaviertel were loosely dispersed to give the families the feeling of having their own space while still living in an urban community. (**Figure 1.3**) The high-rises were widely set in generous green spaces on the edge of the Tiergarten. For the architects and professional observers of the Interbau, the proposed projects were at the center of a transformative vision they believed was the key to the modernization of the traditional city. As Dr. Johanna Hofmann of the Deutscher

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[132] Wagner-Conzelmann, *Die Interbau 1957 in Berlin*, 36.

Werkbund Berlin remarked, "already from the outside [of the new buildings] one can see

how people live on the inside. That wasn't always the case, especially in the old

Hansaviertel ... the façades of the front houses and concealed the inside and hid away the

side wings and back wings with their narrow and sun-seeking courtyards and unhealthy

living quarters."[133]

The Interbau exhibition lasted three months and in that time received over one

million visitors. The noticeable presence of international architects and the range of

difference in the design of each of the newly constructed buildings reflected West

German claims to individuality and internationality to distance itself both from the recent

Nazi past and the collective ideals attached to GDR socialism. Complementing the

Hansaviertel was the special exhibit, "Die Stadt von morgen." If, as Interbau advocates

assumed, the Hansaviertel epitomized the ideal "living space (*Wohnwelt*) for the people

of today," then the main objective of the special exhibit was to provide a detailed and

comprehensive model according to which German cities should be reconstructed.[134]

According to the organizers of the special exhibit, postwar urban development as

articulated in the "city of tomorrow" was a precondition for a establishing a "real

democracy" in Germany.[135] In its endeavor to "restore order to urban life," the exhibit

presented a blueprint for the "design and renewal" of Germany's "outdated cities" that

would speak to both professionals and laypersons. Invoking the concepts and vocabulary

already familiar in postwar urban planning discourse, the all-German organizing

committee subdivided the exhibit into five main categories or themes, all of which were

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[133] Deutscher Werkbund Berlin *Wohnen in unserer Zeit*, introduction by Johanna Hofmann (Darmstadt: Beispiel, [1957]).
[134] Ibid.
[135] Wagner-Conzelmann, *Die Interbau 1957 in Berlin*, 135.

based on principles that supported a link between postwar planning and the ideal of an isolated home that would provide the primary site for the development of civility and morality.

The organizing committee, headed by two architects from Cologne, consulted with a team of sociologists, medical professionals, psychologists, union leaders, economists, and adult youth leaders to assist in the conceptualization of the five themes addressed in the exhibit: City and Humans, City and Health, City and Nature, City and Traffic, City and Land. Each theme occupied a corner in the exhibit's pavilion, which was located at the entrance to the Tiergarten with a view overlooking the park. This location enabled visitors to take in the green surroundings while walking through the exhibit's stations, with each of the five stations calling attention to the contrast between the "city of tomorrow" and the current state of Germany's cities still burdened with the rubble of their nineteenth century urban decay.[136] Claiming that "our cities, built for an earlier age and for the conditions of life of the people of that time" were no longer functional, the exhibit extolled the ideals of a "healthy city," one in which housing was not deprived of light, sun, air, and greenery.[137] Such rhetoric helped West Germans to redefine themselves through their homes and their cities by focusing inward on cultivating healthy, strong family bonds, developed in isolation. These families would in turn serve as isolated, civilized building blocks for a strong social fabric. This emphasis on a rational and hygienic city and the concomitant demonization of the "unhealthy"

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[136] Annette Maechtel and Kathrin Peters, eds., *Die Stadt von Morgen: Beiträge zu einer Archaeologie des Hansaviertels Berlin* (Cologne: König, 2008), 25. The five themes were laid out in the official "city of tomorrow" catalogue published by the Interbau GmbH.

[137] *Die Stadt von morgen*, 2.

nineteenth-century city with its mixed use and back courtyards constituted the central theme of the exhibit.

In fact, the Interbau and the special exhibit the "city of tomorrow" crystallized the turn of the century urban planning mindset that assumed a direct correlation between the city form, and with it the housing models, and the moral fabric of a society. Although German planners were not alone in their inclination to blame the breakdown of society on the nineteenth-century urban form and by extension on the urban dweller who had lost touch with his/her natural environment this belief held a particular credence in postwar West Berlin in helping to maintain the illusion of a "new start."[138] Thus, by providing an ordered and healthy city, not only the urban form itself, but the urban dweller and, in turn, German society would be redeemed. A 1957 article in the architectural journal Bauwelt captured these familiar themes in postwar discussions of the fundamental goals of urban planning. It is worth quoting at length:

> In addition to the damage done to the cities during the War, the need for a wide ranging renovations has its origins in the economic developments of the industrial age and the irregular growth of the city (characterized by over-crowded housing and traffic congestion, which harms the physical and social health of the urban population and cuts them off from nature. The expansion of the city and the overcrowded housing takes away from people not only the connection to nature but also sun, light and air. The "rental barracks" with small courtyards without light or air that in the past century were greeted by workers as a form of rescue in times of need are now increasingly recognizing as a creeping poison that leads to both bodily and mental illness and also to undesirable social attitudes.[139]

Here, the physical health and moral character of the urban dweller, specifically the 'worker,' and the architectural form and/or urban structure were thought to be negatively or positively interrelated. What is remarkable and at the same time disturbing about this

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[138] See Le Corbusier, "A Contemporary City" from 'The City of To-morrow and its Planning," reprinted in R.T. Le Gates and F. Stout, *The City Reader* (London: Routledge, 1996): 368-75.

[139] Lona Ottersky, "Zum Problem der Sanierung 'was wird aus unseren überalterten Stadtteilen?,'" *Bauwelt* 19 (1957): 432.

quote is not just the manner in which it literally echoes late nineteenth-century anti-urban

critiques of the city, but also how it privileges progress in the form of modern living

conditions in the face of the social and material reality of millions of working-class

Germans.

Sunny apartments with balconies and easy access to gardens and greenery would

take the place of the "unhealthy and crowded" apartments with their depressing views

onto dark courtyards. And residing in these new apartments would be the most important

unit to the safekeeping of the "city of tomorrow," the nuclear family.[140] The Interbau

organizers made it clear that the family, and specifically the small family as the

privileged form in an urban setting, was the "Keimzelle" or basic unit of the West

German state. In direct contrast to the lived environment and everyday reality of the poor

and working-class in the old tenements, the Interbau envisaged a domestic harmony

(Familienglücks) whose foundation was the traditional breakdown of gender roles within

the family.[141] Thus the postwar project of rehabilitating the moral character of West

German society from within the family/domestic sphere was also reflected in the physical

form of housing. This focus on the middle-class family, in fact, also led to remaking of

working-class housing and urban design in postwar West Germany. This project entailed

not only a disavowal of the nineteenth-century city, i.e., the tenement, but alongside it a

blatant rejection of the social meaning of that space.

The design of the Hansaviertel and the vision presented in the special exhibit of

what the "old" city could become prefigured the guiding concepts of early renewal and

planning in postwar West Berlin. In preparation for the Interbau, all twenty of the

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[140] *Die Stadt von morgen*, 6.
[141] Wagner-Conzelmann, *Interbau*, 75.

existing buildings of the old Hansa neighborhood were torn down. Responding less to the dire housing shortage than to "fixed cultural concept" of the *Mietskaserne* as the embodiment of urban ills, the Interbau planners demolished housing for 741 persons and 22 businesses, not to mention disregarding the intact foundations of several buildings and streets as well as the underground system lines.[142] The design proposals for the Interbau and the Hauptstadt competition both necessitated vast open spaces. Equally significant as I will discuss in the next chapter, West Berlin politicians and planners maintained the illusion that "old Berlin" had been completely or irreparably destroyed in the war and in the next decades embarked on large-scale projects of demolishing great portions of Berlin's tenement neighborhoods.

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[142] Harald Bodenschatz, "Das neue Hansaviertel: Die Antwort der Interbau 1957 auf die Mietskasernenstadt," *ARCH +* 82 (1985), 70.
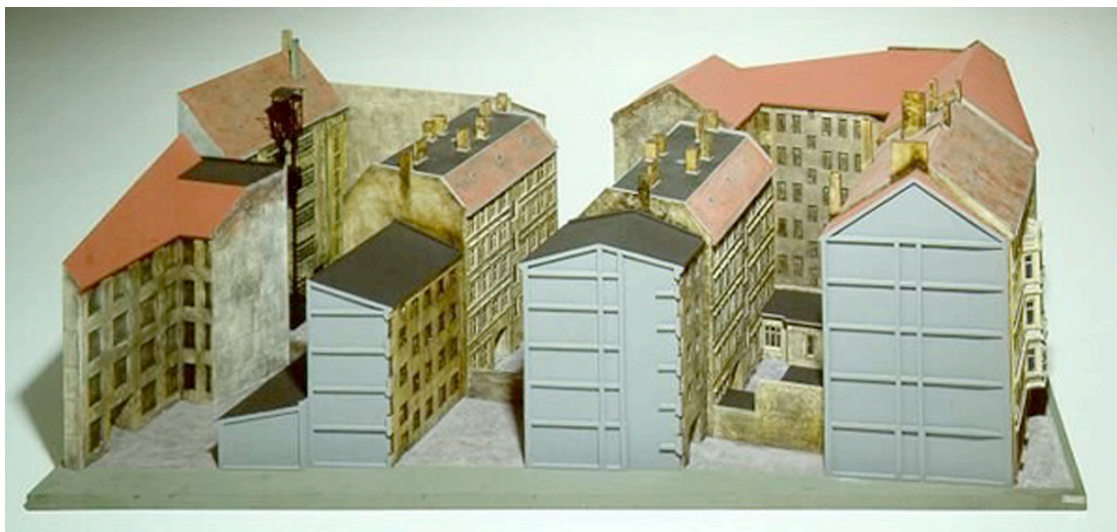
Figure 1.1: Mietskaserne (Source: http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_image.cfm?image_id=1251)

Figure 1.2: A working-class family in a Mietskaserne in the southeastern corner of Kreuzberg (Source:
http://www.stadtentwicklung.berlin.de/denkmal/denkmale_in_berlin/de/weltkulturerbe/si edlungen/hintergrund.shtml**)**

Figure 1.3: Das Eternithaus designed for Interbau 1957 by the German architect Paul Baumgarten (Source: http://www.isarsteve.de/?paged=14)

Chapter Two

Between Demolition and Restoration: The Politics of Urban Renewal in West Berlin

The official 1950s vision of a "new" Berlin was first put into practice in the inner-city rebuilding projects of the 1960s and 70s. Intended to transform the cityscape, West Berlin's urban renewal practices embodied the tabula rasa vision of postwar modernist planning. Yet, as the following chapters will show, this vision was far from universally accepted; it was, instead, a highly contested idea and practice. This chapter first outlines the city's official renewal program for Kreuzberg, which was specifically intended to "replace the outdated [housing] with newer [housing] more in line with the times."[143] The second half of the chapter then turns to the first vocalization of experts' opposition to such redevelopment plans. It argues that these early voices of dissent, and related proposals for alternative renewal practices, laid the intellectual groundwork for later grassroots protests that would produce a marked departure from the century-old negative understanding of Berlin's *Mietskaserne*.

In West Berlin throughout the 1970s and 80s, housing was a highly charged and contentious issue. Thirty-five years after the end of the Second World War, the city yet again faced an acute housing shortage, albeit of a lesser degree than the catastrophic situation of the immediate postwar period.[144] Between the early 1960s and the late 1970s,

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[143] Rolf Schwedler, *Stadterneuerung in Berlin*, aus der Sitzung des Abgeordnetenhauses von Berlin am 18. Juni, 1964, 2.

[144] For more discussion on the years 1945 to 1949, see Michael Wildt, "Plurality of Taste: Food and Consumption in West Germany during the 1950s," *History Workshop Journal* 39 (April 1995): 22-41; Steege, *Black Market, Cold War*; Günther J. Trittel, *Hunger und Politik: Die Ernährungskrise in der Bizone (1945-1949)* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1990); von Beyme, *Der Wiederaufbau*; Clara Oberle,

West Berlin's urban renewal agents pursued a politics of redevelopment largely shaped by the ideal of full clearance and rebuilding. Subsequently, they reduced the availability of affordable housing for the city's low-income residents. The tenements in inner-city neighborhoods that had not been initially demolished to make way for new buildings in the immediate aftermath of the war had –by the late 1970s– fallen into disrepair after being officially designated part of a "renewal area in waiting." Unscrupulous private or city-owned housing corporations in their role as renewal agents waited out the protracted renewal process in order to profit from federal subsidies for new building. The renewal process in Berlin, intended to provide every Berlin resident with adequate housing, in practice displaced thousands of low-income residents and allowed hundreds of intact buildings to dilapidate.

West Berlin's 1963 urban renewal program set out to replace the extant built environment of the "stony city," accordingly calling for new buildings rather than the preservation of existing housing stock. The reasons for this came out of a related set of local concerns and international trends. Not surprisingly, the decades-long condemnation of the densely populated tenement neighborhoods provided the cultural justification for advocates of modernist planning to demolish large quantities of mainly intact housing. Like their historical predecessors, postwar city officials and planners held the architectural form of the *Mietskaserne* directly responsible for the poverty and misery of

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"City in Transit: Ruins, Railways, and the Search for Order in Berlin, 1945-1947" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2006); Hans Joachim Reichhardt, '...*raus aus den Trummern:' Vom Beginn des Wiederaufbaus 1945 in Berlin* (Ausstellungskataloge des Landesarchivs Berlin) (Berlin: Transit:1987); Dieter Hanauske, "*Bauen, Bauen, Bauen...!" Die Wohnungspolitik in Berlin (West) 1945-1961* (Publikationen der Historischen Kommission zu Berlin) (Berlin: Wiley-VCH, 1995).

the working classes.[145] This unchanged cultural assessment partly helps to explain what

critics of official renewal policy called the "second destruction:" the government project

of "loosening up" the inner city through a gradual flattening of tenement blocks in order

to build modern, improved housing and inner-city freeways. Remarkably, the demolition

of Berlin's tenement districts, the main drive of renewal policy, equaled in scale the

physical devastation of the city during the war.[146]

The two largest of the renewal areas were located in the poor, traditionally

working-class districts of Wedding and Kreuzberg. Berlin's city officials slated the

blocks around Brunnenstrasse in Weedding and Kottbusser Tor in Kreuzberg for

demolition, areas that were to become the two largest redevelopment areas in all of West

Germany. At the time, opposition to the practice of demolition and displacement was

small and stemmed primarily from leftist students demanding change in society at large

rather than from the tenants who were directly involved. This would remain the case until

the early 1970s, when the socio-economic consequences of urban improvement in the

housing estates on the city's periphery became plainly visible. Already by the mid-1960s,

however, dissenting voices in the field of architecture and planning emerged on the

margins of the profession. The following two chapters focus on the period between the

first critiques of planning practices in the early 1960s –most notably Wolf Jobst Siedler's

Die gemordete Stadt (The Murdered City) and Alexander Mitscherlich's *Die*

Unwirtlichkeit der Städte (*The Inhospitality of our Cities*)– and the emergence of a

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[145] Building Senator for West Berlin Rolf Schwedler is a good example. See Schmidt, *Vom steinernen Berlin zum Freilichtmuseum der Stadterneuerung*.

[146] Urban, "Recovering Essence through Demolition," 360; Bodenschatz, *Platz Frei für das neue Berlin*.

decidedly more radical form of protest against urban renewal practices in Kreuzberg in the early 1980s.

Pave "Paradise" to Put up a Parking Lot?

In 1963 Lord Mayor Willy Brandt (SPD) officially announced the city's first postwar urban renewal program for West Berlin's inner city housing stock. The inner city neighborhoods had been largely overlooked in the previous decade in favor of building large, and more profitable construction projects on the open tracts of land on the periphery of the city.[147] Brandt's address to West Berliners outlined the city's policies for the next four years. In it he spoke of the city's "test and mission," which linked the project of rebuilding to the more amorphous task of rendering the "free half" of the city the "capital in leadership, innovation and spirit (*geistige Hauptstadt*) of the German people."[148] This standing could only be achieved, according to Brandt, by "upgrading Berlin to one of Europe's most modern and exemplary industrial centers," which necessitated a "metropolitan" approach to reconstruction since "our political goal should and must be recognizable in the city landscape."[149] The city of Berlin's immediate future then was a smooth, rational city that would overwrite the densely built nineteenth-century tenement districts.

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[147] In the first years after the war, it was only possible to rid the city of rubble and start the partial reconstruction of damaged buildings. After the Blockade ended and Marshall Plan funds could be implemented, reconstruction on a larger scale started. See Armin Grünbacher, *Reconstruction and Cold War in Germany: The Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau, 1948-1961* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004); Axel Schildt and Ulrich Herbert, eds., *Kriegsende in Europa. Vom deutschen Machtzerfall bis zur Stabilisierung der europäischen Nachkriegsordnung 1944-1948* (Essen: Klartext, 1998).

[148] Abgeordnetenhaus von Berlin, Stenographischer Bericht, IV Wahlperiode, 4. Sitzung, 18. March, 1963, 13.

[149] St B. IV, Sitzung 4, 18. March, 1963, 14.

Brandt's announcement came on the heels of the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961. The East German government's unsuccessful efforts to stem the flow of its citizens fleeing to the west resulted in the erection of a physical barrier. This left West West Berlin with a shortage of cheap labor, above all in the construction business, for which the city then turned to labor recruitment from Southern Europe and North Africa to fulfill a demand for wage laborers. In terms of urban redevelopment, the new reality of a physical border separating the western sectors from the Soviet sector meant something specific and quite different for the everyday life of Berliners. For Kreuzberg's pre-Wall population, those residing in the southeastern corner not only lost access to the former city center, but also to the closest recreation area (Treptow Park); they witnessed the almost overnight transformation of their neighborhood into an outlying corner of West Berlin, cut off from the commercial advantages of its pre-1961 central location.[150] The Wall not only disrupted the everyday routine of all Berliners, especially residents of Kreuzberg who were surrounded by it on three sides; it signaled, on a daily basis, the end to the illusion of a unified Germany with Berlin as its capital, and by extension, the slow death of a wish for a coherent city silhouette.

Guided by a resolute aspiration to outdo the city's socialist half, West Berlin politicians perceived the housing situation, both in terms of production and consumption, as a tool to further Cold War propaganda. As discussed in more detail in the previous

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[150] Viktor Augustin and Hartwig Berger, *Einwanderung und Alltagskultur: die Forster Straße in Berlin-Kreuzberg* (Berlin: Publica, 1984); Verein SO 36, *ausser man tut es! Kreuzberg abgeschrieben aufgestanden* (Berlin: Verlag Grenzenlos, 1983). See also Katherine Pence's dissertation on the economic and commercial transactions between East and West Berliners before the Wall. "From Rations to Fashions: The Gendered Politics of East and West German Consumption," (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1999). This loss was not specific to Kreuzberg only. The reality of the political division of the city and geographical reality of both the city and the neighborhood meant that the major industrial industries with their headquarters in pre-1945 Berlin no longer returned (economic loss), but the reality of the Wall made it that much worse in Kreuzberg.

chapter, the primary objective of planning and building activity until the early 1970s was

to develop the open tracts of land on the outskirts of the city into new, modern

neighborhoods organized around rows of high-rise apartment towers linked to the city by

new freeways and an extension of existing subway lines. Some exceptions to this focus

were the Hansa Viertel in Tiergarten and the Ernst Reuter Siedlung in Wedding given

that both building projects were located in the inner city.[151] Advocates of large-scale

housing estates on the urban periphery, such as Märkisches Viertel and Gropiusstadt, fell

back on the familiar motto of "light, air, and sun for residents of the *Mietskaserne*" to

enact their reconstruction of a modern, world-class city.[152] In an attempt to sort out the

inner city "chaos" along functionalist lines, the 1963 plan outlined the eventual renewal

of six inner-city districts with the highest concentration of "*Altbau*" or older housing

stock: Wedding, Kreuzberg, Tiergarten, Neukölln, Charlottenburg, and Schöneberg.[153]

Pursuing an ambitious program, the city's Ministry of Building and Housing

published a preliminary appraisal carried out by experts between 1959 and 1961 that

proposed a sweeping urban renewal plan. The report estimated that 430, 000 units of a

total of 470, 000 *Altbau* units were "in need of rehabilitation."[154] According to this

assessment, 40, 000 units were in good condition, another 180, 000 were deemed capable

of improvement, and 250, 000 were ready for demolition. In other words, in 1963 half of

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[151] See chapter one for a discussion of the significance of Interbau 1957.

[152] The postwar design and practice of razing entire city blocks to make room for both new buildings and major thoroughfares was not a postwar idea. As homeless Berliners built make-shift shelters in the months after the war, city planners were already basing their postwar plans for the devastated city on further demolition of war damaged areas. Reconstruction plans were underway before the end of the war. See Benedikt Goebel, *Der Umbau Alt-Berlins zum modernen Stadtzentrum* (Berlin: Braun Publishing, 2003); Bodenschatz, *Platz frei für das neue Berlin!*

[153] The official definition of an *Altbau* is any residential building constructed before 1949. However, in this context of 1960s and 70s renewal, Altbau is most often used to describe the nineteenth-century *Mietskaserne*. Schwedler, *Stadterneuerung in Berlin*; Bodenschatz, *Platz frei fuer das neue Berlin!*

[154] Schwedler, *Stadterneuerung in Berlin*, 2.

West Berlin's housing stock was in need of either major improvements or was seriously dilapidated.[155] In view of the dimension of this problem, the Ministry for Building and Housing limited its first urban renewal program to 56, 000 of the 430, 000 units. Of these 56, 000 units located in the six areas targeted for renewal 10, 000 were considered improvable. A total of 140, 000 residents and 7, 600 businesses were directly affected. The Ministry of Building and Housing projected ten to fifteen years to complete the first program. Berlin's planning officials arrived at this completion rate after delegates visited American cities more experienced in urban renewal practices, such as Boston and New York City. Berlin's housing experts came away from their U.S. visit with a projected number of 4, 000 units per year that could realistically be cleared.

The decision to slate a building for clearance was based on three main features: the age of the building, its unsanitary conditions (densely populated, poorly ventilated, coal heating, shared toilets located in the stairwell or in the courtyard), and the "unruly disorder" of a mixed use area and its related offenses (noise, fumes, objectionable odors). Of the 56, 000 units, 20, 000 were in buildings built before 1870 and the remaining 36, 000 units between 1870 and 1885.[156] In its frequent publication Berlin Building Review (*Berliner Baubilanz*), the city's Building and Housing Department declared its plan for "an extensive renovation [of the remaining portion of older units not targeted for clearance] to bring them up to today's standards."[157] The Minister of Building and Housing Rolf Schwedler (SPD) faced an arduous task, but he was committed to fulfilling

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[155] In 1945, 1/3 of West Berlin's 980,000 apartment units had been destroyed. By 1963, 250,000 new units had been built. Der Senator für Bau-und Wohnungswesen, *Auf dem halben Wege … von der Mietskaserne zum sozialen Wohnungsbau* (Berlin: Druckhaus Tempelhof, 1957).

[156] Schwedler, *Stadterneuerung in Berlin*, 3.

[157] Rolf Schwedler, *Berliner Baubilanz*, Broschüre des Senator für Bau-und Wohnungswesen (Berlin, 1966), 27.

what he perceived as "a moral duty." Renewal of the inner city, he maintained, is "an obligation [we have] to every resident of this city that cannot be deferred."[158] Schwedler's tenure as housing minister lasted from 1955 to 1972, and in that time he did not bend from his unwavering dedication to remedy the "unhygienic buildings of the past" inside which Berlin's residents are "forced to live in undignified circumstances."[159] Throughout his term as minister, Schwedler focused repeatedly on the need to eliminate the transverse and side wings that enclosed a narrow courtyard, the small factories behind the first or second front wing, the stalls used to house and slaughter livestock, and the outdoor toilets.

To accomplish Schwedler's vision, West Berlin's urban redevelopment project relied largely on new construction. In addition to the satellite towns already built on the periphery of the city, redevelopment between 1963 and 1975 for Berlin's inner-city neighborhoods involved razing entire blocks of older, largely low-rent housing for new building (*Kahlschlagsanierung*). As was typical in other West German cities, proponents of modern architecture held a commanding voice in the urban planning and redevelopment of residential areas. Modernists set out to rebuild cities along planning principles intended to reflect a break with the past, or a new beginning, one which would in turn best accommodate a new, modern society.[160] These postwar planners and politicians drew on a familiar discourse of the nineteenth-century city (its tenements and back courtyard factories) as "overcrowded and unhygienic," a discourse that was

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[158] Abegeordnetenhaus von Berlin, Stenographischer Bericht, 33 Sitzung, June 18, 1964, 354.

[159] *auf halbem Wege*, 26.

[160] For literature that specifically discusses postwar West Germany, see Rosenfeld, *Munich and Memory*; Diefendorf, *In the Wake of War*; Bodenschatz, *Platz frei für das neue Berlin!*;. Hanauske, "Bauen, Bauen, Bauen...!"; Deborah Howell-Ardila, "Berlin's Search for a 'Democratic' Architecture: Post-World War II and Post-unification," *German Politics and Society* 16, no. 3 (Fall 1998): 62-85.

grounded in a broader European discussions and critiques of the industrial city at the turn of the century.[161]

The anxiety about the fate of the West German city had a powerful hold over the minds of government authorities and planners. It was at this time, in particular, that the fruits of postwar modernist planning became evident in cities such as Munich, Hamburg, Köln, Mainz and Stuttgart. In 1971, the German Association of Cities (*Deutscher Städtetag*) had taken up the theme "Save our cities now!" at their annual meeting. These earliest concerns, articulated by planning experts and city politicians, focused on the speed of urban sprawl, the migration of residents from the inner city to the suburbs, the separation of urban functions resulting in an inner-city landscape populated mainly by office buildings, and intensified traffic congestion and air pollution.[162] The opening paragraphs of the cover article on West German "Städteprobleme" in a 1971 *Der Spiegel*, Germany's largest weekly news magazine founded in 1947, pointed to what was perceived as one paradox of postwar urban development: "as more and more people move to the city, these cities in turn are becoming more inhumane (*unmenschlich*)."[163] The Spiegel article openly criticized local politicians and sociologists who advocated the postwar approach to urban reconstruction with their reference to "two decades of West German urban development that was revealed, bit by bit, to be '*sozialfeindlich.*'"[164]

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[161] *Wir bauen die neue Stadt: Die städtebauliche Neugestaltung der Luisenstadt im Bezirk Kreuzberg* (Berlin: Bezirksamt Kreuzberg, [1956]).

[162] Deutsche Städtetag, *Rettet unsere Städte jetzt! Vorträge, Aussprachen u. Ergebnisse d. 16. Hauptversammlung d. Deutschen Städtetages vom 25. bis 27. Mai 1971 in München* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1971); Han-Jochen Vogel, "Das unterirdische Grollen ist schon zu hören," *Der Spiegel*, June 19, 1972.

[163] *Der Spiegel* was started as a printed venue to encourage democratic commitment and ease the transition from fascism to democracy in West Germany. "Länge mal Breite mal Geld," *Der Spiegel*, June 7, 1971.

[164] "Länge mal Breite mal Geld."

Breathing new life into the modernist architectural traditions of the inter-war years, postwar planners and architects sought to remedy the perceived faults of the historic nineteenth-century city with their modernist visions of the "city of tomorrow."[165] Their condemnation of the historical city firmly placed them in a long tradition of European architects, urban planners, housing experts, and middle-class social reformers who despised what they saw as the embodiment of the urban ills of the industrial city –the nineteenth-century tenement. Through to the 1970s, this discourse had remained unchanged since the days when Heinrich Zille, the best-known chronicler of late nineteenth-century working-class life in Berlin, ominously declared that, "one can do away with people just as easily with an apartment as with an ax."[166]

As Rudy Koshar among others has pointed out, "for more than two decades after World War Two, reconstructed buildings and landscapes [whether new or restored] were the paradigmatic expressions of political community on both sides of the German-German border."[167] Political elites in West Germany capitalized on postwar rebuilding and urban renewal to project their vision of a democratic, modern Germany. In line with West Berlin's ideologically charged status as the "outpost of the free world," postwar city planning was meant to symbolize the best capitalism had to offer. Given the city's political and ideological division, West Berlin's inner-city neighborhoods, comprised of vast blocks of tenements, represented a crucial site of debate on reconstruction and planning. At stake was an attempt to define the identity of a "new" West Berlin, a West

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[165] "*Die Stadt von morgen*"; plans that re-imagined the city in its potential place as not only capital of a unified Germany, but a capital with a cityscape that would display its democratic and capitalist commitment. These planners looked to leftist modernist architects like the Bauhaus movement of the 1920s and 1930s, where redesigning the city, and opening it up to light and fresh air, was tantamount to solving social problems.

[166] This quote is attributed to Berlin illustrator and photographer Heinrich Zille (1858-1929).

[167] Rudy Koshar, *From Traces to Monuments*, 11; see also Rosenfeld, *Munich and Memory*.

Berlin increasingly perceived less as one part of a temporarily divided whole, and more as a complete and independent city.

In bombed out cities across West Germany, such as Frankfurt, Cologne, Munich, and Hamburg, debates ensued between advocates and opponents of reconstruction of destroyed or damaged historical landmarks and historic town centers. City officials, and the general public, discussed and debated the future of their cities between these two poles of new construction or traditional reconstruction. Historians have shown these debates have been crucial in revealing the ways in which experiences and memories of the recent Nazi past played a role in how West Germans rebuilt their cities.[168] Most notably in Munich, the main challenge to modernism came primarily from conservative *Heimat* (home or homeland) groups, who proved to be the driving force behind the preservation of the old city.[169] In Munich for example, historic preservationists won out and the historic city center was reconstructed as a replica of its former self, whereas in other cities, like in Frankfurt, city officials chose to reconstruct only select historic landmarks or churches. In terms of residential housing, West Berlin was certainly not unique in its readiness to tear down and rebuild.

Locating Kreuzberg

Embracing this modernist ethics of rebuilding in the forward to a 1956 promotion booklet for Kreuzberg's early reconstruction phase (*Wiederaufbau)*, the district's SPD mayor (*Bezirksbürgermeister*) Willy Kressmann acknowleged each city dweller's "right

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[168] See Koshar, *From Monuments to Traces*; Rosenfeld, *Munich and Memory*; Gavriel Rosenfeld and Paul Jaskot, *Beyond Berlin: Twelve German Cities Confront the Nazi Past* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008); Rudy Koshar, *Germany's Transient Pasts*; Michael Wise, *Capital Dilemma: Germany's Search for a New Architecture of Democracy* (New York: Princeton Architectual Press, 1998).

[169] Rosenfeld, *Munich and Memory*, 173. Munich also promoted the conservative *Wohnküche.*

to a modern residential quarter with its indispensable conveniences of schools, sport

fields, and recreational venues.”[170] Kressmann was referring specifically to the rebuilding

of the Luisenstadt, the historic Berlin district whose southern half lay in north central

Kreuzberg; this area of the neighborhood was part of the reconstruction program in the

late 1950s and early 60s dedicated to the construction of inner-city areas flattened by

wartime bombs. Kressmann emphasized that the modernization of the built environment

must be carried out “precisely in the densely populated areas of our district in which the

housing stock was built in the so-called “Founding Years” (*Gründerzeit*).”[171]

“Unfortunately,” he continued, “at this time we don’t have the means to knock down all

of the outdated and unhygienic apartment houses to construct new, sound housing

developments in their place.”[172] However, to remind the Kreuzberg resident of what no

longer complemented the vision of the modern, German city, the first half of the booklet

outlined the “errors of the past to be fixed,” and it emphasized above all the absence of an

“inner order” of the nineteenth-century city or in other words the nonexistent “separation

[of urban life] according to function and character.”[173]

The brochure featured a typical depiction of the nineteenth-century city to be

radically amended. (**Figure 2**) The image showed a caricature of an urban street corner

with arrows pointing out nine features of the “old” city that should be done away with.

For instance, in this illustration a factory is located in the midst of dwellings, the school

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[170] *Wir bauen die neue Stadt*, 3.

[171] *Wir bauen die neue Stadt*, 3. The *Gründerzeit* or “Founding Era” typically refers to the economic boom that occurred in the years after German unification in 1871. A building boom accompanied economic growth and continued well beyond the economic slump in 1873. The building type was built in the four decades between German unification and the eve of World War One. In the southeastern section of Kreuzberg, the majority (70 percent) of tenements were built before 1900.

[172] *Wir bauen die neue Stadt*, 3.

[173] *Wir bauen die neue Stadt*, 7.

next to the apartment house, the dance hall next to the church, "unaesthetic" gables are visible on uneven buildings, and "garish" moulding adorns the building facades.[174] To attain "order" out of supposed "disorder," the plans for Kreuzberg envisaged a neighborhood that would provide "modern work places and humane apartments" for its citizens. This vision included the construction of affordable apartment blocks designed to ensure air, light and sun for every apartment, grassy courtyards to be enjoyed as open spaces for residents and as playgrounds for children. The 1956 booklet published by the Kreuzberg borough government further identified improvements for the neighborhood that everyone involved in the urban renewal debate would agree on: more green spaces, adequate schoolyards, and playgrounds. As this chapter will show, the questions of how, why, and where would prove to be divisive.

The Senate for Building and Housing's thirteenth report on urban renewal two decades later gives evidence to the longevity and application of this planning ethic: "whereas in earlier times the artisan, the tradesman, and the businessman generally lived and worked in the same house, in today's big cities this is only hardly ever the case. As cities developed, separation of work and living, of production and distribution brought with it an increase in traffic volume, especially in Berlin. For this reason, a ring motorway will surround Berlin."[175] Considered indispensable for the forward-looking, democratic neighborhood, functionalist urbanism deemed necessary the separation of living, work and leisure, each having clearly delineated functions connected by an easy

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[174] *Wir bauen die neue Stadt*, 6.

[175] Senator für Bau- und Wohnungswesen, *Stadterneuerung in Berlin: 13 Report, 01.01.1975-31.12.1977* (Drucksachen des Abgeordnetenhauses von Berlin).

access to a modern transportation system that also integrated local services and public

utilities sites.[176] The city's first urban renewal plan reflected this vision of urbanity.

Urban Renewal Area Kreuzberg Kottbusser Tor (*Sanierungsgebiet Kreuzberg*

Kottbusser Tor or SKKT) with its 107 hectares divided into 11 renewal units was the

second largest renewal area in the city after Urban Renewal Area Wedding-Brunnestrasse

(SWB), with both areas also ranking as the two largest renewal projects in West

Germany. The proposed plan for Kreuzberg targeted an area of the neighborhood with

37, 000 residents in 17, 000 apartments and over 2000 businesses that employed 16, 000

people.[177] Over the next decade, the Ministry for Building and Housing, together with the

private and city-owned non-profit housing associations acting as the main urban renewal

agents, proceeded to carry out large-scale demolitions around the Kottbusser Tor to

replace older housing with new residential units. The city recognized Kreuzberg as the

greatest challenge to its planning reform given its long tradition of residential and small

industry sharing the same lots.[178] Urban renewal agents were unwavering in their

commitment to clear the blocks in and around the Kottbusser Tor in preparation for an

expressway. The highway plan trumped another important yardstick used by the city to

identify an area in need of rehabilitation: insufficient public amenities such as green

spaces, playgrounds, or schools. Its very realization would, in fact, reduce the already

sparse green spaces in the neighborhood by paving over Oranienplatz and Wassertorplatz.

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[176] *Wir bauen die neue Stadt*, 6; *auf halbem Wege…*; Presse- und Informationsamt des Landes Berlin, *Bericht Bauen* (Berlin,1968).

[177] Senator für Bau- und Wohnungswesen, Stadterneuerung, Bezirksamt Kreuzberg, 1964; Rainer Autzen et al., *Stadterneuerung in Berlin: Sanierung und Zerstörung vor und neben der IBA*, Berliner Topografien, vol. 2 (Berlin: Verlag Ästhetik und Kommunikation, 1984).

[178] This construction of small- to medium-sized manufactories in lots directly behind the Mietskaserne was unique to Kreuzberg. See Karl-Heinz Fiebig and Dieter Hoffmann-Axthelm, *Kreuzberger Mischung: die innerstädtische Verflechtung von Architektur, Kultur und Gewerbe* (Berlin: Verlag Ästhetik und Kommunikation, 1984).

Here, the city regarded the construction of a "necessary expressway and other traffic plans" as fundamental to the "much needed restructuring of Kreuzberg."[179]

Kreuzberg, without a doubt, was a neighborhood in need of revitalization. Left unattended to until the 1970s, in the three decades since the end of the war the area's older housing stock had been allowed to deteriorate. The façades of the uninterrupted rows of four-to-five story high tenements were colorless and crumbling. And inside these run-down buildings, the majority of Kreuzberg's residents inhabited apartments that still had rudimentary plumbing, coal heating, and windows that faced into narrow, dingy, concrete courtyards. Frequent pipe bursts were not uncommon due to old water and sewage lines, and leaky façades and rooftops led to rotten wood and the problem of mould inside the apartments. Furthermore, the neighborhood contained the highest concentration of residential units that consisted of one room and a kitchen and the least amount of green spaces –whether in the form of public parks, squares, or tree-lined streets. With these conditions in mind, city planners and politicians were convinced that "total demolition with subsequent new construction obviously represents the best way of achieving the desired effect and eliminating the existing deficits."[180]

The postwar political partition of Berlin, and most significantly the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961, had relegated the district of Kreuzberg to a peripheral position in the city's geography. Before the physical division, the neighborhood enjoyed a central location with its northern edge bordering the historic city center (*Mitte*). Following the construction of the Wall, the entire northern and southeastern edge of the neighborhood now bordered East Berlin. Redevelopment plans for the neighborhood viewed this

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[179] Drucksachen des Abgeordnetenhauses von Berlin, Erster Bericht über Stadterneuerung, June 9, 1964, 3.
[180] Ibid., 3

peripheral position as a temporary one, as West Berlin city planners clung to the pretense

of reunification.[181] The political reluctance to recognize a permanent division of the city

is best illustrated by the aforementioned plans for the construction of an inner-city

freeway network authorized by both West and East Berlin in 1956. Strikingly, this plan

was contingent on the vision of a "whole" city and ignored the physical division of the

city after 1961. The highway that would run through the Kreuzberg Kottbusser Tor

neighborhood foresaw over 70 percent destruction of the existing housing to

accommodate two highway arteries meeting at Oranienplatz. Even with the improbability

of a fully realized highway project after 1961, city officials continued to implement the

original renewal plan for the neighborhood that included clearing buildings in preparation

for the highway construction.[182] That the division of the country and the city was

provisional had become an increasingly untenable stance after the 1971 Quadripartite

Agreement on Berlin.

This agreement, signed by the ambassadors of France, the Soviet Union, Great

Britain and the United States, aimed to make communications and travel easier between

the two halves of the city as well as between West Berlin and West Germany.[183] In

making the conditions of everyday life for West Berliners more tenable, it also

paradoxically confirmed the permanence of the division. In other words, viewed more

generally in political context of *Ostpolitik*, the agreement facilitated the formalization of

the Cold War division. In practice, therefore, the key role that the city had played in early

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[181] See Hein, *Hauptstadt Berlin*; Autzen, et al., *Stadterneuerung in Berlin*; Bodenschatz, *Platz frei*.

[182] The official Autobahn plans for Kreuzberg were not actually shelved until the mid-1980s.

[183] On the Four Power Agreement, see Gunther Doeker, Klaus Melsheimer and Dieter Schroder, "Berlin and the Quadripartite Agreement of 1971," *The American Journal of International Law* 67, no. 1, (1973): 44-62; Avril Pittman, *From Ostpolitik to Reunification: West German-Soviet Political Relations since 1974* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Detlef Junker, ed., *The United States and Germany in the Era of the Cold War, 1945 1990,* vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

Cold War international politics declined considerably in the decade after the construction

of the Wall, more than ever after official steps were taken to relax tensions between East

and West. But, as Paul Steege has argued, the city still retained the cultural significance it

had acquired during the Berlin Blockade as the symbolic capital of the Cold War,

negotiating its odd location between the symbolic center of a global conflict, while being

on the literal margins of Western domestic and international politics.[184]

Thus urban renewal must be viewed in the context of this crossroads between the

West Berlin's literal marginalization in terms of domestic and international politics and

providing the half city with the possibility to "modernize" itself in the hopes of someday

regaining its former status as capital and world city. Of course, a renewal project of this

magnitude did not happen overnight. Once the construction of the satellite cities had been

completed, city officials gave their renewal agents the green light to start implementing

similar objectives in the inner-city renewal areas. As of 1965, the first of the affected

residents were given eviction notices and the relocation to the newly built housing estates

on the outskirts of the city began. City officials gave residents "at the very earliest two

years" notice before the demolition of entire neighborhood blocks was to take place.[185]

That this greater need for housing should be met primarily by new construction

directly served the interests of the construction business, private investors and city-owned

non-profit housing associations. Given that the so-called "White Circle" (*Weißer Kreis*)

did not yet apply to West Berlin, it was fiscally more advantageous for urban renewal

agents to demolish rent-controlled older housing and build newer housing for which they

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[184] For a compelling account of Berlin's transformation to symbolic capital of the Cold War, see Steege,
Black Market, Cold War.
[185] Erster Bericht über Stadterneuerung.

received major federal subsidies and tax exemptions.[186] The term "*Weißer Kreis*" was used to describe a city once the rent control of *Altbauten* had been relaxed or lifted. Beginning in the early 1960s, the governing CDU started liberalizing rent control in all West German cities, with Hamburg and Munich being the last two West German cities to have their rent control lifted in 1975. West Berlin remained the exception due to its unique status and continuing efforts of West Berlin officials to entice new residents to the city.

By the early 1970s, neighborhood blocks designated by the city as "areas under examination" for redevelopment, for example the southeast corner of Kreuzberg, fell into disrepair while "waiting" for news of a change to their provisional status. As a result, the neighborhood underwent a massive population exchange in the 1960s and 70s. Those who could afford to do so, mainly upwardly mobile white working-class families were encouraged to relocate into new modern flats in the newly built public housing (*Sozialwohnungen*) in the satellite towns on the outskirts of the city. The assumption of course was that these modern apartment units with their modern amenities –central heating, elevator in building, a modern bathroom equipped with a toilet inside the apartment instead of in the hallway– would far outweigh any of the inconveniences caused by the displacement or relocation of former residents of the working-class neighborhoods of Wedding and Kreuzberg.[187] Between 1974 and 1977, 5000 residents living in two of the planning units of SKKT were forced to move.[188] This practice of

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[186] Horst Tomann, "Germany," in *Housing Policy in Europe,* ed. Paul Balchin (New York: Routledge, 1996).

[187] Senator für Bau- und Wohnungswesen, "Zehnter Bericht über die Stadterneuerung 1.1.- 31.12.1972" *Mitteilungen des Präsidenten des Abgeordnetenhauses von Berlin*, Drucksachen 6/1035, Nr. 59 (1973).

[188] Harald Bodenschatz, et al., *Schluss mit der Zerstörung?: Stadterneuerung und städtische Opposition in West Berlin, Amsterdam, and London* (Giessen: Anabas, 1983); Franziska Eichstaedt-Bohlig, "Zerstörung

displacement, and/or the threat of displacement, continued for over a decade, and one that
ultimately buttressed the grievances of the tenant and citizen initiatives by the early
1970s.

Moreover, most obvious in areas like the south east corner of Kreuzberg, left for
years by the city in stand-by mode, the dwellings became uninhabitable and derelict since
their owners had no financial incentive to undertake even the most basic of renovations.
Meanwhile, entire blocks of tenement houses were left vacant or partially vacant. From
the perspective of the renewal agents, this intentional neglect served to diminish the
quality of the housing stock to such an extent that the only remaining option was that the
city would deem the building ripe for demolition. Only newer, higher standard housing
could take its place, assuring the building's owner generous tax benefits and federal
subsidies. By the early 1970s, the poor condition and high density of Kreuzberg's
housing stock prompted city officials, planners and architects to characterize the
neighborhood as the embodiment of the "slum" that urban renewal was meant to
eradicate.

A steady decline in West Berlin's population buttressed official renewal practices
that were based on the premise of "improving the socio-economic structure" of the inner-
city neighborhoods. The city had a clear interest in making the inner city "attractive" to
entice new residents and new industry or investment from West Germany. But in reality
these practices represented a continued displacement of existing residents in the
redevelopment areas, the purchase of tenements not already owned or managed by
private or city-owned renewal agents, and the destruction of 35, 000/55, 000 apartments

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der Städte – Zerstörung der Demokratie," in *Häuserkämpfe 1872 1920 1945 1982*, eds. Otto Glagau and
Rainer Nitsche (Berlin: Transit, 1981), 211.

to make way for 17, 000/27,000 new apartments. The main shortcoming of the official

plan for neighborhood rejuvenation was obvious to those directly affected. With the

reduction or complete elimination of the housing stock that guaranteed low-income

housing, those residents dependent on this form of housing would be displaced from their

homes and neighborhoods. The rent prices in the newer social housing that replaced the

nineteenth-century tenements were, in fact, more expensive than the housing it replaced

due to construction costs and high interest rates.[189]

Rumblings of Dissent

This practice was not without controversy. Almost immediately, rumblings of

dissent vis-à-vis the implementation of urban renewal plans for West Berlin's inner city

districts were audible. One of the first articulations of opposition in West Berlin came

from journalist and architectural critic Wolf Jobst Siedler. His critique focused less on the

social aspect of demolition and displacement, but rather on the assumed historic value of

the nineteenth-century housing stock. Born in Berlin in 1926, Siedler is often accused of

romanticizing the nineteenth-century tenement in his book, published in 1964, entitled

The Murdered City. In it, Siedler accused city planners of the "collective murder" of

Berlin's historical urban qualities.[190] His attack on modernist planning is recognized as

one of the earliest, most sweeping indictments of the postwar functionalist approach to

the city as laid down in the fourth congress of the CIAM in 1943. According to Siedler,

modernist urban planning was guilty of extinguishing the urban character of the historical

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[189] Karapin, *Protest Politics in Germany.*

[190] Wolf Jobst Siedler and Elisabeth Niggemeyer, *Die gemordete Stadt: Abgesang auf Putte und Strasse, Platz und Baum* (Berlin: Herbig, 1964).

city, something that he believed to be part of cities from "Babylon up to imperial Berlin"

and, moreover, something that created a particular atmosphere (*Wohngefühl*) that could

not be replaced.[191] In his book, Siedler juxtaposed images of the historical city with those

of the new housing developments to highlight the losses associated with the "rational and

modern" city that he saw as tailored to the needs of the automobile not the urban resident.

The negation of the historical city, he warned, meant that the city in which one lived,

walked, and worked, in whose public spaces "community life flourished," was being

replaced by the supposedly "healthy" yet "anonymous, and faceless cityscape."[192]

Siedler placed himself in direct opposition to those planners, politicians and

housing reformers who upheld the distant hope that the division of the city was, in every

regard, temporary. He instead urged them to recognize that the postwar period had come

to an end. For Siedler, the "raison d'être of Berlin from the Blockade to Khrushchev's

ultimatum to the building of the Wall" in the postwar period should now shift. "Now is

the time," he argued, "for Berlin to come up with its own identity [*Begriff*]."[193] In the

forward to the 1978 edition of his "The Murdered City," Siedler himself made reference

to the shift in accepted wisdom that had taken place since the early 1960s: "At the

beginning of the 1960s there were many loud voices who wanted me barred from the

Werkbund [a German association of artists, artisans, designers, and architects that sought

to bring together good design and mass production]. However, at the end of the 1970s,

some of the world's top architects [Philip Johnson and James Stirling] now agree with my

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[191] Siedler, *Die gemordete Stadt*, 7.
[192] Siedler, 9.
[193] Siedler, 197.

contention that modernist reconstruction did more to damage the face of German cities

than the bombs."[194]

Siedler lamented above all else the loss of the intricacies of the nineteenth-century

tenements –the courtyards, the façade ornamentation, the squares, streets, and trees– he

felt were inextricably connected to the historical identity of the city. His book did not,

however, take into consideration the realities of working-class life inside those very

tenements. It would be yet another decade before critics of modern housing and clearance

linked the fate of the historical city to its residents. Critics, both conservative and

progressive alike, remained caught up in the abstractions of buildings and parks; the

experiences and input of individual city dwellers were rarely considered. His critique of

modern urban planning, and its main tenet of separating residential, commercial and

industrial activities, set a tone of criticism and protest that was to dominate popular

responses to city planning for the next two decades. Increasingly, challenges to urban

renewal became more visible and, by the late 1970s and early 1980s, more radical in

spirit and in action. Subsequent critiques would consider not only the architectural value

and the form of the buildings, but also the everyday life that takes place in the back

courtyards, the street and the neighborhood as a whole. As one squatter from

Manteuffelstrasse put it a few years later, "Kreuzberg is not idyllic, the Hinterhof not

romantic … but love from yesterday is tucked away in cracks, and there are remnants

here of opportunity and good fortune."[195]

In the late 1960s, discussions and critiques inside the professional establishment

dovetailed with the critiques of renewal practices across West Germany brewing in the

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[194] Siedler, 8.

[195] Beate Ziegs, "Sanierung und Widerstand," in *Häuserkämpfe*, 233.

social sciences.[196] Planners and architects advocating a change to the city's renewal

practices started to develop alternative models for the preservation of the nineteenth-

century city that also called for resident participation in the renewal process. In the West

Berlin context, one main contributor to this discussion was the mounting dissatisfaction

with resident life in the new satellite towns such as Gropiusstadt and Märkisches Viertel.

By the mid- 1970s, residents and sociologists alike had delivered a sharp critique of the

large-scale housing estates that highlighted the anonymity of the high-rise buildings and

the lack of decent connections to the city center. Yet popular dissent remained limited in

the inner-city renewal areas given that the information circulated on renewal plans for

affected residents was vague and many of the initially displaced residents were eager to

secure a modern apartment in a *Neubau*.

At this time, emerging alongside orthodox planning principles committed to

modernist functionalism, two renegade architects made concrete attempts to preserve the

existing structure.[197] In their respective designs, both Josef Paul Kleihues and Hardt-

Waltherr Hämer challenged the established routine of modernist planning that saw a new

city form and divided urban functions by retaining traditional configurations of city

blocks and public spaces: Kleihues in his 1967 plan for Ruhwald and Hämer in 1974/75

for the area around Klausenerplatz. Both projects were located in the historically

bourgeois neighborhood of Charlottenburg. Hämer, in particular, was chiefly interested in

developing a model of urban renewal for Block 118 around Klausener Platz that would,

unlike the offical practice, improve the social and structural condition for the current low-

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[196] Christopher Klemek, "Modernist Planning and the Crisis of Urban Liberalism in Europe and North America, 1945-1975," (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2004).

[197] Kleihues, "From the Destruction to the Critical Reconstruction of the City," 405; Josef Paul Kleihues, *International Building Exposition Berlin 1987: Examples of a New Architecture*, Architecture and Urbanism, (New York: Rizzoli, 1986), 160.

income residents and not, as was the standard, upgrade the neighborhood to accommodate new, middle-class dwellers.[198] As Kleihues later said of his 1967 initiative, "my concept was and is still, even now [in 1987], seen as a provocation against the established routine of modern urban development, which was in fact how it was meant."[199]

In turning to urban issues, German social scientists lamenting the loss of a public sphere produced new studies and argued for a more democratic city planning.[200] Their work attracted the attention of SPD policymakers in Bonn who had started drafting a federal urban renewal law as part of their efforts to respond to the growing criticism of a top-down renewal program. The first national planning act (*Städtebauförderungsgesetz* or StBauFG) was ratified in 1971 and its contents relied heavily on the "practical experiences and concepts" of the renewal process in West Berlin.[201] It provided the legal basis for urban renewal in the Federal Republic and West Berlin and included three clauses that, in theory, codified an improvement in resident participation. In theory, the bill stipulated that for a neighborhood to be declared a "renewal area" certain "planning problems" were to be established and subsequently improved in a more transparent manner including ongoing resident participation and a public design debate. In reality, the act had no major bearing for the renewal processes already underway for almost a decade.

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[198] Hardt-Waltherr Hämer and Jürgen Rosemann, "Stadterneuerung ohne Verdrängung," *ARCH +* 29 (1976): 4.

[199] *International Building Exposition Berlin 1987.*

[200] For an analysis of the intellectual shifts in twentieth-century urban planning on both sides of the Atlantic, see Klemek, "Modernist Planning."

[201] Bodenschatz, *Platz Frei für das neue Berlin*, 165.

Not long after the passage of the bill, West Germany entered a period of "stagflation" as a result of the oil crisis in the early 1970s. Public funds for new housing construction dwindled and, in response to the economic slump, the West Berlin Senate was forced to revise its first urban renewal program. Since its aims could no longer be realized, a second program was introduced in 1974 that "officially" ended the more expensive practice of wholesale clearance and new building. Instead, the amended program focused on modernization and renovation of the *Altbau* housing stock. An explicit emphasis on partial demolition (*Entkernung*) set apart the second urban renewal program from its predecessor and it encompassed a further 34 000 units in new renewal areas. Ten years after Willi Brandt's announced the first plan for renovating the cityscape, only 5, 000 new units had been built in the urban renewal areas while 8, 000 units had been demolished.[202] In that time, almost no federal or private funds were invested in even the most modest repair of the remaining units of the inner-city housing stock, creating a situation in which housing officials and renewal agents could justify further demolition given that these areas would "require an enormous effort to prevent the [existing] dwellings from turning into "slums" (*vor dem Umkippen*). One only had to take a look at Kreuzberg or Wedding, wrote Building Senator Ristock, to recognize "one of the greatest challenges [still] facing the city for the remainder of this century."[203]

Dissident voices in the architectural and planning professions as well as the grassroots opposition developing in the early 1970s contributed to this shift. In their critiques of the destruction of the nineteenth-century city to make way for modernist city

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[202] Joachim Schlandt, "Statt Erneuerung: Zerstörung und Verfall. West Berliner Gebietssanierung – ein Rückblick," *ARCH* + 31 (1976): 23.

[203] Harry Ristock, Introduction to *Informationen zur Modernisierung und Instandsetzung von Wohnungen*, (Berlin: Senator fuer Bau- und Wohnungswesen, 1978), 1.

planning, oppositional voices identified and made public the threat renewal posed both to the residents and to the very social fabric of Berlin's older neighborhoods. In other words, they questioned the intent of a supposedly benevolent state housing program that promised its citizens newer, bigger, and brighter housing with modern-day amenities like an integrated kitchen, bathroom and an elevator. All features of urban living that politicians hoped would make the city more attractive.[204] Scratching the surface of this seemingly progressive policy, opponents of modernist renewal revealed the implications of this policy for different social groups either located outside of or having no access to this increasingly middle-class reality.

As late as 1972, only half of the fixed amount of space needed to complete the redevelopment plans had been made available.[205] Though the economic crisis of the early 1970s compelled the federal government to reconsider its renewal policies in view of the immense costs of total clearance and new construction, it became clear to residents and citizens' and tenant initiatives in renewal areas that the practice of clearance and new construction was to continue in West Berlin, albeit at a somewhat slower tempo.[206] A set of additional plans for inner-city housing was introduced in the 1974 Second Urban Renewal Program that extended the redevelopment of the inner city to include 29 newly targeted renewal areas, mostly in Kreuzberg. In the newly added renewal areas, the city-owned and private urban renewal agents continued to purposely allow sound buildings to fall into disrepair since new construction guaranteed heavy public subsidies. At the same

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[204] *Berlin: Perspektiven der Stadtentwicklung* (Berlin: Presse- und Informationsamt des Landes Berlin, 1975), 81.

[205] Bodenschatz, *Platz Frei*, 39.

[206] Four-Power Agreement of 1971, "normalized" life for West Berliners, also seen as a pivotal shift in West Berlin's Cold War history, international concerns turn elsewhere, ideological immediacy of West Berlin as "*Frontstadt*" recedes and the city is perceived as "*Stadt am Tropf*."

time, official discourse on urban renewal espoused the importance of renovation and modernization as a way to retain these "historically valuable properties."[207]

The result of this delinquent, yet common practice was the continued exodus of those residents who had the material means to relocate, which in effect bequeathed an entire section of Kreuzberg to the poor, the pensioners, and migrants. Once a building was selected for demolition, it often took years before city urban renewal agents could purchase tenement lots from private owners to carry out the renewal process. This delay in property acquisition meant that following steps in the renewal process, eviction and/or relocation of tenants, demolition and new construction, were also postponed. In the fifteen years that following the announcement of West Berlin's urban renewal program, older units that could have been, in 1963, considered restorable were now fully dilapidated. The city continued to condemn entire residential blocks as "junk"(*Schrott*). Given that the renewal process could be, on average, delayed up to thirteen years, it quickly became clear to building owners (in many cases the "owner" was the city itself) that it was financially advantageous to neglect their responsibilities for standard maintenance and to intentionally ignore tenants' requests for repairs.

Despite the new turn in the city's redevelopment policies brought about mainly by economic factors, critics of urban reconstruction had already noted the that the city's promises to provide its residents, both new and old, with more attractive and better housing had failed to materialize. In 1972, the city had not yet secured even 50 percent of the space needed to carry out its first renewal program. This left tens of thousands of poorer residents remaining in or moving to other parts of the designated renewal areas

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[207] Abgeordnetenhaus von Berlin, "Vorlage zur Beschlussfassung über die Vorbereitung und Durchführung einer Internationalen Bauausstellung in Berlin im Jahre 1984," *Drucksache* 7/1352 (June 30, 1978); "Bausenator Harry Ristock: Meine Vorstellung von Berlin," *Berliner Morgenpost*, January 19, 1977, 4.

because they could still afford the rents in a badly maintained, but affordable *Altbau*. The announcement of the city's second program, then, did not change much on the ground for the majority of tenants left behind in the renewal areas. This was particularly obvious in Kreuzberg with a high proportion of the neighborhood's residents dependent on modest to low-income housing: the working poor, the elderly with nominal pensions, and migrant families shut out of a discriminatory rental market. Thus, the problem of affordable housing in the late 1970s did not disappear with the declared shift to modernization and restoration. Instead, even the most basic level of *Altbau* renovation caused a minimum of 30 percent rent increase for residents.

In another part of the city, residents of Urban Renewal Area Charlottenburg Klausenerplatz (SCK) had formed a tenant organization in 1973, the *Mieterinitiative Sanierungsgebiet Klausenerplatz e.V.*, to protest the policies of displacement and demolition. The group started attending district town meetings and began a letter-writing campaign to put pressure on the authorities to stop the displacement of local population. The official nod given to both citizen participation and restoration explains the city's decision to respond and fund a pilot project for Block 118, an area that included 415 residential units. The Berlin based architect Hardt Waltherr Hämer won the competition. Hämer and his team set out to correct the official practices that failed to improve the housing situation for the existing residents, but instead constructed new housing or renovated old housing to attract new, white-collar residents. Disturbed by the practice of relocation and demolition, Hämer decided to take a new approach and consult with the

residents of Block 118. He discovered that, when asked, 84 percent of the residents

preferred to stay in their homes despite the lack of modern amenities.[208]

Assisted by the local tenant groups to implement his design, Hämer set out to

convince local authorities and the larger planning profession it was economically more

feasible to upgrade the existing housing stock without displacing residents, which in turn,

would warrant only a modest rent increase following the renewal phase.[209] His 1975

model project coined the term that would gain currency in urban planning circles

throughout the 1980s for its emphasis on the organic urban fabric and the needs of

existing residents, "urban renewal without displacement" (*Stadterneuerung ohne

Verdrängung*).[210] Emphasizing resident participation and the necessity of a democratic

approach to planning, Hämer's example provided the model for large-scale "careful"

urban renewal that, by 1984, dictated renewal practices in West Berlin.

Hämer's project challenged city officials and the principles of postwar urban

planning with his suggestion that one could bring sun, light and air into the "dingy, stuffy

courtyards" that were so despised and feared by generations of social reformers, political

elite, and urban planners. In his view accomplishing this task did not necessitate the

complete demolition of these renewal areas. Then again, as made clear by the architect

Joachim Schlandt's caustic synopsis of West Berlin renewal practices in the architectural

and design journal ARCH+, the official objection to the tenement city was not driven by

the negative cultural assessment attached to the *Mietskaserne* alone. The commitment to

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[208] Hämer and Rosemann, "Stadterneuerung ohne Verdrängung," 4.

[209] Hämer and Rosemann, 3.

[210] Peter Rumpf, "In Dialogue with Witnesses to the Past: The Architecture of West Berlin," in Kleihues, ed., *Berlin-New York: Like and Unlike*, 427. Hämer, ARCH +, according to a survey, 84 percent of Block 118's residents preferred to stay in the tenements despite the supposed substandard conditions. Frank Russell, *Architecture in Progress: Internationale Bauausstellung Berlin 1984* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983).

new construction, as Schlandt has described, became central to the fiscal interests of a

city whose economic growth rate had been effectively stifled by its geo-political

location.[211] In Schlandt's assessment, if the SPD government had been serious about

renewal for the sake of Berlin's residents, the first renewal program would have launched

a step-by-step renewal policy to first eliminate the most grievous structural conditions of

the nineteenth-century housing stock. Instead, he argued, the authorities were more

interested in boosting the housing and construction industry in a city already at a great

economic disadvantage due to its special status and location. The large-scale housing

estates started in the late 1950s and into the 1960s would never have reached full

occupancy, Schlandt maintains, without the "calculated unconstrained decline of West

Berlin's older housing stock."[212]

Professional criticism, then was mounting, but it would be another couple of years

before Hämer's "model" alternative for rehabilitation and resident participation would

engender a more general shift in renewal practices on the ground. His ideas, however, did

receive international recognition in the context of the European Year of Architectural

Heritage celebrated in 1975. Block 118 was chosen as West Berlin's contribution for the

Architectural Heritage Year given its location just blocks away from the former

Charlottenburg Palace. Sponsored by the European Council, the 1975 event was meant to

heighten a sense of architectural heritage among the 17 member states.[213] Hämer's project

helped to increase awareness among specialists regarding the value of the "inner city as a

place to live." Hämer's model block project for the time being remained just that, a

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[211] Schlandt, "Statt Erneuerung: Zerstörung und Verfall," 21.

[212] Schlandt, 21.

[213] Koshar, *Germany's Transient Pasts*, 323. Besides Berlin, Germany had 4 other model cities: Trier, Alsfeld, Xanten, and Rothenburg ob der Tauber.

narrowly conceived pilot project in the context of a European-wide affair dedicated to architectural heritage. Yet it was a professional watershed in the sense of signaling the issues around which progressive-minded professionals and tenant organizers would rally.

As Gavriel Rosenfeld has shown, conservative-leaning Heimat groups in Munich gave the members of historic preservationist movement a boost in their vocal attempts to "raise public consciousness about the need to save the city's historic urban identity from modernity's destructive aspects."[214] Protesters in Munich adhered to a traditionalist kind of antimodern thinking. According to Rosenfeld, Heimat groups embraced a conservative politics so that their efforts were characterized not by a broader critique of capitalism, as was the case in West Berlin, but rather by the desire to protect cultural identity and traditional values.[215] In contrast, in West Berlin the growing effort to preserve the inner-city housing stock was shaped in no small part by New Left activists. A new generation of politically committed social scientists, urban planners, and architects either participated in or were inspired by the wave of student revolution and reform that swept the globe in the late 1960s and questioned established ideas and social mores. In this period of heightened political mobilization, student activists also began to directly challenge the top-down policies of urban renewal. Together with residents, they formed tenant groups and citizen initiatives in renewal sites to inform local residents of their legal rights, provide information about the renewal plans, and organize public relations work to publicize the on the ground results of city redevelopment.

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[214] Rosenfeld, *Munich and Memory*, 167.

[215] See Rosenfeld, *Munich and Memory*, and his article "The Architects' Debate: Architectural Discourse and the Memory of Nazism in the Federal Republic of Germany, 1977-1997," *History & Memory* 9, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2006): 189-225.

Thus a much broader opposition to the planned and actual destruction of

Mietskaserne in working-class neighborhoods grew steadily throughout the 1970s.

Primarily concerned with the lives and futures of low-income tenants, tenant organizers

saw in the city's implementation of its renewal program an undemocratic and

paternalistic intervention in the cityscape. One university-based research group at

Berlin's Free University undertook a research project to assess the actual extent of citizen

participation in one of Kreuzberg's renewal sites. The group's report concluded that, in

view of resident participation being inscribed in the 1971 federal StBauFG Law, those

interviewed were poorly informed about the renewal process as well as their legal right to

have a voice in that process. Clashing with the official rhetoric that affirmed a general

improvement of housing standards for the residents of renewal sites, the report showed

that interviewees were less than excited about the renewal policy of clearance and

"hardly believed in the possibility of returning to their neighborhood after the period of

relocation since they knew they could never afford the rents of the new social

housing."[216]

From the mid-70s onwards, a host of experts' musings on the extensive

shortcomings of the renewal process was appearing more regularly in both specialized

journals and popular newspapers. In service of an increasingly vocal critique of the

modernist planning tradition, a 1974 article in the *Deutsches Allgemeines Sonntagsblatt*

blamed the "bad luck" of postwar cities on the underlying concept of the CIAM's Athens

Charter. In it, the author stressed, lay the root of the "illness" plaguing contemporary

cities, which was in turn rooted in the consensus of modernist planners and architects that

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[216] Karin Carmen Jung and Dietrich Worbs, "Was halten die Buerger von Sanierung und ihrer Beteiligung daran?" *ARCH* + 31 (1976): 29.

the "health" of urban residents and the modern city could only be secured by means of a strict separation of work, residential, commercial and leisure spaces.[217] Further, the framing of the author's scathing commentary exposed the kernel of a compelling critique that would be advanced by citizens' initiatives and squatters just a few years later; that is, an appreciation of the historic mixed-use neighborhood in which street life, the workshops of Kreuzberg's back courtyards and day-to-day consumption patterns of new and seasoned residents defined an urban order that proved ultimately impossible to transplant.[218]

What was perhaps noteworthy about these early articulations of professional dissent from official redevelopment plans in West Berlin was that they occasioned a media campaign to raise awareness of the "inner city as place to live." This campaign came in the form of an architectural/planning series titled "Berlin: Models for a City" in one of Berlin's dailies. In interviews appearing in the *Berliner Morgenpost* each day for a period of two weeks in January 1977, Wolf Jobst Siedler, together with Josef Paul Kleihues were asked to invite prominent international architects, critics, politicians, and laypersons to have their say on the achievement of thirty years of reconstruction in West Berlin.[219] By 1977, Siedler was already well known in architectural circles for his unyielding critique of what Berlin had become in the hands of modernist urban planners and municipal building agencies. And since 1973 Kleihues had held a chair in architectural design and theory at the University of Dortmund in West Germany, though he maintained his architectural affiliations with a firm in Berlin. As already mentioned,

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[217] Peter M. Bode, "Die Kranke Stadt: Zum Wohnen geboren, zum Bauen verdammt," *Deutsches Allgemeines Sonntagsblatt*, March 17, 1974, 11.
[218] Bode, "Die Kranke Stadt," 11.
[219] "Berlin: Modelle für eine Stadt," *Berliner Morgenpost*, January 18, 1977,

Kleihues had established his oppositional stance to modernist renewal practices a few years before with his decision to rebuild along the lines of Berlin's traditional block formation and street space.

The editorial introduction to the series carefully pointed first to the "successes" of the reconstruction (*Wiederaufbau*) period such as an increase in living comfort (500 000 new apartments built since 1949), improvements to city transportation networks, and the construction of new office buildings offering ample space. But the editorial then promptly turned to the task at hand: "to introduce concrete and feasible recommendations that will help come to terms with, as well as to remedy the worst sins of a violent, historically ignorant reconstruction period that has shown itself to have no future."[220] Referring directly to official renewal practices since 1963, the editorial board asked, "where modernist planning left the historically grown city structures?" The board wondered whether "if, in these new residential neighborhoods, the liveability (*Wohnlichkeit*) [of the former living surroundings] was also transferable?"[221]

According to Siedler and Kleihues, the series in the *Morgenpost* was not intended to present a far-reaching, comprehensive plan for inner city redevelopment, but instead to propose ideas for a more limited selection of boulevards and squares already damaged or destroyed as well as residential areas in need of revitalization. Showcasing a variety of opinions and positions on urban redevelopment for the inner city, Siedler and Kleihues used the publicity to openly pressure city officials to redirect the focus of a nascent plan to host another international building exhibition in the city. After turning its attention to the redevelopment of the inner city in the early 1970s, the West Berlin Senate expressed

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[220] "Berlin: Modelle für eine Stadt."
[221] "Berlin: Modelle für eine Stadt."

interest in once again showcasing sections of the inner city in need of rebuilding in the form of an international building exhibition. As in 1957, the area around the Tiergarten, West Berlin's largest public park, was first suggested for the competition site.

Instead, Kleihues campaigned for an exhibition that would recognize the value in the "diversity of the cityscape," which for him included the "sundry character of its streets and houses, its work, shopping, and leisure possibilities."[222] He favored a building exhibition that did not concentrate entirely on the areas close to the "new" city center of West Berlin, but rather an exhibition that would encompass several themes and city districts so that the whole population of the city could benefit from the improvements. A number of the articles in the series struck this tone again and again calling for a large-scale attempt to preserve the old cityscape and warning against a repeat of 1957 Interbau, which had resulted in a drastic remodeling of the competition area.[223] What had begun in the 60s as a marginal and often ignored professional opinion was, by the late 1970s, a common stance articulated by a host of important planners, architects, and sociologists.

The belief that Berlin's identity fed and continued to feed off the nineteenth-century tenement, the object of Werner Hegemann's 1930 critique, distinguished this oppositional position from that of orthodox city planners and politicians.[224] A contribution to the series by West Berlin's new Building Commissioner Harry Ristock revealed his eagerness to appease the growing opposition to the city's bulldozer. He conceded that the redevelopment policies of the early postwar years were carried out in haste, but without going too far he argued strongly for the supposed new 1974 shift in

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[222] Josef Paul Kleihues, "Programmvorschläge für eine internationale Bauaustellung zur Wiederbelebung des alten Berlins," *Berliner Morgenpost,* January 18, 1977.

[223] The details and significance of Interbau-Ausstellung/Hansaviertel to Berlin's urban planning are discussed at length in chapter one.

[224] Kleihues, "Programmvorschläge."

urban renewal policy that was meant to strike a balance between preserving the old and

building the new.[225] Ristock agreed that a complete repeat of the last international

building exhibition in Berlin, Interbau 1957 and its "bulldozer" approach should be

avoided. Instead, the focus of another exhibition needed to include both new building and

the modernization of older structures, which would indeed achieve a far-reaching balance

in West Berlin's inner-city renewal areas.[226] In the 1978 publication of the Senate's own

Berliner Baubilanz, Ristock, at the risk of displeasing his critics, acknowledged that in

"our efforts to improve the housing situation in the inner city, the task must be

undertaken with great care in order to preserve the building fabric that can still be

saved."[227] In direct response to criticism from professionals and to demonstrate its

commitment to a genuine shift in official policy, the Berlin Senate made a decision in

1978 to "save the damaged city" by supporting the proposal for a building exhibition

scheduled for 1984, the International Building Exhibition '84 or IBA.[228]

In the Senate's written decision to host the exhibition, city officials once again

articulated a discursive shift from the planning principles of clearance and new building:

"the existing urban concepts no longer offer satisfactory answers to the legacy of

industrialization (obsolete working-class tenements) or to the consequences of urban

growth (urban sprawl, faceless housing developments, empty inner cities) [...] Berlin

must now find new ways to bring together old and newly built structures based on the

layout of the historical [nineteenth-century] city in order to accommodate the changing

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[225] Harry Ristock, "Meine Vorstellung von Berlin," *Berliner Morgenpost*, January 19, 1977, 4.

[226] Ristock, 4.

[227] *Berliner Baubilanz*, 7.

[228] Abgeordnetenhaus von Berlin, "Vorlage zur Beschlussfassung über die Vorbereitung und Durchführung einer Internationalen Bauaustellung in Berlin im Jahre 1984," *Drucksache* 7/1352 (June 30, 1978).

needs of its citizens."[229] This attentiveness to the "changing needs" of the citizen, in part,

explains the outright support and enthusiasm the city gave to an architectural competition

that encouraged a preservation of the historical urban fabric. "An international building

exhibition," the Senate declared, "is all the more urgent for Berlin given the city's

particular hurdle when confronting the more general urban phenomenon of population

loss." "Unlike in other 'world cities,'" continued the report, "in which residents only

move to the outer suburbs but continue to work in the city, Berlin must tackle the

question of a quality of urban life in a different way."[230] Thus the official endorsement of

the IBA implicitly revealed the city's political interests in strengthening its domestic and

international image to attract new residents and industry by showcasing the city as a

model for new approaches to urban planning and architectural design.

Models for a Neighborhood

By the early 1970s it was clear to critics of modernist renewal in Kreuzberg that

the ostensible aim of the city's urban renewal program –to fashion out of this "populous"

borough "a new neighborhood" guaranteeing a "good and humane future" for its

residents– translated in reality to displacement, demolition, and higher rents in the new

"social housing." Active tenant and grassroots community leaders working and living in

the community regarded the official renewal practice as nothing less than duplicitous.[231]

The question thus became: for whom exactly was this "new neighborhood" intended? A

1973 statement by the district board of the Protestant Church (*Evangelische Kirche*)

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[229] Abgeordnetenhaus von Berlin, "Vorlage zur Beschlussfassung."

[230] Abgeordnetenhaus von Berlin, "Vorlage zur Beschlussfassung".

[231] Bodenschatz, *Schluss mit der Zerstörung?*, 83; Klaus Duntze, "Sanierung muß ihre Kriterien aus der Gegend selbst gewinnen," *Bauwelt* 41 (1969): 7-9.

articulated its main concern that "urban renewal isn't living up to its promise of a planning practice that will provide Kreuzberg's residents [German and migrant working-class and poor] with a better quality of life. Instead it only benefits the capitalist interests of housing associations and private owners and serves as a playground for planners and architects."[232]

As the 1970s progressed, the growing number of left-leaning urban planners, architects, and community and tenant organizers, understood Kreuzberg's decaying buildings, its population make-up of the under-privileged (old people, immigrants, social "drop-outs" and the chronically unemployed), and the slow death of its social and economic infrastructure as the end result of "authoritarian" renewal policies.[233] Instead of demolition, they argued for the preservation of the old housing stock despite, as one planner and architect described it, her own shock over the smell of damp mold coming from tenement basements and urine emanating from the shared toilets every time she visited renewal neighborhoods. The reasons given why some groups of planning and architectural professionals advocated for a preservation of these "shabby" buildings, even when their specialist training would have led them to argue otherwise, were those of left-leaning critics of extensive clearance and displacement who charged the city officials with deliberately favoring the practice of demolition and new building, despite continued assurances offered by the city that "wholesale clearance and new construction will generally not be accepted as the only possible and appropriate course of action."[234] More

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[232] Evangelische Kirche in Berlin-Kreuzberg, "2. Erklärung zur Stadterneuerung in Berlin-Kreuzberg," (Berlin: Kirchenkreis Koelln Stadt, 1973).

[233] Franziska Eichstädt-Boehlig, "Zerstörung der Städte –Zerstörung der Demokratie," in in *Häuserkämpfe 1872 1920 1945 1982*, eds. Otto Glagau and Rainer Nitsche (Berlin:Transit, 1981), 211. 216 .

[234] Erster Bericht über Stadterneuerung, 1964, Zweiter Bericht über Stadterneuerung, 1967.

accurately, critics claimed that this renewal practice not only patently benefited the construction industry, but also "artificially" produced a housing shortage, which, in theory, would strengthen the demand for the newly built housing on the city's outer limits.[235]

In particular, professionals opposed to the modernist impulse of separating work and residential locations understood that uprooting the inner-city neighborhoods resulted in social dislocation due to the loss of a familiar landscape and community institutions. Moreover, city officials and planners argued that a vibrant neighborhood required flourishing local businesses and contacts, which they identified as deriving from the social, commercial and industrial space already knit into the urban fabric of the old blocks. The most vocal of the critics, much like Hämer, started to place value on the participation of the residents and their visions of how their own back courtyards, green spaces, street corners, and play areas should look and be used. Ultimately, it was these defenders of the "old" neighborhood, as opposed to their historic preservationist allies, who drew attention to the complex web of social, commercial and cultural relations whose deep roots in the built environment came to characterize the neighborhood and shape the identity of its residents. Assigning meaning to Kreuzberg's courtyard and streetfront cluster, one neighborhood pastor, echoing Jane Jacobs, regarded the neighborhood's intersections and streets as "important sites of communication similar to the function of the plaza or market place."[236]

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[235] Bodenschatz, *Platz Frei*, 174; Dieter Geffers, "Stadterneuerung als politisches Instrument der Stadtentwicklung," in *Stadterneuerung Berlin: Erfahrungen, Beispiele, Perspektiven*, ed. Senatsverwaltung für Bau- und Wohnungswesen (Berlin: Reiter Druck, 1990), 6.

[236] Klaus Duntze, *Strategien für Kreuzberg* (Berlin, 1977), 19. Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Vintage, 1992) (original publication: New York: Random House, 1961).

All this served as a leitmotif for the formal announcement of the design competition hosted by the Berlin Senate took place in 1979 with the establishment of a chartered commission, Bauausstellung Berlin GmbH, which was to carry out the redevelopment tasks in the competition areas. The selected theme for the IBA was, aptly, "the inner city as a place to live." The IBA was divided into two parts, (one part was concerned with aspects of new building, while the other with redevelopment), that ostensibly overlapped in a few key understandings of an alternative approach to urban planning. Kleihues was appointed director of what was to be called the "IBA-New Building Section or IBA-Neubau" and Hämer of the "IBA-Old Building Section or IBA-Altbau." Each director went about his task with a different set of guiding principles. Kleihues pursued his "critical reconstruction" approach to planning that he developed in the 1960s, an approach that set out to reconcile new construction with the historic scale and forms of the city. Drawing from his experience with his model project in Charlottenburg, Hämer developed a set of twelve principles he dubbed "careful urban renewal." His principles promoted a preservation of the tenements and the historical street grid, called for resident feedback and participation (including shop owners) at every stage of the renewal process, and the implementation of physical improvements to the housing stock, as well greening interior courtyards and renovating house façades, with as little demolition as possible.

The IBA-Neubau included four specific sites (Tegel, Prager Platz, southern Tiergarten and southern Friedrichstadt in Kreuzberg), and dealt almost entirely with the rebuilding of a number of remaining empty lots dotted across the city. Alternatively, the IBA-Altbau supported the renovations of the older housing stock in designated areas of

Kreuzberg (Luisenstadt and SO 36). The original IBA timetable called for completion of

the projects within five years. It soon became clear that the projected timeline would be

impossible to meet given the scale of the exhibition both in terms of logistics and cost.

Subsequently, the city set a new schedule for a 1987 completion date that would coincide

with the 750th anniversary of the city of Berlin.

Following in the tradition of previous building exhibitions (1910, 1931, and

Hansaviertel in 1957), Kleihues invited architects from around the world to participate in

the project that became, arguably, one of the most important architectural events of the

decade.[237] Furthermore, Kleihues and Hämer viewed the IBA not merely as a competition

to showcase the latest architectural trends, but as an opportunity to put into practice an

urban renewal concept with valuable social and cultural effects, namely, a "careful" or

"gentle" approach to redevelopment that did not threaten displacement of residents or

small businesses or destroy the nineteenth-century housing stock. They set out, in other

words, to "mend the urban fabric" rather than completely transform it.[238] Their hope was

that the IBA principles developed and realized within the time frame of the competition

would serve as yardsticks for future urban design not only in Berlin but also for other

cities around the world. Indeed, now an antidote to the official "burn and build" approach

of the 1960s and 70s, the Ministry of Building and Housing, not surprisingly, opted for

"The Inner City as a Place to Live" as the theme of its 1980 *Berlin Bauwochen*.[239]

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[237] The directors of the IBA invited the most celebrated names in the international architectural profession including Rob Krier, Oswald Mathias Unger, Daniel Libeskind, James Stirling, Aldo Rossi, Alvaro Siza to name just a few. Wallis Miller, "IBA's 'Models for a City': Housing and the Image of Cold-War Berlin," *Journal of Architectural Education* 46, no. 4 (May 1993): 201.

[238] Peter Blake, "Berlin's IBA: A Critical Assessment," *Architectural Record* (August 1993). PAGE #

[239] "Programm der Berliner Bauwochen vom 26. September bis 5. Oktober 1980," *Industriespiegel, Berliner Bauwochen Sonderausgabe 1980* 31, no. 9 (1980): 1.

However, during this same period, and despite the shift in official discourse since 1974, the practice of partial demolition and the "unavoidable flattening of 150 000 units" deemed "garbage" in 1978 by the Ministry of Building and Housing remained common practice.[240] It was already widely established in planning, architectural, and social science circles by the late 1970s that the large-scale state interventions of demolition and new building reproduced social inequalities and reduced the urban landscape into functions that centered on the automobile. Defenders of low-cost housing maintained that the construction of new "social housing" unequivocally led to higher rents. In 1975, for example, the cost of an apartment in a *Neubau* was double sometimes triple the price of a similarly sized apartment in an *Altbau* (cost per square meter in a *Neubau* 4.50 DM compared to 2.10 DM in an *Altbau*).[241] More significantly, the "revised" practice after 1974 of knocking down the back and side wings of tenements indisputably eliminated the main source of affordable housing for Kreuzberg's low-income residents. In the words of Hämer, "people in disadvantaged areas have a right to available, near their homes, areas for sports, recreation and leisure-time activities as well as day-care centers and schools."[242] Calling for a stop to the trend of demolishing almost as many units as were rehabilitated, IBA set out to repair the nineteenth-century city.

With this knowledge in mind, the goal of the IBA-Altbau, was two-fold: first, preservation of the closely-knit mixture of light industry, trade and housing, thought to have shaped the character of older, working-class neighborhoods such as Kreuzberg and

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[240] Senat für Bau und Wohnungswesen, *Stadterneuerung 2* (Berlin, 1968); Der Senator für Bau-und Wohnungswesen, *Information zur Modernisierung und Instandsetzung von Wohnungen* (Berlin: 1978).

[241] Hardt Waltherr Hämer, ARCH +, Strategies for kreuzberg info [?] I'll fix that.

[242] Hardt Waltherr Hämer, "The Center City as a Place to Live," *Urban Design International* 2 (September-October 1981): 19.

more generally the city; second, to integrate residents into the design process.[243] In this regard, the IBA came to represent more than just innovative examples of architecture and new housing; it reflected the Zeitgeist of the 1970s by including ideals of participatory democracy. Though the objective of including tenants in the design and renovation of their neighborhoods was an equally important facet of both IBA sections, it was more visible in the realization of the IBA-Altbau.[244] Projects sponsored by the IBA-Altbau helped transform former sheds, stables, and small factories in the back courtyards of tenements into liveable outdoor spaces, play areas for children or workshops organized around cooperative principles.

Hämer's team, for example, addressed the generally agreed concern with Kreuzberg's inadequate infrastructure, i.e., lack of playground areas and green open spaces, by recommending that empty lots not be built up, as was the plan envisioned by the city, but instead transformed into "improvised play lots."[245] In Kreuzberg, IBA architects and planners offered expert guidance to self-help collectives and residents by organizing seminars on house renovations and co-designing both standard and green tenement restorations. Under the direction of the IBA-Altbau team, only 360 of the 1 600 new units intended by the city were built; in dramatic contrast, 7 000 rather than the intended 1 500 older units were co-renovated with the residents and according to their financial means; 370 courtyards were planted with flowerbeds and gardens, plans were

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[243] The process of "alienation" which critical planners throughout the world viewed with concern as a problem robbing people of a sense of purpose and causing them to relinquish responsibility for their lives was reinforced by one-dimensional planning and building strategies.

[244] Wallis Miller, "IBA's 'Models for a City'" 208.

[245] "IBA-Alt: 'Ein komplexer Ansatz…:' Hardt-Waltherr Hämer im Gespräch mit Lore Ditzen," *ARCH +* 57/58 (December, 1982): 10.

developed for 27 daycares and 10 schools, 30 sections of streets and squares were rebuilt in part to reduce speed of traffic in the neighborhood.[246]

Though IBA was an independent planning authority, the city reserved the right to approve the building permits. This, at times, proved to be a bureaucratic hurdle for Hämer and his team to push through their objectives in the southeast corner of Kreuzberg, an area with a high migrant population. Since the goal of IBA-Alt was to both preserve the basic historic structures and to involve the local population, Hämer, in effect, defied the expectation of city planners and private developers that a successful renewal of the area would attract higher-income residents.[247] Working together with the existing renters, the architects handled the modernization unit by unit after the architects and planners met with the residents and together drafted the renovation plans according to a democratic consensus. No families were displaced and few families voluntarily left Kreuzberg in this period.

By the late 1980s, the physical space of Kreuzberg came to symbolize alternative possibilities not only in terms of correcting the urban renewal policies of the postwar period, but also in regard to the politicization of everyday life through resident practices of communal living and cooperative modes of economic organizing. The neighborhood signaled a liveliness and political consciousness that extended far beyond matters directly related to housing or urban planning. The overlapping goals of the IBA-Altbau and its cooperation with already growing grassroots opposition to urban renewal practices in Kreuzberg will be the subject of the next chapter.

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[246] Internationale Bauausstellung Berlin, *Projektübersicht. Internationale Bauausstellung Berlin 1987*, (Berlin: Stern, Gesellschaft der Behutsamen Stadterneuerung, 1991), 204.

[247] Gerwin Zohlen, "IBA est divisa in partes tres," in *City of Architecture of the City: Berlin 1900-2000*, eds. Thorsten Scheer, Josef Paul Kleihues, and Paul Kahlfeldt (Berlin: Nicolai, 2000), 333.
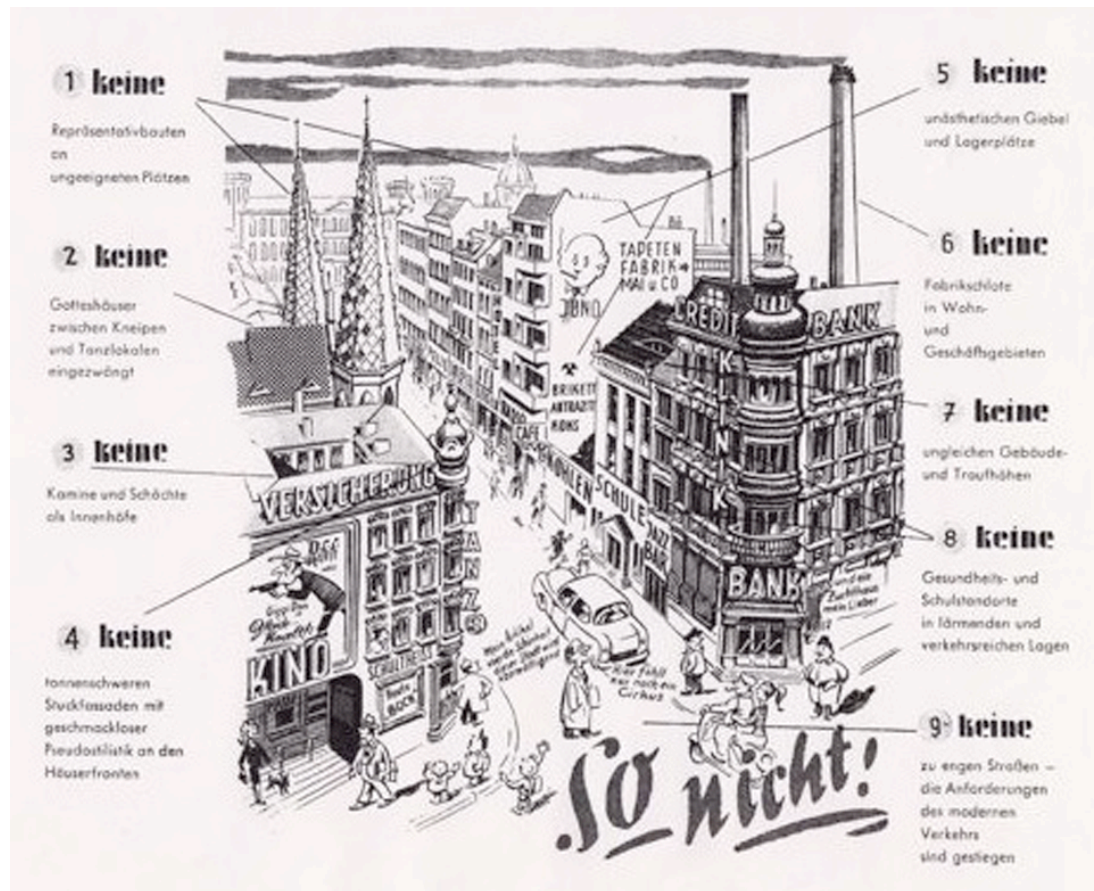
Figure 2: From the 1957 promotion brochure: *Wir bauen die neue Stadt: Die städtebauliche Neugestaltung d. Luisenstadt im Bezirk Kreuzberg*, **Bezirksamt Kreuzberg, 1956, 6.**

Chapter Three

In the Shadow of the Wall: The Neighborhood, Urban Space, and Everyday Life in Kreuzberg

In the days following the first of May 1987, the West Berlin district of Kreuzberg made national and international news, reinforcing an already popular rendering of the neighborhood as the volatile "cradle" of West Germany's radical, left-alternative scene. Coming out on the streets to celebrate International Labor Day was nothing new for the residents of Kreuzberg, a traditionally working-class neighborhood; however, as the social make-up of Kreuzberg gradually changed during the decades of the Cold War, so too did the character of the yearly demonstrations.[248] On that evening in 1987, the annual May Day demonstration escalated into a full-scale riot that peaked with the burning glow of parked cars, trashcans, and a local grocery chain in flames. According to press statements, both the city's Christian Democrat mayor and the Senator for the Interior held "anti-Berliners" and "hooligans" responsible for the "bloody streetfight" and "pillaging" of local stores.[249] (**Figure 3.1**)

Far from being simply one of many violent clashes arising out of a social or political demonstration in this West Berlin neighborhood, this demonstration-turned-riot on May 1, 1987 was to prove profoundly influential in terms of local identity formation.

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[248] Dieter Rucht, "Die medienorientierte Inszenierung von Protest. Das Beispiel 1. Mai in Berlin," in *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, Beilage zur Wochenzeitung *Das Parlament* 53, December 29, 2003, 30-38; Dieter Rucht, "Heraus zum 1. Mai! Ein Ritual im Wandel, 1950-1999," in *Protest in der Bundesrepublik: Strukturen und Entwicklungen,* ed. Dieter Rucht (Frankfurt/Main: Campus), 143-172.

[249] Reports and analyses of the May 1 riot could be read for weeks in newspapers and magazines, extending across the political spectrum from the sensationalist *B.Z.* to the left-alternative *die tageszeitung.* "Kreuzberg: Blutige Strassenschlacht. Chaoten plündern Geschäfte," *B.Z.*, May 2, 1987;"Berlin feiert-Kreuzberg brennt. Schwerste Randale seit Jahren," *die tageszeitung*, May 2/3, 1987; Hans-Rüdiger Karutz, "Anti-Berliner," *Die Welt*, May 4, 1987; "Kreuzberg: Schwarze Nacht," *Der Spiegel*, 20, May 11, 1987.

This conflict between police and protestors established a pattern of conflict that is carried on to this day. Its mythical or legendary quality, clearly fed in large part by its annual repetition, prompts observers twenty years later to describe May Day as a "neatly choreographed dance" between police and a segment of the demonstrators.[250] The annual protest has become a heavily ritualized event with each side playing out its assigned part with grim commitment and a sense of historical responsibility.[251] Yet what has become increasingly evident in the repeated "rehearsals" of this event is increasing distance from the politics that framed the original, historical clash from the current myth that now surrounds it.

In accounts of the original protest, generally simplified by both contemporary observers as well as popular and academic interpretations, the political activism of the left-alternative scene in 1980s West Berlin is often reduced to the workings of a radical group of self-indulgent squatters, freaks, and dropouts who were looking for a free place to live and who, after 1987, were thought to have transformed into unruly gangs and outlaw communes throwing rocks and getting tear-gassed during annual May Day demonstrations.[252] As a contributor for Germany's leading left daily *die tageszeitung* wrote in 1990, something that had once been understood as political was thought to have morphed into something quite different:

> Burning barricades, police with clubs, rocks being thrown, shattered glass. Not your everyday image of Berlin, but one that recurs at least once a year with increasing brutality… Ten years ago when exasperation and anger over the housing shortage, speculation and the city's disastrous urban redevelopment were

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[250] "May Day Déjà Vu. Berlin's Ritual Riot,"*Der Spiegel*, May 2, 2007. http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/0,1518,480491,00.html.
[251] "May Day Déjà Vu."
[252] A striking example of this can be found in Jane Kramer's *The Politics of Memory: Looking for Germany in the New Germany* (New York: Random House, 1996). See also Clay Large, *Berlin*.

an invitation to take action on the streets around the Kottbusser Tor,[253] no one imagined that a Kreuzberg "street-battle" would be reduced to a depoliticized ritual.[254]

A consequence of this depoliticization, as suggested by the *taz* contributor, was that this latest iteration of militancy illustrates an absence of historical memory of past political struggles. One argument of this chapter is that these assessments deliberately dilute the political and cultural potency inherent in attempts to define and occupy urban space, reducing such protests to apolitical violence rather than recognizing them as political activism. In fact, this brand of urban radicalism of 1980s West Berlin had its roots in long-standing, broad-based political and cultural struggle that had parallels in other Western European cities, all of which were attempts to give meaning to urban space: in other words, to have a say in what a place is and who can live there.

Indeed, what is deliberately erased from historical memory is the fact that the defense of the historical city by West Berlin's vibrant left-alternative scene was the culmination of long-standing critiques of modernist urban renewal. Youth and alternative urban movements joined with unorthodox architects and urban planners, local citizens' initiatives, and tenant organizers to reverse the course of official urban redevelopment and to offer viable alternatives for the restructuring of Berlin's inner-city neighborhoods. These alliances explicitly and implicitly revealed the political nature of urban activism.[255]

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[253] A subway station in Kreuzberg that was at the epicenter of a "street-battle" between police and demonstrators on Dec. 12, 1980.

[254] "12.12.1980," *die tageszeitung*, December 12, 1990.

[255] The scene does not lend itself to easy categorization. In West Berlin the scene was made up of ecological and political groups of various grades of dogmatism, local grass roots organizations, punks, and a growing faction of militant autonomous groups (*Autonomen*). During the 1970s, the main pulse of the alternative movement had moved, albeit briefly, from the politicized West Berlin of the 1960s to the West German provinces, where protests and attempts to potential sites of nuclear power stations by citizens' initiatives, their supporters and sympathizers, revealed the strength of a growing ecological and anti-nuclear movement. By 1980/81, the perceived center of the alternative scene had returned to West Berlin, as the city became a hotbed of the squatting movement.

The cultural rediscovery of the "traditional" urban fabric, linked with the nineteenth-century city dovetailed with leftist anti-capitalist struggles centered on housing issues.

One explanation for the heightened tensions on May Day 1987 was a police raid, carried out early that same morning, on the Berlin office of the Census Boycott Initiative, which was located in the Mehringhof in Kreuzberg.[256] A former typesetting factory, the Mehringhof had been bought in 1979 and transformed into a self-administered living and work space by a collection of six alternative projects, intended for specifically radical leftist and alternative social, cultural and political projects. The raid on the office of the West Berlin anti-census group was far from an unusual incident for left-wing political groups at the time.[257] Indeed, the left-alternative scene saw the raid as yet another unjustified encroachment by the state on hard-won, politicized autonomous spaces.[258] West Berliners' struggle for self-defined, autonomous spaces has a long and contested history. The genealogy of these protests can be traced back to the early 1970s to the diverse strands of opposition to urban renewal as an idea and practice. As I discussed in more detail in the previous chapter, the dissident professionals and architects who had set the intellectual tone for resistance to modernist principles of postwar city planning were the first to argue that things could be done differently.

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[256] A nationwide boycott campaign mobilized against the the national census (the first in the BRD in 17 years) sparking a major debate in West Germany around fears of a "surveillance state." Evoking both the past (Nazi period) and present (the GDR), protesters distributed brochures that encouraged people to cut out the serial number on the census form. This was considered an illegal act punishable under law and the state responded by raiding initiative offices, seizing the "anti-census" forms, and criminalizing protestors.

[257] Tensions between squatters and the police still ran high as the state attempted to brand leftists as terrorists. In Hamburg, the city had announced its plan to evict squats on Hafenstrasse, which led to clashes in the spring and summer of 1987. In response, squatters and their sympathizers in the city and elsewhere planned *Tag X* (Day X). On April 23 or *Tag X*, over 30 groups and civic initiatives held rallies and demonstrations across the city and as far away as West Berlin and Copenhagen to protest the impending evictions.

[258] *Presseerklärung von Netzwerk Selbsthilfe und dem Mehringhof*, May 7, 1987. See also Brigitte Fehrle, "Berlin feiert: Kreuzberg brennt Schwerste Randale seit Jahren," *die tageszeitung*, May 4, 1987; "Provozieren und abgreifen: Strategien für Kreuzberg," *die tageszeitung*, May 21, 1987.

For the next two decades, tenant activists, community organizers, and squatters built on this legacy in their varied attempts to shape, define and put into practice alternative plans for the inner city. This chapter draws upon the recent work of urban historians and historical geographers who have persuasively argued that space, particularly the public space of the metropolis, functions as something more than a passive backdrop to the making of social and political identities. Scholars have shown that urban space itself is marked by daily interaction, conflict, and symbolic struggle, and that the city is fundamentally shaped and altered by these multi-layered political and cultural contests concerning the use and definition of urban space.[259]

The previous chapter examined the emergence of professional critiques that were opposed to modernist planning, critical assessments that contributed to both a broader appreciation of the nineteenth-century housing form and an acute awareness of the local populations suffering most from the city's renewal practices. This chapter further analyzes these oppositional ideas by exploring the grassroots resistance to urban renewal that emerged alongside professional critiques of the 1970s in the form of tenant organizing, citizen initiatives, and squatting. It first situates the type of radical protest that has long marked the West Berlin district of Kreuzberg within the context of broader opposition to modernist urban renewal. It then seeks to show how "everyday" tactics of resistance by tenant and squatting activists challenged a top-down prescribed vision of urban space, and thus how these activists imprinted their own political and cultural values

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[259] See most recently, Axel Schildt and Detleft Siegfried, eds., *European Cities, Youth and the Public Sphere in the Twentieth Century* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005); Frank Mort, *Cultures of Consumption; Masculinities and Social Space in Late-Twentieth Century Britain* (London: Routledge, 1996); David Scobey, *Empire City: The Making and Meaning of the New York City Landscape* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002); Belinda Davis, "The City as Theater of Protest: West Berlin and West Germany, 1962-1983," in *The Spaces of the Modern City: Imaginaries, Politics and Everyday Life*, eds. Gyan Prakash and Kevin M. Kruse (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 247-74.

and practices onto the city landscape by shaping and defining their neighborhoods and urban policy. Exploring these political and cultural cleavages in Kreuzberg compellingly reveals the fraught relationship between urbanity and identity in West Germany.

Thus, a longer examination of the historical development of urban renewal protest in Kreuzberg and related images of the neighborhood as a "ghetto" –in this case an alternative "ghetto"– challenge renditions of 1980s protest and its spatial expression in Kreuzberg that reduce these events to a one-dimensional, marginal episode in Berlin's Cold War history. Furthermore, by calling attention to struggles around affordable housing and resident participation in neighborhood development, as well as the more radical demands for self-defined and self-administered spaces in late 1970s and 80s West Berlin, this chapter seeks to complicate the dominant account of Kreuzberg's protest culture and its assumed "leftist" romanticism, which supposedly derived from largely fictionalized legacies of the nineteenth-century city and its working-class culture.[260]

The Creation of a Myth

In her memoir, *Das schöne Leben*, Berlin musician and journalist Christiane Rösinger, born in rural southwest Germany in 1961, describes the streets of Kreuzberg (**Figure 3.2**) in the mid 80s:

> Life was hard in Berlin. But also very beautiful. Everything was gray, filled with smoke, and destroyed, the buildings were full of bullet holes, in almost every street a plot of land lay dormant, a building missing. Decay and ruin was ubiquitous and the spruced up, clean Germany seemed really far away. The best though was that one didn't always feel like an outsider. Normal Berliners lived in Tempelhof, Zehlendorf, or Friedenau, in Kreuzberg everyone was an outsider:

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[260] Andreas Huyssen, "The Voids of Berlin," *Critical Inquiry* 24, no. 1 (Autumn 1997): 57-81; Ladd, *Ghosts of Berlin*; Large, *Berlin*.

> draft dodgers, Turks, the artists and musicians, gays and lesbians, the alcoholics, and even the newly arrived students from well-off families.[261]

Rösinger's recollection of Kreuzberg captures an image of the neighborhood as the spatial expression of both people and lifestyles located on the margins of West German society, an image that even today continues to define the reputation of the neighborhood. Rösinger not only places West Berlin on the margins of the "clean" Federal Republic, alluding to what many young Germans believed was a superficial effort on the part of West Germany to come to terms with the Nazi past, she further situates Kreuzberg on the margins of West Berlin. This 1980s characterization of Kreuzberg as an island inside an island points to a process of mythologizing that has long contributed to the neighborhood's identity even after the fall of the Wall.

Rösinger's depiction of Kreuzberg in the 1980s underscores one feature of Berlin's unusual Cold War status, as an occupied city that attracted two generations of young men who moved to West Berlin to avoid military service. This appeal helps explain the disproportionate number of left-leaning or alternative youth who were relocating to Berlin at a time when the city was, in fact, experiencing a steady population decline. Already in the late 1970s, West Berlin's left-alternative scene had started to concentrate in the run-down neighborhood close to the Wall. Parallel to the physical decay of Berlin's nineteenth-century tenements, most obvious in working-class neighborhoods, there emerged a growing youth and alternative movement with its roots in New Left activism that claimed and defended low-cost housing and autonomous

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[261] Christiane Rösinger, *Das schöne Leben* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 2008), 63.

spaces. Activists mobilized their political protest around the physical occupation of the derelict turn-of-the century tenements scheduled for demolition.

These activists occupied vacant or partially vacant buildings that were scheduled to be demolished after urban renewal agents and municipal governments determined them to be inadequate housing since they did not meet the standards of modern housing. Grass-roots actors were also responding to the ushering in of austerity politics in view of the worldwide recession and, in turn, linked themes and concepts such as self-help, autonomy and self-organization to demands for low-rent housing and new approaches to urban development. Facing a bleak economic situation after 1973/74, many West German youth were confronted with a drastic cut in the number of available apprenticeships as well as access to inexpensive housing.[262] Increasing numbers of politicized youth saw in the failure of the state to adequately provide them with the promised access to material means grounds a turn to "practical self-help" in the form of squatting.[263]

By 1980, the militant defense of squats and self-administered ways of living by a segment of West Berlin urban activists vis-à-vis city authorities commanded the attention of the mainstream media as well as local and national politicians, as similar conflicts

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[262] Thomas Stahel, *Wo-Wo-Wonige! Stadt- und wohnpolitische Bewegungen in Zürich nach 1968* (Zurich: Paranoia City Verlag, 2006); Flemming Mikkelsen and Rene Karpantschof, "Youth as a Political Movement: Development of the Squatters' and Autonomous Movement in Copenhagen," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 25, no. 3 (September 2001): 609-628.

[263] Steven Katz and Margit Mayer, "Gimme Shelter: Self-Help Struggles Within and Against the State in New York City and West Berlin," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 9, no. 1 (March, 1985): 15-46; Peter Hein and Heinrich Jüttner, *Von der Selbsthilfe als Kampf um's Überleben zum Kampf um Selbsthilfe für ein besseres Leben : Untersuchungsbericht zum Kampf um Selbsthilfe als Geschichte von Wohnungs- und Mieterkämpfen am Beispiel des Kiezes südlich der Wiener Strasse in Kreuzberg SO 36*, (Berlin: Internationale Bauausstellung, 1984). Self-help in the context of housing was neither novel nor unique to Berlin, see Jose Ospina, "Self-help housing and Social Change in Colombia," *Community Development Journal* 20, no. 4, (October 1985): 258-266.

broke out in other West German and western European urban centers.[264] The heavy-

handed response on the part of West Berlin's police served to rally public sympathy and,

by the spring of 1981, Kreuzberg was home to the largest display of protest in all of West

Germany against the destruction of inner-city housing and the historic urban fabric.

Squatters occupied buildings that owners had left empty or partially empty for years,

eagerly anticipating the next, more profitable phase of postwar urban renewal. At the

height of the wave of squatting, an estimated 180 squats dotted the city landscape, with

the highest concentration in the southeast corner of the neighborhood –an area still

known in popular parlance as SO 36 after its cold war postal code.

Contemporary depictions of Kreuzberg in the popular press fostered an

identification of the neighborhood with two foci of West German public anxiety in the

late 70s and 80s: radical leftist politics and migrants.[265] This image of Kreuzberg as a

neighborhood whose public face was dominated by bohemians, punks, anarchists, leftist

intellectuals, the alternative scene, and migrants from Turkey, still captivates German

cultural and political imagination more than two decades after the fall of the Wall. As

Wolfgang Kil and Harry Silver argue, the neighborhood came to symbolize the "ghetto"

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[264] This impression of urban protest was picked up on by various mainstream European and North American newspapers and magazines. An article in the German national news weekly *Der Spiegel* ("Da packt dich irgendwann 'ne Wut," December 12, 1980) thought the protest in West Berlin to be propagated mainly by a "militant" wave of protesters, comprised mostly of "drop-out youths" who had already formed similar such communities in cities such as Zurich and Amsterdam. In fact, noted the same journalist, the formidable clashes in the West Berlin neighborhood of Kreuzberg between "street-fighters," "hippie freaks," and "Turkish youth" on the one side of the barricade and the city police on the other had reached violent new heights "not even seen in the wildest years of the APO." Fred Bruning, "Europe's Dead-End Kids," *Newsweek*, April 27, 1981, 52-57.

[265] Kreuzberg's representation as an "ethnic" ghetto will be taken up in the next chapter. For Kreuzberg as "ethnic" ghetto, see Ayhan Kaya, *Sicher in Kreuzberg: Constructing Diasporas: Turkish Hip-Hop Youth in Berlin* (Berlin: Transcript, 2001); Wolfgang Kil and Harry Silver, "From Kreuzberg to Marzahn: New Migrant Communities in Berlin," *German Politics and Society* 24, no. 4 (Winter 2006): 95-121; Jennifer Petzen, "Home or Home Like?: Turkish Queers Manage Space in Berlin," *Space and Culture* 7, no. 1 (February 2004): 20-32.

of West Berlin, and continues to be perceived as a symbolic site of political, cultural and ethnic difference in Germany.[266] For the West German mainstream and conservative press, the militant form of protest linked to the new urban youth and alternative movements in their defense of inner city squats from forced eviction seemed to confirm Social Democrat Hans-Jochen Vogel's 1972 warning that if housing and redevelopment politics did not change, the centers of West German cities would be transformed into "concrete jungles, in which violence, hate, decay, and ruin would prevail."[267] When Hans-Jochen Vogel made his prediction about the potential fate of West German cities, media representations of expanding urban decay and concomitant social problems singled out the West Berlin neighborhood of Kreuzberg as the worst example of this frightful development.

Strategies for Kreuzberg

Around the same time as German social scientists began pointing out the social repercussions of Berlin's renewal apparatus, a protestant pastor in Kreuzberg was witnessing firsthand the effects of the physical decline of the housing stock on the neighborhood's population. Klaus Duntze had been living and working in the southeastern corner of Kreuzberg since 1966 when he was assigned as pastor of the Martha Congregation on the Glogauer Strasse. On his arrival to his new posting, Duntze

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[266] Kil and Silver, "From Kreuzberg to Marzahn"; Barbara Lang, *Mythos Kreuzberg: Ethnographie eines Stadtteils (1961-1995)* (Frankfurt: Campus, 1998).

[267] Hans-Jochen Vogel, "Das unterirdische Grollen ist schon zu hören," *Der Spiegel*, June 19, 1972. SPD Hans-Jochen Vogel was mayor of Munich when he contributed this article to *Der Spiegel*; he was then Justice Minister of the Federal Republic before running relocating from Bonn to West Berlin where he was mayor during the early clashes between the city and the urban squatters.

was surprised by how gray the neighborhood looked with large-format adverts as the only things brightening the streets.[268]

Duntze's earliest observations of Kreuzberg's local social structures together with his work with neighborhood residents led to his conclusion that urban renewal was doing little to contribute to a new urbanism for the "little people," but instead seemed to be a "huge setback for the democratization of the city."[269] Thus in 1971, just a few years into his tenure as a local pastor, Duntze's community role as minister in an area already designated a "renewal area in waiting" compelled him to plainly address the social aspect of urban redevelopment, one which had all but been ignored in larger debates about the urban form of the neighborhood; he raised the question "whether functionalist urban renewal actually points to improved possibilities for affected residents or, in fact, the exact opposite?"[270]

Of his earliest contact with grassroots activity already underway on the neighborhood level, Duntze wrote that he quickly became skeptical of the tenant organizing in SKKT by student activists looking to "awaken a proletarian consciousness." Either ignored or taken to task by local residents, the failure of this first tenant group to make any significant headway sent the message from the existing residents that "one can't just come here and tell [the long-time residents of Kreuzberg]

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[268] Klaus Duntze, *Der Geist der Städte baut: Planquadrat, Wohnbereich, Heimat* (Stuttgart: Radius Verlag, 1972), 10.

[269] Duntze, *Der Geist der Städte baut*, 45

[270] Duntze, *Der Geist der Städte baut*, 19. See also Katrin Zapf, *Rückständige Viertel: Eine soziologische Analyse der städtebaulichen Sanierung in der Bundesrepublik* (Frankfurt: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1969).

what others think they [the residents] should hear."[271] In 1972, Duntze took a sabbatical

year from the Martha Congregation to publish a book in which he explores these issues of

urban revitalization and participation while critically examining the principles of

modernist urban planning from a sociological perspective with Berlin-Kreuzberg as his

case study. In the face of Kreuzberg's low standard of housing resulting from a lack of

maintenance over decades with shared toilets located in stairwells, densely built

courtyards without a smattering of green, and the fusion of industrial workshops and

tenements, Duntze saw the advantages that this unloved urban spectacle offered to its

existing residents. His view that the low rents, familiarity with neighbors, shopkeepers

and the social interactions on the street and in the courtyard could not be separated from

Kreuzberg's built environment inspired him to advocate for resident participation as the

driving force behind alternatives to renewal plans already in progress.[272]

Ultimately, it was the failed community attempt to resist the closure of the

Bethanien Hospital in Kreuzberg renewal area SKKT in 1970 that convinced Duntze to

conclude that, "opposition and citizen participation can only work if a neighborhood is

perceived as a high profile experiment in urban renewal."[273] (**Figure 3.3**) To do so,

Duntze realized he needed elite allies if his ideas were to enact a real shift in renewal

policy for SO 36. He found one in municipal politician Gerd Wartenberg (SPD).

Wartenberg, a former member of the socialist youth organization *Die Falken*, had written

extensively on urban redevelopment before winning a seat in Berlin's city parliament. In

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[271] Klaus Duntze, "Ein Stadtteil hilft sich selbst," in *Kreuzberger Mischung: Die innerstädtische Verflechtung von Architektur, Kultur und Gewerbe*, eds. Karl-Heinz Fiebig, Dieter Hoffmann-Axthelm, and Eberhard Knoedler-Bunte (Berlin: Verlag Ästhetik und Kommunikation, 1984), 299.

[272] "Zur Ausschreibung 'Strategien für Kreuzberg,' Interview with Klaus Duntze," "Strategien für Kreuzberg," *ARCH* + 34, 1977. Discuss the involvement of the Protestant Church in social justice issues/leftist politics.

[273] Klaus Duntze, "Ein Stadtteil hilft sich selbst," in *Kreuzberger Mischung*, 298.

the spring of 1977, with Wartenberg's backing, Duntze initiated an unorthodox

"competition of ideas." In effect, this competition, which was called "Strategies for

Kreuzberg," extended the work of the *Berliner Morgenpost* series and Hämer's Block

118 model to legitimatize Altbau preservation and resident participation in the planning

process for an entire renewal area as discussed at length in the previous chapter.

Unwilling to ignore the displacement and disruption caused by the redevelopment

plans for Kreuzberg, Duntze and Wartenberg proposed a planning contest that would be

open to all (*für jedermann*), for which they solicited participatory solutions to "save th[is]

neighborhood" located in squarely in the "shadow of economic, social, and political

developments."[274] To increase the likelihood of a successful competition, the organizers

of the "Strategies for Kreuzberg" opted for restricting the scope of the competition to

several blocks to the north and south of the former Görlitzer Bahnhof, located in the

southeastern corner of Kreuzberg with the north section of the area bordered by the

Spree, to the east and south by the Landwehr canal, and to the west of the competition

area by the Manteuffelstrasse, Skalitzer and Mariannenstrasse. Eager to gain more

publicity and official support, the "Strategies" team appealed to the organizers of the

1977 annual convention of the Protestant Church (*Kirchentag*) scheduled to take place in

West Berlin. Convention organizers designated the "Strategies" competition a "special

project" of the national convention. Not to be outdone by the Church, Building

Commissioner Ristock is said to have given his full support of the project after

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[274] Senator für Bau- und Wohnungswesen, ed., *Sanierungs-Zeitung/Stadterneuerung Kreuzberg* 1 (1977): 9.

remarking, "that there is something going on there, shouldn't be left to the Churche, because that would make the Senate look like a fool in Kreuzberg."[275]

This corner of Kreuzberg, with the highest density of nineteenth-century tenements built before 1885 earmarked for demolition, displayed the marks of a neighborhood left in stand-by mode. Facing a social and physical landscape of crumbling tenements, emptying storefronts, a migrant and poor population being shuffled from one dilapidated housing unit to the next by negligent landlords, and a chronic shortage of open space, Duntze and others were determined to show that revitalizing the infrastructure of this inner-city district could be achieved by respecting and strengthening the existing social and physical composition of the neighborhood rather than at its expense.[276] They vehemently argued for an approach to renewal that went beyond relating planning principles to the interests of residents, but rather included these same residents or communities in the actual planning process. Thus, they felt that limiting the competition to a few blocks, rather than advocating designs for the entire district or city, would stimulate a "smoother living together at the neighborhood level" as well as a "local identification with the area."[277]

The tenements, despite their basic amenities like shared toilets, coal heating, and rudimentary baths and kitchens, remained attractive to a cohort of low-income residents that included immigrant workers and their families, the elderly, the poor, a mix of both Old and New Left activists, and growing numbers of youth seeking an alternative to the "conformist" and "oppressive" life in the West German provinces. Kreuzberg's

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[275] Ristock quoted in Duntze, "Ein Stadtteil hilft sich selbst," 301.

[276] *Strategien für Kreuzberg* (Berlin: Der Senator für Bau- u. Wohnungswesen, 1978); Klaus Duntze, *Die Berliner Wohnungspolitik, ihre sozialen Auswirkungen und die Aufgaben der Kirche,* Evangelisches Bildungswerk Berlin, Dokumentation 24 (Berlin: Evangelische Akademie, 1981), 3.

[277] *Strategien für Kreuzberg*, 3.

population by the 1970s, as Klaus Duntze put it, could be broadly broken down into four

main categories that he labeled the four "A's": the poor (*Arme*), "foreigners" (*Ausländer*),

the elderly (*Alte*), and drop-outs (*Aussteiger*).[278] Low rents in Kreuzberg, particularly in

the southeastern corner, were attributed to rent control of housing units built before 1949.

As was openly documented in the early 1970s by critics of wholesale clearance, the

dilapidation of the older buildings, especially those built between 1871 and 1885, was a

result of intentional neglect. Socially-minded planners and architects argued that the poor

structural conditions of these buildings, proof in fact used by urban renewal agents to

justify demolition, was a direct outcome of the failure of apartment owners to provide

even the most basic maintenance of the housing stock.[279]

A 1974 report published by the Berlin Senate detailing municipal objectives over

a fifteen year period upheld the new official shift in policy by writing that "efforts must

be reinforced to rectify the substandard quality of living in the inner city neighborhoods;

therefore it is essential to help every citizen find [decent] housing, to guarantee affordable

rent, and to extend their rights as tenants."[280] At the same time, federal urban renewal

subsidies continued to specify the construction of newer housing, units that were

promoted as "social housing" for West Berlin's population. Paradoxically, none of the

former residents remaining in the renewal areas would be able to afford rents in the new

housing built by city-owned and private housing corporations. These renewal agents

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[278] Klaus Duntze, "Ein Stadtteil hilft sich selbst," 298.

[279] This was a regular issue addressed in the local Kreuzberg magazine *Südost Express*. See also, Bodenschatz, *Schluss mit der Zerstörung*; Renate Mulhak, "Die Instandbesetzungskonflikt in Berlin," in *Grossstadt und Neue Soziale Bewegungen*, eds. Peter Grottian and Wilfried Nelles (Basel: Birkhäuser, 1983), 205-252; Volker Heise, "Der Weg bis zur "behutsamen Stadterneuerung" im Osten Kreuzbergs: das Sanierungsgebiet Kottbusser Tor und das "Strategiengebiet SO 36," in *Stadterneuerung in Berlin Sanierung und Zerstörung vor und neben der IBA* (Berlin: Verlag Ästhetik und Kommunikation, 1984), 38-43.

[280] Presse und Informationsamt des Landes Berlin, *Perspektiven der Stadtentwicklung* (Berlin, 1974), 81.

were, by law, able to demand higher rents for the new units since rent control no longer

applied to *Neubau*.

The "Strategies for Kreuzberg" competition as envisioned by its initiators set out

to make a case for improving both private conditions for residents and satisfying social

needs in the community without resorting to demolition, a difference in approach marked

specifically by participatory methods of co-planning and co-managing, rather than a top-

down policy to neighborhood redevelopment.[281] As the coordinators of "Strategies"

hoped, the active input from residents in choosing the winning proposals and

participating in their implementation would engender an exemplary model of

redevelopment both locally and nationally that acknowledged and met the various needs

of a neighborhood as defined by its own population.[282] The project committee or

"citizens' jury" consisted of thirty-four members, one-third drawn from the Senate and

Kreuzberg's district administration (*Bezirksamt*) and the remaining two-thirds from the

community. Announced as a formal cooperation between the Berlin Senate for Building

and Construction and the Protestant Church of Berlin-Brandenburg (West Berlin),

representatives from both official bodies made the committee recommendations for the

"Strategies for Kreuzberg."[283]

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[281] See most recently, Habbo Knoch, ed., *Bürgersinn mit Weltgefühl: Politische Moral und solidarischer Protest in den sechziger und siebziger Jahren* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2007); Detlef Siegfried, *Sound der Revolte: Studien zur Kulturrevolution um 1968* (Munich: Juventa, 2008); Belinda Davis, "Civil Society in a New Key? Feminist and Alternative Groups in 1970s West Germany," in Sonya Michel, et al, eds., *Civil Society and Gender Justice: Historical and Comparative Perspectives* (NY: Berghahn, 2008).

[282] *Strategien für Kreuzberg*, 4.

[283] As discussed in the previous chapter, with financial resources in short supply, the Berlin Senate Committee for Housing and Construction recognized the fiscal advantages of a modification to the existing policy of relocation, full clearance and new construction; therefore, in March 1977 the Berlin Senate announced it would back the creation of a "Strategies for Kreuzberg" commission that included a mélange of landlords, residents, renewal officials, district officials, tenant organizations, and the local church circuit. The official shift to partial demolition had been introduced in 1974; however, the neglect of the buildings and slow forced vacancy due to the postponement of demolition continued but now involving both those

Each of the 34 jury members came from one of the following categories: representatives from social groups, which included local businesses, tenants, migrants, youth, landlords; community role models drawn from neighborhood social workers, Turkish schoolteachers, local work council, community workers; interest groups, such as citizens' initiatives, local not-for-profit associations, the local Protestant and Catholic churches, local mosques, and social welfare organizations; and public administrative units and representatives from the Kreuzberg district administration.[284] The committee's main task was to receive, evaluate and assess the submissions (129 in all) within a two-month period. The jurors chose eleven winning submissions whose proposals presented self-help ideas for housing renovation, designs for street and courtyard use, a plan to turn the abandoned grounds of the former Görlitzer Bahnhof into a park, storefront information and counseling offices for locals, and educational and training programs to address the problem of high unemployment among local youths.

The "Strategies" campaign to include residents in the "collaboration" (*mitwirken*), "participation" (*mitentscheiden*), "thinking along with" (*mitdenken*), and "working together" (*mitarbeiten*) in the planning process before any official decisions took place was consistent with similar aims promoted by Hämer on a smaller scale just a few years before. Taking Hämer's ideas one step further, Dunzte and the "Strategies" team insisted on the importance of preserving and restoring the interior courtyards, with their side and back wings or small factories and handicraft workshops that still employed a percentage of the local population.[285] Duntze, for example, grounded his defense of the old urban

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buildings slated for demolition before 1974 and the side and rear wings of those buildings in the additional eight zones slated for redevelopment.

[284] *Strategien für Kreuzberg*, 5.

[285] *Strategien für Kreuzberg*, 4.

fabric so evident in Kreuzberg not simply in terms of its sound architectural merits, but in the "presence of a past that is for us far from over." This "past," he continued, "reveals itself in the informal social system of neighborhood life still intrinsically linked to the famed Kreuzberg Mix."[286] The "past" Duntze evoked here was not, at least directly, the most immediate German past, i.e., the Nazi past, but rather one that located the southeastern corner of Kreuzberg in a long working-class tradition whose politics, sociability and culture marked the built landscape.[287] Yet this part of Kreuzberg was particularly controversial and seen by proponents of urban renewal as the perfect example of the soulless and history-less moloch of the urban space. Contradicting this view, Duntze argued that this area remained a paradigmatic and historically crucial space for the emergence of the classic Berlin cityscape, as it was conceptualized in the nineteenth-century Kreuzberg Mix.

The Return of the Kreuzberg Mix

The area around the former Görlitzer Bahnhof where the competition site was located, and as Duntze himself discovered, had contributed significantly to the formation of this particular "Mix" of housing and work with tenements and industrial workshops built up alongside each other. More concretely, the urban development of the neighborhood was influenced by the train station's function as major freight depot for raw materials arriving from the southeast, e.g., lignite or brown coal from Bohemia,

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[286] "Experiment der Selbsterneuerung oder Feigenblatt? Interview [with Klaus Duntze],"*ARCH +*, 34 (June 1977), 16.

[287] For a discussion of this see Chapter Four in Rudy Koshar's *From Monuments to Traces: Artifacts of German Memory*. One could place Duntze in this 1970s/80s context of (leftist) understandings of Heimat as seen in their interest in the preservation of historical architecture.

wheat from Austria.[288] Opening in 1867 at the zenith of German urbanization and

industrialization, the train station became a hub for both goods and people arriving to the

big city from the east. The train station's proximity to the industrial areas being built up

along the Spree influenced the decision of newcomers disembarking on its platforms to

make this area their home. A smaller-scale sphere of production, largely trades and craft,

began to flourish in the back courtyards of these large tenements built up around the

Görlitzer Bahnhof.[289]

 As discussed in Chapter One, this nineteenth-century mix of housing and work

managed to endure, albeit in an ever weakened form, through two world wars, inflation,

the division of the city, and the steady transition to a post-industrial society; in this

neighborhood, however, it remained a defining feature, one that the initiators of the

"Strategies" felt should be defended since the industrial workshops and small factories

still in operation employed local residents who could live close to their workplaces and

the buildings already emptied out offered large enough spaces for trade, artist, or housing

collectives.[290] Although the Bahnhof itself was only moderately damaged during the war,

it fell into disuse after East Berlin officials suspended train service going east in the

1950s. The city of West Berlin began tearing down the unused train station in the early

1960s.

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[288] Anita Geret and Elisabeth Harten-Flitner, *Der Kinderbauernhof Görlitzer Bahnhof: Erfahrungsbericht über Planung, Aufbau und Arbeit eines Kinderbauernhofs in Berlin-Kreuzberg SO 36*, (Berlin: Bauausstellung Berlin, Arbeitsgruppe Stadterneuerung, 1983), 4; Emil Galli, *Görlitzer Bahnhof, Görlitzer Park* (Berlin: Support Edition, 1994).

[289] *Berlin und seine Bauten* and see Reiner Kruse, "Neues Leben in alten Fabriken" *ARCH+* 46 (1979): 20-23. "Fabrikgebäude, die früher etagenweise an kleinere Industrie und an Handwerksbetriebe vermietet wurden, befinden sich in vielen Hinterhöfen, vor allem in Kreuzberg ... In Kreuzberg mit seiner naehe zur Innenstadt haben sich kleine Betriebe konzentriert als Zulieferbetriebe fuer das dortige Geschaeftsviertel. Dies steht z.B. im gegensatz zum Wedding, wo die kleinteilige Struktur viel seltener ist, da sich dort die Grosskonzerne der Elektroindustrie angesiedelt haben (AEG, OS-RAM)."

[290] *Kreuzberger Mischung*, 155.

For local opponents of urban renewal, Kreuzberg's mix of spheres (private and public), of the new and old (industrial trades and alternative collectives) provided one important solution for a revitalization of Kreuzberg. Defenders of the Mix (old and new residents alike) perceived it as the neighborhood's "source of vitality" and to bolster their claim, they felt one only had to look to "all places where small trade and industry has been destroyed or depleted by urban renewal practices, where the urban functions of living and working have been segregated, urban life has been lost [...] these factory floors in the tenement courtyards offer space that could be used in a multitude of ways to regenerate Kreuzberg."[291] Through the "Strategies" community work, opposition to urban renewal increasingly meant more than only ensuring affordable housing. It was as much about culturally and socially reviving an informal network of communication that relied on the small corner shops (*Tante Emma Läden*) and pubs, back courtyards and storefront meeting places as it was about raising the issue of affordable housing for low-income residents.

In part because of considerable media attention given to the "Strategies" contest, the Bezirksamt Kreuzberg sponsored an exhibition in 1979 detailing the "pronounced diversity of the[se] possibilities for neighborhood rejuvenation" for the public. Following a comprehensive summary of the "Strategies for Kreuzberg," the exhibition catalogue introduced the eleven projects born out of the "Strategies" community work.[292] Vacant factories were in the process of being renovated to accommodate decentralized or consensus-based adult education centers (*Volkshochschulen*), youth self-help and

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[291] *Bilder aus Kreuzberg: Stadtreparatur am Beispiel Kreuzberg* (Berlin: Bezirksamt Kreuzberg von Berlin, 1979).

[292] *Bilder aus Kreuzberg*; Reiner Kruse, "Neues Leben in alten Fabriken: Der kleine Einblick," *ARCH +*, 51, 1979.

apprenticeship programs for unemployed and under privileged youth to then live in once restored, and artists' centers. The catalogue proposed ways in which a "vibrant" street life could be maintained, one whose street fronts (*Erdgeschosszone*) was thought to be of utmost importance for an accessible, people-friendly city. To safeguard their ideas on how to improve an urban community, the "Strategies" commission founded a registered non-profit association (e.V.) in 1978. This step help ensured continued funding and local government support in the implementation of the remaining eight projects working on lowering the cost of rent for "Tante Emma" stores, planting garden or flower beds on streets with wider sidewalks, developing ways to minimize speed of traffic, transforming the ruins of the Görlitzer Bahnhof into a neighborhood park, setting up information centers specifically targeting the neighborhood's migrant population, opening decentralized youth and recreational locales.[293] Additionally, seven neighborhood centers had already opened in the competition area to continue their work of providing residents with information on the various steps of redevelopment.

By 1979 calls for a preservation of the housing stock that had dovetailed with the demands for low-income housing and tenant participation in designing neighborhood spaces had not altogether rendered the wrecking ball immobile. Not only did local tenant and community activists still see Kreuzberg's built environment at risk of demolition, they were becoming increasingly radicalized by the continued practices of public and private building owners, in the face of an official shift to modernization, allowing tenements by design to fall into disrepair which, in effect, slated them for clearance. One neighborhood newspaper conveyed this concern in one of its 1978 issues with a cover

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[293] *Strategien für Kreuzberg*, 10; Volker von Tiedemann, *Bürgerbeteiligung bei der Stadterneuerung: Beispiel Strategien für Kreuzberg* (Bonn-Bad Godesberg : Bundesminister für Raumordnung, Bauwesen u. Städtebau, 1980).

image of a recently flattened building lot displaying a crane in the one corner and in the foreground a bulldozer moving debris. The question accompanying the cover image asked, "Kreuzberg is not yet lost, right?" (*noch ist Kreuzberg nicht verloren, oder*?)[294] This ongoing concern with a reality that "a large quantity of the existing housing is to be torn down and on a smaller scale refurbished" did not cease with the Senate's support of the "Strategies" competition.[295] The following account given by Berlin's City Building and Planning Senator Harry Ristock exposes what remained a "balanced" approach to "upgrading" inner city neighborhoods:

> … The quality of life in the back and side wings (*Hinterhäuser und Seitenflügel*), where formerly the little man, the worker, the small businessman, and the domestic helper lived, was at times catastrophic. There was no light, no greenery and small and medium sized walls separated each courtyard from each other. It was nothing but "junk" ("*Schrott*") and a public indictment. The situation is still not over and here lies the great task of urban renewal. Renewal is one of the most important of our political tasks.[296]

Voicing opposition to the city's further removal of back and side wings and the related concern that Kreuzberg would become a "*Gründerzeit* Museum" with just a few tenements left to exhibit as relics of days gone by, activists continued to make the point that official redevelopment practices were of no use to those residents living in the "here and now."[297]

Within weeks after the "Strategies" competition got underway, Kreuzberg's activists were given even more reason to distrust city renewal officials. At the same time as the Berlin Senate declared its support of a "competition of ideas" that advocated a

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[294] "Noch ist Kreuzberg nicht verloren," *KOZ Kreuzberg Stadtteil Zeitung*, 24, 1978, 11.

[295] Ibid.

[296] *Berliner Morgenpost*, January 19, 1977, 4.

[297] "Strategien für Kreuzberg, " *ARCH* + 34 (1977): 16.

rehabilitation of Kreuzberg through "careful" renewal, a bulldozer arrived on the site of a nineteenth-century pumping station and former fire hall in anticipation of demolition and new construction. Surprised and dismayed by the official proposal to raze the site and build a new school with an adjoining sports and daycare center, tenant and community activists were determined to save the pumping station and the adjacent fire hall on Reichenberger Strasse from the wrecking ball. Particularly infuriating for the "Strategies" initiators was that the Reichenberger Strasse was located squarely in the competition grid, a competition whose very objective was to promote a new, contemporary use of older buildings according to the needs and wishes of the residents. A citizens' initiative (*Bürgerinitiative Feuerwache/Pumpwerk*) proposed a model for a social and cultural center, which would service the needs of the neighborhood by providing a communication and social center. Several other initiatives were also involved in the plans to design a new use for the center; these included a theater group, feminist group, addiction councilors, a seniors' group" and a youth group. Activists from these thirteen different groups "illegally" occupied the fire hall and started renovations for the "*Stadtteilzentrum*" to demonstrate what they perceived as the only way to defend their vision of the neighborhood against the divergent interests of the city urban renewal agents.[298]

A flare up ensued with one side arguing for an end to demolition plans for Kreuzberg until all alternatives had been evaluated and residents included in the decision-making process, while the other side maintained that the demolition "was in direct

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[298] *ausser man tut es… Kreuzberg abgeschrieben, aufgestanden*, 36.

accordance with the wishes and needs of the neighborhood's population."[299] Rather than

honor its intended commitment to resident participation, the city's decision to tear down

the fire hall and pumping station sent an unambiguous message to Kreuzberg's residents

who in turn voiced reservations about the efficacy of the "Strategies" competition.

Further examples of resident interests at odds with the city's "actual" plans soon

followed. On the Waldemar Strasse directly on the Mariannenplatz, a street located in the

SKKT urban renewal area, a former factory (*Maschinenfabrik Prakmagebaeude*) had

been selected in 1975 as "worthy of historic preservation" under the auspices of the

European Year of Architectural Heritage and thus thought to be out of harm's way. In

1978, one of the "Strategies" funded projects, *Ausbildungswerk Kreuzberg*, a self-help

project conceived to couple "careful" or "small-scale" renewal with youth job training

schemes, submitted a proposal to the city for a redevelopment option in the former

factory.[300] Ignoring the project's application, the city's urban renewal agent instead

moved forward with demolition with the tacit approval of the *Bezirksamt Kreuzberg*. The

Ministry for Building and Housing argued that the demolition was carried out only

because no candidates expressed an interest in the building.[301] One local community

paper commented on this breach between the city and neighborhood organizers by

proclaiming on its cover title, "Attention! You are now leaving the democratic sector of

Kreuzberg!"[302] This heading played on the sector signs alerting residents that they were

leaving one occupied sector and entering another. The significance of these examples

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[299] Building Commisioner Ristock quoted in *Der Abend*, June 14, 1977.

[300] "Wer wir sind – Was wir machen," KreuzWerk, Selbsthilfe bei Stadterneuerung und Berufsausbildung: Berlin, 1983, 7, *KreuzWerk: Projektbericht*. Ausstellungsprojekt im Rahmen des Berichtsjahres 1984 der IBA (Berlin: KreuzWerk, 1984).

[301] *SüdOst Express* June 6, 1979.

[302] *KOZ: Kreuzberger Stadtteil Zeitung*, March/May, 1978.

more generally was that they served as a litmus test for political support of the "Strategies" objectives and a sincere shift in urban renewal policy.

Self-Help and "Rehab" Squatting

Over the course of two years disillusionment and anger on the part of "Strategies" participants and supporters grew after each forcible eviction in Kreuzberg. One group started meeting informally in a bar once a week to discuss and organize specifically around the eradication of the things "[they] love[d] about Kreuzberg –the small shops, the pubs, the backyard workshops."[303] At first they called themselves *Stammtisch* SO 36 indicating their informal yet regular meetings around a table in the same bar week after week. Later the group formally changed its name to BI SO 36, short for *Bürgerinitiative* SO36 (citizen's initiative SO36). However, as was the case with *Verein* SO 36, born directly out of the "Strategies" competition, the Berlin Senate did not officially back the BI SO 36, which in turn made it that much easier for the group to consider more confrontational ways to bring the issue of failed renewal practices to public attention.[304]

The Senate's lip service to the "Strategies" organizers and participants combined with the calculated deterioration and subsequent vacancy of thousands of apartment houses convinced BI SO 36 that conventional tactics failed to generate any significant change in renewal policy. Tensions grew in Kreuzberg's southeast corner as the BI SO 36 tried, without success, to force one city-owned housing corporation, BeWoGe (*Berliner*

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[303] Flyer, "Stammtisch SO 36, Haberkern in Gefahr," October, 1978, uncatalogued, binder, "Hausbesetzung," Sammlung Berlin, Berlin.

[304] Bernd Laurisch, *Kein Abriss unter dieser Nummer: 2 Jahre Instandbesetzung in der Cuvrystrasse in Berlin-Kreuzberg* (Giessen: Anabas, 1981). The BI SO 36 published the neighborhood magazine the Sued-Ost Express, which would become an important organ for informing Kreuzberg residents of their tenant rights, for publicizing housing/construction scandals and for pressuring the city's urban renewal agents to explain their intentions behind overwhelming vacancies and the deliberate deterioration of the tenements.

Wohn-und Geschäftshaus), to rent out the 300 vacant apartments in forty-six of their tenements in Kreuzberg alone. By end of the year 1978, the BI SO 36 had resolved to take more dramatic measures to exert pressure on city officials to sufficiently address the severity of the increasing shortage of affordable and decent housing.

Frustrated by the high number of vacant apartments despite months of a publicity campaign urging the building owners and the city to change their policy, the BI viewed the situation as hopeless. This sense of desperation led to the group to take matters into their own hands. In February of 1979 members of the BI SO 36 squatted two apartments in two different buildings managed by the BeWoGe in the southeast corner of SO 36.[305] These calculated token squats were meant to raise public awareness to the failed renewal policies and, in the act of literally "occupying" the tenements, the activists hoped to deliver a message to government officials that conventional methods until that point had failed to convey. Under the motto, "it's better to 'rehab' squat than to own and destroy," (lieber instand(be)setzen als kaputtbesitzen) this act of squatting added a new vocabulary to the more than ten-year struggle by citizens' initiatives, community organizers and tenant organizations to hinder the deliberate decay of structurally sound and habitable dwellings, whose demolition only added to the already acute housing shortage of affordable units.

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[305] The squatters' movement in West Germany mushroomed shortly before the second peak of the economic crisis of the 70s with 1.7 million unemployed and, for the first time in West German postwar history, a negative economic growth rate. The problems of housing and youth unemployment furthered a sense of pessimism and hopelessness about the future among youth of the late 1970s and 80s. Laurisch, *Kein Abriss unter diese Nummer*; Rainer Autzen, et al., *Stadterneuerung in Berlin*, 42; Mulhak, "Der Instandbesetzungskonflikt in Berlin," 208; Margit Mayer, "Social Movements in European Cities: Transitions from the 1970s to the 1990s," in *Cities in Contemporary Europe*, eds. Arnaldo Bangnasco and Patrick Le Gales (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000): 131-152.

A new term was coined by the actions of these first squats, *Instand(be)setzung* or "rehab" squatting, a term that was a play on the verb, *instandsetzen,* meaning to rehabilitate or to repair. For years, citizens' groups and tenant organizations had advocated for a new planning paradigm, one that would rehabilitate (*instandbesetzen*) the existing housing stock at low costs using methods of direct action by "those most immediately affected who should [now] take things into their own hands and stop waiting for the politicians and bureaucrats to act."[306] Other squats of apartments owned by the same corporation quickly followed. Not wanting their acts of squatting to be misconstrued by the public as "just a way to help find accommodation," the BI SO36 made it clear that their primary focus was to "initiate a movement [that] can agree on a common line of approach […] and is prepared to take the risks involved to 'rehab' squat."[307]

While these "spontaneous," yet self-conscious acts to bring broader public attention to the issue at hand were successful in forcing the BeWoGe to negotiate new leases for forty apartments, these early token squats fell short of engendering any significant change in official renewal policy. They did succeed, however, in setting off a much larger wave of squatting in West Berlin and across West Germany that, by the end of 1981, defined itself as part of a larger urban protest movement and a force to be reckoned with on the local and national political landscape. And from the beginning, the squatters' movement in West Germany shared similar aims with other squatting scenes that were emerging across Europe around the same time. Squatters in West Berlin, and

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[306] "Hausbesetzungen sind richtig und notwendig," BI SO 36, 1979, uncatalogued, Sammlung Berlin, Berlin. "Erklärung der BI SO 36," Berlin SO 36, 1981, uncatalogued, Sammlung Berlin, Berlin.

[307] Kuno Haberbusch, ""Berliner Linie" gegen Instandbesetzer. Die "Vernunft" schlagt immer wieder zu!," Dokumentation der Ereignisse vom 3.2.1979 bis zum 11.8.1981, 1981, uncatalogued, Papiertiger Archive and Library, Berlin.

other West German cities, drew inspiration from other urban movements in Amsterdam, Zurich, and London, and understood themselves as one part of a larger unofficial network of urban activists.

Frustration escalated over the summer and early fall of 1980 when it became obvious to the first "rehab" squatters that the SPD government was making no serious efforts to address the housing shortage or induce a major reform in its politics of demolition. Instead, city-owned and private housing management companies bricked up windows of vacant tenements, unexplained fires started in tenement basements or roof tops of buildings with vacancies, and the city government continued to give free rein to the U.S. Army to practice close combat maneuvers in Kreuzberg's renewal areas. As a direct response, others in Kreuzberg followed the BI SO 36's example and, by the fall of 1980, there were 21 "rehab" squats in Kreuzberg. Already in March of 1980, "rehab" squatters from the by then nine squats in Kreuzberg formed a squatters' council (*Besetzerrat* K36) intended as a forum to exchange information and experiences, but also to agree on a plan of action vis-à-vis the local government and house owners.[308] Indeed, the formation of a squatters' council had, as one squatter from the Mariannenstrasse put it, a "psychological value" for the burgeoning squatters' scene. Accordingly, in the case of a forced eviction by the city, "it is totally clear that the [targeted] squat is not alone and that we form a united front."[309] However, as the movement grew, the reality of this united front would fragment as political cleavages divided the scene between those squats

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[308] Ibid.

[309] Ingrid Müller-Münch, Wolfgang Prosinger, and Sabine Rosenbladt, *Besetzung: Weil das Wünschen nicht geholfen hat*, *Köln, Freiburg, Gorleben, Zürich und Berlin* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Verlag, 1981), 124.

willing to negotiate leases with the city and those who viewed this method of securing the squat as selling out.

The first "rehab" squatters registered their discontent with failed government housing policies with a cry to "repair our neighborhood (*Kiez*) on our own and now!" and vocalized a two-pronged objective: to restore, by means of self-help, the vacant or partially vacant tenements left to decay by their owners, and to put into practice new, self-organized forms of collective living and work. Eager to secure space and demonstrate that these tenements could be cheaply restored, occupants of 14 of the 21 squats in Kreuzberg were willing to negotiate leases with the city. By the late 1970s in West Berlin close to 80, 000 people were either actively seeking an affordable apartment or had their names on a waiting list for the next available spot in low-income housing. As critics of Berlin's renewal policies had been pointing out for years, the scandal lay in the fact that, at the very same time, over 10, 000 apartments in Berlin's urban renewal areas were deliberately kept vacant while they awaited demolition so owners could erect more profitable new buildings subsidized by the federal government as so-called social housing.[310]

This upsurge in public criticism of the city's renewal politics coincided with the exposure of the so-called the Garski Affair, which, by January 1981, would contribute to the resignation of the Mayor Stobbe (SPD), along with his finance and economic ministers. The biggest finance scandal in West Berlin's history, the Garski Affair exposed the corrupt business dealings of the West Berlin Senate and the construction industry. In 1978, the city backed a line of credit for architect and contractor Dietrich Garski at the

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[310] Both official and unofficial numbers differ here. They range from 40, 000 as the lowest to 80, 000 as the highest estimate.

Bank of Berlin for over 112 million DM, despite his company not having the proper financial documentation for a loan of that dimension. By 1980, payments were looming, the contracting project in Saudi Arabia had fallen through, and Garski went underground. The city, or rather the West Berlin taxpayer, was left to pick up the bill.

With the SPD government facing an internal, and public, crisis, and public sympathy with the "rehab" squatters' method of protest on the increase, a violent police eviction of a just squatted building close to the Kottbusser Tor subway station on December 12, 1980 took Kreuzberg by surprise. In view of the slow government response to protest actions around squatting and the small concessions already made with the first "rehab" squats, the December eviction incited indignation and anger that resulted in a four-day clash between police and protestors.[311] This heightened level of anger and militancy combined with a city government distracted by a change in its leadership and a call for new elections created favorable conditions for an explosion of squatting in West Berlin. During the short tenure of former Minister of Justice Hans-Jochen Vogel (SPD), who replaced Stobbe as mayor in January of 1981, and the elections in May of that same year, protestors and squatters responded to repressive police actions and the on-going crisis in renewal policies by squatting over 165 buildings. Taking advantage of the weakened position of the Senate, squats in Kreuzberg tenements occurred almost daily throughout the spring of 1981. With its center in Kreuzberg and the eastern part of the neighboring district of Schöneberg, the city's squatters' movement was, by far, the largest in West Germany.[312] And as the movement grew, so too did the varied political

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[311] Karapin, *Protest Politics in Germany*, 95; Bodenschatz, *Schluss mit der Zerstörung?*, 312; Arlette Moser, Wolfgang Albrecht, Peter Ott, eds., *Instandbesetzungen in Kreuzberg. Friede den Besetzern, Kampf den Besitzern* (Berlin: Sozialistische Einheitspartei Westberlins, 1981).

[312] Karapin, *Protest Politics in Germany*, 65; Mayer and Katz, "Gimme Shelter."

standpoints of those who squatted ranging from "rehab" squatters willing to negotiate leases to more radical or militant squatters framing their protest in terms of a *Häuserkampf* or urban warfare.

The Squats and Everyday Life

By 1980, the nineteenth-century tenements in Kreuzberg were far more than a set of buildings that particular groups felt should be preserved or protected from destruction. Rather, the entire space of Kreuzberg, including its tenements, became an intensely charged not to mention highly contentious political and cultural space. Claims made to that space, definitions of the city, neighborhood, home, citizenship, and of productive work in a changing capitalist system were not only made on the neighborhood's streets and literally on its buildings, as I will discuss in more detail in Chapter Five, but also inside those buildings and in their back courtyards.

In questioning official renewal policies, squatters created an infrastructure for the left-alternative scene that would provide the space both to practice non-normative lifestyles and to meet, socialize, and organize politically. The second, undoubtedly more militant drive of squatting activity and resistance followed the first "rehab" squats and connected the fight for affordable housing and the preservation of the old housing stock and its neighborhood milieu to a larger political agenda. More broadly, this agenda included struggles against West German austerity measures, nuclear rearmament, ecological degradation, consumer capitalism, and U.S. imperialism. Ultimately, all squatters shared the desire to carve out self-organized spaces (*Freiräume*) that would offer alternatives to dominant conceptions of the home, family, and work. They

established, and defended, new configurations of physical spaces in which they could

"lead a different kind of life than the one we [were] being told to live."[313] But just how

did this other life look like *inside* the squat? The remainder of this chapter will describe

how, in their spatial arrangements and in their everyday lives, squatters' challenged and

sometimes confirmed dominant West German notions of domesticity.

Bringing into play the cultural significance attached to middle-class notions of

home and the interior design of domestic spaces, one unnamed squatter wondered what

the popular West German home magazine *Schöner Wohnen* would make of her domestic

abode.[314] In order to inspire the creativity of the reader, the magazine often depicted new

interior design and decorating ideas by using before and after pictures of any given

changes to a home's interior. The unidentified squatter remarked that, "what we could

show in our home, the magazine would [certainly] not constitute as beautiful living.

Nothing is for sale. Perfection, uniformity, and order are missing from top to bottom. Out

of essentially ruins, and with little means but a lot of imagination, [we] are making the

spaces liveable."[315] However, this process of making the space inside the apartments

"liveable" was a daunting task considering the degree of dilapidation squatters faced once

they entered the tenement.

The tenements squatted were either completely or partially vacant and had been

left unattended for years by their owners even though some residents remained and were

still paying rent. Before actually squatting, some groups met over a period of several

weeks in order to get to know each other better, check out the situation and discuss how

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[313] Volkhard Brandes and Bernhard Schön, eds., *Wer sind die Instandbesetzer: Selbstzeugnisse, Dokumente, Analysen* (Bensheim: päd.-extra-Buchverlag, 1981), 69.

[314] *Stattbau informiert* (Berlin: Stattbau Stadtentwicklungs-GmbH, 1984), 148.

[315] Ibid.

they wanted to proceed. For one Kreuzberg squatter a central issue to establish at the outset was that "everyone [in the group] was willing engage in political work, which [in this case] meant a readiness to interfere with ownership and property rights."[316] The city's politics of demolition and displacement, seen as privileging the interests of business and private property over the housing needs of low-income residents, only strengthened the squatters' belief that their property transgressions were justified. Slogans along the lines of "The Senate only talks about housing politics, we take action!" (*Der Senat redet von Wohnungspolitik, Wir machen sie!*) or "Clear the jails, not the houses! (*Räumt die Knäste, nicht die Häuser!*) made clear the early goals of the squatters' movement.[317]

Once a group identified and entered a vacant or partially vacant tenement, a fairly easy undertaking in the southeast corner of Kreuzberg in the early 1980s, their first priority was to "remove any life threatening dangers." This task included clearing out falling debris, identifying dry rot and mold and then removing the affected wood from inside the apartments. The next thing squatters did was look for rooms or whole apartments that were in reasonably decent shape. Even then, as one squatter recalled, "we still had to clear out garbage piled meters high."[318] Having secured a minimum standard of comfort in one or two rooms, the group then turned to removing the debris from the other apartments and the courtyard. This was followed by a focus on other more immediate, structural problems that resulted from the owner's neglect such as fixing or replacing old and exposed electrical wiring, broken or damaged windows, rusty pipes, and poor plumbing. After this, squatters started working on the floors, fixing loose roof

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[316] *Besetzung: Weil das Wünschen nicht geholfen hat*, 47.

[317] Slogans culled from various flyers and images of graffito.

[318] Laurisch, *Kein Abriss unter diese Nummer*, 88.

tiles or repairing damaged roofs. If a group squatted in the fall or winter months, winterizing the building as fast and as best they could was a key concern, primarily to prevent water and gas pipes from freezing, and, subsequently bursting. For most squats, it would take weeks, or sometimes months of almost daily meetings and basic repair work before a group could turn to the design and renovation of the space that best reflected the group's house concept.[319] (**Figure 3.4**)

Squatting a partially vacant house meant that other tenants still lived there. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, the two social groups overrepresented in Kreuzberg's renewal areas in the late 1970s were the elderly with working-class backgrounds and young migrant families, mostly from Turkey. Squatters made establishing immediate contact with the remaining tenants in the building a first priority, above all to ensure that the elderly Germans would not be startled and phone the police. According to squatters' own reports, they felt welcomed at best and tolerated at worst by the remaining "legal" tenants.[320] The inaugural issue of the *Instandbesetzerpost*, one of the scene's many mouthpieces, recounted a first meeting between a group of Kreuzberg squatters and their mostly "foreign" neighbors: "[the neighbors] were all really happy that we came … some of [our] Turkish fellow residents would rather hang out at our place than at home. Besides, now we are all making a big effort to learn Turkish."[321] Though not a central theme in literature produced by the squatters (flyers, published interviews, squatter newspapers), accounts of neighborly interactions such as inviting one another over for tea or dinner, helping out the "legal" tenants with repair or maintenance work, carrying bags

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[319] *Was wird in den besetzten Häusern gemacht? Eine Dokumentation am Beispiel von 13 besetzten Häusern* (Berlin: Architekteninitiative Schöneberger Planung, 1980.

[320] "Block-Revue – Wir lassen uns nicht einwickeln einplanen einpacken können sie sich selbst," Block 101/103, May 1982, 9, uncatalogued brochure, Papiertiger Archive and Library, Berlin.

[321] *Instandbesezterpost* 1 (1981): 4.

of groceries up a few flights of stairs for the single elderly neighbor, or playing soccer in the courtyard with the younger generation of neighbors were common.

In Kreuzberg, a low-income neighborhood deliberately left to decay, squatters drew upon ideas already circulated and put into practice by active neighborhood tenant groups in the late 1970s to frame their agenda of "living their lives in ways otherwise not possible."[322] As with the "Strategies" objectives, squatters laid emphasis on principles of self-help and resident self-administration. Squatters took action against the (still) glaring lack of social services available to Kreuzberg residents such as a sufficient number of pre-schools, parks, outdoor playgrounds and sport venues. Parallel to their initial renovation work inside the tenements, groups of squatters addressed this lack in their designs for the back courtyards, street front spaces, and factory floors of the squats. Not only satisfied with exchanging pleasantries with their neighbors in the stairwell, building entrance, or in the courtyard, squatters also created social spaces intended to address the needs of the existing residents, provide an improved infrastructure, and foster better neighborly encounters.[323] "Our house concept," one squatter said in the first months of squatting activity in Kreuzberg, "is designed to help shape and maintain the living environment to best serve all neighborhood residents."[324]

Experiments in cooperative modes of living, working, and organizing became the primary avenue for squatters' to address the social repercussions of urban restructuring. Whether or not the local residents sympathized with this particular approach to social and

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[322] "Was wir wollen," flyer, no date given, uncatalogued folder/file, "Hausbesetzung," Sammlung Berlin, Berlin.

[323] Regenbogenfabrik Block 109 e.V. *Regenbogenfabrik. Berichte zum Kleinkrieg gegen die Spekulanten Vogel/Braun* (Berlin, September 1982), 4.

[324] "Hauskonzept," October 10, 1981, squatters from the Manteuffelstrasse 40/41, uncatalogued, Sammlung Berlin, Berlin.

economic changes, most at least recognized the benefit to the neighborhood as a whole.

Inside the squat of one partially empty tenement, the "new" tenants used the ground floor

space both in the front and back of the tenement to open an alternative daycare

(*Kinderladen*), they also set up a driving school collective, lay out a garden in the

courtyard, and, together with the "legal" tenants, planted indoor greenery.[325] Over half of

all the squats offered such a collective, self-managed space. (**Figure 3.5**) This space was

not meant to only benefit the creation of a left-alternative infrastructure, but was also

created with the intention to service the larger neighborhood community. For instance,

members of several squats initiated projects for a children's petting farm

(*Kinderbauernhof*), one of Kreuzberg's women-only squats opened up a daycare,

handiwork spaces, a café, a fitness area, and a Turkish bath, all women-only spaces, and a

squat in the Waldemar Strasse close to the Wall started a naturopathic health care project

that offered free holistic treatment and advice for the neighborhood's residents.[326]

Larger squat projects, such as the *Kerngehäuse* in the Cuvry Strasse or the

Regenbogenfabrik in the Lausitzer Strasse, had the space to promote an even more

elaborate example of a living and work collective. (**Figures 3.6 and 3.7**) These two

squats, occupying a former factory for toy sewing machines and a set of buildings that

comprised the storage area of a former steam saw mill respectively, offered a whole

range of projects based on the idea of revitalizing the Kreuzberg Mix of living and

working in close proximity. Their 1980s re-imagining of the historic mixed use of space

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[325] "Block-Revue – Wir lassen uns nicht einwickeln einplanen einpacken können sie sich selbst," Block 101/103, May 1982, 12, uncatalogued brochure, Papiertiger Archive and Library, Berlin.

[326] Senatsverwaltung für Bau- und Wohnungswesen, ed., *Der Block 103 in Berlin-Kreuzberg. Sanierungsgebiet Kottbusser Tor. Ein städtebauliches und stadtökologisches Modellvorhaben*, Städtebau und Architektur Bericht 28 (Berlin, 1994), 21; Margit Kennedy, "Schokoladenfabrik Frauenstadtteilzentrum," in *Dokumentation zum Ökologie- Workshop der IBA am 15./16. August 1983* (Berlin, 1983), 28-32.

was based on collectivist ideals of direct democracy and self-help. Residents of these two squats applied these values and organizing strategies to both their living and work spaces, which included: a taxi collective, carpentry workshops, a food coop, a printing press, a language school, a movie theater, a bike repair shop, and a daycare. In establishing a community-focused infrastructure, squatters also rejected the established practices of modernist renewal, which, in its efficient design of buildings and neighborhoods, necessitated the separation of urban functions. One squatter from the *Kerngehäuse* summed up this position when he insisted that, "our goal is to do away with the spatial separation of living and work areas as well as to work collectively, and equally, without a boss."[327]

Setting up these projects, renovating the squats, and taking on the landscape design of the tenement and street block interiors meant that a particular set of handiwork skills and building materials were required. For most groups, after the first step of getting the "junk out and people in," a long and difficult road of time and labor intensive work began.[328] In contrast to the student movement of the late 1960s, of the youth drawn to the city in the late 70s and early 80s, and its left-alternative scene, most came not with the explicit intention to study, but rather, sought out a place where "there was punk, the big city, wild youth […] where buildings were squatted and street fights were fought."[329] Many arrived with practical skills learned either at home, from a completed apprenticeship in a trade, or from some months of attending vocational school. Others started apprenticeships once in Berlin or gained some knowledge on the job.

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[327] Hannes Kowatsch, *F. W. Mueller's Toy Sewing Machines and the "Kerngehäuse": The Story of a Berlin-Kreuzberg Craft Center* (Berlin, 2000), 144.

[328] "Hauskonzept" October 10, 1981, squatters from the Manteuffelstrasse 40/41, uncatalogued, Sammlung Berlin, Berlin.

[329] Rösinger, *Das schöne Leben*, 56

To help ease the restoration work that was pivotal to "rehab" squatting, one of the first projects set up by a squat in the Manteuffelstrasse in February of 1980 was the *Bauhof* or building yard.[330] Inexpensive, yet good quality material and the practical know-how were vital in order for squatters to demonstrate their point that the restoration of run-down tenements could be achieved economically. For squatters and their allies, the affordable refurbishment of tenements stood in stark contrast to the city's plans for the urban renewal areas, which, in effect, would raise the rents for those in need of affordable "social" housing. The *Bauhof* took on the role of coordinating and supplying other squats with building materials, either recycled or donated new, and became a space where qualified tradespersons could offer workshops or answer more complicated renovation questions. Other squats would pool their financial donations together with a collection of the group's private savings and bought building material in bulk quantities to cut costs. The principle of self-reliance that guided their renovation work was inextricably tied to a larger struggle to, as one squatter put it, "find our place in this society that is shaped by competition, pressures to perform, consumer frenzy, and isolation."[331] Indeed, this meant securing a space in which people could explore alternatives, a space "where at least an attempt to live communally and better [was] possible."[332]

Squatters' assertions of autonomy and informal organization notwithstanding, in actual practice, these concepts were, ultimately, far from conflict-free. Given the range of experiences, handiwork skills, not to mention veiled gender expectations, already heated negotiations over the division of labor, who was responsible for what tasks and when,

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[330] "Die Kreuzberger Bauanstalt," *Stattbau informiert*, 145.

[331] Squatters' Flyer, 1981, Papiertiger Archive and Library, Berlin.

[332] "Block-Revue – Wir lassen uns nicht einwickeln einplanen einpacken können sie sich selbst," Block 101/103, May 1982, 12, uncatalogued brochure, Papiertiger Archive and Library, Berlin.

were compounded by the fact that in addition to renovation work most squatters also had

casual full-time jobs. For the interpersonal dynamics of many squats, this "double

burden," as one squatter called it, of evenings and entire weekends spent renovating

while also earning money or attending school, generated "an enormous amount of stress

that could only be dealt with inside the group." But more often than not, it was the

women squatters in mixed houses who drew attention to one central paradox in their male

comrades' calls to "live differently than their parents." For one incensed woman squatter

it just "wasn't enough to throw down a pot of spaghetti once a week with the noodles so

overcooked that they got stuck in your throat, or to play with kids only when they are not

crying and have clean diapers."[333] She put forward her own explanation for the "division

of labor inside the squats" with a reference to the symbolic beginnings of the second-

wave women's movement in West Germany by concluding that, "clearly not enough

tomatoes had been thrown and too many women have stayed by men's sides." [334]

Regardless of gender arrangements, negotiating differences and managing group

conflict were part and parcel of squatters' experiments in alternative forms of working

and living. This reality stood in stark contrast to a conservative, if not benign, clichéd

stereotype of collective living arrangements as utopian "models of harmony and

sharing."[335] The idea of political living collectives, or *Wohngemeinschaften* or WG, had

its roots in the student movement of the late 60s and early 70s, and embodied the

rejection of bourgeois domesticity centered on the nuclear family. However, the

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[333] "Sachschaden. Häuser und andere Kämpfe," *Taz-Journal* 3 (1981): 106.

[334] Sigrid Rüger, frustrated by sexism and ignorance of women's issues in the New Left, broke up a podium discussion by throwing a tomato at Hans-Jürgen Krahl, a leading SDS figure, during his speech at the organization's annual meeting in Frankfurt. For more, see Helke Sander, Margit Püttmann, and Marlene Streeruwitz, *Wie weit flog die Tomate?: Eine 68erinnen-Gala der Reflexion* (Berlin: Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, 1999).

[335] Large, *Berlin*, 495.

squatters' movement took this idea of a collective living to a new dimension. One squatter made the point that, "[we] are a group of 35 people and although most [of us] lived in a WG before, this form of living together is new to everyone."[336] These large communal living arrangements were intimately tied to alternative economic and consumption practices and a voice in shaping the neighborhood. For Kreuzberg squatters the spatial intersection of housing and work realized in converted former factory buildings or in tenements represented "[their] way of opposing bourgeois lifestyles [...] since an integral part of achieving our larger political goals/work is organizing our own needs."[337]

Exactly how groups organized their everyday lives inside the house differed from squat to squat. This variation too depended on any given group's political motivations for squatting in the first place, whether the protest stemmed from failed government policies and efforts to "save" the neighborhood or from a militant expression of protest against a rigid culture of social conformity. On a more basic level, for many West German youth life inside the squat was "the first time in [their] lives that [they'd] found a real home."[338] Yet despite varying political statements or social emphases for squatting, the interior design scheme that appealed to all squats was one that maximized the common spaces, especially the kitchen, to facilitate social interaction. To realize this, squats tore down walls between two or three smaller units on the same floor to make a common space or kitchen that could accommodate up to 30 or 40 people.[339] Or alternatively, inside one

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[336] "Block-Revue – Wir lassen uns nicht einwickeln einplanen einpacken können sie sich selbst,"Block 101/103, May 1982, 9, uncatalogued brochure, Papiertiger Archive and Library, Berlin.

[337] Squatters' flyer, no title, 1981, uncatalogued, Sammlung Berlin, Berlin.

[338] *Was wird in den besetzten Häusern gemacht?*

[339] Anke Borcherding, *Oranienstraße 198 in Berlin-Kreuzberg: Ein Wohn- und Beschäftigungsprojekt im Block 104 - Sanierungsgebiet Kottbusser Tor.* STATTBAU Stadtentwicklungsgesellschaft mbH

apartment, walls between existing rooms were torn down to create a larger common space.

In the same vein, one squat assigned collective projects and service-oriented workshops to the first floor of the tenement, renovated seven apartments for bedrooms and designated the top floor for the common room and communal kitchen. In another squat, the group arranged themselves into smaller groups of five and from the original two or three smaller apartments on each floor they renovated one bigger apartment for each of the five *WGs*. Each apartment had its own bathroom and kitchen and the squat designated the entire third floor as common space for the whole house; this space was used for regular group meetings (*Plena*), parties, films and theater performances. Another squat created its communal kitchen and dining room to accommodate forty people by consolidating three rooms on the first floor of the front house. Each squat had its own distinct way of realizing both its vision of a communal living arrangement and the modification of the original layout of the tenement to establish the common spaces as the squat's focal point.

This diversity of arrangements also extended to household responsibilities and finances. In one Schöneberg squat depicted in a special feature on squatting in *Die Zeit Magazin*, squatters did not feel it necessary to stick to a fixed plan for kitchen duty, instead "everybody just knows when it's his/her turn." And although this system admittedly meant many late nights spent cleaning and doing dishes, one squatter underscored that he had never known a community like the one in his squat.[340] Depending on its size, other squats introduced more structure. In one squat in SO 36, each person

Treuhänderischer Sanierungsträger Berlins, i. A. der Senatsverwaltung für Bau- und Wohnungswesen, 1995, 6.

[340] Ingeborg Drewitz, "Morgen Leute, denkt nur nicht, wir räumen," *Die Zeit Magazin*, 39, 1981.

contributed 60 German marks (DM) every ten days to the common pot; for building

materials each person was expected to throw in another 30 DM per month.[341] To save on

other expenses, this same squat pooled resources with a few other squats in the

neighborhood to buy coal, vegetables, fruit and other foodstuffs in bulk. Some squats had

a fixed cooking plan, others not. Irrespective of these different arrangements, the main

decision-making platform was the house plenum. All house initiatives, ideas, and above

all problems or conflicts had to be discussed before any major decision was made.

Staying true to the principles of transparency and non-hierarchical decision making in a

self-administered house or collective, the plenum required, not surprisingly according to

one member of the all-woman "Chocolate Factory" squat, "a lot of time, energy, and

endurance."[342]

But for those who adhered to the ideals of collective self-management, other

aspects of self-managed living offset the long hours at a weekly plenum. For many

squatters, the shared kitchens with tables large enough to seat two-dozen people and on

which "bread rolls, cheese, tobacco [were] piled up and the coffee [was] never enough"

were ideal spaces for spontaneous political discussions with other house occupants,

visitors and friends from other squats or from West Germany. These spaces also

facilitated debates and discussion about the movement's "hopes, differences,

commonalities and frustrations" as well a place to discuss broader political issues around

"prison politics, nuclear energy, nuclear rearmament and NATO policies."[343] The large

kitchens could also easily accommodate the rotating neighborhood kitchen or *Kiezküche*,

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[341] Asta FU, ed., "Hausbesetzer: eine documentation," 1981, 18, Sammlung Berlin, Berlin.

[342] Petra Bosse, *Ökologische Massnahmen im Frauenstadtteilzentrum Schokoladenfabrik* (Berlin: S.T.E.R.N., 1988), 12.

[343] "Breakfast Internationale," in *Sachschaden: Häuser und andere Kämpfe, taz journal* 3 (Frankfurt/Main: Die Tageszeitung, 1981), 158.

nights for which every squat in the block was in charge of cooking one day a month for its neighbors.

In visual depictions of a shared kitchen inside a squat, one sees a least ten people sitting around a table cluttered with coffee mugs, newspapers and leaflets, and a large pot or casserole dish at the center of the table for the taking. Some squats placed a long second-hand sofa against one wall of the kitchen alongside the table to ensure more sitting room, some sat on chairs, some stood. At first glance it becomes clear that the space of the kitchen and its role as a central space inside the squat willfully turns on its head the postwar notion of the "ideal dwelling" with its small, efficient modern kitchen, a well-ordered arrangement of the rooms and the everyday household objects that adorned its shelves and walls. In West Germany, the kitchen functioned as a space normally associated with the nuclear family, but above all else with the wife and mother. The emergence of the family and home as one central arena of West German politics and the bulwark of a postwar recovery was particularly powerful in the early construction of a German identity that was to be firmly anti-communist and anti-Nazi.[344]

Perceived as a distinct space to be protected from the public and thus political sphere, the home, more specifically the kitchen, played a vital function in constructing women's roles in the new democratic and consumerist West German society.[345] Thus the association with the domestic kitchen as an exclusively feminine sphere, one in which women both literally and symbolically nourished the "nation," remained potent despite a

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[344] Robert Moeller, "Reconstructing the Family in Reconstruction Germany: Women and Social Policy in the Federal Republic, 1949-1955," *Feminist Studies* 15, no. 1 (Spring 1989); Elizabeth Heinemann, *What Difference Does a Husband Make?: Women and Marital Status in Nazi and Postwar Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

[345] Castillo, *Cold War on the Home Front*; Ruth Oldenziel and Karin Zachmann, *Cold War Kitchen: Americanization, Technology, and European Users* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009).

gradual liberalization of conservative domestic and gender mores in the wake of a post-1968 feminist and gay and lesbian movements. Cooking and eating collectively as was the everyday practice inside the squat, albeit in an arguably private space, directly challenged the presumed West German value placed on the kitchen and by extension the home-cooked meal for the nuclear family as an embodiment of a healthy, middle-class existence. As Alice Weinreb has persuasively argued, the political importance of the home-cooked meal in West Germany not only helped to redefine gender relations but also exposed the class implications of the perception of collective or communal eating as a slippery slope to communism.[346]

Infusing a new political and cultural understanding into domestic space, communal living and working inside the squat furthered a sense of a community that squatters cultivated as an alternative to the "organized inhumanity of the concrete block" –that is, the standardized blocks of modernist housing. For one squatter this domestic arrangement was an everyday reminder that "one could do more together" than when "sitting alone vegetating away in one-room apartment."[347] Another squatter asked, "Who in this city doesn't know the tortuous loneliness and the emptiness of everyday life?"[348] And as yet another squatter put it, "most of us moved [into the squat] because we wanted to break out of the [standard] pattern of either living in isolation in a one-room apartment or as a couple."[349] Together these statements reveal a sentiment shared by all segments of Kreuzberg's left-alternative scene. While some squatters were first motivated to squat as

[346] Alice Weinreb, "Matters of Taste: The Politics of Food in Divided Germany, 1945-1971," (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2009).

[347] "Blockrevue, Operation Picobello, Block 101/103," May 1982, 11, uncatalogued brochure, Papiertiger Archive and Library, Berlin.

[348] Flyer, "Offener Brief an die Bürger Berlins!" signed by Schöneberger Besetzerrat, uncatalogued, Sammlung Berlin, Berlin.

[349] Flyer, "Hauskonzept 10.10.81," uncatalogued, Papiertiger Archive and Library, Berlin.

a protest against the destruction of affordable housing, others squatted as a form of protest against a society in transformation not able to meet their lifestyle politics. Broadly speaking, both standpoints promoted the creation of alternative and communal spaces that can be understood as one response to a growing sense of alienation from the state. The potent symbol of this disaffection in the late 70s and early 80s was the mid-rise modernist residential building. For squatters, the pre-fab, modernist "concrete block" thus became an apt metaphor for the isolation and loneliness they felt was imposed upon them by the state.

Tenant activists initially squatted as a statement against the city's renewal politics. The events, however, in Kreuzberg following the December 12 conflict galvanized a new wave of squatting and militant protest as West Berlin joined Zurich and Amsterdam as yet another locus of urban unrest. As the West Berlin movement grew in numbers and subsequently diverged in political standpoints, a left-alternative infrastructure blossomed in Kreuzberg. Whatever the intentions of individual squatters, the squatters' movement of the early 1980s had firmly fixed the neighborhood's reputation as an iconic space of radical protest. The movement created and defended spaces and places in which to live and work, and in the process sustained both a reality and a myth of radical political and social possibilities. The following chapter explores the limitations to these left-alternative ideals of community and neighborhood at a time when Kreuzberg became the focus of public debates on leftist radicalism, but also as a "Turkish ghetto." It is to those issues that Chapter Four will turn.

Figure 3.1: Remains of the Bölle supermarket in Kreuzberg after the May 1 riot in 1987. Source: http://www.umbruch-bildarchiv.de/
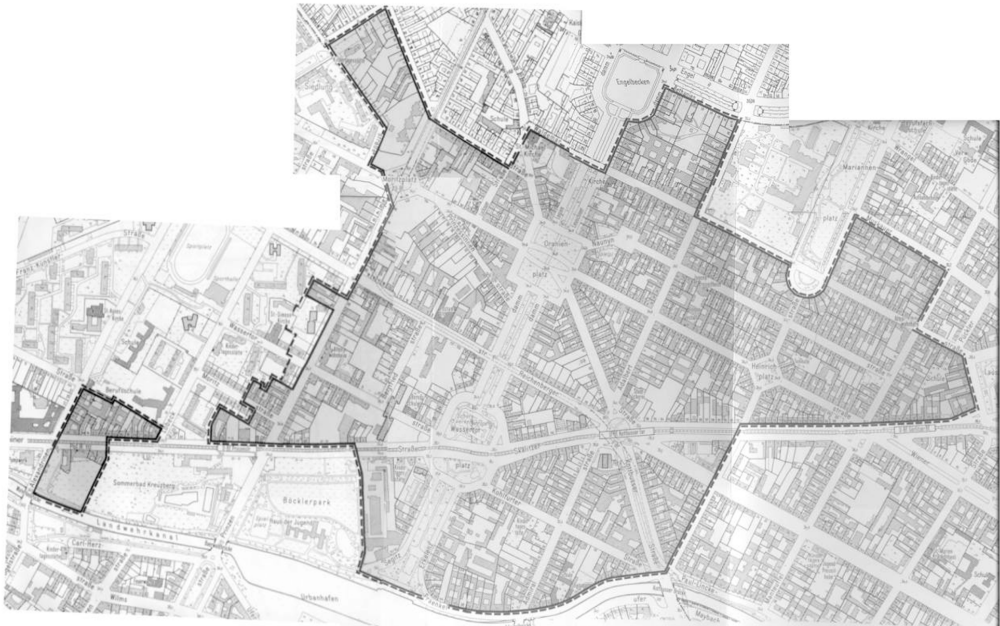
Figure 3.2: Urban Renewal Area Kreuzberg-Kottbusser Tor. Source:
http://www.sanierung-berlin.de/sankot/Gebiet/gebiet.html

Figure 3.3: Kreuzberg Mietskaserne in the 1980s. Photo in Jürgen Henschel, *der Fotograf der Wahrheit Bilder aus Kreuzberg 1967-1988* **(Berlin, 2006), 75.**

Figure 3.4: Inside a neglected Mietskaserne (1980s). Source: http://einestages.spiegel.de/external/ShowAuthorAlbumBackground/a18743/l5/l0/F. html#featuredEntry

Figure 3.5: Block 89 in Kreuzberg near Oranienstrasse. Source:
http://www.umbruchbildarchiv.de/bildarchiv/foto1/berlin1982/pages/1329f.htm

**Figure 3.6: Renovated courtyard of the Rainbow Factory (Regenbogenfabrik).
Source: http://www.hausprojekte-solidarfonds.de**

Figure 3.7: Courtyard of the Rainbow Factory shortly after it was squatted. Source: http://www.regenbogenfabrik.de/

Chapter Four

Kreuzberg is in Germany: The Making of an Urban "Ghetto"

In 1990, the question of whether the capital of a reunified Germany should remain in Bonn or return to its pre-Cold War location in Berlin sparked a vigorous national debate that ended with a close vote in favor of the historic capital. In arguing his case against Berlin, then premier of Bavaria Max Streibl declared that "Kreuzberg as capital (*eine Hauptstadt Kreuzberg*) is certainly the last thing we could wish for."[350] Streibl's self-assured allusion to Kreuzberg, a district of the city bordered by the Spree and East Berlin, positioned spatially and metaphorically on the margins of the FRG, and traditionally associated with the working class and migrant laborers, reveals the neighborhood's cultural and political importance as a locus of West German anxieties. Streibl could assume that his reference would resonate broadly for a West German audience given that since the early 1970s Kreuzberg had been continually constructed in both the mainstream media and the popular imagination as home to two distinct yet related categories of threat: the "foreigner" (generally the working-class migrant from Turkey) and the radical leftist.

Whereas the last two chapters outlined an alternative set of policies and visions of the inner-city neighborhood that developed in opposition to a top-down urban renewal apparatus, this chapter examines the limitations to visions of social inclusion and community that were articulated in these oppositional discourses. It points to the underlying racialized and ethnicized assumptions that were embedded in these debates,

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[350] "Personalien: Berlin. Die Hauptstadt," *Der Spiegel*, 37, 1990, 274.

and argues that depictions of migrants in mainstream media and political discourse had profound implications for the ways in which subversive and rhetorically alternative progressive groups in Kreuzberg imagined their neighborhood space.

This chapter will first look at how a stigmatizing picture of the neighborhood as a "Turkish ghetto" coincided with developments in German migration policy in the 1970s. Indeed, as the visibility of working-class immigrants grew, a number of municipal governments, including that of West Berlin, passed discriminatory laws and regulations intended to address the "foreigner problem."[351] Complementing these laws, the mainstream media regularly carried fear-provoking references to U.S. urban ghettos laden with obvious racial overtones. Official ambivalence vis-à-vis permanent immigration as well as outright hostility to the socio-spatial organization of Kreuzberg were reflected in rehabilitation policies, which unfairly disadvantaged migrants from Turkey while simultaneously depicting the residential patterns of these same migrants as part of the problem that urban renewal practices were meant to remedy.

The remainder of the chapter explores this societal ambivalence surrounding the pejorative characterization of Kreuzberg as a migrant ghetto in the context of the political activism of Kreuzberg's second most visible group: the loose network of left-alternative activists and organizations. In their opposition to official housing politics – and to the established order more generally – activists in Kreuzberg attempted to open up spaces for alternative social relationships, at times outright rejecting framing concepts such as the nation-state, imperialism, and the capitalist system. Given the left's symbolic identification with revolutionary movements in South Africa and Central America and

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[351] In addition to West Berlin, Hamburg and Frankfurt.

leftists use of anti-imperialist and anti-racist rhetoric and images, it may seem surprising that issues such as structural racism and the exploitation of migrants in the movement's struggle to reclaim Kreuzberg were absent. This fact deserves some sustained attention. Literally occupying the same physical space in a neighborhood synonymous with public fears around immigration and heterogeneity, Kreuzberg's activists in the 1980s reproduced instead of challenged static images of migrants from Turkey, often drawing upon the same vocabulary and stereotypes as that used in mainstream public debate. This unintentional blind spot had consequences. Not recognizing class- and race-based oppression as a problem prevented radical left and progressive activists from mounting a sustained critique of what it meant to be German.

Postwar Migration to West Germany

For the FRG, the decades of the 1950s and 1960s saw a massive increase in demands for wage labor as its postwar economy gained strength. In West Germany and West Berlin, labor migrants from eight Mediterranean countries were deliberately recruited in order to satisfy this labor shortage; in West Berlin, the numbers of recruited workers increased dramatically after the construction of the Wall in 1961 brought to a halt the daily influx of workers from East to West. In light of the unprecedented population movements at war's end and in the first years after the Second World War, the category of "foreigner" was a highly contested one in occupied Germany.[352] The

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[352] For more on earlier waves of migration to Germany and reliance on foreign labor, see Klaus J. Bade, ed., *Auswanderer - Wanderarbeiter - Gastarbeiter: Bevölkerung, Arbeitsmarkt und Wanderung in Deutschland seit der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Ostfildern: Scripta Mercaturae Verlag, 1984); Klaus J. Bade, ed., *Population, Labor and Migration in 19th and 20th Century Germany* (Leamington Spa: Berg, 1987); Christoph Kleßmann, *Polnische Bergarbeiter im Ruhrgebiet: 1870–1945* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978); Herbert, *Geschichte der Ausländerpolitik in Deutschland*; Konrad Jarausch and

relationship between labor and foreigners in the postwar FRG was highly complex, as there were many populations of recently arrived men and women who were perceived, often simultaneously, as potential and necessary workers and as potential economic, and even racial threats. Germany from the late 1940s and early 1950s was home to many groups of people conceived of in various ways as "foreign," all of which must be distinguished from one another.

It is first important to distinguish between individuals grouped under the category displaced persons or DPs at the end of the war. This category included survivors of concentration camps, forced laborers persecuted by the Nazi regime and forced to work in Germany, and prisoners of war. Millions of DPs were quickly repatriated, but many others, such as Jewish DPs, spent up to five years in the western zone of occupation until decisions were made to emigrate. Thus, Germany became the unwilling host of its former victims and, as Atina Grossmann has recently argued, "perceptions and self-perceptions of Jewish DPs as survivors, victims and villains" reveal the "contradictory and ambivalent" way in which contemporaries viewed the presence of this category of "foreigners" in postwar Germany.[353]

A second category of "foreigner" included ethnic German refugees and expellees from the east. Arriving in occupied Germany in the millions, the expellees encountered a resentful local population who saw them as competition for scarce resources and jobs. While expellees did initially experience economic and social marginalization, they were accorded equal political rights by the new West German state seeing as they were ethnic

Michael Geyer, "Unsettling German Society: Moblity and Migration," in *Shattered Past: Reconstructing German Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 197-220.

[353] Atina Grossmann, "Victims, Villains, and Survivors: Gendered Perceptions and Self-Perceptions of Jewish Displaced Persons in Occupied Postwar Germany," *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 11, no. 1/2 (2002): 291-318.

Germans.[354] Importantly, a generation later, the grandchildren of those same expellees, whose parents had been young children at the time of expulsion, experienced none of the social, cultural, and economic discrimination given their parents or grandparents' place of birth. Ironically, however, the new West German state instrumentalized the expellee experience to help bolster memories of collective German suffering and victimhood at the hands of the Red Army. Consequently, these collective memories were woven into a national narrative in the founding years of the Federal Republic in turn producing a dual narrative of perpetrator/victim that became central to a nascent West German identity.[355]

Beginning in the 1960s, it was migrant laborers who came to define the category "foreign." For the mostly unskilled and semi-skilled men and women recruited by the state, the German term "*Gastarbeiter*" or "guest worker" explicitly verbalized the official view that their time spent in Germany would be a temporary one.[356] Initially, a bilateral treaty was signed with Italy whose weak postwar economy prompted a government

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[354] Pertti Ahonen, *After the Expulsion: West Germany and Eastern Europe, 1945-1990* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 24; Mathias Beer, Martin Kintzinger, and Martina Krauss, eds., *Migration und Integration: Aufnahme und Eingliederung im historischen Wandel* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1997); Hellmuth Auerbach and Wolfgang Benz, eds., *Die Vertreibung der Deutschen aus dem Osten. Ursachen, Ereignisse, Folgen* (Frankfurt: Fischer Verlag, 1988); Klaus Bade, ed., *Neue Heimat im Westen*: *Vertriebene, Flüchtlinge, Aussiedler* (Münster: Westfälischer Heimatbund, 1990).

[355] Robert Moeller, *War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Frank Biess and Robert G. Moeller, eds., *Histories of the Aftermath: The Legacies of the Second World War in Europe* (New York: Berghahn, 2010); Elizabeth Heineman, "The Hour of the Women: Memories of Germany's 'Crisis Years' and West German National Identity," *American Historical Review* 101, no. 2 (1996): 354-95; Frank Biess, *Homecomings: Returning POWs and the Legacies of Defeat in Postwar Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

[356] Yet as Karen Schönwälder, Anne von Oswald and Barbara Sonnenberger have pointed out in their chapter "*Einwanderungsland Deutschland*: A New Look at its Post-war History," in *European Encounters: Migrants, Migration, and European Societies since 1945*, eds. Karen Schönwälder, Rainer Ohliger, and Triadafilos Triadafiloloupus (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003), West Germany didn't practice a "guestworker" policy if this assumes the existence and implementation of a strategy aimed at short-term employment and prevention of permanent settlement and family reunion. As Ulrich Herbert among others has pointed out, there is a long tradition of labor importation in modern German history. Herbert, *Geschichte der Ausländerpolitik in Deutschland*.

policy to export its surplus workers.[357] In addition to an agreement in 1955 with Italy, the

country that provided the bulk of workers in the first five years of the "guest worker"

program, treaties were also signed with Spain and Greece in 1960; Turkey in 1961;

Morocco in 1963; Portugal in 1964; Tunisia in 1965; and Yugoslavia in 1968.[358] Between

1969 and 1971 recruitment from Turkey reached its peak, so that by the early 1970s an

increasing number of migrant workers coming from Turkey shifted the ethnic

composition of workers arriving, and those choosing to remain, in West Germany.[359] As

of the early 1970s, it was above all the "guest worker" from Turkey who came to

represent the threat of the "foreigner" who had overstayed his/her welcome.[360] This

became even more obvious in 1973 once the FRG declared that its economy no longer

needed a migrant labor force given the anticipated rise in unemployment due to the global

recession; the paradox inherent in the term "guest worker," and the misplaced belief that

flows of migrant workers could be turned "on and off like a faucet," became evident.[361]

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[357] In 1955 the West German government initiated a program of labor recruitment to fill a much needed labor shortage. Given the convergence of such factors as the rapid growth in the West German economy, the postwar re-domestication of German women, the wartime losses of able-bodied working men, and the interruption of skilled and non-skilled workers coming from the East with the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961, the Federal Republic began to recruit millions of "foreigners" to support its thriving economic development.

[358] Migrant workers who arrived in these early years were young men and a moderate fraction of young women who, if married, had left their families behind with hopes of eventually relocating them to Germany; of course, the ideal "guest worker" profile favored both men and women who were young and healthy, single, and without children. The percentage of women recruited under the "guestworker" policy was 23 percent in 1965 and 30 percent by 1973. As was the case with men and women migrant workers, they were recruited for the jobs Germans often refused. See Esra Erdem and Monika Mattes, "Gendered Policies - Gendered Patterns," in *European Encounters*, 170.

[359] The political and economic situation in Turkey by the late 1960s and early 1970s led to an overwhelming response by those seeking better employment opportunities.

[360] A fundamental difference that set apart migrant workers from southern Europe from those workers arriving from non-EC countries was that the former group had the freedom of movement to work and reside anywhere inside the borders of the European Community.

[361] Manuela Bojadzijev and Serhat Karakayali, "Autonomie der Migration 10 Thesen zu einer Methode," in *Turbulente Rände: Neue Perspektiven auf Migration an den Grenzen Europas*, ed. Transit Migration Forschungsgruppe (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2007), 203-210.

Immigrant experiences in Germany and Germans' relationships to immigrants

have not, however, been dictated exclusively by national policy and top-down decisions.

In fact, immigrants themselves resisted these assignments by postwar West German

governments as "temporary" and "non-integrated" members of German society. Since the

1970s, migrants have engaged in a series of struggles to alter these definitions, as well as

attempts to develop strategies to deal with and defy political exclusion and ethnic

chauvinism. In the context of West Germany's efforts to atone for the Holocaust, it may

seem surprising that, officially, West Germany did not encourage or want immigrants.

Instead, the FRG, like its political predecessors continued to define, and defend, an

ethnocultural understanding of a "German" identity and political citizenship. It was not

until 1999 under a Social Democrat/Green government that the 1913 citizenship law was

modified. Since the 1980s scholars and activists have written about postwar migration

emphasizing the active role of immigrants as autonomous agents. More recent historical

studies on postwar migration extend this work and show the ways in which migrants

operated as active forces in the migration regime and integration process and how

everyday interactions between migrants and governmental institutions expose a complex

process of both "being made" and "self-making."[362]

Impassioned debates on questions of immigration and integration in West

Germany coincided, not coincidentally, with a growing fear of the "migrant ghetto," a

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[362] Aihwa Ong, *Buddha is Hiding: Refugees, Citizenship, the New America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003). For more on this discussion in the German context, see Bojadzijev, *Die windige Internationale*; Sabine Hess, "Jenseits der Integration. Eine kulturwissenschaftliche Betrachtung der Integrationsdebatte," in *No Integration. Kulturwissenschaftliche Beiträge zu Fragen von Migration und Integration in Europa*, eds. Sabine Hess, Jana Binder, and Johannes Moser (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2009), 11-26; Encarnación Gutiérrez Rodríguez, *Intellektuelle Migrantinnen: Subjektivitäten im Zeitalter der Globalisierung. Eine dekonstruktive Analyse von Biographien im Spannungsverhaeltnis von Ethnisierung und Vergeschlechtlichung* (Opladen: Leske & Budrich, 1999); Serhat Karakayali, *Gespenster der Migration: zur Genealogie illegaler Einwanderung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2008).

construction of urban space as defined by large enclaves of foreign families (including

children) speaking their own language, eating their own food, posing a threat to the

German nation both by not being German themselves and by threatening, through high

birth rates, to outpopulate Germans. This panic was intimately bound to the perceived

acceleration of family reunions that continued to take place after the government labor

recruitment program was discontinued in 1973, which officially gestured toward the

permanent presence of those ambivalently and discursively constructed as short-term

"guests." Without question, by the early 1980s, West Germany had become a "receiving

society" that refused to officially acknowledge itself as a country of immigration.[363]

Elected into power in 1982, the CDU government under Helmut Kohl pursued hard line

anti-immigrant proposals promising to "reduce the flow of foreigners living in

Germany."[364]

At a time in postwar history when western societies were confronted by major

socio-economic cleavages, Kreuzberg, with its mix of migrants, punks, squatters, and

disaffected working-class youth, became a symbol of the anxieties and challenges facing

West German society.[365] The concerns ranged from high youth unemployment and

questions of immigration to the decline of the welfare state and a deindustrializing

economy. By being displaced onto this one section of the city of West Berlin, these

concerns melded together, as worries over excessive racial mixing, increasing violence

among German youth, and the degeneration of traditional German values seemed to be

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[363] Fatima El-Tayeb, "'Blood is a Very Speical Juice': Racialized Bodies and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century Germany," *International Review of Social History* 44, Supplement 7 (1999): 148-169.

[364] Anton Kaes, Deniz Göktürk and David Gramling, *Germany in Transit: Nation and Migration, 1955-2005* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

[365] Kil and Silver, "From Kreuzberg to Marzahn"; Ruth Mandel, *Cosmopolitan Anxieties: Turkish Challenges to Citizenship and Belonging* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008).

epitomized in the ethnically and politically marginal cityscape of Kreuzberg. Moreover,

in the aftermath of the generational crises of the late 1960s, West Germany entered a

turbulent decade marked by further domestic conflicts in 1977 with the German Autumn,

which culminated with the Red Army Faction's kidnapping and murder of German

industrialist and former Nazi Hanns-Martin Schleyer. The state's reponse to political

violence on the left produced a general atmosphere of anxiety and resulted in the

continued repression of various articulations of leftist dissent.[366] Ultimately these various

fears were projected onto Kreuzberg, a place that had, by the early 1980s, represented

most clearly all of these fears.

The resultant climate of anxiety at this historical moment focused on a so-called

"crisis in the city." Politicians, government agencies and mass media perceived the

"invasion," as *Der Spiegel* called it, of migrant workers from Turkey and their families,

living in close quarters along with leftists of various stripes, as a volatile combination that

commentators discursively characterized as disadvantaged, derelict, and dangerous.[367]

Mainstream newspapers and magazines like *Spiegel* framed this presence of a high

proportion of immigrants in certain urban neighborhoods in terms of "a rise in crime and

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[366] See Belinda Davis, "Activism from Starbuck to Starbucks, or Terror: What's in a Name?" *Radical History Review* 85 (Winter 2003): 37-57; Belinda Davis, "Violence and Memory of the Nazi past in 1960s-70s West German Protest," in *Coping with the Nazi Past: West German Debates on Nazism and Generational Conflict, 1955-1975*, eds. Phillip Gassert and Alan Steinweis (New York: Berghahn, 2006), 210-37; Karrin Hanshew, "Negotiating Terror: Political Violence and Democracy in 1970s West Germany," (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2006).

[367] Since these debates emerged full-force in popular discourse (ghetto/ethnic enclaves) in the early 1970s, Kreuzberg's population has been/remained ethnically diverse, with no one minority nationality making up more than 10 percent of the district's population (according to Schoenwaelder). Although Kreuzberg is constructed as a "Turkish" space by dominant discourse, and while not ideal, I also use the term "Turkish" but mean from Turkey and not "of Turkish origin" as there are a number of social and religious cleavages among immigrants who arrived in the Federal Republic *from* Turkey and who made their home in Kreuzberg. This points to another problem generated by German discourse on issues of multiculturalism and integration: terms are conflated: "*Ausländer*" in public discourse today equals "Muslim" equals "Turkish" equals "Arab." There is no recognition of diversity among so-called "foreigners."

social decay similar to that of Harlem."[368] This was the image evoked more than a decade later by Streibl in his plea to keep Germany's capital out of Berlin. At the same time, however, Kreuzberg's residents attached their own cultural and political meanings to the neighborhood, ones that allowed ethnic diversity to be constructed as positive and that saw alternative living models as paths toward a modernization and liberalization of a "conservative" FRG.[369]

The Making of "Little Istanbul"

As laid out in the previous chapters, the mid-1970s marked a shift in official urban renewal policy, at least in theory, from demolition and new construction to rehabilitation and modernization. Beginning in the late 1960s and early 1970s, it was migrant workers and their families who moved into these substandard housing units, often the only units available to them on the housing market, out of a combination of economic necessity and structural discrimination.[370] The decreasing quality of apartments in the area meant that Kreuzberg, with its densely concentrated population, saw a tremendous flux in demographics as those social groups who could afford to move into newly built social housing ("respectable" German residents) left the neighborhood, while others (migrants and alternative or leftist German youth) took their places as "temporary"

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[368] "Die Türken kommen –rette sich wer kann," *Der Spiegel*, 31, 1973, 24.

[369] See Sean Purdy, "Framing Regent Park: The National Film Board of Canada and the Construction of 'Outcast Spaces' in the Inner City, 1953 and 1994," *Media, Culture and Society* 27, no. 4 (July 2005): 523. Jeffrey Jurgens also explores this idea in his article, "Senses of Race and Place in Berlin and Beyond," unpublished paper.

[370] Cihan Arin, "The Housing Market and Housing policies for the Migrant Labor Population in West Berlin," in *Urban Housing Segregation of Minorities in Western Europe and the United States*, ed. Elizabeth D. Huttman (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991), 202; Cihan Arin, "Berlin's Gastarbeiter," *Urban Design International* 1-2 (1979): 32-35; Seyfi Özgen, "Wie 'die' wohnen. Wie Ausländer wohnen wollen und wohnen müssen," *Der Architekt* (1983): 531-32.

renters until the renewal process began. This cycle in turn created a paradox. Renewal

agents and private owners rented substandard apartments to migrants who were shut out

of the rental housing market, and therefore only able to find ill-equipped apartments in

poor condition.

The obvious result of this discriminatory practice was that a disproportionate

number of migrants resided in working-class inner city districts like Kreuzberg and they

were held responsible for the "decline" of the neighborhood. Their presence literally

"marked" the neighborhood as a blighted area.[371] Though poor housing quality in

Kreuzberg was in fact largely due to the deliberate negligence of the city-owned housing

corporations, West German public officials had transformed Kreuzberg by the early

1970s into the paradigmatic example of the urgent need to push through renewal policies

ostensibly aimed at improving both housing and the socio-economic structure of inner-

city neighborhoods.[372] A brochure distributed as part of a series by the Ministry for

Building, Urban Affairs, and Spatial Development provides one example of how urban

repair was connected to addressing the apparent "problem" of neighborhoods with a high

percentage of "foreigners." Speaking to the innovative approach to neighborhood

rehabilitation as advanced by the 1977 "Strategies for Kreuzberg" competition, the

authors of the report remarked that "under the circumstances of having such a high

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[371] This practice was not specific to West Berlin, but occurring across Western Europe and North America.

[372] To those opposing modernist renewal policies, the neighborhood embodied the failure of Cold War planning to recognize the historic value of inner city neighborhoods, while at the same time criticizing the limited room left in the official decision-making process for public participation. The protest focused on the fact that decisions regarding where and how people should live on Berlin were made in Bonn, with little attention/interest in the desires and needs of specific populations.

Turkish population, the search for new forms of urban renewal in Kreuzberg is of special importance."[373]

Parallel to the discursive shift in renewal politics from demolition to modernization and the sign of a more visible critique of urban planning practices, the official policy of labor recruitment came to an abrupt end.[374] In the years following the official end to recruitment initiatives in 1973, the percentage of migrants from Turkey continued to outnumber other foreign nationalities as these other numbers started to decrease, while at the same time recruited workers campaigned for their families to join them in Germany. Immigrants constituted a little over 11 percent of the total population in West Berlin and of that percentage migrants from Turkey comprised the greatest numbers of the immigrant population. The district of Kreuzberg had the highest percentage of immigrants in any residential neighborhood in West Berlin and in West Germany with 23 percent, but in certain parts of the neighborhood, such as SO 36 or the area around Kottbusser Tor, over 50 percent of the population.[375]

In 1978, when the city council announced its backing of a building exhibition to confirm its commitment to modernization and rehabilitation of the inner-city housing stock, the city's official preamble to the IBA's objectives made reference to what it considered today's concerns facing urban planning in the city; "the scientific engagement with the problems of inner city development, such as migration outward [either to other West Berlin districts or to West Germany], and the replacement by guest workers […],

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[373] Tiedemann, *Bürgerbeteiligung bei der Stadterneuerung Beispiel: Kreuzberg.*

[374] Recession in the early 1970s combined with the global oil crisis in 1973 led to the first sustained peak of unemployment in since the early 1950s. As the numbers of German unemployed soared, the public called for a halt to "foreign" labor recruitment.

[375] Jürgen Hoffmeyer-Zlotnick, *Gastarbeiter im Sanierungsgebiet: Das Beispiel Berlin-Kreuzberg*, (Hamburg: Christians, 1977).

has led to a different understanding of urban development after the [most recent] stage of dividing the city into functional zones (*Entflechtung*)."[376] By pointing to the modernist renewal practice, the city was responding directly to critiques put forward by opponents of its postwar policies; at the same time the official discourse readily designates the residential concentration of migrants in inner-city districts to one the "problems" that demanded attention. Significantly, the Senate could refer to the phenomenon of outward migration of a certain socio-economic group of German residents from the inner-city districts simply by using the term *Abwanderung*, meaning exodus or migration, without having to give any further explanation. In a different section of the report, the Senate connected the creation of a so-called minority enclave and the demise of the neighborhood more explicitly. In a relatively novel discussion of the tenement block as a part of the historical legacy of the city, the Senate pointed to the indicators of tenement dilapidation, the renewal of which had become "an issue of our generation."[377] According to housing officials, these symptoms of "decay" that served to "threaten the inner city" included "unhealthy apartments, dark courtyards, empty units, closed stores, unsafe streets, and the concentration of socially underprivileged groups and foreigners."[378]

After 1973, an additional factor that supposedly contributed to the imminent death of the West German inner city entered professional discourse and public debate. Articulated in similar ways by politicians, housing associations and the media, the discourse on the emergence of slums in West German cities in the years following the

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[376] Abgeordnetenhaus Berlin, "Vorlage zum Beschluss der Internationale Bauausstellung," 1978. Additionally, the use of the word *Entflechtung* or disentanglement could be read as neutral if not positive connotation to describe the modernist policies of the 1960s, policies that the preliminary IBA guidelines of the Senate were meant to remedy.

[377] Ibid.

[378] Ibid.

official halt to recruitment or *Anwerbestopp* shifted qualitatively to include the threatening image of the "ethnic ghetto." West Berlin's inner- city neighborhoods fed into West German fears about the number of immigrants from Turkey and the focus on how to regulate or control this population. In the context of an economic recession and fears of a changing social situation, this perceived threat of the slum dovetailed with the now public concern over ways to "control" the "flood of guest workers."[379] As scholars have shown, historical and contemporary depictions of slums reveal a racialized construction of the physical space inhabited by the disadvantaged and minorities.[380] White, middle-class notions of what "proper" homes and neighborhoods constituted are projected onto these communities, a critique which masked the underlying structural causes of decline in inner city neighborhoods.

This period of economic recession and uncertainty corresponded to a historical moment in postwar German history in which questions of race and ethnicity and "Germanness" moved discussions on the "guest worker" question to the foreground of official and public discourse. As Rita Chin has demonstrated, at the same time that West Germany's labor policies shifted, so too did the category of the "guest worker" from being someone wholly advantageous, albeit exclusively in an economic sense, to becoming a looming menace vis-à-vis the German public.[381] While the West German

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[379] Compare Rita Chin, *The Guest Worker Question in Postwar Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); "Markt der Menschenhaendler," *Der Spiegel*, 13, 1973, 60.

[380] Alan Mayne, *The Imagined Slum: Newspaper Representation in Three Cities, 1870-1914* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1993); Seth Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); Judith Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Purdy, "Framing Regent Park."

[381] Historical treatments of immigrant/guest workers are wanting in several respects. See Chin, *The Guest Worker Question*; Herbert, *Geschichte der Ausländerpolitik in Deutschland*; Karen Schönwälder, *Einwanderung und ethnische Pluralität: politische Entscheidungen und öffentliche Debatten in Großbritannien und der Bundesrepublik von den 1950er bis zu den 1970er Jahren* (Essen: Klartext-Verlag,

state actively pursued migrant laborers and opened its doors to asylum seekers and

refugees, these de facto new immigrants, once inside the country, were legally and

culturally defined as outsiders. Thus, despite a constitutional framework that allowed

relaxed entry into the Federal Republic, the postwar identity of West Germany was

explicitly founded on a set of political and cultural principles, understood as immutable,

that declared the country "not a nation of immigration."[382] This narrowly defined political

and cultural framework continuously assigned immigrants to an outsider status, one that

was based on differences in appearance, dress, food, language and religion.[383]

The Senate's fourteenth report on urban renewal published in 1978 explicitly

conflates the urban planning ills, in other words, the structural qualities of the nineteenth-

century tenements, with the spatial concentration of an ethnic minority.

> The results of a recently completed investigation of this section of Kreuzberg
> have shown that the extensive urban planning ills [*städtebaulichen Misständen*]
> contribute to this neighborhood around the Wrangelstrasse as having the worst
> living conditions. In addition to these structural urban ills, the current
> demographic trend is a crucial reason for a much-needed renewal of the area,
> since there is an increase in foreign residents who replace the steady loss of the
> German population.[384]

As urban historians and sociologists have noted, the concept of urban decline and the

looming image of the slum, long associated in the German consciousness with the city of

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2001); Brett Klopp, *German Multiculturalism: Immigrant Integration and the Transformation of Citizenship* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2002).

[382] As Christian Joppke has noted, "Germany is not alone in not defining itself as nation of immigrants, it is the only country that has not become tired of repeating it," *Immigration and the Nation-State: The United States, Germany, and Great Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 62.

[383] See most recently, Rita Chin, Geoff Eley, Heide Fehrenbach, and Atina Grossmann, *After the Nazi Racial State Difference and Democracy in Germany and Europe* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan University Press, 2009); Cathy Gelbin, Kader Konuk, and Peggy Piesche, eds., *Aufbrüche: Kulturelle Produktionen von Migrantinnen, Schwarzen und jüdischen Frauen in Deutschland* (Königstein: Ulrike Helmer Verlag, 1999).

[384] Der Senator für Bau und Wohnungswesen, *14. Bericht ueber Stadterneuerung 1.1.1978-31.12.1979*, Mitteilung des Präsidenten des Abgeordnetenhauses von Berlin, 86, Drucksache 8/531, 45.

Berlin, reemerged after postwar economic prosperity had slowly ground to a halt.[385] In the 1970s, the West German media conflated any residential clustering of migrants groups in urban centers, but above all in Kreuzberg, with the negative depiction of the slum. Once these areas had been labeled "areas under renewal investigation" and the properties subsequently neglected by owners, the apartments became an attractive low-cost housing option for immigrant workers and their families, who found they did not have to compete with Germans for affordable housing or fear discrimination by landlords. This image of a neighborhood in decline strengthened the case for demolition and legal regulations for the forced dispersal of migrants from Turkey.

The perceived temporariness of these housing units made migrants particularly attractive tenants for landlords who saw them as an easy clientele to occupy the apartments on a temporary basis –often leasing at an excessive price– before the razing of the area was to begin.[386] In contrast, German renters might lay a longer claim to the apartments and, more significantly, might also be more informed of their legal rights. This preference further supported the view that migrants were a temporary phenomenon in German society. This readiness to overlook the long-term social implications of a labor recruitment program meant that urban renewal discourse in West Berlin remained couched in a rhetoric that favored the short-term over the permanent. The decade between 1970 and 1980 saw an increase in migrant families from Turkey moving from substandard apartments to the next areas inside Kreuzberg earmarked for demolition.

[385] See Alison Isenberg, *Downtown America*: *A History of the Place and the People Who Made It* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); Patrick Simon, "Gentrification of Old Neighborhoods and Social Integration in Europe" in *Cities in Contemporary Europe,* 210-232.

[386] Hartmut Häußermann and Andreas Kapphan, *Berlin: von der geteilten zur gespaltenen Stadt? Sozialräumlicher Wandel seit 1990* (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 2000); Hoffmeyer-Zlotnik, *Gastarbeiter im Sanierungsgebiet.*

This practice in turn led one critical observer to label migrants the "new *Trockenwohner*," drawing a parallel to the era of nineteenth-cenntury building speculation and the related exploitation of the most vulnerable of the working classes seeking affordable housing.

Due to their vulnerable legal status, migrants were unable to rely on proper government channels to demand improved housing.[387] But, when asked, migrants repeatedly remarked on the role discrimination played in preventing them from securing adequate housing. One letter from a Turkish-speaking resident of Kreuzberg sent to the Berlin daily paper the *B.Z.* disrupts the commonly held assumption that migrants' social choices and economic decisions best explained the substandard housing conditions in which they lived. "We are a family of five, in West Berlin since 1971, living in a 3-room apartment" wrote Kreuzberg resident Tayyar Kizgin in his 1976 letter to the *B.Z.*, "only one of the three rooms is heatable. The one room we can heat (13 square meters), we use as both a living room and the children's bedroom. My constant efforts to find another apartment have failed either because we're foreigners (Turkish) or because the apartment was financially unaffordable."[388]

This enduring popular conceptualization of migrant workers as, exclusively, temporary workers, overlooked the challenges and struggles of immigrant families to achieve a degree of security in German society. For example, for the first generation of workers, housing in the barrack or dormitory (*Wohnheim*) was dependent on an individual's labor contract, and one was expected to leave the premise when the labor

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[387] Arin, "Berlin's Gastarbeiter," 32; Cihan Arin, "Beteiligungsmodelle können den Ausweg weisen: Zur Wohnsituation ausländischer kinderreicher Familien," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, July 17, 1985, 12.

[388] Kemal Kurt and Erika Meyer, *…weil wir Türken sind*, Türk oldugumuz icin. Bilder und Texte von Türken. Dt.-Türk (Berlin: Express-Edition, 1981), 81.

contract expired or was terminated.[389] Coupled with the work contract, dormitory

accommodations facilitated state processes of exclusion. In this way, the state had spatial

control over labor migrants in addition to denying or hindering social developments such

as family reunions and marriages. Just a few years later, when migrants began actively

participating in the rental market, they faced legal and social discriminatory practices.

One man, who came to West Berlin in 1971, lived in a *Wohnheim* for his first year in

Germany. His wife followed him in 1972 and his two children in 1974. Living in a one-

room apartment with 2 adults and 2 children, this one family's search for an affordable

and adequately sized apartment reflects the situation for many migrant families in the

1970s and early 1980s. According to this man, "when we find an apartment to let, we go

and put our name on the list. But we never get the apartment. We've been looking for

ages now. We keep trying. The landlords just don't rent to foreigners."[390]

    A 1979 information report on renewal and modernization published by city

housing officials and directed specifically at Kreuzberg residents reveals the attachment

to an illusion of an interim stay: "Those who can afford it move to a nicer neighborhood;

those left behind, stay mainly because of the low rents, and consist of families on a

limited income and the elderly. At the same time […] there is an increase in the numbers

of residents in the renewal areas under investigation staying only temporarily, for

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[389] Stephan Lanz, *Berlin aufgemischt, abendländlich, multikulturell, kosmopolitisch? Die politische Konstruktion einer Einwanderungsstadt* (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2007), 64.

[390] Kurt and Meyer, … *weil wir Tuerken sind*, 18. As Ulrich Herbert and Karin Hunn among others have noted, "living conditions of foreign workers remained externally the most visible sign of their underprivileged and disadvantaged status in Germany," Herbert and Hunn, "Guest Workers and Policy on Guest Workers in the Federal Republic," in Schissler, ed., *The Miracle Years*, 201. Contrary to popular belief, this point was not lost on some migrant organizations active in Kreuzberg in the 1980s. See IGI Initiative Gleichberechtigung "Integration," *Stellungnahme der Ausländer zur Ausländerpolitik* (Berlin: Express-Edition, 1981); *Oranienstrasse 22: Wo unser Herz schlägt* Eine Dokumentation der HDB (Berlin: Progressive Volkseinheit der Türkei in Berlin-West e.V., 1984).

example, students and foreigners."[391] The reality, however, defied this assumption. By the early 70s housing was an integral part of migrants' daily struggles. Men saved up to bring over wives, parents, and children. Moreover, the FRG also recruited female workers, leading to an increase of marriages among migrants already living in Germany.[392] Marriages inside Germany and the acceleration of family reunions in the early 70s continued to expose a reality that was in direct opposition to the "ideal" migrant labourer meant to be seen as "a transitional, mobile figure not permanently rooted in West German society."[393]

Residential patterns of ethnic minorities, in particular migrants from Turkey, served as a barometer for the shifts in West German debates on the "foreigner's" so-called ability to integrate.[394] Housing played a role in constructing the ways in which Germans thought about and feared the "foreigner." Thus when living in the barracks, the migrants appeared less threatening than when those same migrants moved into rental properties, places where "their way of living" could no longer be regulated and monitored in the same way. What later became available to migrant families was a confined rental market of small, badly maintained apartments with inadequate facilities in the *Mietskasernen* slated for eventual demolition. This restriction of choice for rental housing in turn produced residential segregation and unequal access to public services. Speaking to this obvious form of inequality, one Turkish man pointed to the no-win situation for tenants from Turkey: "The Turks live mainly in old condemned apartment houses. The

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[391] Der Senator für Bau und Wohnungswesen und Bezirksamt Kreuzberg, *Stadterneuerung: Untersuchungsbereich Mariannenplatz Nord Bezirk Kreuzberg. Ergebnisse der Untersuchungen- Vorschläge zur Planung- Information für Betroffene* (Berlin: Engelmann, 1979), 10.

[392] See Erdem, "Migrant Women and Economic Justice."

[393] Chin, *The Guest Worker Question*, 5.

[394] Lanz, *Berlin aufgemischt, abendlaendlich, multikulturell, kosmopolitisch*, 65.

landlords let the foreigners move in and then let the houses rot and then tell us that the house has to be torn down. We are left empty-handed. One the one hand, we lost our apartment, on the other hand we won't get another apartment because we supposedly are at fault for wrecking the place."[395]

West Berlin's new social housing, with its lure of modern amenities such as central heating, inside toilets and shower, and elevators, was not a feasible economic option for Kreuzberg's poor German residents. For Kreuzberg's migrant population, it was a near impossibility. Only 10 percent of all publicly funded new or renovated units could be rented out to "foreigners."[396] This reality was lost upon one employee of a city-owned renewal agent who declared in the reputable West German daily the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (*FAZ*) that "most people will gladly pay more for an apartment; an old pensioner is happy to no longer have to drag coal up four flights of stairs." "And for the Turks," he continued, "well, we'll refer them to housing management X for cheap apartments in a tenement since they [housing management X] have a translator."[397] In the article's text the name of the housing management was not mentioned, but referred to with an anonymous "X." The piece described the redevelopment practice in one of Kreuzberg's renewal areas, and while somewhat critical of the practice of full clearance, it articulated a dominant position on the supposed decay of West German urban centers. While intending to present a neutral picture of urban planning politics, the article drew upon an assumed connection between a high concentration of "foreigners," i.e., residents from Turkey, and the slumming and decay of Kreuzberg.

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[395] Kurt and Meyer, *…weil wir Türken sind*, 20.

[396] Arin, "The Housing Market and Housing Policies," 208; Gert von Bassewitz, Christa Tebbe, and Kunstamt Kreuzberg, *Morgens Deutschland abends Türkei: Katalog zur Ausstellung vom 26. Mai bis 23. August,1981* (Berlin: Fröhlich und Kaufmann, 1981), 204.

[397] Helene Rahms, "Fünf Blocks in der Luisenstadt," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, December 8, 1973.

The opening paragraphs of the 1973 *FAZ* article, for instance, highlighted three characteristics of a nineteenth-century tenement that, according to architects and urban planners at the time, marked a neighborhood's demise: if the hallway reeked of old potatoes, if there were more Turkish than German names on the mailboxes, and if remainders of the original façade of the building were still visible. As the article's author is quick to point out, this was not meant as a "socially derogatory judgment," but rather as a plain "rule of thumb" to identify dilapidation.[398] According to the architects, the foul potato stench indicated decay, the Turkish names confirmed that the apartments were no longer rentable to German tenants, and remnants of the original façade revealed that the apartment house had not been thoroughly repaired since it was built eighty to a hundred years earlier. Ultimately, I would argue, this claim to represent a neutral assessment of the causes of dilapidation was representative of German professional and public opinion, and it served to mask or displace the underlying racist assumptions and German fears of cultural "hybridity."[399]

No doubt unintentionally, the above quote from the *FAZ* pointed to a discursive split of Kreuzberg's residents into two main categories: elderly working-class Germans with a limited income –many of whom had lived there for decades if not generations– and younger migrants from Turkey, both single men and women, and increasingly those with young families, who were deliberately cast as temporary residents. This imagined division of Kreuzberg's population, as suggested in the FAZ quote, was reflected in the

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[398] Rahms, "Fünf Blocks in der Luisenstadt."

[399] Heide Fehrenbach, *Race after Hitler: Black Occupation Children in Postwar Germany and America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Rogers Brubacker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992); Fatima El-Tayeb, "Germans, Foreigners, and German Foreigners: Constructions of National Identity in Early 20th Century Germany," in *Unpacking Europe: Towards a Critical Reading*, eds. Salah M. Hassan, Iftikhar Dadi, and Leslie A. Adelson (Rotterdam:: NAi Publishers, 2001), 72-81.

physical planning of the neighborhood in that a certain ideal of integration guided the

renewal principles for Kreuzberg. The representation of this division began to take hold

during the late 1960s and early 1970s as Kreuzberg developed an increasingly atypical

demographic landscape. At this time, Kreuzberg had not yet become the end point for

youth looking for an alternative to the social conformity of West German towns and

countryside.

Kreuzberg's Twentieth-Century "Trockenwohner"

The intersection of integration policies and urban renewal in the 1970s played a

pivotal role in recasting Kreuzberg as a symbol of German fears of the foreigner and his

or her possible threat to a mythical German culture or pure German identity.[400] The

original official attitude toward postwar "guest workers" shifted in this period to a fear of

"overforeignization" as the number of migrants choosing to permanently settle in the

FRG increased. The lead story in a 1973 issue of Der Spiegel clearly points to this shift.

Departing from earlier approval of a source of cheap labor, mainstream discourse started

identifying these same migrants as a source of urban trouble, chaos, and decline.[401]

Perpetuating German stereotypes, the magazine cover shows a family of eight (3 adults

and 5 children) in an open window of a run-down old building with the caption, "Ghettos

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[400] El-Tayeb, "'Blood is a Very Special Juice.'"

[401] See Chin, *The Guest Worker Question in Postwar Germany*; for a specific discussion of a construction of an "ethnic ghetto," see Ayse S. Caglar, "Constraining Metaphors and the Transnationalisation of Spaces in Berlin," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 27, no. 4 (October, 2001): 601-13; Maria Stehle, "Narrating the Ghetto, Narrating Europe: From Berlin, Kreuzberg to the Banlieues of Paris," Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture 3, no. 3 (2006): 48-70, Ayhan Kaya, *Sicher in Kreuzberg: Constructing Diasporas: Turkish Hip-Hop Youth in Berlin* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2001); Levent Soysal, "Diversity of Experience, Experience of Diversity: Turkish Migrant Youth Culture in Berlin," *Cultural Dynamics* 13, no. 1 (March 2001): 5-28; David Horrocks and Eva Kolinsky, eds**.** *Turkish Culture in German Society Today* (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1996); Lutz Holzner, "The Myth of Turkish Ghettos: A Geographic Case Study of West German Responses Towards a Foreign Minority," *Journal of Ethnic Studies* 9, no. 4 (Winter 1982): 65-83.

in Germany: One Million Turks." The lead story, "The Turks are coming: Save yourself if you can," describes the "flood" of migrants "overpowering" West German cities. Furthermore, to underscore the magnitude of the situation, the magazine relies on examples and descriptions drawn from the district of Kreuzberg.

The article opens by evoking the image of the "real" or "authentic" German Kreuzberg corner pub (*Eckkneipe)*, assuming all West Germans would instinctively know what that looked like. Evoking a community of shared experience, language, and ethnic identity, the article mourns the passing of this supposed "true" Berlin, read ethnically German, neighborhood. Instead of the "Berliner Kindl and hamburger patties," a visitor to the neighborhood now discovers the disturbing new flavors of "sweet, syrupy coffee," "meat rotating on a skewer," and "oriental melodies" floating from the juke box.[402] "So complete a change in the resident population" cautioned *Der Spiegel*, "has not been seen to the same degree in any other German city like it has in Kreuzberg."[403] At this historical juncture, this discourse at once claims the neighborhood as German while simultaneously seeing it as "foreign," setting up the idea of two co-existing, authentic, and homogenous cultures.[404]

The article expressed a widespread fear that German cultural values and vision of community were in danger of being destroyed or rendered irrelevant by a steady influx of foreigners. By reminding its readers that the *Eckkneipe* in Kreuzberg was once the "real Kreuzberg," the Spiegel article places Kreuzberg firmly in a German tradition, more specifically a German working-class tradition. The *Eckkneipe* in Kreuzberg is perceived

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[402] "Die Türken kommen -rette sich, wer kann.".

[403] "Die Türken kommen -rette sich, wer kann."

[404] On this idea as represented in film, see Deniz Göktürk, "Turkish Delight – German Fright: Migrant Identities in Transnational Cinema," in *Mediated Identities,* eds. Deniz Derman, Karen Ross and Nevena Dakovic (Istanbul: Bilgi University Press, 2001), 131-149

here as an extension of a decent German working-class ritual of men socializing at the corner pub after a day's work. Historically, this would not have been a popular evocation for the majority of middle-class West Germans. Paradoxically, this image of working-class sociability only became nostalgic at the very moment that the nation feared a "foreign invasion."

This emphasis on tradition in turn constructed a mythic past for this neighborhood in a time when notions of German cultural purity appeared to be threatened by immigrants, while in fact ignoring the reality of Kreuzberg's history as a conflicted site of working-class opposition, poverty, immigration, and violent altercations between the radical right and the radical left.[405] Though only one of several of Berlin's historic working-class districts, Kreuzberg had the highest density of nineteenth-century tenements that were deemed the "hallmark of proletarian Berlin," and built to accommodate workers during the period of rapid industrialization.[406] After almost a century of being marked as a troubled working-class district, Kreuzberg in the 1970s and 80s underwent a transition in public discourse from a marginal to an "outcast space."[407] For the middle-class sensibilities of 1970s West Germany, both the historical memory

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[405] Swett, *Enemies and Neighbors*; Belinda Davis, "'Everyday' Protest and the Culture of Conflict in Berlin, 1830-1980," in *Berlin, Washington, 1800-2000: Capital Cities, Cultural Representation, and National Identities*, eds. Andreas W. Daum and Christof Mauch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 263-284.

[406] His-Huey Liang, "Lower-Class Immigrants in Wilhelmine Berlin," *Central European History* 3, nos. 1/2 (March-June 1970): 94-111; Ladd, *Ghosts of Berlin*, 88.

[407] This term is borrowed from Sean Purdy whose dissertation is a study on the area of Regent Park in downtown Toronto and how its image transformed from one of "hope" to an area of the city synonymous with "decline." Sean Purdy, "From Place of Hope to Outcast Space: Territorial Regulation and Tenant Resistance in Regent Park Housing Project, 1945-2000," (PhD diss., Queens University, Kingston, Ontario, 2003).

and reality of a communist threat was minimal in comparison to the fear of this "foreign" invasion.[408]

In this debate, urban spaces were particularly important, both because foreigners tended to settle there, and because urban spaces had historically been sites of cultural deviation and difference.[409] In this article, *Der Spiegel* creates an image of the "German city" that in fact evokes imagery of a "*Heimat*" traditionally associated with the *Dorf*, or village. This article suggests multiple aspects of German fear toward workers from Turkey in Kreuzberg, evoking the idea of a lost homeland overrun by foreign influences in order to reclaim as German a neighborhood historically known to attract migrants. What becomes apparent at this juncture is that discussions of urban decline in 1970s West Germany became racialized and fixated on the image of the rural "foreigner." This stands in stark contrast to historical connections made between the metropolis and modernity as synonymous with chaos, degradation, and decline.[410] Unlike the construction of Berlin in the 1920s as embodying the societal changes linked to modernity, the "urban crisis" now came in the form of a steady "invasion" of "foreigners" from the "shores of the Bosporus

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[408] Eric Weitz, "The Ever-Present Other: Communism and the Making of West Germany," in *Miracle Years*, 219-232.

[409] Frank Mort, "Cityscapes: Consumption, Masculinities and the Mapping of London Since 1950," *Urban Studies* 35, nos. 5/6 (1998): 889-907; Frank Mort, "Mapping Sexual London: The Wolfenden Committee on Homosexual Offences and Prostitution," *New Formations: Sexual Geographies* 37 (Spring 1999): 92-113.

[410] On the German metropolis and modernity see Katharina von Ankum, ed., *Women in the Metropolis: Gender and Modernity in Weimar Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Maria Tatar, *Lustmord*: *Sexual Murder in Weimar Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); Richard McCormick, *Gender and Sexuality in Weimar Modernity*: *Film, Literature, and "New Objectivity*" (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); Patrice Petro, *Joyless Streets* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989); Peter Fritzsche, *Reading Berlin 1900* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996); Adelheid von Saldern, *The Challenge of Modernity: German Social and Cultural Studies 1890-1960* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002).

and the highlands of Anatolia," for whom the "gap between traditional living conditions at home and life in a developed industrial society has never been so great."[411]

While Berlin as the urban metropole of Germany had traditionally been evoked as a symbol of decline, this marked the moment in the 1970s when in fact the city became a marker of modernity, health, education and progressive democracy, all values placed in opposition to foreign workers marked as "rural" (read backwards) by German media. As stated bluntly in Der Spiegel, "no other country of origin [of migrant workers] has such a high illiteracy rate as Turkey."[412] This rural/urban dichotomy serves to position the urban landscape as positive space that was then in danger of being "tainted" by foreigners from the hinterlands of a "primitive" country. In fact, it is only in the face of this perceived Turkish invasion that an example of urban, working-class Berlin is granted an authentic and romantic "German-ness." This discourse of primitive shepherd turned factory worker juxtaposed with the idealized image of the German urban worker discursively weakened any possibility of solidarity and understanding between working-class migrants and their working-class German neighbors.[413] Furthermore, it cast working-class migrants as firmly outside the bounds of an identificatory process with the historical working-class heritage associated with Kreuzberg.

In response to the so-called "Turkish ghetto," in effect produced by discrimination in the housing market, a majority of the West Berlin Senate, which consisted of Social Democrats and their coalition partners the Free Democrats (FDP) announced its decision in 1974 to restrict migrant worker access to neighborhoods with a high "foreigner" quota

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[411] "Die Türken kommen -rette sich, wer kann."

[412] "Die Türken kommen -rette sich, wer kann."

[413] Compare Chin, *The Guest Worker Question in Postwar Germany*; Stehle, "Narrating the Ghetto, Narrating Europe"; Aras Ören, *Was will Niyazi in der Naunynstrasse?* (Berlin: Rotbuch, 1973).

with the intended goal of "easing integration into society."[414] A direct intrusion into the everyday lives of immigrants, the state passed a set of discriminatory laws with the specific intent to regulate both newcomers and migrants looking to move to or within the city. Starting in 1975, immigrants arriving from Turkey, Greece, and Yugoslavia, or nationals of those countries already living in West Berlin were barred from moving into three of the city's twelve boroughs: Kreuzberg, Wedding, and Tiergarten. Applied to those three districts where the total percentage of foreigners had reached fifteen percent, the ban on entry and settlement or *Zuzugssperre* denied underprivileged immigrants the right of movement.[415] Authorities granted migrants arriving in West Berlin a residence permit only when they could provide proof of residence outside of these three districts. Non-German nationals from EEC (predecessor of EU) countries, such as Italy, and those either married to a German passport holder or someone holding permanent residency were exempted from this regulation.[416]

A second discriminatory regulation required migrants to verify occupancy in a legally "conforming" apartment (*Nachweispflicht vorhandenen ausreichenden Wohnraums*) in a non-banned district. To get an extension of the residence permit, the application for permanent residency, or to receive permission to bring in family members to West Germany or West Berlin, migrants had to prove, in accordance with the Berlin Alien's Act, that their apartments corresponded to the "normal requirements" of a German worker or employee's apartment. The federal Housing Supervision Law determined what criteria fell under the category "normal." This law, intended in fact to

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[414] "Gettos: Stopp für Türken," *Der Spiegel*, 45, 1974; Anita Drever, "Separate Spaces, Separate Outcomes? Neighborhood Impacts on Minorities in Germany," *Urban Studies* 41, no. 8 (July 2004): 1423-39.

[415] This policy also applied in the district of Wilhelmsburg in Hamburg.

[416] The Council of European Communities admitted Greece to the EEC in 1979.

protect tenants from negligent landlords, stipulated that minimum standards of upkeep and care be fulfilled. In addition, it fixed a minimum amount of space in any given apartment for adults and children, nine and six square meters respectively. The law deemed the apartment uninhabitable if the minimum standards were not fulfilled and does not offer a replacement apartment for the former tenants. Authorities pointed the finger at migrant families, discriminated against on the rental market and therefore left with no other option but to rent apartments too small to meet their needs, for overcrowded conditions, which resulted in an eviction at best and deportation at worst.

These policies set out to explicitly manage urban space and movement from above, though they were introduced as a benevolent directive, and had a consensus among all political parties as an appropriate method of integration.[417] It targeted all "foreigners" but affected migrant workers from Turkey and their families most significantly since this group constituted more than half of West Berlin's immigrant population. From an official perspective, this restriction on migrants' right to move about freely was proposed as a solution to the emergence of urban "ghettos" that deterred "proper" integration. The assumption was that a concentration of foreigners, on the scale observed in Kreuzberg, would allow for a retreat into the comforts of one's own culture and, therefore only encourage unwillingness to adapt to the language, culture, and values of the receiving society. This may seem like a slightly ironic stance considering the belief that German culture was something fixed and inextricable from ethnicity.[418] At the same

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[417] Arin, "Migrant Labor Population in Berlin," 210.

[418] See El-Tayeb, "Blood Is a Very Special Juice;" Stefan Berger, *Inventing the Nation: Germany* (London: Edward Arnold, 2004).

time, this concern over migrants avoiding integration was coupled with the belief that a high minority concentration in an urban center only fostered crime, violence and decay.

By invoking the racialized image of the "ghetto," the administration of urban space to control or assist desegregation can be read as a response by policy makers to German anxiety concerning ethnic difference, while at the time framing the policy as though the government was doing the immigrant community a favor. By linking an ethnic minority to a particular place or neighborhood, namely Kreuzberg, public officials gave the impression that there was a specific problem to be dealt with. Policy makers drew the conclusion that if only this part of the city could be managed, then so too could the question of integration of "foreigners" into mainstream "German" society. Imposing such restrictions on minorities that curtailed their rights to move freely was not of course new. The historian Ulrich Herbert has pointed to similar restrictions placed on Eastern European Jews (or the *Ostjuden*) at the end of World War One.[419]

West Berlin officials justified direct interference with settlement patterns by arguing that social services in these neighborhoods were overtaxed. Buttressing this line of argument, a 1974 *Der Spiegel* article only needed to call attention to Kreuzberg's day nurseries and playschools remarking that "they had in their care more foreign than German babies" for Kreuzberg's district mayor Günther Abendroth to conclude, "we are suffocating."[420] The mayor's attitude signified a tendency in official attitudes that increasingly viewed the "ethnic clustering or ghettoization" in West German cities as dangerous or problematic.[421] Abendroth's quote is telling for two reasons. Firstly, his

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[419] Herbert, *Geschichte der Ausländerpolitik in Deutschland*, 102.
[420] "Gettos: Stopp für Türken."
[421] "Gettos: Stopp für Türken."

stress on "foreign" offspring implies a fear of reproduction, more specifically a fear of an ethnic "other" ultimately outnumbering "real" Germans, that is, white and ethnic Germans.[422] The implications of this fear cannot be underestimated in the symbolic power it had in deterring politicians and policymakers from any serious consideration of an immigration policy, which would have entailed permanent settlement and political inclusion. Scholars on this topic have pointed to the legacy of a deeply ethnocultural understanding of a German identity that prevented an understanding of a population "not white and still German."[423] The implicit desire that any "guest worker" who settled permanently in the Federal Republic would need to blend without a trace into German society (just as the Poles of an earlier era), would dominate the public debates on questions of immigration and integration well into the late 1990s.[424]

Secondly, in Abendroth's evocation of a German "we," he set up an us versus them or native versus foreign dichotomy. In doing so, the district mayor presents the very space of Kreuzberg as an essentially "German" place, a literal and symbolic space that represented "real Germanness," a vigilantly defended concept he perceived as being consumed by exotic food, dress and language. The description of the "foreign" evoked a fear of the invasion of German bodies with unfamiliar, even poisonous substances. In this vein, a visitor to Kreuzberg apparently could be misled by the "colorful fruit and vegetable stands" and the "butcher shops with eviscerated mutton and the kebab shops." This seemingly "pastoral idyll," according to Der Spiegel, operated merely as "nice

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[422] This point has been explored at length in Uli Linke's chapter on "Blood, Race, Nation," in *German Bodies: Race and Representation After Hitler* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

[423] El-Tayeb, "Blood is a Very Special Juice," 1999.

[424] Patrick Ireland, *Becoming Europe: Immigration, Integration, and the Welfare State* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 2004), 30. See also Schönwälder, *Einwanderung und ethnische Pluralität*; Karin Hunn, *"Nächstes Jahr kehren wir zurück…": die Geschichte der türkischen "Gastarbeiter" in der Bundesrepublik* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2005).

decoration" to a neighborhood that was, in fact, in a state of "communal agony (*kommunale Agonie*)."[425] The image presented here is one of a neighborhood on its deathbed. On the surface, the assumed features of rural Turkey may have seemed innocuous, even enjoyable to the casual observer strolling through Kreuzberg, yet according to the Spiegel, for the neighborhood's German residents the sentiment of being "overrun" was understood as nothing short of a catastrophe.

Just four years later, Günther Abendroth, now no longer the district mayor, held a seat on the SPD district steering committee on the "foreigner question" (*Ausländerfragen im Kreisvorstand der SPD-Kreis Kreuzberg*). Reflecting the larger societal and political reality by the mid-1970s, this committee reflected how the main political parties in West Germany made steps towards adopting a framework in which to more effectively discuss or debate the "foreigner question."[426] Diverging from a more conservative line of argumentation on this issue, the SPD promoted a "co-existence of multiple cultures grounded in empathy and tolerance and viewed the interaction and exchange between these cultures as a prerequisite for successful integration."[427] This position however clearly had its limitations. "Integration," wrote Abendroth in an issue of the city's urban renewal bulletin (*Sanierungs-Zeitung*) intended for residents in renewal areas, "should not stand for Germanization of them [*Ausländer*], instead it should encourage a co-habitation that ensures equal rights and cultural autonomy."[428] Yet in the very next sentence he wrote that, " the children of foreigners need the chance to receive an

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[425] "Gettos: Stopp für Türken."

[426] Chin, *The Guest Worker Question*, 99.

[427] Chin, *The Guest Worker Question*, 99.

[428] Günther Abendroth, "Stadtsanierung –auch für unsere ausländischen Mitbürger," *Sanierungs-Zeitung*, 1978, 10.

education and in order to be employable here in the future [West Berlin]; this education however will help them to keep all options open in case they decide to return to their home (*Heimat*)."[429] This position, in short, encapsulates the tension found in public debates on integration. German authorities proposed short-term measures to improve the situation of immigrants and supported integration measures (particularly for their German-born children), but in doing so no political party explicitly rejected the long-held official idea of an eventual return to the "foreigner's *Heimat*."

Similar ambivalent views graced the pages of the Hamburg-based liberal weekly *Die Zeit*. The paper's contribution to public discourse on the integration of "foreigners" offered a pessimistic picture of "two worlds colliding, whose reconciliation or mutual integration remains a pipe dream."[430] In the longer term, it was argued in one editorial, "mentality and cultural background" would continue to get in the way of integration since the "feudal structures of the patriarchal Anatolian world have been saved [in the move] to the Federal Republic."[431] Mainstream and conservative discourse repeatedly assigned this culturally marginal position to migrants from Turkey. This image of the "large Turkish family" from Anatolia, as if all migrants from Turkey came from Anatolia, at the Kreuzberg weekly market with "the head of the family, the father, at the front, with the rest of the family in tow" or the depictions of "black-haired, dark-eyed children playing in apartment house entrances" produced and reinforced notions of "foreigness" and incompatibility with German "culture."[432]

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[429] Abendroth, "Stadtsanierung –auch für unsere ausländischen Mitbürger," 10.

[430] "Das Dorf reicht bis nach Kreuzberg," *Die Zeit*, 5, 1982. See also, "Tore zu – die Türken kommen," *Die Zeit*, 17, 1976.

[431] "Das Dorf reicht bis nach Kreuzberg."

[432] Gabriele Engen, "Wo sie Ekmek kaufen: Klein-Istanbul zum Anfassen –auch für Berliner," *Die Zeit*, 49, 1982.

Mainstream cultural representations of Kreuzberg in this moment of economic uncertainty reveal the widespread German image of "Turks" as proponents of a retrograde religion, culturally backwards, poor, having many children, and dressed in loud colors. This fantasy of a socio-economic, culturally homogenous underclass contributed to the popular belief in West Germany that migrants from Turkey inhabited a social, cultural and political space clearly outside the boundaries of a German, and more broadly European identity. Functioning as stark reminders of ethnic difference, these pervasive stereotypes supported the exclusion of West Germany's de facto immigrants whose eastern, Islamic customs and values were seen as antithetical to a western, Christian Europe. As scholars have demonstrated, the negative image of the "Turk" has had a long history in European discourse with Turkey, and the Ottoman Empire before, functioning historically as Europe's "Other."[433]

A widespread understanding of both German and Turkish cultural homogeneity accentuated the fear that German culture and society would be damaged or diluted via an acceptance of non-European ethnic minorities. Additionally, broader European stereotypes of Turkey allowed for German officials to pursue racist policies without conjuring up fears of Nazism. Having to prove its integration with the West and its commitment to a democratic political order, West Germany had opened its doors to millions of refugees and initiated a program of foreign labor recruitment. Nevertheless, in

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[433] Klaus Eder and Willfried Spohn, eds., *Collective Memory and European Identity: The Effects of Integration and Enlargement* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005); Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Deniz Göktürk, Levent Soysal, and Ipek Tureli, eds., *Orienting Istanbul: Cultural Capital of Europe?* (London: Routledge, 2010). More recently, opponents of Turkey's bid to join the EU have evoked the menacing image of the Ottoman Turks driven from the gates of Vienna in 1683 by the defenders of Christian Europe.

the context of post-Holocaust Federal Republic, definitions of "Germanness" remained rooted in nineteenth-century understandings of a culturally homogenous "Volk."[434]

Thus, the image of the "ethnic ghetto" loomed large as the cultural and spatial presence of new immigrants challenged West Germany's official version of itself as a non-immigration country. As historians have effectively demonstrated, the normalization of West German public life and the creation of a West German identity in the 1950s were rooted in a narrow definition of citizenship.[435] As it became evident to both foreign workers and West German policy makers that the intended temporary stay was turning into a permanent one, the Federal Republic's liberal residency laws clashed sharply with its own image of itself as a culturally homogenous society.

Between the late 1960s and the fall of the Berlin Wall, the neighborhood's image in public discourse oscillated between fears of it as an "ethnic ghetto" to Kreuzberg as the embodiment of left-wing radical politics. In both scholarly and popular accounts, representations of the "legendary island of the foreign, the 'Other,' and the poor," it is not uncommon to have discussions of Kreuzberg alternate between these two categories at any given time.[436] Contemporary observers of post-Wall Kreuzberg have further contributed to a perpetuation of this division, the creation of what the mainstream media now refers to as "parallel societies."[437] As Berlin-based German writer Peter Schneider recently reflected, "There is a new wall rising in the city of Berlin. To cross this wall you

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[434] Göktürk, Gramling, and Kaes, *Germany in Transit*; Scott D. Denham, Irene Kacandes and Jonathan Petropoulos, *A User's Guide to German Cultural Studies* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997); Berger, *Inventing the Nation: Germany*, 2004.

[435] Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*; Geoff Eley and Jan Palmowski, eds., *Citizenship and National Identity in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008).

[436] Kil and Silver, "From Kreuzberg to Marzahn."

[437] Zafer Senocak and Leslie A. Adelson, *Atlas of a Tropical Germany: Essays on Politics and Culture, 1990-1998* (Omaha: University of Nebraska Press, 2000).

have to go to the city's central and northern districts –to Kreuzberg, Neukölln and Wedding– and you will find yourself in a world unknown to the majority of Berliners."[438] Schneider situates the existence of "parallel societies" in a discussion of a post-9/11 world, when "for many German residents in Neukölln and Kreuzberg, th[is] was the first time they stopped to wonder who their neighbors really were."[439]

Evoking the image of the wall, albeit a new and invisible one, supposedly separating German residents of Kreuzberg from those perceived to be their non-German neighbors, Schneider reminded his reader of both the "foreignness" attached to the space of Kreuzberg and the long-held belief that its populations lived not together, but beside each other. Seen by scare-mongers as both a hotbed of political radicalism and the embodiment of ethnic difference and incompatibility, by focusing on either a) "leftist" Kreuzberg or b) "Turkish" Kreuzberg, popular and scholarly discourse on the neighborhood has denied its complexity and rendered unimaginable the possibility of alliances, interconnectedness, or mutual overlap between these two categories.[440] Moreover, depictions and discussions of Kreuzberg as a district consisting mainly of two distinct subcultures, one political and one ethnic, rarely address the inequality between the two subcultures and the subsequent unequal access to political decision-making and models of participation. The remainder of this chapter considers the prevailing perceptions of difference found in the ambivalent treatment of migrants from Turkey by their leftist neighbors.

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[438] Peter Schneider, "The New Berlin Wall," *New York Times*, Dec. 4, 2005.

[439] Schneider, "The New Berlin Wall."

[440] For examples of accounts of 1980s Kreuzberg as a place of radical and alternative politics see Lang, *Mythos Kreuzberg*. For discussions of Kreuzberg as "ethnic ghetto" see Daniel Levy and Yfaat Weiss, eds., *Challenging Ethnic Citizenship: German and Israeli Perspectives on Immigration* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2002).

The Schimanski Effect

On the local level, the leftist activism in Kreuzberg that mobilized itself in opposition to state housing and renewal policies also had important implications for the migrant families living in the neighborhood. Whether directly or indirectly, all of Kreuzberg's residents benefited in some way from the work of tenant organizing, "illegal" squatting, and the more institutionalized objectives of IBA-Alt that addressed issues of affordable housing, slum landlords, and decrepit housing conditions. Nonetheless, for a group of people incredibly engaged in and committed to social and political change, activists in Kreuzberg failed to see the ways in which they too, in their everyday political practices, reinforced a division and privilege between the majority and a disenfranchised minority perceived as "outside" or not belonging to German society and culture. A shortcoming of the squatters' movement, the more radical elements repeatedly calling on activists to "resist forms of imperialist aggression" and to "smash state structures," was to recognize how the category of "race" or a process of racialization functioned to uphold the very structures they rejected. [441] Instead, large number of activists accepted ethno-racial difference as a "given" rather than as a culturally created category thus leaving any change up to a gradual socio-political development rather than a political struggle to which the following example illustrates.

For some in Germany, it might be hard to imagine that in another generation or two, their "Turkish-sounding" last names, particularly if they operate or are visible in high profile positions, might not have warranted, as it in fact does still warrant a

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[441] *radikal* 86, January, 1981; "Sie reden von 'Frieden' und machen Krieg!," anonymous flyer, uncatalogued, Papiertiger Archive and Library, Berlin.

comment or a disussion of their supposed "foreignness" in German public culture.[442] By this, I mean, would mainstream perceptions of such difference have dulled over time so that the name, formerly marked as "migrant," would have seamlessly integrated into German society and culture? I have had many stimulating conversations on the topic of Kreuzberg with P.H., an activist friend and archivist of radical left movements living in the neighborhood. P.H. once described to me his theory of integration, a theory he called the "Schimanksi effect." Reflecting upon his experiences with race relations in Kreuzberg since moving to the neighborhood in 1979, P.H. insists that, within a few generations, Germans with a minority or migrant background will be embraced as full members of German society to the extent that their Turkish-sounding last names will no longer be called into question, much like their historical predecessors from Poland.

In P.H.'s example, "Schimanski" refers to Detective Horst Schimanski, a popular detective on the long-running crime show series Tatort (Scene of the Crime). The public broadcaster ARD, a consortium founded in 1950 made up of several regional broadcasters, introduced Tatort in 1970.[443] The well-established series has since aired every Sunday evening on German television. A unique aspect of this television series is that each regional network produces its own episodes, and these are set in a major city or town in the given region. Each network's Tatort also stars its own pair of detectives, and over the past four decades the more popular detectives have been elevated to the role of cultural icons.[444] One such inspector, arguably the most popular detective in the four-

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[442] Cigdem Akyol, "Sind Sie die Nachfahrin des Kinderfickers Mohammed?," *die tageszeitung*, July 29, 2010.

[443] Tatort homepage, ARD, http://www.daserste.de/tatort/ (accessed December 21, 2010).

[444] "'Allein durch meine Präsenz' Der neue "Tatort"-Kommissar," *Die Zeit*, October 27, 2008.

decade history of Tatort, is Horst Schimanski, a fictional detective in Duisburg, a city in the Ruhr region of Germany.

The Ruhr region is Germany's most densely populated area and historically the heart of Germany's industrial production in coal and steel. In the late nineteenth century, the region's high industrial output stimulated a wave of migration that included tens of thousands of Polish migrants seeking better economic opportunities in the Ruhr area's developing industrial urban centers. In 1981, the producers of WDR (West German Broadcasting) introduced the fictional detective Horst Schimanski (played by Götz George) to Tatort viewers, his character signaling a break from the conventions of previous depictions of "correct and proper" detectives on German television.[445] To counter this familiar representation, the producers of the series emphasized Schimanski's working-class background, his rough around the edges behavior and language, and his willingness to bend the rules when it came to defending the "little guy." Above all else, it was Schimanski's proletarian, not his Polish, roots that disrupted his critics' middle-class ideas of West German law enforcement as both decent and respectable.

Historians have demonstrated the long-standing negative attitudes and prejudices Germans have against their "inferior" Slavic neighbors to the east.[446] And it is well known that anti-Polish policy characterized the state's official attitude to economic

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[445] Michelle Mattson, "Tatort: The Generation of Public Identity in a German Crime Series," *New German Critique* 78 (Fall 1999): 161-82.

[446] William W. Hagen, *Germans, Poles and Jews. The Nationality Conflict in the Prussian East, 1772 – 1914* (Chicago: Univeristy of Chicago Press, 1980); Volker R. Berghahn, "Germans and Poles, 1871-1945," in *Germany and Eastern Europe: Cultural Identity and Cultural Differences*, eds. Keith Bullivant, Geoffrey Giles, and Walter Pape (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999), 15-36; Thomas Urban, *Die Deutschen und ihre Nachbarn: Polen*, eds. Helmut Schmidt and Richard von Weizsäcker (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2008).

migrants in the decades leading up to World War One.[447] However, P.H.'s point in

creating this analogy between the fictional Polish-German detective and Berlin's

migrants from Turkey is that, a hundred years after the first waves of Polish migration,

the process of cultural assimilation of the nineteenth-century Ruhr Poles is so complete

that the "German-ness" of a television character with a Polish last name is never

questioned. The same process of integration, he trusts, will inevitably happen to

Kreuzberg's Turkish Germans. His example relies on the knowledge of a reluctant

assimilation of these nineteenth-century "foreigners" by the state and the resistance to

this practice of assimilation on the part of the Poles themselves.[448] His argumentation

relies on such factors of historical difference in Polish-German relations that included the

status of Poles as Germany's age-old enemy, the resistance of Poles to Imperial efforts of

"Germanization," and moments when ethnic and linguistic difference were employed to

exclude new immigrants from full participation in the public sphere.[449]

What is significantly absent in his example is that Polish migrants have shared,

and still do share, a number of important similarities with their German neighbors that

make a blanket comparison with migrants from Turkey qualitatively difficult, not to

mention historically naïve. These migrants, much like the ethnic German war refugees

who arrived post-1945 in great numbers from Eastern Europe, were white, Christian and,

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[447] David Crew, *Town in the Ruhr: A Social History of Bochum, 1860-1914* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979).

[448] Crew, *Town in the Ruhr*; Richard Charles Murphy, *Guestworkers in the German Reich: A Polish Community in Wilhelmian Germany* (New York*:* Columbia University Press*,* 1983); Steve Hochstadt, *Mobility and Modernity: Migration in Germany, 1820-1989* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999).

[449] Helmut Walser Smith, *The Continuities of German History: Nation, Religion, and Race Across the Long Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Helmut Walser Smith, "Prussia at the Margins, or the World That Nationalism Lost," in *German History From the Margins*, eds. Neil Gregor, Nils H. Roemer, and Mark Roseman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006): 69-83.

however maligned, could draw upon a European tradition. Turkey, in contrast, has been imagined and characterized as historically, politically, and culturally "different." It is this characterization of Turkey as difference incarnate, its historical role as Europe's "Other," to which P.H. is idealistic. Although he is quick to acknowledge systemic discrimination, his optimism relies on the belief in a teleological historical process of integration that precluded a deep-rooted engagement with the complex ways in which ethno-racial difference has been and still is historically constructed in both the political realm and in everyday practices.[450]

By the early 1980s, public debates on immigration and the role of millions of "foreigners" in German society had acquired a new dimension. Helmut Kohl's center-right government had pushed the debate to the right by proposing a policy that actively supported the return of West German's de facto immigrants from Turkey to their country of origin. The debate exposed a racist and nationalist discourse circulating not only in places where it was expected, like on the far right, but one that also found support among conservative politicians and public intellectuals. The 1982 Heidelberg Manifesto, written and signed by a number of respectable university professors, best illustrates this troubling development of framing anti-immigrant sentiments in mainly biological terms. The manifesto warned against "the infiltration of the German people [*Volk*] through an influx of millions of foreigners and their families, the infiltration [*Überfremdung*] of our language, our culture, and our national traditions by foreign influences."[451]

This opinion was a marginal one and did invariably provoke sharp public criticism. However, it represents the most extreme version of a much more widespread

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[450] See the introduction to *After the Nazi Racial State*.
[451] "Heidelberger Manifesto," *Die Zeit*, February 6, 1982.

view that migrants, particularly those who were not white or Christian although they

could potentially become citizens, would always be *Ausländer* or "foreigners." The more

liberal version of the debate denounced the biological line of argumentation and, instead,

promoted a multicultural model in which homogenous cultural entities would live

harmoniously alongside each other. And on the other end of the political spectrum, leftist

groups, too, voiced some opposition to forms of state-sanctioned racism. However, in this

period of heightened concern with the "foreigner problem," the presence of such

questions could be found at the margins of radical leftist activism. As scholars and public

intellectuals have pointed out, this debate, at its core, was ultimately about German

national self-understanding.[452] In what follows I will provide instances in which the

politics and rhetoric of the squatters' movement fell short of redefining both the nature of

the immigration debate and the static image of the "foreigner."

Considering National Culture in the Political Margins

One might expect that in the context of a conservative backlash against

immigrants the left in Kreuzberg would have taken a strong oppositional position to both

official state policies and mainstream opinion. Certain elements of the squatters'

movement active in Kreuzberg were ostensibly internationalist in their orientation,

positioning their groups in solidarity with struggles in Central America that opposed

imperialist and racist politics. (**Figure 4.1**) Others kept their political struggles local

through a continued focus on their defense of squatted places and spaces in which to live

and work. Yet despite variations in currents of thought and action in the Kreuzberg

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[452] Berger, *Germany*; Senocak, *Atlas of a Tropical Germany*; Chin, *The Guestworker Question*; Jeffrey M. Peck, ed., *Multiculturalism in Transit: a German-American Exchange* (New York: Berghahn Books, 1998); Mandel, *Cosmopolitan Anxieties*.

squatters' scene, all elements articulated either directly or indirectly a critique of the

prevailing world order and particularly U.S. hegemony in the West. Within this highly

politicized culture, however, the question of enforced residential segregation and

systemic discrimination against West Germany's ethno-racial minorities remains

curiously absent from their demands for a new social and political order. Instead, the

ways in which German leftists depicted their migrant neighbors reveal a wide array of

emotions ranging from well-meaning paternalism to passive indifference to outright

hostility. In other words, the everyday political practices of Kreuzberg's activists –inside

the squats, in the neighborhoods, or at demonstrations organized against U.S.-led

imperialist and racist politics– were at best a slightly differentiated version of mainstream

discourses on migrants from Turkey. The remainder of this chapter investigates this

spectrum of emotions on the part of leftist activists in Kreuzberg vis-à-vis their neighbors

from Turkey.

 In 1980 the left-leaning city magazine *Zitty* ran a cover story that posed the

question, "Is a neighborhood dying?," asking if Kreuzberg would remain Kreuzberg or

become a "Turkish ghetto." Founded in 1977 and modeled after the London weekly

listings magazine Time Out, the magazine evoked an image of a Kreuzberg that was on

its last legs. The lead article showed an image of a run down, dilapidated neighborhood

and pointed the finger at migrants from Turkey for Kreuzberg's sad condition. The article

reported that, "despite government funds of 14 million DM dedicated to the foreigner

question, a city district ceases to exist when it becomes overrun by foreigners. Turks out?

Why not. At least some of them." According to the authors of the article, the nineteenth-

century tenements had been "left to decay by the Turks, [and] signal[ed] the readiness of

such buildings to be demolished."[453] Once again, the threat of removal of low-income

housing, whether actual or perceived, was not linked to the failures of postwar housing

policies, but instead to the migrant population –whose mere presence in Kreuzberg was

blamed for having eroded the already substandard housing stock.

The article invited its West Berlin readers to reflect on the current state of affairs

in parts of their city:

> Tourists from West Germany and from other West Berlin districts love the
> colorful street scenes, the exotic smells. One takes pictures of Turkish kids in
> grubby clothes in front of a crumbling tenement. A romanticized glimpse from a
> worm's eye view? […] Meanwhile the neighborhood is entering its 11th hour. The
> ruling is pending: Kreuzberg –Berlin's Turkish ghetto or a West Berlin
> district?"[454]

The fear that Kreuzberg would become a separate "Turkish" city-within-a-city, rather

than part of a coherent, albeit divided, city reflects tremendous discomfort, now on the

left as well as on the right, with the perceived loss of a "German" neighborhood. Coupled

with this unease is the authors' inability to imagine a functioning multi-ethnic

neighborhood. This tendency to render the shifting character of West German urban

centers in terms of either "German" or "ethnic" undermined the possibility of political

alliances that might confront the issues of poverty, inadequate housing, and

discriminatory practices that faced Kreuzberg's population. This sentiment in *Zitty* also

echoed a larger sense of West German anxiety over West Berlin specifically, already

within a Cold War context an isolated city within a city. This anxiety was tied to the

dilemma of wanting an authentic and whole West Berlin at same time that it not even a

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[453] Renate Bookhagen and Rainer Bielig, "Kreuzberg SO 36 ,Stirbt ein Stadtteil,'" *Zitty* 8, 1980.

[454] Bookhagen and Bielig, "Kreuzberg SO 36 ,Stirbt ein Stadtteil.'"

real "whole" city. The city that, since the Berlin Blockade, had "proved that Germany

[still] lives"[455] now had likely "enemies" not only externally, i.e., its communist

neighbors, but internally as well, i.e., its Turkish neighbors.

One of Kreuzberg's tenant activist groups, Verein SO 36, found the inflammatory

tone of the Zitty article clearly objectionable. The group's main news organ, the *Südost*

Express, printed a response to the *Zitty* that underscored the group's distress at the

representation of Kreuzberg and, especially, of its migrant residents:

> The *Zitty* title page chilled us to the bone. Thankfully there were many other SO
> 36 residents who were also outraged. But this is not the only recent example in
> which growing xenophobia has reared its ugly head. In public discussions
> foreigners are placed on the same level as bums and crackpots on the street and
> comments have been heard suggesting forced deportations. What kind of an
> attitude leads to such a statement! And what kind of politics makes no decisive
> steps towards integration in fear of losing the support of German voters? Are we
> Germans in the process of cultivating a new master race?[456]

Officially active in neighborhood renewal politics for over five years, Verein SO 36

included a variety of community and tenant activists, all long-time defenders of

affordable housing. The group's local newspaper offered tenant advice, provided a forum

for residents to voice their concerns, publicized the misconduct of urban renewal agents

and owners of tenements operating in Kreuzberg, and advocated alternative plans and

visions for an affordable revitalization of the neighborhood. Notably, the paper regularly

dedicated a section of the paper to highlighting the concerns of the neighborhood's

"foreigners." For the editorial members of the Südost Express and their neighborhood

allies, acknowledging migrants from Turkey as active members of neighborhood life was

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[455] President of the Bundestag Rainer Barzel, quoted in Karl Heinz Krüger, "Ich lerne langsam, dich zu hassen," *Der Spiegel* 33, 1983, 36.
[456] *Südost Express* 5, May, 1980.

the exception rather than the norm. This inclusionary approach can be explained by the group's commitment to improving tenant rights as well as participation in both the earlier "Strategies for Kreuzberg" competition and the IBA-Alt, both of which sought to include migrant residents in the participatory renewal process.

In the tradition of the 1960s student activists, who deliberately used allusions to Nazi racial policy in their critiques of West German society and politics, the editorial staff of Südost Express expressed their alarm at the resurfacing of racist sentiments in post-Holocaust Germany. Such sentiments, they argued, called to mind the extremes of German nationalism and racism that had culminated in Nazi Germany's extermination of Jews and other "foreign bodies." Historians of postwar West Germany, such as Heide Fehrenbach, Atina Grossmann, Geoff Eley, and Rita Chin in their book *After the Nazi Racial State*, have made it clear that there is no simple link between Nazi racism and the Nazified vocabulary frequently used in West German public debates.[457] Nonetheless, racist ideologies unmistakably informed postwar West German notions of belonging across the political spectrum.[458]

Of course the neighborhood press in Kreuzberg differed from its local and West German liberal and conservative counterparts in important ways, in that it recognized to some degree the institutional structures that defined and circumscribed the everyday lives of Kreuzberg's immigrants. The Südost Express, for example, called for ways to directly confront contemporary resentments against "foreigners" and declared that "SO 36 has to be a district in which foreigners and Germans can learn to live together, with each other,

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[457] Chin, Eley, Fehrenbach, and Grossmann, *After the Nazi Racial State*.

[458] While acknowledging that notions of national belonging shift over time, the political and public discussions in Germany on citizenship and the concept of multiculturalism have, for at least the last two to three decades, focused almost exclusively on the idea of who or what is "German." See Senocak, *Atlas of a Tropical Germany*; Karakayali, *Gespenster der Migration*.

not against each other," and in order for that to happen "foreigners must live here with equal rights, that means they deserve the right to vote like any citizen of a democratic country; they need the right to be human."[459] Such a plea advocating political participation for West Berlin's migrants from non-EEC countries was rare in the early 1980s. Implicit, however, in this well-intended discourse of dialogue was a tendency to view migrants primarily as victims. These local efforts in Kreuzberg to bring neighbors into contact with each other envisioned a more diverse German body politic, but in doing so they relied on a familiar conceptual framework of two homogeneous and culturally distinct groups, the Germans and the "Turks."

In the context of promoting tolerance and finding common ground, the Südost Express called for a neighborhood forum in which both groups (German and Turkish) would have a space to discuss and share their daily impressions with each other. In particular, Kreuzberg residents having had "good examples and experiences of living together" were encouraged to attend in order to pass on and develop these "promising beginnings."[460] Calling upon the neighborhood's residents to find ways to bridge their cultural differences, the *Südost Express* reinforced explicitly a "Turkish" and a "German" identity. The magazine consistently portrayed migrants from Turkey as passive victims even as it advocated the right of migrants to vote locally. The *Südost Express* was not alone in conceiving of migrants as culturally distinct.[461] Echoing policy makers,

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[459] "Alle Jahre wieder…," *Südost Express* 1, 1980; see also "Kommunales Wahlrecht für Ausländer," *Südost Express* 2, 1979.

[460] "Forum und Fest für Deutsche und Ausländer," *Südost Express* 6, 1980, 3.

[461] Mieterberatung in S(üd)O(st) 36: 3 Jahre eigentümerunabhängig. Mieterberatung des Vereins SO 36. eds., Jörn Dargel and Ulrich Lautenschläger, Berlin, 1983.

Kreuzberg's tenant and and community activists placed more weight on promoting harmonious social relations than on access to political channels.[462]

By referring to the additional problems faced by "foreigners" in the urban renewal areas such as language difficulties, inability to find suitable apartments to house large-sized families, fear of authorities (housing and law enforcement), and not knowing or having the language skills to understand and exercise their rights, the articles in the *Südost Express* did challenge the oft-repeated claim by housing authorities and landlords that "the foreigners are [simply] not interested in paying more rent."[463] As discussed earlier in this chapter, for urban renewal agents and landlords, migrants from Turkey in Kreuzberg served as expedient tenants who would occupy apartments that they believed no (white) German would ever rent. Official notions that migrants, particularly migrants from Turkey, were a temporary phenomenon ('Guest Workers') tacitly supported such illicit and discriminatory rental practices. Equally, this official notion also relied on the patently untrue assumption that migrants from Turkey themselves always expressed an interest in returning "home." These notions served to undergird the reasoning behind the regular leasing of rundown, dingy one and half room apartments with limited amenities to migrant families of four or five.

In fact, as historian Karen Schönwälder has demonstrated, by the early 1960s it was already clear in the papers of the Labor Ministry that many so-called "guest workers" were there to stay.[464] Yet despite voices in industry, trade unions, and the church calling for more permanent integration policies, the common assumption that "guest workers"

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[462] Jörn Dargel and Ulrich Lautenschläger, eds., *Mieterberatung in S(üd)O(st) 36: 3 Jahre eigentümerunabhängig. Mieterberatung des Vereins SO 36* (Berlin, 1983).
[463] *Südost Express*, 1979, 2.
[464] Schönwälder, von Oswald, and Sonnenberger, "*Einwanderungsland Deutschland*."

were a transient population in West Germany could be found across the political

spectrum.[465] The narrative amongst migrants themselves also shifted. As the rate of

family reunification steadily increased in the decade following the recruitment stop in

1973, suitable housing for their families became a central priority for migrants from

Turkey. Yet landlords refused to rent out the apartments in the front buildings that would

accommodate larger families. Instead, they rented the smaller one- to two-room

apartments located in the back courtyard buildings and side wings to migrant families of

four, five or six. Landlords and housing management companies justified these rental

practices on the assumption that migrants were driven entirely by the desire to save

money in order to eventually finance their triumphant return to Turkey.[466] Housing

officials, however, had not only a financial, but a social and ideological interest in

accepting this idea of eventual return 'home,' living as they did within a society that did

not acknowledge its status as an immigrant-receiving country until the late 1990s.

The monthly *Kiez Depesche* (Neighborhood Dispatch), another neighborhood

newspaper "establish[ed] to inform the broad range of [Kreuzberg] residents negatively

affected by the urban renewal practices,"[467] also recognized and addressed Kreuzberg's

minority population. The paper's self-described "informal and open" editorial collective

was comprised of residents living in renewal blocks 73 and 76, the streets between

Kottbusser Tor and Mariannen Platz. Unlike the Südost Express the paper did not

explicitly endorse the political participation of migrants or offer even a modest critique of

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[465] The 1979 public statement by SPD politician Peter Kühn was the exception rather than the rule. His article in *Die Zeit* argued for a recognition that West Germany's immigrants were there to stay and proposed more progressive citizenship policies. Peter Kühn, "Zustände wie in Amerika?" *Die Zeit* 45, November 2, 1979.

[466] Jeffry Jurgens, "Plotting Immigration: Diasporic Identity Formulation Among Immigrants from Turkey in Berlin," (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2005); Hunn, *Nächstes Jahr kehren wir zurück*.

[467] "Die Besetzer, die Punks und wir," *Kiez Depesche* 2, December, 1982

the state's foreigner's politics (*Ausländerpolitik*). The paper did, however, implicitly offer a model of neighborhood cooperation by publishing a part of its paper in Turkish and occasionally featured translated articles from the Turkish section in the subsequent edition. In the paper's first issue in October of 1982, the collective introduced the paper's Turkish section by noting that they had heard voices declaring the Turkish section "redundant," implying that Turkish migrants were not the magazine's main audience. The editorial collective's response to this sentiment was to state simply that, "nonetheless, over half of the residents in this area are Turkish."[468] And the editor of the Turkish-language section, who introduced himself to the readers in the fourth edition, declared his goal to help make Kreuzberg a place where "we can all get along better no matter what nationality."[469] This emphasizes the ways in which language was tied to this vision of "getting along." By including texts written in Turkish, not only was the newspaper actively seeking and affirming its readership of those migrants who could not or did not want to read German, it was also implicitly suggesting that a multi-lingual community was imaginable.

An affirmative and multi-ethnic vision of the neighborhood surfaced in more ambiguous fashion in the *Kiez Depesche* when compared to the *Südost Express*. The *Kiez Depesche* addressed the common pattern of "Germans and foreigners liv[ing] side by side" without any substantive contact or interaction. To counter this, the *Südost Express* encouraged seniors to reach out to their Turkish neighbors and offer babysitting or after school services such as helping migrant children with their homework. The idea behind the appeal to seniors was that these older German residents "play an important role in

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[468] "Wer wir sind," *Kiez Depesche* 1, 1982, 2.
[469] "Wer wir sind," 3.

improving neighborhood relations since they have more time than regular working folks and often sit alone in their apartments."[470] Additionally, there were, the paper claimed, "foreign families in the neighborhood with scores of children who can't afford daycare given that they send money back to home country to support relatives and these children have parents who don't speak sufficient German to help their children with homework [therefore] it would be a great help if one or the other German Oma or Opa would be interested in looking after [their neighbors'] children after school."[471]

The paper subtly and not so subtly reminded its readers that the "future of SO 36 lay not in superficial everyday negotiations between German and foreigners, but in finding ways to learn how to best get along and to assert common interests for improved living situations."[472] While acknowledging that these approaches "will not do wonders and sweep away mutual prejudices," they were nonetheless advocated as "small steps to better communication and understanding."[473] Indeed, we see here that discursive spaces for a more positive understanding of ethnic difference did open up in this period, as grassroots politics pursued a well-meaning approach to intercultural understanding. However, locally based groups stopped short of making arguments for a greater inclusion of more and different forms of oppression as principally experienced by poor immigrants Kreuzberg's tenant activists and community organizers made efforts to emphasize shared socioeconomic status and location between "Turks" and Germans in a space marked as marginal, but their approach to bridging those differences had one major limitation.

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[470] "Liebe Senioren!," *Südost Express*, 3, 1978
[471] "Liebe Senioren!"
[472] *Südost Express* 6, 1980, 3.
[473] *Südost Express* 6, 1980, 3.

These left-alternative groups active in the neighborhood failed to recognize that the burden of official renewal practices fell disproportionately on migrants from Turkey.

The neighborhood activists working for the Kiez Depesche did not directly call for residents to combat discriminatory housing measures or did it encourage amicable ways to live and work together, but the magazine did provide a venue for Kreuzberg's migrant residents from Turkey to speak for themselves. The division of the paper into two parts, one German and one Turkish, signaled to residents of Kreuzberg that the contents of each issue concerned not just one resident population, but everyone in the neighborhood. Moreover, the pieces from the Turkish section that appeared in translation gave German-speaking readers insight into both the shared and specific concerns of their Turkish neighbors. This fact, at first glance, might seem trivial; however, seeing as both government policies in 1980s West Germany and public debate cast migrants as passive clients of a benevolent state apparatus, having a voice in neighborhood politics to address specific concerns should not be underestimated.

Perhaps most importantly, a selection of the *Kiez Depesche* articles challenged the passive position assigned to migrants from Turkey by both local government authorities and left-alternative activists. In one issue, the paper reported extensively on an altercation between residents of Kottbusser Strasse 8, home to the German-Turkish association *Verein Autonomes Wohnen*, and the city-owned housing corporation that managed the building. The tone of the report suggests a more complex picture of neighborhood relations than what was typically the case. The residents of the house were a mixed group of German and migrant women from Turkey who had squatted the building two years before. The group was motivated by both a material need for adequate and affordable

housing and concern with the general problem of limited availability of housing for

single women with children. In the spring of 1983, they managed to negotiate a lease

with the housing corporation to secure their legal status in the building. Not unlike other

legalized squats, the residents of Kottbusser Strasse 8 appropriated the built landscape,

i.e., the physical building itself, to display their politics. In this particular example, the

residents had hung banners outside their windows declaring solidarity with political

prisoners in Turkey who were engaged in a hunger strike to protest government torture

and mistreatment of detainees. In the *Kiez Depesche* report, the reader is told that the

housing corporation demanded that the banners be removed, but the reasons behind this

request were left unmentioned.[474] Residents of the building, organized in the form of a

house committee, refused the request to take down the banners, insisting on their right to

freedom of expression.

For the residents of Kottbusser Strasse 8 the dispute initially revolved around the

freedom to express their political views. As the dispute swelled, another matter revealed

itself to be of central importance: the everyday practices and political cooperation

between the German and "foreign" women residing in the apartment house. A

spokesperson for the house committee underlined this other, political dimension to the

conflict: "In view of the existing xenophobic politics of the government, it is more

necessary than ever that Germans and foreigners align together. The public should know

that foreigners are not apolitical, isolated individuals but that they follow the

sociopolitical developments in Germany with great alarm […] Foreigners are included in

a democratic movement against conservatism. Our project provides a concrete

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[474] Aus dem Türkischen "Druck von oben kann gemeinsames Handeln nicht aufhalten," *Kiez Depesche*, 2, 1982.

example."[475] Here, in accentuating the significance of this unique project in the Kottbusser Strasse, the residents confronted the dominant understandings of social relations based on ethnicity and race that were found not only in mainstream German discourse, but also in leftist circles. This example illustrated, as did others in the Kiez Depesche, the political agency of "foreigners" in a social and political context in which notions of timid or acquiescent "guestworkers" still dominated public discourse.[476]

Neighborhood endeavors to raise awareness of the structural constraints faced by Kreuzberg's immigrants were invariably embedded in a discourse that emphasized how two culturally distinct entities could 'get along.' This narrative did not complicate mainstream notions of German identity that were, and still are, based on an assumed dichotomy between "German" and "foreigners." For instance, the *Südost Express* frequently argued that "mutual distrust and incomprehension" derived primarily from language difficulties, competition for work, and a general lack of understanding of a different or "foreign" way of life.[477] Given the nationalist meta-narrative of Germany as a non-immigration country in the face of everyday realities that revealed otherwise, a discussion regularly framed as one of mutual misgivings, of an "us" and a "them," proved ineffectual. Even if reciprocal mistrust did indeed characterize everyday interactions, analyses by the autonomous left failed to take into full account migrants' unequal political status and, in turn, did not adequately question the social and political privileges automatically accorded to white, ethnic Germans.

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[475] *Kiez Depesche*, 5, 1983

[476] Bojadzijev's published dissertation, *Die windige Internationale*, addresses the history of resistance by migrants in Germany. See also, Serhat Karakayali, *Gespenste der Migration*.

[477] *Südost Express*, 3, 1982.

The left's tendency to presuppose an analogous status to the one occupied by their migrant neighbors vis-à-vis state power is most obvious in the political tracts, newspapers, and political posters of the more radical wing of the squatters' scene. Race, in other words, or more accurately the existence of racism, is completely ignored. Like other critics of urban renewal in Kreuzberg, the squatter scene had been instrumental in generating publicity around the issues of affordable housing and corrupt renewal practices. Another goal of the more radical and militant wings of the squatting movement claimed self-managed autonomous spaces that served, among other things, as platforms for political organizing. In the international political climate of the early 1980s, the radical left firmly opposed what they saw as a militarist and capitalist West German state existing in partnership with an imperialist U.S. administration. Given their oppositional political stance, not to mention a lifestyle culturally and socially on the margins of West Germany society, it is perhaps not surprising that the squatters' scene perceived itself as a target of state repression and acts of private discrimination. These suspicions were not unfounded and are discussed in more detail in the next chapter. But more important for this discussion is the way in which this self-perception helps to explain the limits to radical political discourse and organizing in relation to race and ethnicity.

The West Berlin squatters' scene generated a high volume of flyers, newspapers, and magazines that circulated throughout the left-alternative scene both in West Berlin and beyond. Among the vast number of pages, one rarely finds any mention of the migrant population residing in Kreuzberg. Again, this may not be surprising given that the scene's immediate interest lay in disseminating information on the status of the squats, both new and old, addressing issues that divided the scene, as well as providing

information on upcoming political demonstrations or events. In fact, in the few instances

when migrants are mentioned at all, these references unabashedly reinforced popular

stereotypes of Turks in Germany. In one issue of the *Besetzerpost*, a mouthpiece of the

squatters' scene, the editorial collective compared Kreuzberg to a cat with nine lives and

asked, "How many times in the last decades has Kreuzberg felt the heat? Who all has

tried to give the neighborhood its fatal blow?"[478] It summed up the answer with the

following words: "Like a cat, our neighborhood has survived all the strokes of fate

thrown at it: wartime bombing, the division of the city and its consequences for [area]

residents, the flood of Turks, speculators' evil deeds, and clear-cut renewal."[479] The

inclusion of the "flood of Turks" within a list of 'evils' ranging from physical destruction

to exploitative practices reflects a remarkably hostile perception toward the Turkish

population – it also employs vocabulary ironically drawn from mainstream and

conservative discourse viewing minorities as outsiders threatening to overwhelm German

society and culture.

Reading further, one finds a more detailed depiction of each "blow" suffered.

Once the wall went up, the neighborhood, according the article, emptied out. But then

came the "the economic miracle to give us the third blow: the 'Kanaken Keule' –and

Kreuzberg became 'Little Istanbul' with some streets, now loud and colorful thanks to the

Turkish kiddies, almost entirely Turkish."[480] Following this listing of "serious" blows to

the life of the neighborhood, the article declared that, "none of these things could take

Kreuzberg down. On the contrary, [the neighborhood] has resisted what those from above

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[478] "Kiezportät 1. Teil," *Besetzerpost*, September 4, 1981, 20.

[479] "Kiezportät 2. Teil," *Besetzerpost*, September 11, 1981, 18.

[480] "Kiezportät 1. Teil," 21.

try to threaten us with."[481] Two points are worth noting here. Firstly, the article draws

upon common perceptions of the ways in which migrants from Turkey have altered or

changed a "German" cityscape by calling attention to the "raucous Turkish kiddies" and

the "loud colors" visible in the neighborhood's streets and squares. Secondly, there is a

firm sense of "we" in the article's depiction of Kreuzberg's heroic struggle to resist

"changes from above," that is, those imposed by the state. In this instance, the 'we vs.

them' refers to the squatters and the state, with Kreuzberg portrayed as the "Gallic island

resisting the Roman occupation."[482] In this contemporary reenactment of the fictional

story in the Asterix comic, the migrants in Kreuzberg do not play a significant role in the

struggle.[483] In fact, they are ironically cast as tools in the struggle of the oppressor, allied

with the German state.

This position is again evident in an article in a newspaper paper for the

radical/autonomous left based in West Berlin, *Radikal*. In it, the anonymous authors

appropriate the historical meaning of the term ghetto as a way to initiate a debate on the

potential pitfalls of a "ghettoized existence." They opened the piece by evoking the

following references:

> The Warsaw ghetto, the Jews' failed uprising, ghetto uprising in Algiers, ghetto
> slums in American cities, foreigners – the so-called guest worker ghettos in the
> BRD; actually ghettos are nothing new, the first in the Middle Ages when Jews
> tried to sequester themselves from the rest of the population or were sequestered –

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[481] "Kiezportät 2. Teil," 18.

[482] Martin Düspohl, "Mythos Kreuzberg: Ein historischer Streifzug," Texte zum Kongress Mythos Kreuzberg - Bilanz eines multikulturellen Experiments, Kongress, 26. - 28. Mai 2005 in Berlin-Kreuzberg, Heinrich Böll Stiftung. *www.migration-boell.de/downloads/.../MythosKreuzbergStreifzug.pdf*; Düspohl, *Kleine Kreuzberg-Geschichte.*

[483] For an analysis of this fantasy in the context of film, see Barbara Mennel, "Political Nostalgia and Local Memory: The Kreuzberg of the 1980s in Contemporary German Film," *The Germanic Review* 82, no. 1 (Winter 2007): 54-77.

but that's actually not the issue here. We're in Kreuzberg and this is about our ghetto!"[484]

By connecting "their" ghetto to other historical and contemporary forms of ghettos, the authors fail to acknowledge both the widely disparate experiences of the inhabitants of these different "ghettoes," and, even more importantly, the aspect of forced segregation, particularly with reference to the Nazi period. The authors do not differentiate between free choice and limitations or restrictions: "After the Turks began to create their own ghetto in Kreuzberg in the 1960s and 70s, the drop-outs, the squatters, and the alternatives then came along. While the student movement felt at home in bourgeois Charlottenburg, the new movement settled down in close physical contact (*in Tuchfühlung*) to the Turks in the most run-down part of the Berlin."[485]

Rather than addressing the underlying structures in place that restricted migrants' housing choices and opportunities, the article emphasizes the potential of the ghetto as a space of resistance and militancy. Unlike in American cities or Nazi-created ghettos, the authors claimed that this powerful site of resistance would be driven not by oppressed and persecuted religious or racial minorities but by politically oppressed white, leftist Germans. The article posits, "as long as the ghettos remain ghettos, could our Kreuzberg become a new Morazan?"[486]This likeness of Kreuzberg to the El Salvadorean district known as the stronghold of guerilla resistance and for a 1981 anti-guerilla massacre by the Salvadorean armed forces reveals the limitations the radical left inability to discern its own relationship to subordination and privilege inside the space of Kreuzberg.

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[484] "Babylon must Burn!," *Radikal*, 106, 1982, 20.

[485] "Babylon must Burn!," 19.

[486] "Babylon must Burn!," 19. Morazan refers to the center of the El Salvadorean guerilla resistance and the 1981 massacre of resistors by state militia.

Further examples drawn from political posters produced and distributed by the autonomous left make clear this limitation. The posters reflect the political sensibilities of the international solidarity movement and the anti-imperialists, both of whom found their home in Kreuzberg's squats and political centers. The former supported international solidarity and social justice movements such as the peace movement, anti-apartheid movement, and anti-imperialist politics.[487] In the early 1980s, the main focus of the solidarity movement was the U.S. intervention in Central America. The anti-imperialists shared similar politics with those active in the solidarity movement, but differed in their embrace of a more militant approach to toppling imperialist political entities. This movement aligned itself closely with the Red Army Fraction (RAF) and political prisoners of liberation movements, in particular with Palestinians and Turkish Kurds. Identifying with militant struggles outside of West Germany, these anti-imperialists saw themselves as part of a global revolutionary force. One 1987 poster expressed both solidarity with an imprisoned RAF member at the same time as it called for solidarity with the Palestinian liberation struggle. The bottom of the poster read: "Not one centimeter for the imperialists, zionists, and fascists – unity to the revolutionary forces world-wide!"[488]

Posters in support of the Central American solidarity movement are graced with images of smiling El Salvadorean or Nicaraguan peasants or farmers with weapons and fists raised high. The posters announce the dates of organized demonstrations and provide

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[487] The solidarity movement drew on traditions of the 1960s activists who supported and identified with national liberation movements. See Katrina Hagen, "Internationalism in Cold War Germany" (PhD diss., University of Washington, 2008); Quinn Slobodian, "Radical Empathy: The Third World and the New Left in 1960s West Germany" (PhD diss., New York University, 2008).

[488] "Front entsteht als kämpfende Bewegung," in *hoch die kampf dem: 20 Jahre Plakate autonomer Bewegungen*, ed. HKS13 (Hamburg, Berlin, Göttingen: Verlag Libertäre Assoziation Verlag der Buchläden Schwarze Risse, 1999), 115.

the bank information of the respective solidarity committee in order to raise money for

material aid. (**Figure 4.2**) One poster publicizing the 1982 anti-Reagan demonstration in

West Berlin asks: "The question is what we to do in view of the fact that US-imperialism

is still the main enemy of humanity!" Another poster from 1984 declares "No

intervention in Nicaragua!" and provides a more extensive summary of the current

situation on the bottom third of the poster. The last line of the summary affirms that, "the

best form of practical solidarity is still to follow up on our battles with determination

against war preparations against the war preparations and imperialist politics here [in

West Berlin]. They will not pass!"[489] These visual representations and the hyperbolic

texts and slogans accompanying the images romanticize a –most often– masculine

revolutionary subject, revealing far more about the self-perception of West German

solidarity movements than the reality of Central American guerilla fighters. This

identification with an anti-imperialist struggle locates the (white, male) German activist –

in a similar position of resistance, but one aimed against the United States via the West

German state.

The combined effect of this solidarity and identification with anti-imperialist

struggles, for which, in most cases, there were no significant demographic or cultural ties,

was that the issue of race (and to a lesser extent gender) was eclipsed by a more

developed analysis of class. An examination of the posters and slogans of the

autonomous left reveals that a discourse of anti-capitalism and anti-imperialism in the

1980s did not intersect productively with a discourse on anti-racism. And when a

connection between racism and imperialism was offered, it was often made in an

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[489] Ibid., 90

international rather than a domestic context. One explanation for this glaring limitation

on the part of Kreuzberg's squatters was that they did indeed face repeated confrontations

with police during forced evictions, demonstrations, blockades and riots, particularly in

the peak phase of protests in 1982. This constant threat of a violent altercation or eviction

increased the left's own sense of "persecution" as I will continue to show in the next

chapter. Given that the autonomous left's own experience with discrimination was what

collectively defined the movement, it was difficult to consider other more insidious

sources of oppression and inequality in German society.

Kreuzberg's radical white activists and squatters repeatedly cast their struggles

against an unjust system within a wider, more global framework of interconnected

oppressive practices on the part of intertwined state actors. Squatters made links between

what they perceived as "the belligerent and plundering politics against peoples of the so-

called Third World and American efforts to crush resistance" and the city of Berlin's

"attrition warfare" against squatters, a conflict made visible through forced evictions,

early morning searches, the intimidating presence of police vans on neighborhood side

streets, night-time provocations, and the increasingly harsh sentences under Paragraph

129a.[490] In order to confront state actions both locally and abroad, squatters organized

campaign days, demonstrations political events, discussions, street festivals, and formed

neighborhood councils and solidarity committees for those they saw as their beleaguered

brethren in other parts of the world.

In demonstrating antipathy towards the German state specifically, and U.S.

foreign policies more generally, there was a curious lack of awareness in squatters'

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[490] "Erklärung der autonomen und antiimperialistischen Gruppen zur Reagan-Demo," June, 1981, uncatalogued, Papiertiger Archive and Library, Berlin.

articulations of social and political justice. Those vehemently opposed to forms of state

injustices, remarkably paid little attention to their politically disenfranchised neighbors.

Squatters' political demands rarely addressed the tenuous housing and residency status of

migrants in Kreuzberg or the official housing discrimination undeniably visible in

Kreuzberg in the late 1970s and early 80s. In light of the hostile political climate in West

Germany in the 1980s in respect to the "foreigner question," the oppositional character of

the left-alternative scene overlooked any efforts to create a multi-ethnic political agenda

or political community. Moreover, in rejecting outright all things "German," a sentiment

aptly captured in the punk song "Germany must die so that we can live,"[491] radical

activists ironically reified a notion of a pure national identity.[492] For them, Germanness

was real, absolute and unchanging in their eyes, a notion that had little value or resonance

amongst migrant workers in West Berlin struggling to acquire a voice in political

discussions that concerned them directly (such as housing and other access to public

services).[493] This tension between the leftist rhetoric and political practices on the ground

in terms of incorporating an anti-racist agenda has, to this day, still not been adequately

resolved.

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[491] Joseph Scheer and Jan Espert, *Deutschland, Deutschland, alles ist vorbei: alternatives Leben oder Anarchie?: die neue Jugendrevolte am Beispiel der Berliner "Scene"* (Munich: Bernard & Graefe, 1982). The punk band Slime from Hamburg wrote the song in 1981.

[492] "Preeseerklärung des Besetzerrats zum Ausländererlass," November 29, 1981, uncatalogued, file: Hausbesetzer, Sammlung Berlin, Berlin. See also Rolf Amann, *Der moralische Aufschrei Presse und abweichendes Verhalten am Beispiel der Hausbesetzungen in Berlin* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1985).

[493] See IGI Initiative Gleichberechtigung "Integration," *Stellungnahme der Ausländer zur Ausländerpolitik* (Berlin: Express-Edition, 1981).

Figure 4.1: Solidarity with FMLN. Source: http://www.umbruch-bildarchiv.de/bildarchiv/foto1/berlin1982/pages/1330q.htm

Figure 4.2: 1980s Solidarity Poster FMLN. Photo in *hoch die kampf dem. 20 Jahre Plakate autonomer Bewegungen***, 1999, 96.**

Chapter Five

"Squatting is just the beginning": Redefining the Cold War Capital

Since its designation as the capital of the newly unified German Empire in 1871, the city of Berlin has been redefined and remade by no less than five different political regimes. Even after the western-half of the city lost its official designation as capital of Germany to Bonn in 1949, Berlin soon came to be identified not only with Germany's postwar "fate," but more so as a potent symbol of an ideologically divided world.[494] This story is well known. Berlin's unique geo-political status in the early, volatile years of the Cold War helped establish future references to the partitioned city that evoked images of a global conflict between East and West, of communist aggression and of western freedom and democracy.[495]

The flash point years between the Berlin Airlift in 1948-1949 and the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961 would secure the rhetorical celebration of West Berlin as a front-line city until the fall of communism in 1989. The Soviet blockade of Berlin's western sectors and the American and British decision to airlift supplies to West Berliners settled the question of continued U.S. involvement in the occupied city. For the duration of the Cold War, that the Berliners owed their freedom to the valiant efforts of the Western Alliance, especially the United States, was fervently maintained. However, over the course of the 1980s, this dominant, albeit clichéd, narrative and its related

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[494] Werner Düttmann, "Thema Berlin," Festvortrag auf dem 107. Schinkelfest des Architekten- und Ingenieursverein zu Berlin am 13. März 1962 in der Kongresshalle von Senatsbaudirektor, Schriftenreihe des Architekten-und Ingenieurvereins zu Berlin, Heft 14 (Berlin: Architekten- und Ingenieurverein. 1962), 8.

[495] For a detailed discussion of how Berlin became *the* symbolic capital of the Cold War see Steege, *Black Market, Cold War*; Large, *Berlin*.

heavy-handed rhetoric was contested as struggles between a new, leftist movement and a

conservative West German government began to revolve around contestations over the

definition of Berlin on the global stage. In particular, there was tension over the real and

the ideal form of Berlin's relationship to the United States. Both protestors and

government leaders at the local and national level saw this issue to be of particular

importance, culturally, politically and economically.[496] Both sides perceived the space of

West Berlin as crucial for gauging the complex and shifting relations between the United

States and the Federal Republic toward the end of the Cold War era. (**Figure 5.1**)

In the early 1980s, a general atmosphere of dissent focusing on nuclear energy,

disarmament, and NATO policies was burgeoning across Western Europe. In the Federal

Republic, after several years of relative quiet following the well-publicized leftist

radicalism of the early to mid-70s, 1982 saw a new cycle of mass protest that took to the

streets to challenge both global and local politics. In response to this unwelcome

challenge to their power, political leaders branded these forms of leftist dissent as

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[496] On the special bond created between West Berlin and the United States, see Daum, *Kennedy in Berlin*. On West Germany's cultural, political and economic relationship with the United States, see Heide Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany: Reconstructing National Identity after Hitler* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995); Maria Höhn, *GIs and Fräuleins: The German American Encounter in 1950s West Germany* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Frank Trommler and Elliott Shore, eds., *The German-American Encounter: Conflict and Cooperation Between Two Cultures, 1800-2000* (New York: Bergahn Books, 2001); Uta Poiger, *Jazz, Rock and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Reiner Pommerin, ed., *The American Impact on Postwar Germany* (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1995); Volker Berghahn, *The Americanisation of West German Industry, 1945-1973* (Leamington Spa: Berg, 1986); Wolfgang-Uwe Friedrich, ed., *Germany and America: Essays in Honor of Gerald R. Kleinfeld* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001); Jeffry M. Diefendorf, Axel Frohn, and Hermann-Josef Rupieper, eds., *American Policy and the Reconstruction of West Germany, 1945-1955* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Konrad Jarausch and Hannes Siegrist, eds., *Amerikanisierung und Sowjetisierung in Deutschland, 1945-1970* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 1997); Alf Lüdtke, Inge Marssolek and Adelheid von Saldern, eds., *Amerikanisierung: Traum und Alptraum im Deutschland des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1996).

insignificant and its participants as politically and symbolically marginal.[497] Faced

directly with these challenges, West Berlin politicians would accomplish this by

positioning protestors' actions and discourse in direct opposition to the supposed values

that had defined the city since the Berlin Airlift. By the late 1980s, the mainstream and

boulevard press routinely characterized protestors in Kreuzberg in much the same way

that then Mayor Eberhard Diepgen (CDU) described them after the May Day riot in

1987: "a clique of anti-Berliners joined together to violently disturb and destroy."[498]

      This language and imagery, in its assignment of anti-government agendas and

anti-Berlin aims on the part of the demonstrators, was typical of the time. In fact,

Diepgen's statement encapsulates the official attitude of West Berlin's politicians,

sustained throughout the 1980s, toward moderate to militant manifestations of leftist

political protest in the divided city. This rhetorical construction first figured widely just a

few years earlier when other, equally unruly demonstrations by leftists in West Berlin

undermined the city's iconic image that owed its very survival to its postwar relationship

with the United States. At this time, then Mayor Richard von Weizsäcker (CDU) made

attempts to smooth over wide differences in opinion vis-à-vis the Ronald Reagan's 1982

presidential visit to West Berlin by claiming that:

> On the occasion of the American President's welcome visit to this city some
> unwelcome guests will be traveling to Berlin to take the opportunity to abuse the
> right of freedom through violence. These visitors, the majority of whom are not
> Berliners and who aren't familiar with the city, are out to damage the issue of

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[497] By political establishment I mean here members of parliament from all three major parties, the ruling CDU and its coalition partner the FDP as well as the SPD. The Green Party was the main exception, particularly in the context of West Berlin (The Alternative List). The West Berlin Communist Party (SEW) too was a supporter of the city's radical, left-alternative scene.

[498] "Schwarze Nacht," *Der Spiegel* 20, May 11, 1987, 64.

freedom and the related right to peacefully demonstrate right here in Berlin because they are aware of the symbolic meaning Berlin has for freedom.[499]

Significantly, this vision of the meaning of Berlin still dominated the rhetoric of West Germany's politicians decades after such defining events as the Airlift, the Freedom Bell gift, and John F. Kennedy's visit in 1963.[500] West Berlin's political leader cultivated this image, seeing it as a way to link ideology and economics. By continually fashioning Berlin as a city "saved" by the U.S., this rhetoric allowed West Berliners, and ultimately West Germans at large, to both justify their "special relationship" and to mitigate discord with the United States.[501]

Previous chapters examined the ways in which various social actors resisted or opposed state and local planning. Focusing primarily on questions of design and decision making related to the built environment, these actors contested authorities' plans and visions of Berlin's residential buildings, streets, and neighborhoods. Yet the terrain of contestation was not only framed in material terms (as in access to quality housing), but also symbolically. This chapter takes up the latter in more detail and explores the political

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[499] Weizsäcker in *Der Tagesspiegel*, June 11, 1982, quoted in Komitee für Grundrechte und Demokratie, *Bericht und Einschätzung den Auseinandersetzungen am 11. Juni 1982 in Berlin* (Sensbachtal: Das Komitee, August, 1982), 7.

[500] The Berlin Airlift refers to the decision on the part of the Western Allies to airlift necessary supplies and foodstuffs to the population of Berlin after the Soviets blocked access to the western sectors of the city in 1948-49. It is recognized as the first major Cold War crisis. See Steege, *Black Market, Cold War*; Richard Collier, *Bridge Across the Sky: The Berlin Blocade and the Airlift 1948-1949* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1978); Uwe Förster, *Auftrag Luftbrücke: Der Himmel über Berlin 1948-1949* (Berlin: Nicolai Verlag, 1998). The Freedom Bell is a replica of the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia. The idea for the gift was inspired by a grassroots campaign and General Lucius D. Clay presented the gift in 1950 to the city of West Berlin. See David E. Barclay, "Beyond Cold War Mythmaking: Ernst Reuter and the United States," in *Germany and America: Essays in Honor of Gerald R. Kleinfeld*, ed. Wolfgang-Uwe Friedrich (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001); Daum, *Kennedy in Berlin*; Gary B. Nash, *The Liberty Bell* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010). President John F. Kennedy's visited West Berlin in 1963 where he gave his now famous "*Ich bin ein Berliner*" speech. See Daum, *Kennedy in Berlin*; Andreas Daum has argued persuasiuvely of the propagandistic purpose of all three events in the context of Cold War Europe.

[501] See Daum, *Kennedy in Berlin*. Michael Geyer in his article, "America in Germany: Power and the Pursuit of Americanization," emphasizes the element of security that the United States guaranteed West Germany as "one of the single most important reason why Germans came to like Americans and accept their presence;" in Trommler and Shore, eds., *The German-American Encounter*, 132.

symbolism of West Berlin in the 1980s. The left-alternative scene, concentrated in the

district of Kreuzberg, rejected a definition of the city that was couched explicitly in

relation to an older model of postwar Berlin. Leftists most visibly critiqued this well-

worn meaning attached to the city's western half during two U.S. state visits to West

Berlin in the early years of the Reagan administration –a visit by Secretary of State

Alexander Haig in September 1981, and a visit by President Reagan in June 1982.

(**Figure 5.2**)

Both visits inspired hefty controversy among West Germans and Berliners and

resulted in widely covered conflicts between protesters and the city government. In the

context of uneasy transatlantic relations between the US and West Germany, this chapter

demonstrates the ways in which political leaders continued to rely on Berlin as central to

their casting of West Germany as a "reliable friend" with respect to the Western Alliance

and Reagan's America. By exploring the highly publicized contestations over the

definition of Berlin in relation to America during these two explosive moments, this

chapter argues for the importance of the interrelationship between urban space and the

evocative power of historically symbolic imagery.

Situating West Berlin

On June 11, 1982 U.S. President Ronald Reagan visited West Berlin after a

summit meeting of the NATO Council in Bonn one day before. To the embarrassment of

the party leaders, hundreds of thousands of peace and antinuclear demonstrators took to

the streets of Bonn and West Berlin to protest Reagan's foreign and defense policies

concerning rearmament and NATO's security strategies.[502] The belligerent tone of the new Reagan administration, demonstrated by the president's explicit commitment to the military build-up already begun under President Jimmy Carter, and the implementation of NATO's 1979 double-track decision to deploy intermediate-range nuclear missiles (INF) in several western European countries, had sparked an upsurge in antinuclear and peace protests across the continent. Barely into the first year of Reagan's first term as president, both Americans and West Germans perceived his administration as marking an important shift in the international power dynamics of the Cold War, and especially, of the complex relations between these two countries. Divergent interests between the Federal Republic and the United States regarding military strategy and foreign policy, such as détente and arms control, widened with a second period of intense rivalry between the superpowers depicted most clearly by Ronald Reagan's confrontational anticommunist rhetoric.[503]

In terms of West German and American relations, the new Reagan administration embodied an already visible estrangement between the two countries.[504] This was a moment when the threat of nuclear war (augmented by anxieties that it would take place on German soil) seemed closer than it had in decades. Peace activists had been

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[502] The numbers reported in the German press on the day after the respective demonstrations were: Bonn over 300 000 estimated, and 100 000 in West Berlin on 10 June and between 2000 and 3000 on June 11. I do not argue here that West Berlin was the center of the peace movement in the 1980s, but rather for the sake of better understanding German-American relations, it is West Berlin's protest movements and alternative scene that interests me.

[503] David S. Painter, *The Cold War: An International History* (New York: Routledge, 1999), chap. 6; Fred Halliday, "The Ends Of Cold War, " *New Left Review* 180 (March/April 1990): 5-24.

[504] On the growing tension between West Germany and the United States in this period, see Harald Mueller and Thomas Risse-Kappen, "Origins of Estrangement: The Peace Movement and the Changed Image of America in West Germany," *International Security* 12, no. 1 (Summer 1987): 52-88; and Matthias Dembinski, "Differences on Arms Control in German-American Relations," in *The United States and Germany in the Era of the Cold War, 1945-1990: A Handbook*, v. 2, 1968-1990, ed. Detlef Junker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 140-147; and in the same volume, Michael Broer, "The NATO Double-Track Decision, the INF Treaty, and the SNF Controversy: German-American Relations between Consensus and Conflict," 148-154; Wolfgang Schlauch, "Reliable Partnership? Perspectives on Recent German-American Relations," *German Studies Review* 8, no. 1 (February 1985): 107-125.

organizing throughout the 1970s in response to West German defense policies, but small protests grew into mass demonstrations in response to the bellicose rhetoric of the Reagan presidency and the related concern that the American president could quite possibly instigate a third world war.[505] The salience of the peace protests in West Berlin, and more generally in West Germany, owed much to the country's vulnerable geo-strategic position in Cold War Europe.

The growth of the peace movement in the early 1980s presented a domestic problem for Chancellor Helmut Schmidt (SPD), who, in the face of increased opposition within his own party and by protest groups, was confronted with the task of defending his support for INF deployment. Schmidt saw the modernization of intermediate-range nuclear forces as crucial to European security, yet this vision clashed with Reagan's arms-control policy and his desire to restore American military superiority believed by Reagan to be weakened during the era of détente. Schmidt's efforts to maintain a delicate balance between a strong alliance with the West (i.e., United States) while endorsing an open policy of détente contributed to the rift between West Germany and an American administration intent on abandoning this policy. Despite diverging interests between the transatlantic partners, there was no doubt that a strong commitment to the alliance was a clear priority of the Schmidt government. Nonetheless, West German and American relations reached a low point in the early 1980s as the Schmidt government continued to assert West German interests independently of, and often in direct conflict with the United States.

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[505] See Klaus Schwabe, "Détente and Multipolarity: The Cold War and German-American Relations, 1968-1990," in Junker, ed., *The United States and Germany in the Era of the Cold War*, vol. 2, 1-17.

By the latter years of the Cold War, American presidential visits to West Berlin, or more specifically the Berlin Wall, had established themselves as ritualized acts; they both drew upon the historical importance of positive German-American relations, and recreated it for TV cameras, reporters, and crowds of enthusiastic onlookers.[506] In 1982, confronted with Reagan's confrontational global politics, the massive protests of a sizeable number of West Berliners, and specifically how they were staged, offered an explicit challenge to this traditionally positive history; in doing so, these protests reflected the growing cracks in the long-cherished model of positive West German-American relations, challenging a central narrative of postwar Europe and United States. Ultimately these challenges, which were rekindled in the relatively small context of West Berlin local politics, were to continue throughout the 1980s, and they went on to redefine the meaning of the autonomous German left, as well as the contours of the German-American "partnership".

The peace marches of 1982 were but one element in a wave of protests between 1979 and 1983 that confronted both West German and American political leaders. This wave of peace and anti-nuclear protests, in fact, surpassed in sheer numbers of participants the protest activities of the 1960s.[507] An undeniable element of anti-American rhetoric, long a mainstay of German protests both on the left and right, became clearly

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[506] It is perhaps worth mentioning here that in the popular discourse it is Reagan's second visit to West Berlin in 1987 that is most often referenced. This is due largely to Reagan's speech at the Brandenburg Gate in which he stated, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!"

[507] Sociologist Ruud Koopmans' work confirms that new social movements (NSM) in West Germany were concentrated in two periods –one in the late 1960s and another in the 1980s. His analysis shows that at least quantitatively the protests in the early 1980s surpassed those of the late 1960s. For literature on the West German peace movement of the 1980s see Joyce Marie Mushaben, "Grassroots and Gewaltfreie Aktionen: A Study of Mass Mobilization Strategies in the West German Peace Movement," *Journal of Peace Research* 23, no. 2 (June 1986): 141-54; Alice Holmes Cooper, "Public-Good Movements and the Dimensions of Political Process," Postwar German Peace Movements, in *Comparative Political Studies* 29, no. 3 (June 1996): 267-89.

visible during the protest activism of this period, and indeed assumed a greater role in West German protest culture than it had in previous decades. Although this general trend was also true of other protest movements elsewhere in Europe at the time, the intimate involvement of the US in West German politics, culture, and society since 1945 bestowed a more complicated meaning to anti-American sentiments in West German protest movements.[508] The anti-Reagan demonstrations in West Berlin in 1981 and 1982 took place against this backdrop of fraught German-American relations, during a time when the U.S. first began to develop concerns over West Germany's commitment to the security of the Atlantic Alliance.

The fact that more general American concerns over Germany focused on Berlin was neither novel nor a surprise. The special symbolic power of Berlin was not unique to the Cold War period, as Berlin enjoyed iconic status nationally and internationally during Imperial, Weimar and Nazi Germany, when the erstwhile capital held a central place in the political, cultural, and social debates that have shaped our understanding not only of Germany itself, but of the nature of European modernity. As we have seen, as the "world's greatest tenement city," Berlin was emblematic of the social extremes of the nineteenth-century industrial capital. In the early twentieth century, it became a symbol of modernity as the home of modern architecture. Most vividly in 1945, the city marked the global ambitions and then absolute defeat of Nazi Germany. However, in the period between 1945 and 1989, West German politicians, with the backing of the Western

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[508] American and West German relations are often characterized as a long love-hate relationship rooted in Germany's conflicted relationship to modernization tracing at least to the late 19th century and being particularly strong during the Weimar and of course then the Nazi years. These tensions intensified after 1945 in the wake of American occupation and economic policy. For studies that demonstrate the complexities of the German-American encounter in the postwar period see Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels*; Höhn, *GIs and Fräuleins*.

alliance, constituted the social identity of the city's western half as the "better" Berlin, in opposition to their unfortunate brothers and sisters in the city's eastern half.

As social and cultural historians have demonstrated, Adenauer's path to political respectability for the new, democratic state of West Germany included an active consumer culture, for which the idea of a "good capitalist" was linked to everyday practices of consumption.[509] West Berlin represented *the* symbol of the Cold War; a divided city, with its western section embedded deep inside of the Soviet sphere, it represented both the threat of communism and the vital importance of western capitalism as a counter-balance and bulwark. Berlin ultimately came to embody the political and moral superiority of the West. Already in the immediate postwar period, the Berlin Blockade with its infamous Airlift and the subsequent Marshall Plan had succeeded in displaying to an avidly watching world American economic, moral and political superiority over the Soviets, and at the same time, of course, capturing the devotion of West Berliners.

After surrendering its political status as the capital of Germany to the little-known "provincial capital" of Bonn, and losing its economic vitality as a result of the division, Berlin's symbolic power became all the more crucial to the dynamic process of reinventing an identity for the western half of the city. The image of West Berlin that was projected to the world in the first decades of the Cold War was one built on the idea of the city as an outpost of western democracy in a divided Europe, a site that served as grounds for the U.S. to continue investing in the city. In the process of creating a "new" Berlin in postwar Europe, America, as Andreas Daum has argued, clung to a perception

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[509] Moeller, ed., *West Germany under Construction*; Schissler, *The Miracle Years*.

of the city as a place that mirrored specific historical myths and political visions of the

United States.[510] According to Daum, the dissonance between how Americans imagined

the city, and Berliners' perception of themselves and their city, grew steadily wider

throughout the Cold War, reaching new heights during the anti-Vietnam student protests

of the 1960s.[511] As is now well-documented, the mid- to late- 1960s saw the first fractures

in the idealized view of America that West German youth had grown up with.[512] The

expectations of a benevolent and morally credible America clashed with the reality of the

Civil Rights Movement and U.S. military strategy in Vietnam. Yet as Mary Nolan notes

in her analysis of anti-Americanism and Americanization in Germany, the protests

against the Vietnam War led by West German students did not mark a definitive

worsening of German-American relations.[513] Instead, she argues, the political anti-

Americanism of the '68ers found little resonance in broader discourse, remaining

essentially a fringe phenomenon.[514] In the early 1980s, this had changed. The appeal and

reach of the peace movement to a broader West German public played a role in this shift.

The palpable rift between the West German public and the United States in the early

[510] Andreas Daum, "America's Berlin, 1945-2000: Between Myths and Visions," in *Berlin: The New Capital in the East. A Transatlantic Appraisal*, ed. Frank Trommler (Washington, DC: 2000), 49-73.
[511] Daum, "America's Berlin, 1945-2000."
[512] Philipp Gassert, "With America Against America: Anti-Americanism in West Germany," in *The United States and Germany in the Era of the Cold War*, Junker, ed., vol. 1, 502-509.
[513] Mary Nolan, "Anti-Americanism and Americanization in Germany," *Politics and Society* 33, no. 1 (March 2005): 110.
[514] Nolan defines political anti-Americanism as a form of German anti-Americanism that emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s and that accepts capitalism and is accompanied by an extensive Americanization of West German society. Nolan, "Anti-Americanism and Americanization," 89. On the argument that anti-Americanism in West Germany attained a qualitatively different meaning from elsewhere in Europe, see also Andrei Markovits and Philip Gorski, *The German Left: Red, Green and Beyond* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Andrei Markovits, "On Anti-Americanism in West Germany," *New German Critique* 34 (Winter 1985): 3-27.

1980s points to a transformative phase in the ever more conflicted relationship between the two countries.[515]

To be sure, the loaded symbolism that defined the character of West Berlin did not possess equal intensity throughout the four Cold War decades. The 1961 construction of the Wall refocused tremendous international attention on the city, which gained an international symbolic value only matched in importance by the 1948 Airlift. This wave of renewed obsession with Berlin waned however, and the 1971 Quadripartite Agreement, which marked an international acceptance of the division of Berlin, settled the issue of Berlin ever again becoming the flashpoint of any future East/West conflict. For the West, both the FRG and the U.S., the agreement also marked a gradual decrease in popular and political interest in West Berlin, as its status was no longer tensely ambiguous. In a practical sense, the agreement also "normalized" the lives of West Berliners, as access in and out of the city, as well as more casual dealings vis-à-vis daily amenities became easier.[516] In the domain of politics, throughout the course of the 1970s and early 80s Berlin was gradually transformed from a site of heightened political tensions on an international scale to a city that, at least politically, commanded little attention.[517]

Kreuzberg: A Cradle of Protest

It is at first glance ironic, then, that from the 1960s through to the fall of the Wall the increasingly depoliticized West Berlin became a refuge for *Andersdenkende* –those

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[515] Nolan, "Anti-Americanism and Americanization in Germany," 110; Gassert, "With America Against America," 503-504; Müller and Risse-Kaapen, "Origins of Estrangement."
[516] Wolfgang Ribbe, *Geschichte Berlins*.
[517] By politically I mean here the city's centrality in diplomatic relations; in national politics it certainly remained present in the minds of West Germans as subsidies continued to flow into the city to keep it alive.

who sought an escape from the perceived social, political, and cultural conformity of the West German provinces. The anti-NATO and anti-Reagan demonstrations I focus on in this chapter drew a broad segment of their support from this left-alternative milieu or "scene." As I have discussed at length in earlier chapters, this "scene" does not lend itself to easy classification. It was comprised of ecological and political groups of various grades of dogmatism, local grassroots organizations, punks, and a growing faction of radical autonomous groups. Moreover, unlike the composition of the APO and student movement of the 1960s, there was a distinct shift away from the university as the locus of, and recruiting pool for political protest as discussed in Chapter Three.[518]

In the late 1970s resident and activist claims to the neighborhood, and by extension claims to "their" definition of the city, began to manifest itself politically through the physical occupation of empty apartments and buildings. The forms of protest action taken in the 1980s that displayed outrage over the city's mismanaged redevelopment policies dovetailed with a struggle not only over an evident material need, i.e., affordable housing, but also for the right to organize and define one's own living and work environment, i.e., self-administration over self-organized spaces (*Freiräume*). As the squatter movement radicalized, the squats, and the expansion of the alternative infrastructure they helped make possible, became important sites for the intersection of local struggles and a radical critique of political issues that transcended regional and national boundaries. Perhaps more significantly, the squats represented places where

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[518] Participants came from working to lower to middle class families, but many came to Berlin either to do or after their vocational training (*Ausbildung*). Many kept their from typical middle class professions and when then on the margins of these profession working for political projects/collectives. AG Grauwacke, *Autonome in Bewegung: aus den ersten 23 Jahren* (Berlin: Assoziation A, 2008), 40.

one's politics and civic identity were lived out, shaped, and literally displayed within the urban landscape.

It was during the 1970s that the main pulse of the "scene" had moved, albeit briefly, from the politicized West Berlin of the 1960s to the West German provinces. It was here, in the rural and sparsely populated countryside of Schlwesig-Holstein, Lower Saxony, Bavaria, and Baden-Württenberg, that militant protests and attempts to block the sites (or potential sites) of nuclear power stations led to the emergence of alternative camps "occupying" sites in Wyhl, Brokdorf, and Gorleben. By 1980 however, a new phase of Berlin protest, thanks to the city's function as a center of the squatting movement, acquired a particularly spatial aspect as West Berlin became once again a hub of alternative protest.[519] Throughout this decade, the way in which space was occupied revealed a struggle of opposing visions and the political remaking of urban space.

The early 1980s signaled the emergence of a new generation of leftists who were eager to show that their antipathy towards NATO's missile policies extended beyond just the policies of a particular administration, and represented a larger systemic critique of the Federal Republic, the West and capitalism. Going back to the 1960s, the extra-parliamentary left in Germany and throughout much of the world began linking the United States with the excesses of market capitalism and consumerism. West German 68ers joined students around the globe in opposing U.S. capitalism and imperialism in addition to holding critical views of American foreign policies. What differed in the early 1980s was that protest visibly opposed not only American foreign policies and the

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[519] Dieter Rucht points to two factors, continuity over time and the extraordinary size of West Berlin's protest scene, as way to explain the perception of the city as the "capital" of the West German leftist and alternative movements in his discussion of the anti-Reagan and anti-IMF campaigns in his article, with Jürgen Gerhards, "Mesomobilization: Organizing and Framing in Two Protest Campaigns in West Germany," *The American Journal of Sociology* 98, No. 3 (November, 1992): 570.

American military presence in West Germany and West Berlin, but also American culture and society as a model to be emulated.[520]

To be sure, demonstrations against nuclear armament and Reagan's foreign policies was certainly not unique to the political agenda of activists in West Berlin; in the week leading up to the planned June 10 and 11 demonstrations in Bonn and Berlin, the Federal Congress of Autonomous Peace Initiatives (*Bundeskongreß autonomer Friedensinitiativen* or BAF) organized an anti-NATO week that took place in towns and cities across the Federal Republic.[521] However, unlike in Bonn and numerous other sites of protest in West Germany, the character and intensity of the anti-NATO and Reagan protests in Berlin was unequivocally linked to the struggle around and definition of urban space and the defense of those spaces that had radicalized the movement in the months before Haig and Reagan's visits to the city.

In an editorial piece in the *taz* former Kommune I member Dieter Kunzelmann declared just days after the demonstration in Berlin on June 11 that the image of "a harmonious Berlin on the day of Reagan's visit can now no longer be reproduced despite the many efforts to do so such as police violence, the position taken by the [mainstream] media, and the jubilant Berliners carted off to the official reception."[522] For Kunzelmann,

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[520] On the formal and informal networks of collaboration between activists in the 1960s, especially between West Germans and Americans, see for example, Martin Klimke, "The 'Other' Alliance: Global Protest and Student Unrest in West Germany and the U.S. 1962-1972," (PhD diss., Heidelberg University, 2005); Schmidtke, *Der Aufbruch der jungen Intelligenz*. For studies on the relationship between youth and consumer cultures in the 1960s and 1970s, see Axel Schildt and Detlef Siegfried, eds., *Between Marx and Coca-Cola: Youth Cultures in Changing European Societies, 1960-1980* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006).

[521] Bernd Weidmann, Herbert Meyer, Theo Christiansen and Peter Grohmann, eds., *500 000 gegen Reagan & NATO. Dokumentation: 10.6. in Bonn NATO Politik 1949-1982, Reagan in Berlin, I.D.E.E.* (Göttingen: Verlag Die Werkstatt, 1982), 72. See also, Steve Breyman, *Why movements matter: the West German Peace Movement and U.S. Arms Control Policy* (Albany: State University of New York, 2001).

[522] Dieter Kunzelmann, "Nur die allerdümmsten …," *die tageszeitung*, June 14, 1982. In 1982 Kunzelmann, former member of West Berlin's most well known 1960s commune, was a member of West Berlin's Green Party, the Alternative List.

the demonstrations in Berlin metaphorically broke the "bubble" of what he described as the supposed political "consensus of West Berliners with the warmongers in the Pentagon."[523] In the aftermath of the anti-Reagan demonstration, Kunzelmann was not alone in his assessment of the heightened political situation as a continuum that linked the state's "harassment" (e.g., protest banners torn down from squatted houses, political stickers confiscated, the right to demonstrate restricted; all perceived by the left-alternative scene as justified acts of protest) to the very recent official responses to the squatters' defense of the squats.

In the months immediately preceding Haig's visit, the large squatter movement took on ever more radical forms in response to the repressive tactics of the newly formed CDU Senate elected in May 1981. The main hard-liner in the CDU-led government under Weizsäcker was the Interior Minister, Heinrich Lummer. For many of the city's squatters and their sympathizers, Lummer's penchant for large-scale forced evictions over talks at the negotiating table led squatters to conclude that, "instead of pursuing a change in housing policies, the CDU is planning a civil war."[524] Hard-hitting measures intensified under the CDU-led Senate that included severe prison sentences for first-time offenders arrested at either demonstrations or in clashes with the police during forced evictions. The hard-line faction in the CDU emphasized internal security. Concretely, this meant increasing threats of eviction and the criminalization of squatters and demonstrators under Paragraph 129 (supporting or forming a terrorist organization). The squatting movement entered a new phase of confrontation.

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[523] Kunzelmann, "Nur die allerdümmsten …"
[524] Ermittlungsausschuss im Mehringhof, *Abegeräumt? 8 Häuser geräumt … Klaus-Jürgen Rattay tot*, (Berlin: Regenbogen, 1981), 13.

Around the same time, the broader public sympathy and outcry over mismanaged renewal policies that had followed the spate of "rehab" squats in 1979 and 1980 dwindled as the squatter movement grew in size and its methods of resistance became more militant. It would be accurate to say that the conservative and boulevard press had no small part to play in this development of waning public support. Until the end of 1980, public sympathizers had also included politicians in the Berlin Senate who sided with the "rehab" squatters. Most notably, SPD representative Walter Momper, who, ironically, as Lord Mayor of the newly unified city in 1990 gave the orders to evict 13 squats in the former East Berlin district of Friedrichshain.[525] After the first major conflict between squatters and the police on December 12, 1980, the boulevard press made its way through the familiar round of name-calling. The *B.Z.* cautioned the public to "distance yourselves from the criminals!" *Der Abend* reported that the "hooligans and rabble-rousers are out to ruin our city!"[526] At the movement's apex in the spring and summer of 1981 with close to 165 squats, the press produced weekly reports that depicted demonstrators and squatters as "terrorists, criminals, anarchists, and subversive elements" who were out to "ruin our city!"[527]

That summer the escalation in evictions, searches, and further arrests under Paragraph 129a inspired a new wave of sympathizers ranging from public intellectuals, writers, professors, high school teachers, filmmakers, journalists, Lutheran pastors, and left-wing organizations who vocalized their support of the movement at demonstrations with participants numbering in the tens of thousands. As the threat of evictions worsened,

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[525] "Berliner Politiker unter den 'Instandbesetzer,'" *Der Abend*, June 20, 1980, 13.
[526] Michael Siefert, Michael Rieger, and Ulli Bartoszenska, *Dokumentation: Gegendarstellung zur Boulevard-Presse. Verhinderung der Instandbesetzung in Berlin und ihre Folgen* (Berlin: System Druck, 1980).
[527] Ibid.

sympathizers organized "godparent" groups declaring their sponsorship of individual squats in Kreuzberg and Schöneberg. This was done largely with the goal of "talking to all parties concerned in order to ward off any further intensification of the political climate."[528] In addition to their roles as political interlocutors, 43 godparents temporarily moved into nine squats in July of 1981 following an announcement by the Senate that it would soon evict residents of these nine buildings. These godparents hoped that their acts of solidarity would encourage a "peaceful solution" and prevent, as Free University theology professor Helmut Gollwitzer cynically observed, "[Interior Minister] Lummer from taking advantage of the summer to systematically evict squats, since [he thinks that] all potential sympathizers would be vacationing in Crete."[529] In doing his part to show support, Günther Grass, godfather to a squat on Bülowstrasse, threatened to "never read in Berlin again" if the CDU government evicted his sponsored squat.[530]

In response to the impending evictions that summer, a group of Kreuzberg squatters made an announcement of their own, a TUWAT or "Do Something" congress to open on August 25, 1981. In the words of the anonymous TUWAT organizers:

> TUWAT means a spectacle. A congress, a festival as a symbol for the battle that unites us. Located in Berlin, the divided arse of nations. Berlin, the place that reveals Cold War politics in its purest form. A battle that is conducted against us. The Berlin government has declared war on us. Nine squats, that mean more to us than just a place to live, are going to be evicted. The government wants to destroy our living space (Lebensraum) and community networks. We'll use this chance to show those who still believe that they can do to us what they please what we really think […] Do something (TUWAT) against organized inhumanity![531]

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[528] "Einzug auf Zeit in Besetzte Häuser – Initiative gegen der Eskalation der Gewalt," Presseerklärung, July 22, 1981, 1, file, Hausbesetzer, Sammlung Berlin, Berlin.
[529] Interview with Gollwitz in *Die Zeit*, July 31, 1981.
[530] "Die Berliner Linie ist ein Leichnam," *Der Spiegel*, June 20, 1983.
[531] "Spektakel in Bärlin ab 25.8." (1981), TUWAT flyer, Sammlung Berlin, Berlin.

TUWAT organizers urged "squatters, anti-nuclear power activists, anti-imperialists,

feminists, anarchists, punks, hippies, gays and lesbians, anti-militarists, socialists, and

anti-fascists" from all around Europe to join them in West Berlin. This colorful appeal for

the TUWAT congress earned the attention of the Berlin's President of the German Police

Union, Egon Franke, who suggested to the city's Interior Minister and Police President

that they ban a planned demonstration on August 11 given the "terrorists' announcement

under the heading of TUWAT to bring the city a "troubled autumn" (*einen heissen

Herbst*)." Taking it step further, Franke told *Der Spiegel* that after the TUWAT

declaration, "it has to be clear to everyone now that the situation is no longer just about a

housing shortage, but rather about the end of democratic life in Berlin."[532]

The TUWAT congress, as it turned out, was not the watershed event of the year

as anticipated by both the organizers and police officials. Instead, talks between the

mayor and numerous groups seeking a peaceful solution to the squatters' movement, such

as the former Evangelical Bishop of Berlin-Brandenburg Kurt Scharf, SPD and AL

politicians, and "godparent" groups continued until late August. Despite arguments from

one "godparent" group, the Initiative Against the Escalation of Violence, that "police

violence may well suppress social conflicts, but it can't resolve them,"[533] it was becoming

clear to all involved that the CDU was no longer interested in returning to the negotiating

table. It was during this volatile civic situation that U.S. Secretary of State Haig arrived in

the West Berlin on September 13, 1981.

The left-alternative squatters' scene utilized the two U.S. state visits to frame their

defense of the squats in a larger context that not only questioned the existing world

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[532] "Widerliche Auswüchse," *Der Spiegel*, 34, 1981, 32.
[533] "Einzug auf zeit in Besetzte Häuser," 1.

system, but also the values upon which the city's official representation was based. In attempts to embarrass city officials during the visits, squatters evoked a specific language familiar to a West Berlin audience. In one flyer, distributed after the last tenant was evicted from a tenement in Schöneberg, squatters in the neighborhood called on Berliners to "Look upon this city! People only interested in money and profit are destroying an intact residential area without taking any care for the residents or their needs."[534] Others placards located strategically in Kreuzberg read, "Attention! You are now leaving the democratic sector of Kreuzberg (*Achtung! Hier verlassen sie den demokratischen Sektor Kreuzbergs*)." Defending their self-administered centers and squats from a city government they perceived as hostile, the left-alternative scene "welcomed" not with open arms but with loud displays of open animosity Secretary of State Haig and President Reagan to the city in which "the Cold War is felt in its purest form," albeit a war that the left-alternative scene felt was "being waged against [them]."[535]

The Proxy Visit: The Secretary of State in West Berlin

Before the demonstrations in West Berlin that greeted Ronald Reagan's Berlin visit in 1982 –his first visit overseas since taking office in January 1981– Reagan's Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, paid a visit to the city on September 13 and 14, 1981. This visit was a crucial predecessor to the presidential visit the following year. It triggered an immense outpouring of hostility from left-alternative protest groups toward American policies.[536] During his four-day trip to Europe, Haig met in Bonn with West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dieter Genscher (FDP), and then, on September 14, he

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[534] Anonymous flyer, August 1981, Papiertiger Archive and Library, Berlin.
[535] Tuwat flyer, 1981, Sammlung Berlin, Berlin.
[536] Haig signed The Golden Book of West Berlin at the City Hall in the name of President Reagan.

addressed the Berlin Press Association in West Berlin. In his speech to the Press

Association, Haig defended a military buildup in response to the East-West conflict by

suggesting that there was evidence to show that the Soviet Union and its allies were

employing illegal chemical weapons in Southeast Asia.[537] Haig went on to reassure

western European governments of the Reagan administration's commitment to an arms

reduction with a plea for an East-West military balance, and furthermore warned that

without this precondition there could be no policy of détente.[538] Despite direct appeals by

the West German government (the SPD and its coalition partner the Free Democratic

Party (FDP), the youth wings of both parties, in concert with the West Berlin's Green

Party the Alternative List, the Protestant Students' Association of the Free University and

Abroad, the Socialist Unity Part of West Berlin, and the Youth Initiative against

Rearmament, along with a remarkable fifty-two other organizations, successfully

organized a demonstration on the day of Haig's visit.[539]

The demonstration caused a great degree of embarrassment for West German and

West Berlin political leaders. Raised with a deep belief in the affection that linked Berlin

with the USA, the leaders of the established parties were disturbed by the atmosphere of

anti-American sentiment and feared that the protests would send the wrong message not

only to the Reagan administration but to the American public at large.[540] Rejecting

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[537] "Haig in European Trip Stresses Soviet Threat; Focus on Western Alliance," *World News Digest*, September 18, 1981,

[538] "Genscher und Haig bekräftigen gemeinsame Bündnispolitik," *Der Tagesspiegel,* September 15, 1981,

[539] "Demonstration, Sonntag, 13.9.1981," flyer, Papiertiger Archive and Library, Berlin. At least fifty other organizations ranging from the feminist magazine *Courage*, the West Berlin Homosexual Action Group to the Berlin Tenant's Association supported the demonstration.

[540] "Demonstration gegen Haig im Bundestag scharf verurteilt," *Der Tagesspiegel*, September 11, 1981; "SPD-Landesvorstand missbilligt geplante Demonstration gegen Haig," *Der Tagesspiegel*, September 8, 1981; "Ruling Parties' Youth Wings Plan to Protest Haig's West Berlin Visit,"*New York Times,* September 9, 1981. The American Nuclear Freeze Movement was gaining momentum in these same years and provided a domestic challenge to Reagan's plan to increase nuclear weapons.

official pleas for order and restraint, the protest organizers mobilized under the general

slogan, "there is nothing more important than peace!" turning on its head an alleged

comment by Haig in which he declared "there are more important things than peace."[541]

Protest groups rallied participants by characterizing the Reagan administration as

promoting a reactionary politics, one that was "deluded by its superpower status and as a

result, show[ed] ruthlessness vis-à-vis anyone who dare[d] to stand in the way of

Washington's interests."[542] In the same flyer, distributed in the days before the

demonstration, the organizers explained their decision to protest Haig's presence in the

city:

> A man whose country only knows war as something that happens in other places
> is trying to obscure the fact that our country could become a battlefield for the
> second time this century. This man is a provocation to us all! And we must show
> him this by taking to the streets.[543]

At a historical moment when the security of West German citizens seemed, for many, to

be at risk, Secretary of State Haig acutely symbolized U.S. foreign and defense policies.

Those opposed to U.S. policy held the expectation that Haig would try to defend the

U.S.'s position on rearmament by framing these issues as a defense strategy. In contrast,

WBAL, one of the group's organizing the protest, claimed German superiority by dint of

WWII in expressing its opposition to Haig's visit in a full-page editorial in West Berlin's

daily *Der Tagesspiegel* titled, "Do something for security in Berlin and elsewhere –Rid

Europe of nuclear arms!" The Alternative List promoted the stance that Germany, and in

particular Berlin was the "symbol of East-West confrontation in Europe" and was the

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[541] "Ruling Parties' Youth Wings Plan to Protest Haig's West Berlin Visit,"*New York Times,* September 9, 1981
[542] "Es gibt nichtigeres als den Frieden, Mister Haig! Sonntag, 13.9.1981," flyer, Papiertiger Archive and Library, Berlin.
[543] "Es gibt nichtigeres als den Frieden, Mister Haig!"

most important starting point of the peace movement. Only here in embattled Berlin would signs of any willingness to disarm be as urgent but also the most believable.[544]

On the day of the demonstration, West Berliners gathered in front of city hall in the West Berlin neighborhood of Schöneberg, where John F. Kennedy had delivered the first and more memorable of his two West Berlin speeches almost twenty years earlier, in order to receive U.S. Secretary of State Haig.[545] As he gave his speech, a demonstration involving between 40, 000 and 60, 000 participants marched through the neighborhood carrying homemade placards with anti-Haig/USA slogans painted on them. Contemporary observers noted that the demonstration was the largest protest in West Berlin since the anti-Vietnam protests in the late 1960s.[546] Violence broke out after several hundred of the protestors exited the demonstration and moved their demonstration closer to the City Hall. In part due to the 1979 assassination attempt on Haig in Brussels in his role as commander of NATO and concurrent attacks on U.S. military bases in southern Germany, the police deployment in the city was significant. Haig never glimpsed the protest or the riot, yet later once he had been briefed on the afternoon's events he defended the demonstrators' right to protest. Just as the announcement of a planned protest had stirred public debate in the days leading to Haig's visit, the actual day, and especially the brawl between police and radical protestors, was to generate even more heated discussion.

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[544] "Aufruf zur Anti-Haig-Demonstration," flyer, Papiertiger Archive and Library, Berlin. Also published by the Alternative List in *Der Tagesspiegel*, September 12, 1981.
[545] On the discrepancy between John F. Kennedy's two 1963 speeches in West Berlin, see Diethelm Prowe, "The Making of *ein Berliner*: Kennedy, Brandt, and the Origins of Détente Policy in Germany," in *From the Berlin Museum to the Berlin Wall: Essays on the Cultural and Political History of Modern Germany*, ed. David Wetzel (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1996): 169-189.
[546] *Die Zeit*, 39, September 18, 1981; *New York Times*, September 14, 1981.

In the days after the visit, SPD executive director Peter Glotz responded in *Die Zeit* to a criticism by the West German daily the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (*FAZ*). The *FAZ* editorial had accused the SPD of undermining the integrity of the rule of law (*Rechtsstaat*) by not banning the demonstration outright; "the whole thing is an alarming piece of today's reality. The rule of law has degenerated to such an extent that it is incapable of confronting threatening mass violence initiated by political extremists."[547] In an evocation of Nazism, Glotz responded by warning against the danger of restricting the freedom of assembly in the name of protecting the rule of law. Further he noted that, "this city cannot simply stand by and watch as the right to demonstrate is smashed to bits."[548] He did not however throw his support wholeheartedly behind the organizers of the demonstration. In his rebuke of the Young Socialists and Young Democrats, Glotz criticized the organizers for losing their political perspective in their commitment to the protest:

> Of all places to demonstrate against the Americans, those who demonstrate in Berlin has to reckon with and take into account the inevitable support of the Moscow-loyal West Berlin Communist Party and a violent crowd of "professional demonstrators." With these two groups supporting the demonstration, even the most honest of motivations cannot be held free from blame. A demonstration [against the U.S. in Berlin] might win over a part of the younger generation, but will damage wider public sympathy and/or support from all others.[549]

Glotz divides West Berlin leftists into two disparate groups: communists loyal to Moscow, and German leftists, some of whom he clearly believed were well intentioned but naïve. Glotz frowned upon this naiveté and the failure of the Young Socialists and Young Democrats to discern both the symbolism and the danger of protesting in West

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[547] Quoted in "Ein Lehrstück für die Deutschen," *Die Zeit*, September, 1981.
[548] Quoted in "Ein Lehrstück für die Deutschen."
[549] Quoted in "Ein Lehrstück für die Deutschen."

Berlin. Glotz argued that that precisely in West Berlin –a city in a sense created and maintained by the Americans– the implications of such a protest were profound. His fear pointed to the unraveling of a symbolic thread held dearly by state officials. His editorial pointed to the tensions inside the city and the widening schism he saw between a substantial population of left-leaning alternatives, a militant autonomous movement, and communist party members on the one side, and political leaders intent on maintaining a status quo relationship with the Americans on the other.

The tensions surrounding the question of West Berlin-American relations were evident in political discourse of the time. The new Christian Democrat mayor Richard von Weizsäcker confirmed a strong identification with America and a support of continued U.S. presence in West Berlin in an interview he gave in *Die Welt* in July 1981, one month after the mayoral election and just two months before Haig's visit. Weizsäcker's remarks in the interview clearly articulate the symbolic role he assigned to West Berlin in European, and even more so in international politics. In response to the question of whether or not he believed that Berlin was still the pressure point between East and West, Weizsäcker replied that the city of West Berlin was no longer a place where the East would exert its military muscle to put pressure on the West; however, he added that Berlin was still a vitally important symbol. The mayor insisted proudly that in fact the very importance and multiple meanings of Berlin were present in the heads of both the East and West.[550] In addition to asserting America's importance for West Berlin, Weizsäcker reminded readers of West Berlin's importance for the Federal Republic at large. In fact, Weizsäcker grounded his confidence in West Berlin's political centrality to

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[550] *Die Welt*, July 7, 1981.

the rest of West Germany in West Berlin's role as a unique indicator of German-

American relations. He insisted that West Berlin's special status as an occupied city

meant that,

> one is aware of things more quickly here [in Berlin] more so than in Bonn as to the kind of effect the actions of Germans or Europeans have on America. Berliners live with the Americans on a daily basis. To be sure, living in Berlin one cannot easily forget what the Americans have done for this city and one can also not lose sight of the fact that the freedom we gained and now enjoy would be impossible without the protection of the Allied powers.[551]

According to Weizsäcker, an examination of Berlin is quite explicitly the only way to

approach the question of German-American relations. Again, Weizsäcker's emphasis on

West Berlin's special relationship to the Americans is grounded historically and implies

the belief that any critique of the U.S. administration can only be read as a direct insult to

one's "neighbor" (the U.S. presence in West Berlin); as a result, within the walls of West

Berlin there was no space, both literally and figuratively, for anti-American protestors.

(**Figure 5.3**)

The fact that Haig's visit moved 50 000 people to demonstrate against American

defense policies, and that the protest ultimately escalated into a street fight between the

police and a segment of the protestors, prompted an immediate apology by a deeply

embarrassed Weizsäcker. Dismissing the tens of thousands of protesters as not

representing the "true face" of the city, the mayor declared West Berlin's deep-seated

commitment to the Alliance, and publicly invited Reagan to pay a visit to the city in order

to get a glimpse of West Berlin's loyalty and to hear the "true voice" of the Germans. Yet

as *Die Zeit's* correspondent in Washington Michael Naumann aptly noted in an opinion

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[551] *Die Welt*, July 7, 1981.

piece four days after Haig's visit, both the audience and city had changed over the past decade. Gone were the days of the city welcoming early Cold War rhetoric that boldly positioned western democratic ideals against Soviet communism, the sort of rhetoric that had so endeared John F. Kennedy to the hearts of Berliners nearly two decades earlier.[552]

The debates that surrounded the Haig visit, and both the official and unofficial reception he received in West Berlin, are significant for two reasons. On the one hand, the Haig visit would become a reference point for Reagan's visit to West Berlin months later, one used both by the left and the establishment in their respective narratives of the events that followed. On the other hand, Haig, in addition to Bonn and Berlin's political elite, called upon early Cold War rhetoric in order to evoke an older tradition of mutual affection, an obvious attempt to temper emerging differences between the two countries on questions of policy. This appeal to emotional symbols, however, while it reinforced a particular and traditional image of West Berlin, was now being met with less and less acceptance on the ground level.

Beginning at least with the Berlin Blockade and lasting throughout the Cold War period, continual acts of (re)-constructing Berlin evoked (or manipulated) a specific mythology of Berlin that served West Germans and Americans alike. This shared understanding of the meaning and history of West Berlin served as a stage onto which a carefully crafted image of German-American friendship could be projected and acted out. This relationship literally shaped the space of Berlin as well; the flow of American dollars, as well as West German funds, rebuilt a new, capitalist democratic Berlin out of the rubble of the western half of the former capital of Nazi Germany.

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[552] "Berlin-Bild mit Kratzern, Haig's Deutschlandreise- nur ein Teil Erfolg," *Die Zeit*, September 18, 1981. On the reception of Kennedy's speech by West Berliners, see Prowe, "The Making of *ein Berliner*," 172-174.

By the 1980s, however, both Germany and the USA had changed, and this old, postwar model of relations no longer reflected reality, even though it remained decidedly meaningful for some. West Germany of 1980 was Europe's strongest economy, a confident player in global politics, and a country with a sizable military force. America as well had changed. From the original agenda of Marshall-funds driven reconstruction of West Germany as a key recipient of American overproduction and an important player in the establishment of the USA as a global super power, the priorities had changed by the 1980s. The patriotic confidence about America's leading role in the world during the Reagan years followed a decade marked by a period of low confidence in the American political ethos resulting from an economic downturn, a political crisis and the loss of credibility at home and abroad.[553] The years of the Reagan administration, on the other hand, countered this political atmosphere by pursuing a hard line policy of anti-communism to instill a sense of optimism and the belief that a new golden age for America was on the horizon. These changes were to come to a head in the events leading up to and during President Reagan's 1982 visit to West Berlin.[554]

Once President Reagan's state visit to West Berlin was made public (in addition to his attendance at the NATO summit in Bonn), a broad spectrum of antinuclear and anti-Reagan protest groups started to mobilize in West Berlin in the weeks leading up to the visit. In a city that continued to be metaphorically defined by early Cold War events, the Berliners who gathered to show President Reagan that he was not welcome did not simply reject the policies of a specific American administration; they also proposed a

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[553] That is, Vietnam, the Watergate scandal, and an economic /energy crunch.

[554] On the relationship between space and protest in the city, see in particular Belinda Davis, "The City as Theater of Protest: West Berlin and West Germany, 1962-1983," in *The Spaces of the Modern City: Imaginaries, Politics and Everyday Life*, eds. Gyan Prakash and Kevin M. Kruse (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

radical reformulation of a city whose laurels had rested on its ritualistic ties to the United

States. The discourse of local peace and anti-Reagan protests was part of a larger

dialogue concerning American rearmament that extended beyond West Germany's

borders.[555]

President Reagan's Visit to the "Occupied" City

The visits by Secretary of State Haig and President Reagan signaled a new phase

in the development in German-American relations after 1945. As I have suggested, these

two official visits, most notably Ronald Reagan's, marked the moment when it became

apparent to both the American and German political elite that the long cherished Cold

War framework for defining the city as pro-American no longer resonated with a growing

number of West Berlin's residents (i.e., no longer evoked the same sense of loyalty on the

part of the West Berliners).[556] Even before Reagan set foot on German soil, the West

German political establishment trumpeted the president's planned trips to Bonn and West

Berlin as a "signal" of the still strong German-American partnership.[557] Ironically, it had

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[555] Carl Lankowski, "Social Movements in Germany and the United States: The Peace
Movement and the Environmental Movement," in *The United States and Germany in the Era of the Cold
War,* 435.

[556] The *FAZ* reported in 2002, shortly before President George W. Bush's visit to Berlin, that according to
representatives of the American Embassy in Berlin, in the last five and a half decades Berlin has held the
rank of the foreign city most frequently visited by U.S. Presidents. This regularity comes as no surprise in
light of the historical relationship between Americans and "their" city, a relationship that many deem as
"special" even seventeen years after the fall of the Berlin Wall. See article in the *FAZ* in which Berliner
Gesine Schwan (now President of Viadrina European University in Frankfurt/Oder and then political
science professor at the Free University in Berlin as well as member of the SPD's Commission of Basic
Values from which she was removed in 1984 for her critique of *Ostpolitik*) defends her initiative in 1982 to
post an advert in the newspaper with signatures of like-minded university professors in which they spoke
on behalf of all Berliners by emphasizing their gratitude to the Americans for securing the existence of
West Berlin and underscored they know who their friends are, despite not always being of the same
opinion."Noch mal abdrucken! 1982 wurde Ronald Reagan mit einer Zeitungsanzeige begrüsst: Eine
Initiative von Gesine Schwan," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, May 22, 2002. See also, *New York Times*,
"Bin ich noch ein Berliner?," February 26, 1982.

[557] "Das andere Deutschland," *Der Spiegel*, March 29, 1982, 30.

remained unclear until three months before the visit whether or not Reagan would ultimately bypass West Germany altogether during this first, brief European tour. Apparently, Germany's significance to the USA was more obvious to the Germans than to the Americans. The prospect of his not visiting the Federal Republic however proved entirely unacceptable to a West German leadership that was keen on reaffirming its commitment to the Western Alliance for domestic as much as international reasons.

In the face of Chancellor Schmidt's deep regrets at the prospect of Reagan passing over a German visit, Secretary of State Haig immediately moved to make new arrangements to relocate the planned NATO meeting from Brussels to Bonn. It was only after talks between West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher and Reagan took place in Washington in March, however, that the official announcement was made that Reagan would also visit West Berlin. Genscher was in Washington to discuss West Germany's plan to build a natural gas pipeline Siberia to Western Europe.[558] The unwillingness of West German politicians to pay heed to Washington's misgivings about negotiations with the Russians caused a degree of tension between the two countries. Despite opposing positions over the pipeline construction plans in Siberia, Genscher left the meeting with the "reaffirmed view that the U.S., like the Federal Republic, are aware of the vital importance this relationship has for the efficiency of the Western alliance."[559] To this end, Genscher made his message clear in the weeks leading up to the much-

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[558] The relevance of this visit was that in was one confrontation in a series of decisions in Bonn to negotiate with the Russians and therefore put the Western Alliance, especially the U.S. at unease about where Bonn stood. See "How West Germans See Détente," *Financial Times*, June 17, 1982,

[559] "Reagan Likely to Visit West Berlin," *United Press International,* March 9, 1982. See also Helmut Schmidt, "A Policy of Reliable Partnership," *Foreign Affairs* 59, no. 4 (Spring 1981): 743.

anticipated Reagan visit; this visit was no ordinary one, but rather a chance to demonstrate West German solidarity with America.[560]

In *Die Zeit*'s coverage of the meeting, its Washington correspondent cited Reagan's decision to visit West Berlin as one of the more concrete results of Genscher's visit in Washington. In general the editorial reflects the belief on the part of the mainstream media and Bonn's leaders that it was vital for Reagan "to see first hand the German reality (*deutsche Wirklichkeit*) at the confrontation point between East and West i.e., Berlin."[561] And of course, the reporter assures us, in order to ensure absolute security, the American President would be led through emptied streets in West Berlin so that he would be protected from the harassment of demonstrators.[562] With memories of Haig's visit still fresh, this promise was realized with the largest police deployment in West Berlin's history. The editorial hinges on the widely held view that only a visit to West Berlin could salvage German-American relations. After the White House formally announced the visit, Richard von Weizsäcker called on West Berliners to welcome "the freely elected President of the American people" on June 11 by underlining that "the Berliners do no forget those friends who stand by them in difficult times" and because of this obligation "Reagan should feel that he is warmly welcomed here."[563] In line with the mayor's official sentiment, West Berlin's Senator for Federal Affairs Norbert Blüm added that, "for Berliners a demonstration in favor of the USA also means a

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[560] "Das andere Deutschland," 39.
[561] "Schwer zu überzeugen. Ist der Widerstand gegen Erdgasgeschäft überwunden?," *Die Zeit,* 11, 1982. It was an absurd paradox that Haig would apparently see the "real face" of West Berlin, which adores the USA, but in reality the entire population will be moved from the streets. So in effect, he would not see anyone.
[562] "Schwer zu überzeugen."
[563] Der Senat informiert. "Der amerikanische Präsident besucht am 11. Juni Berlin. Darüber freuen wir uns von Herzen," in B Rep 002, Nr 26441, Landesarchiv, Berlin.

demonstration for the freedom of their city."[564] With these statements both men evoked

the historical ties between Germans and Americans, harking back to the Airlift of 1948-

49, when the Soviets closed off West Berlin from West Germany, and then to 1961, when

East Germany divided the city with the Berlin Wall.[565] Weizsäcker's appeal to the

citizens of West Berlin drew attention to their supposed astuteness; "they know who

protects their freedom."[566] His rhetoric asked the people of West Berlin to identify their

own lived memories with the city as a whole, to remember the literal and metaphoric

protection from the Soviet threat that Americans had provided since the Blockade.

The repetition of this well-worn Cold War rhetoric reminding West Berliners of

the debt they owe to American generosity was designed to mask what was for the

seasoned politicians from the major parties in West Berlin and Bonn, a worrisome

development: A new generation of West Berliners, both born and imported, who were

attempting to redefine the relationship between America and West Berlin. Weizsäcker in

Berlin and Chancellor Schmidt in Bonn drew on what they believed to be the strength of

the memory of early Cold War images to counter this trend. Yet at the most basic level,

members of this generation of Germans simply did not possess memories of American

good will (e.g., the chocolate and the chewing gum distributed by smiling GIs to hungry

children) but instead were part of a different global generation with very different

reactions to the U.S. and with war itself. Not the children of the postwar years of

suffering, these youth had come of age in a world that was defined by the debacle of the

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[564] Landespressedienst, Aus dem Senat, 4.6.1982, Nr. 106. in B Rep 002, Nr 26441, Landesarchiv, Berlin.
[565] "Berlin to Welcome Reagan," *The New York Times*, May 9, 1982,
[566] Der Senat informiert. "Der amerikanische Präsident besucht am 11. Juni Berlin. Darüber freuen wir uns von Herzen," in B Rep 002, Nr 26441, Landesarchiv, Berlin.

Vietnam War and the horrors of the aftermath of Hiroshima, events that rendered impossible any uncritically positive attitude toward the United States.

Once President Reagan's state visit to West Berlin was made public (in addition to his attendance at the NATO summit in Bonn), a broad spectrum of antinuclear and anti-Reagan protest groups started to mobilize in West Berlin in the weeks leading up to the visit. In a city that continued to be metaphorically defined by early Cold War events, the Berliners who gathered to show President Reagan that he was not welcome did not simply reject the policies of a specific American administration; they also proposed a radical reformulation of a city whose laurels had rested on its ritualistic ties to the United States. Unsurprisingly, as soon as the official announcement had been made that Reagan would visit the city, a passionate response emerged on the left, one intended to make obvious to the American president that his presence in the city was not welcome. For the larger protest scene in West Berlin, Reagan embodied the danger of a new round of NATO rearmament –something peace and anti-nuclear activists feared could lead to a nuclear war on the European continent. Reagan's own belligerent rhetoric, as well as the administration's policy towards Latin America (i.e., Nicaragua and El Salvador) augmented these fears.[567] The more radical wing of the left-alternative scene, many of whom were self-defined squatters, called for a demonstration because they feared that "if this city once gets its frontline character back again (*Frontstadtcharakter*), the paddy wagons at the side of the road will be a daily occurrence on the Kudamm and the cops

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[567] Reagan's support of military dictatorships in Central America revealed to the protestors his attitude towards forms of political dissent when it directly involved U.S. interests, and generally U.S. hegemony around the world.

will declare open season on every one of us (particularly at Kotti) [the area around Kottbusser Tor in Kreuzberg]."[568]

Although antipathy towards Reagan's foreign and defense policies was a common sentiment more generally among peace activists and the Greens, its manifestation took a particularly militant form in the left-alternative scene in West Berlin. Here, in the city that had once loved the U.S. above all else, a younger generation of Germans gathered together to express an outright rejection of the United States. As anti-Americanism reached new heights in West Germany, nowhere in the Federal Republic was anti-Americanism to be as eminently visible as in West Berlin. It is of course not a surprise that these political shifts and tensions expressed themselves within the walled-in city of West Berlin. The perception of West Berlin as a place that was central to how one understood West Germany's relationship to America fed both conservative and leftist discourse at the time. There emerged a passionate struggle to claim Berlin, with official discourse insistently clinging to a vision of the city as closely tied to America while the alternate discourse of the left-alternative movement promoted a vision of the city that rejected "American" values.

The housing struggles had helped to transform the cityscape of Berlin into a canvas to make political protest visible. These squatters continued this tradition leading up to Reagan's visit, as whole sections of the city were adorned with anti-Reagan slogans draped out of apartment windows and balconies, nailed to rooftops, spray painted on apartment façades and on public edifices, most notably on the Berlin Wall itself. The police and the Public Attorney's Office were kept busy in the weeks before the visit

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[568] Die Besetzer, Aufruf zur Demonstration 24.5.82 Wittenbergplatz, "Gegen euren Räumungsschmutz machen wir jetzt Frühlingsputz." Sammlung Berlin, Berlin.

removing banners and painting over slogans on walls that included, "Reagan's specialists, murders and fascists (*Reagans Spezialisten, Mörder und Faschisten*)", "The American sector ends here (*Hier endet der amerikanische Sektor*)", "Yanks go home," "On June 11 Reagan (rain) will fall (*Am 11. Juni fällt Reagan*)", and "Berlin stinks when Reagan winks (*Ganz Berlin stinkt, wenn Reagan winkt*)."[569] The predictable reaction of the West Berlin authorities to these very public displays of anti-Reaganism escalated into what the alternative media came to term the rag war (*Lappenkrieg*), named in honor of the protest banners swaying off of balconies and out of windows and made from old or tattered bed linens.[570]

The heart of this anti-Reagan campaign was found in the two West Berlin districts where the squatting movement was its strongest, Kreuzberg and Schöneberg, although banners were also displayed on apartments in the neighborhoods not "occupied" by squatters. This overlap was no coincidence in view of the then solid reputation of both neighborhoods as centers of alternative and sub-cultural life. The police systematically moved through these neighborhoods to confiscate banners and to paint over slogans found on the façades of apartment houses. After the first round of raids resulted in the confiscation of 15 banners with "offensive" and "punishable" content and several arrests on the grounds of insulting a foreign state official, the Squatters' Council (*Besetzerrat*) organized a response on May 24. Just two weeks before the visit the Council encouraged West Berliners to drape their balconies, windows, or rooftops with anti-Reagan banners

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[569] Arbeitsgruppe Demonstrationsrecht im Komitee für Grundrechte und Demokratie, *Demonstrationsbeobachtung: Bericht und Einschaetzung den Auseinandersetzungen am 11. Juni 1982 in Berlin* (Sensbachtal: August, 1982), 8.

[570] Ulf Mailänder, Ulrich Zander and Guido Ullmann, *Das kleine West-Berlin Lexicon: Von Hausbesetzer bis Zapf-Umzüge - die alternative Szene der 70er und 80er Jahre* (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2003), 167.

in order to show solidarity with those arrested and to demonstrate their right to freedom of expression.[571] The Council argued for this act of solidarity by noting that "it is impossible to insult the desk murderers in the White House and therefore now more than ever on Friday at 2:00 PM hang banners on all walls, out of all windows and apartments."[572]

This political spectacle on Berlin's streets and buildings had turned into a game of cat and mouse after the first round of raids by city police, who, according to the residents of the houses targeted, had entered squatted buildings and confiscated the "offensive" banners without a search warrant.[573] This went on for the two weeks leading up to Reagan's visit; by the fifteenth day of the "war", Berlin's interior minister wearily declared that 616 banners had been confiscated for "safe-keeping" and 752 violations of Section 103 of the Penal Code had been registered (insulting a foreign head of state).[574] This strategy to literally clean up the city in preparation for Reagan's visit included both random and calculated police measures. Diligent police officers also made countless visits to newspaper stands and stores that sold the left-intellectual magazine *Konkret*. The magazine's June 1982 issue contained removable stickers for its customers that read, "Reagon go home."[575] According to the Berlin daily *Der Tagesspiegel*, police officers started singling out cars and random pedestrians with anti-Reagan stickers or T-shirts and forced individuals to immediately remove the object of insult.

[571] "Lappen-Krieg ausgebrochen," *die tageszeitung,* May 26, 1982; "Anti-Reagan Aktionen-Alternative Beflaggung," *die tageszeitung*, May 28, 1982.
[572] "Lappen-krieg ist ausgebrochen," *die tageszeitung*, May 26, 1982, 14.
[573] *Bericht und Einschätzung den Auseinandersetzungen am 11. Juni 1982 in Berlin*, 8.
[574] Violations included mainly paint smearing and banners. J. C. Wartenberg, *Kreuzberg K 36: Leben in [der] Bewegung, Kreuzberg inside bis zum Fall der Mauer* (Berlin, 2005); *Bericht und Einschätzung den Auseinandersetzungen am 11. Juni 1982 in Berlin*, 8.
Bericht und Einschätzung den Auseinandersetzungen am 11. Juni 1982 in Berlin, 9; *Der Schwarzer Kanal*, July/August, 5, 1982, 4.

These busy weeks prior to Reagan's arrival illustrated above all the public reclaiming of the city by a vigorous protest culture, one that had been cultivated in West Berlin since the student protests of the sixties. The *Lappenkrieg* literally projected a message onto the face of the city, and this message was a resounding rejection of how the city had and still was being officially defined. While city officials trumpeted their vision of Berlin as a bastion of American support, a Kreuzberg squatter magazine declared ironically that June 11 "turns out to be a key-date for the Berliner power mongers … The main thing is there should only be ONE opinion: Hurray, the head of the occupiers is coming!!"[576] What was specifically at stake for the alternative scene was a redefinition of the relationship "their" city had with the United States. This would not just find its expression in a two-hour demo or 10-hour brawl with the police, but rather in the spectacularly visible rejection of the rhetoric applied by politicians to describe the city. This visual claiming of the city represented a physical assertion of the right to articulate the terms defining the role of West Berlin in German-American relations. To put it another way, the *Lappenkrieg* suggested an important shift in discourse; the ritualistic Cold War rhetoric conjuring up a formidable city of resistance to the Soviet menace was rejected once and for all. During the *Lappenkreig*, the alternative scene used West Berlin not as a positive, but a negative site to define the relationship between Germany and the United States. These voices had been virtually absent from the public radar up to now; in the context of the Haig and Reagan visits, however, they thrust themselves literally onto every corner of the city.

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[576] Block Revue, Block 101/3 Mai 1982, Papiertiger Archive and Library, Berlin.

Up to the day of the actual visit, it was still unclear whether or not Reagan would actually land in West Berlin or if he would just view the city from a helicopter. The decision was never disclosed to the general public, a desired consequence of which was that Reagan's convoy drove through empty streets on its way to the obligatory visit to the Berlin Wall, and finally to Schloss Charlottenburg. In the park, 25 000 invited visitors were carefully inspected before being allowed to enter the grounds.[577] Even in this context of a forceful manipulation of public space to conform to an official vision, in his first post-visit remarks Mayor Weizsäcker maintained the façade: "The Berlin population warmly welcomed the American President not just at the official reception at Schloss Charlottenburg, but also during his drive through Kreuzberg."[578]

The high security measures were taken in fear of an attack on Reagan; this fear had of course been compounded by the experience of the Haig visit, which still echoed loudly in the memories of both the political elite and the alternative scene. In a pre-emptive response to the already planned anti-Reagan demonstrations, the Berlin Senate announced two weeks before the visit a prohibition of any demonstration on the actual day of Reagan's visit. This ruling followed on the heels of Chancellor Helmut Schmidt's statement to SPD party members that any expressed interest in participating in an anti-Reagan demonstration, be it in Bonn or West Berlin, would be grounds for expulsion from the party.[579] In order to avoid any conflict, the organizers of the West Berlin demonstration, the Protestant Students' Association (ESG), accordingly planned their

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[577] These visitors were recruited from associations, administrative bodies, and companies, but in fact it was not until after Mayor Weizsäcker announced that public servants would be rewarded with a paid day off that the numbers of accepted invitations soared. Informationsblatt B Rep 002, Nr 26441, Betr-Besuch des amerikanischen Präsidenten, Landesarchiv, Berlin.

[578] Landespressedienst/Aktuelles der Woche VII Nr. 24/ 16. Juni 1982, B Rep 002, Nr 26441, Landesarchiv, Berlin.

[579] Das andere Deutschland," 31.

protest for June 10, one day before the official visit. However, the more radical

opponents of Reagan's presence (autonomous groups and the Alternative List) decided to

go through with their original plan to demonstrate on June 11, legal or not.[580] The co-

organizers of the Haig demonstration, the Young Democrats, joined the autonomous

groups, squatter councils and the Alternative List in going ahead with the plans to on

June 11.[581] Both camps were intent on demonstrating, albeit under slightly different

mottos; the ESG singling out a demonstration for peace and disarmament, while the

protest planned on the day of Reagan's visit was explicitly anti-NATO, anti-imperialist,

and anti-Reagan. Moreover its participants rejected what they perceived as an outright

"manipulation of flag-waving Berliners to legitimate warmongering."[582]

Given the obsessive attention to the planned demonstrations, it was not surprising

that President Reagan expressed an interest in the brouhaha surrounding his visit. The

West German daily the *Frankfurter Rundschau* quoted Reagan from a broadcasted TV

interview out of Washington as saying that he is "curious about whether or not these

people [demonstrators] know what I really stand for." To underscore his commitment to

peace, Reagan then evoked the symbolism of West Berlin as a place where "a lot is at

stake in the conflict between East and West.[583] Importantly, for the peace that Reagan was

offering was protection from a communist threat –he did not realize that this threat was

no longer meaningful for these protestors– for whom American bombs seemed both more

frightening and more plausible. These "people" to whom he referred however were

mainly concerned with disrupting what they perceived would be a "Reagan and Schmidt

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[580] "Am 11.6. keine legale Demonstration?," *die tageszeitung*, June 3, 1982.
[581] "Demo am Vorabend des Reagan-Besuchs: Friedlich ohne Randale," *die tageszeitung*, June 1, 1982.
[582] "Erklärung der autonomen und antiimperialistischen Gruppen zur Reagan Demo," June 1982, pamphlet, Sammlung Berlin, Berlin.
[583] "US-Präsident Ronald Reagan ist "neugierig" auf Proteste," *Frankfurter Rundschau* June 3, 1982,

propaganda show." This "show" referred to both heads of state the using the symbolic

power of West Berlin to accentuate the celebrated German-American friendship, a

friendship the demonstrators were no longer interested in being a part of.[584]

The demonstrations proceeded as anticipated by both the politicians and the

radical left; the first demonstration on June 10 with relative calm, and the second on June

11 ending in a street brawl complete with a riot control squad. Given the point of

departure, the conclusion reached by West Berlin politicians was that Reagan's visit was

a success. Weizsäcker confirmed this view in his assessment of the visit, and stated that

the success of Reagan's visit to Europe rested on the President's recognition of Berlin's

unique role for the effectiveness of the Alliance.[585] Consistent with the official tone

already set during the Haig visit, Weizsäcker insisted on the visit's favorable outcome in

spite of "the despicable damage carried out by a violent minority."[586] Once again he drew

a sharp line between demonstrators and "ordinary" Berliners:

> Neither were they [demonstrators] able to eclipse the image of Berlin because
> everyone knows that the majority of them, having traveled from the whole of the
> federal territory and even from abroad, were professional violent perpetrators who
> were determined to destroy. They chose Berlin for their appearance precisely
> because Berlin has special symbolic power. The devastation that they wrought
> strongly agitated Berliners. The necessary conclusions are to be drawn from the
> sequence of events. But it is worth noting that the plan to offset a decisive blow to
> freedom in Berlin has failed.[587]

The character of the discussion on the left post-Reagan's visit not surprisingly took quite

a different tone. The *taz* referred to the street fights as the worst the city had witnessed

since June 17, 1953 (significant since this was GDR Stalinist conflict), noting that despite

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[584] "autonome und anti-imperialistische gruppen, anti-NATO demo 11 June W.-Berlin," 1982, pamphlet, Sammlung Berlin, Berlin.

[585] "Weizsäcker: Reagans Besuch hat die Stellung Berlins gestärkt," *Der Tagesspiegel*, June 16, 1982.

[586] Landespressedienst/Aktuelles der Woche VII Nr. 24/ 16. Juni 1982, B Rep 002, Nr 26441, Landesarchiv, Berlin

[587] Ibid.

his official intentions, President Reagan did not bring "peace,' but rather riots, to West

Berlin.[588] In addition, the left criticized the city's politicians and the conservative media

for discrediting demonstrators' critiques by labeling all protestors as violent left-wing

extremists, and thus in one broad sweep shutting down a space for legal, if militant,

protest. (**Figures 5.4 and 5.5**)

Protestors countered proposals to a vision of a capitalist, individualistic urban

German public sphere with claims that ranged from offering alternatives to capitalist

norms of production and distribution, to autonomous youth and social to centers, to

militant calls to resist the "new round of rearmament of the western military powers."[589]

Following the anti-Reagan demonstration, mayor Richard Weizsäcker responded to these

concrete and amorphous claims when he declared that "we will not let the despicable

damage done by a rowdy minority detract from the success of [Reagan's] visit."[590] Trying

to dismiss the protests against an American head of state, Weizsäcker denied validity of

the demonstrations, recasting the protestors' alternative visions as opposed to the

democratic deployment of the freedom of expression. In response to Weizsäcker's effort

to reject the protestors' opposition to the dominant definition of the city, the left-

alternative daily the *taz* dedicated a four-page spread to the demonstration and its

aftermath. The editorial stance of the paper, rejecting the official casting of the protesters

as being an "anti-Berlin force" located metaphorically as well as literally on the margins

of the city proclaimed: "women and squatters, anarchists and non-conformists, peace

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[588] "Wir sind alle Berliner," *die tageszeitung*, June 12, 1982. June 17, 1953 refers to the workers' uprising in East Berlin that subsequently spread to cities and towns across East Germany. The first expression of outward dissatisfaction with the socialist system.
[589] *Autonomen in Bewegung*, 71.
[590] *Der Tagesspiegel*, 1982, file clipping in *Bericht und Einschätzung den Auseinandersetzungen am 11. Juni 1982 in Berlin*, 5.

activists and left-leaning mentors, those beaten on the streets and the street fighter . . . We too are Berliners [emphasis mine]."[591]

This proclamation challenged a supposed Cold War truism of the special relationship between the U.S. and the Federal Republic –a model that simultaneously showed the non-threatening dependent position of the FRG and the country's economic and cultural power. The Haig and Reagan visits brought to a head a struggle of two visions of West Berlin and revealed serious fissures in the decade-long crafting of West Berlin as a desired site of pro-Americanism. This myth of West Berlin still had symbolic power through the postwar decades and into the 1980s and in crucial moments of discord, whether in German-American relations or in the city's domestic politics, the political leadership invoked this symbolism to bolster a sense of consensus and harmony by reassuring Washington of West Germany's ongoing gratitude.

Though the city had lost its frontline status as a key site of the Cold War and battlefield between west and east in the decade after the Wall was built, its political leaders continued to draw upon the symbolic language that traced back to the occupation years where the western zones of occupation were integrated into the Atlantic Alliance. Central as this imagery had been for reconstruction, by the late 1970s and 1980s the official image of the city was in need of being (re)-created or (re)-defined in the face of radically different realities of daily life in West Berlin and West Germany at large. The antinuclear protest movement, whose participants and sympathizers ranged in the hundreds of thousands across West Germany, were people whose daily lives contradicted the old imagery. Protests in Berlin were fueled (in part and obviously more so than in the

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[591] "Wir sind alle Berliner," 13.

rest of West Germany) by the city government's inability to offer an image of the city that matched with residents' own experiences. Rather than responding to this need, city officials obstinately continued to fall back upon this early Cold War rhetoric in moments of crisis, emphasizing America's role in establishing a "free and democratic" West Berlin.

The two protests in 1981 and 1982 against the visits of U.S. Secretary of State Haig and President Reagan respectively provided an occasion for the sizeable autonomous left scene in West Berlin to offer an alternative definition of the city. In both instances, protesting NATO policies, nuclear weapons, and U.S. imperialism, peace demonstrators numbering in the hundreds of thousands not only questioned larger foreign policy and security issues, but activists in Berlin rejected the dominant representation of West Berlin as symbolically defined through its relationship and history with America.[592] Since the end of the Second World War, politicians in West Berlin and the FRG at large had relied upon this real and imagined connection between development of Berlin and the U.S. as a symbol of the new, non-Nazi and democratic nature of the country. In the context of the June 1982 Reagan visit, the left-alternative scene spurned this official representation of the city and, in the process, laid claims to both the literal and symbolic space of the city. Thus their protests were not only critical but also constructive, offering a counter-model of German urban life.

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[592] David Frisby, "Streets, Imaginaries, and Modernity: Vienna is Not Berlin," in *The Spaces of the Modern City*, 21-57. Imaginaries of Berlin in the 1920s tied to the modern, to America. Concerning peace protests and security, see Holger Nehring, "Americanized Protests? The British and West German Protests against Nuclear Weapons and the Pacifist Roots of the West German New Left, 1957-1964," in *Decentering America*, ed. Jessica Gienow-Hecht (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2007): 210-251.

Figure 5.1: Grafitti in West Berlin 1980s. Source: http://www.umbruch-bildarchiv.de/willkomm1.html

Figure 5.2: anti-NATO grafitti. Source: http://www.umbruch-bildarchiv.de/bildarchiv/foto1/berlin1982/pages/1330d.htm

Figure 5.3: anti-Haig Demonstration 1981. Source: http://www.umbruch-bildarchiv.de/bildarchiv/foto1/berlin1982/pages/1330o.htm

Figure 5.4: anti-Reagan demonstration 1982. Source:
http://einestages.spiegel.de/external/ShowAuthorAlbumBackground/a18743/l5/l0/F.
html#featuredEntry

Figure 5.5: anti-Reagan demonstration 1982. Source: http://www.umbruch-bildarchiv.de/bildarchiv/foto1/berlin1982/pages/1330o.htm

Conclusion: Kreuzberg as an Urban Experiment

When the two German states reunified on October 3, 1990, the district of

Kreuzberg found itself located in the center of the "new" Federal Republic's largest city

and capital. Its reputation as an ethnic and left-alternative "ghetto" remained a concern

for political and business leaders as the "New" Berlin began to reinvent itself in the wake

of political and economic restructuring. A 1980 article in the West Berlin SPD weekly

newspaper, the *Berliner Stimme*, titled, "Problems in Kreuzberg" situated the

neighborhood at the intersection of two "pressing social problems." The first source of

trouble, as the newspaper defined it, were the bitter, and often violent conflicts between

ultra-national Turkish fascists and left-wing groups from Turkey (Kurds and Turks alike);

the second problem threatening the neighborhood, according to the Stimme, was the new

buzzword on the streets, "urban warfare" or Häuserkampf. "Kreuzberg," the *Stimme*

prophesied, "most certainly cannot survive in the long-term with these problems festering

there."[593] As the comment implicitly suggested, these new residents of the neighborhood

should be kept in check for fear that the neighborhood might someday implode.

Thirty years later in the winter of 2010, *Die Zeit* published a feature article on the

controversy in Kreuzberg over the luxury apartment building with a car loft recently

completed on the Reichenberger Strasse.[594] The article presented two opposing points of

view. On the one side the 43-year-old investor convinced his project could only bring

good things to the neighborhood. The investor, Johannes Kauka, claims that a socio-

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[593] *Berliner Stimme*, September 6, 1980.

[594] Kerstin Kohlenberg, "*Die Krieger von Kreuzberg*," Die Zeit, 9, February 25, 2010.

economic mix (*Durchmischung*) is always positive since it lowers the unemployment rate, raises the average income of the neighborhood, and increases the number of youth attending Gymnasium. And "why," asks Kauka, "can't people who earn € 500, 000 a year also enjoy the beauty along the canal that runs through Kreuzberg?"[595] Berlin's SPD Senator for Urban Development (Ingeborg Junge-Reyer) likes the car loft idea. In a city encumbered by debt, her support of the project is market-driven. "The city," after all, has to sell its virtues to "attract investors so new jobs will be created."[596] For the counter-argument, *Die Zeit* interviewed a 43-year-old *Autonomer* or radical autonomous leftist who feels threatened by the post-Wende gentrification of a neighborhood that was once the embodiment of all things alternative and marginal. Now, once again, the neighborhood lies in close proximity to the (new) city center. Sebastian Wenger, as he is called in the article, is disappointed in the general unwillingness of leftists in Kreuzberg to use violence against the luxury townhouses and condos slowly filling the empty spaces of the inner-city neighborhoods (particularly the former voids between Kreuzberg and Mitte along where the Wall ran).[597]

Years of creeping gentrification notwithstanding, there are not many fancy, expensive cars in Kreuzberg to warrant such amenities. In fact, there are not many cars at all in Kreuzberg. Kreuzberg is still one of the most densely populated and poorest districts in the city. Most people walk or bike, and the average net income per household is € 800 a month. But those are precisely the reasons why the luxury apartment building has a car loft. How, exactly, are the new residents of the Reichenberger Strasse meant to

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[595] Ibid., 15.
[596] Ibid.
[597] Ibid.

positively contribute to the existing neighborhood social and economic structure? As urban scholars have pointed out, historically there is little evidence that such upmarket housing promotes social mixing.[598] Neither the Berlin Senate nor the seemingly benevolent private investor has presented a convincing argument to this question that many are asking. Instead, the more radical constituents of those who oppose the project have routinely showed their antipathy with paint balls, eggs, and exploding gas containers –at least until Berlin's Senator of the Interior (Körting) guaranteed Kauka police dogs and personnel to prevent any future attacks.

These two assessments of Kreuzberg, its past and its present, are set in two very different local and global contexts, one in a still politically divided Germany and Europe, and the other in an increasingly globalizing postunification city. At the same time, what connects the two accounts is that they both discuss and define Kreuzberg, directly or indirectly, in relation to Berlin's public profile and its future. A part of that past and future is the city's housing politics. For Kreuzberg's low-income populations, migrant and non-migrant alike, the neighborhood's legacy of squatting as a housing strategy had meant the institutionalization of "cautious urban renewal" (*behutsame Stadterneuerung*). Instead of a market-driven approach to rehabilitating the urban fabric, "cautious urban renewal" set out to improve the older housing stock without displacing the existing residents or increasing the rents.

In short, this social planning approach privileged the housing demands of a lower and middle-income population. This urban policy was in effect in Kreuzberg until 2002, when the city officially concluded the neighborhood's 39-year existence as an urban

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[598] Simon Parker, *Urban Theory and the Urban Experience: Encountering the City* (London: Routledge, 2004), 88.

renewal area (*Sanierungsgebiet*). One of the earliest and most significant challenges to the politics and culture of urban renewal was centered on the consumption and access to affordable housing for all residents, not only for the benefit of the professional classes, homeowners, real estate vendors, and investors. My research shows that in political and social debates on questions ranging from modernist urban renewal to immigration policy and integration, to the relationship between political dissent and violence, a host of public fears and anxieties in public and political discourse were projected onto the district of Kreuzberg. Accompanying this belief was the assumption that if these issues could be solved here, they could be solved anywhere. Kreuzberg thus came to serve as a barometer to gauge the either the success or failure of migrants,' specifically Muslim migrants,' integration into German society or the state's success at stemming the leftist radicalism of those unwilling to politically and socially conform. Change is inevitable. But is the end of social planning and affordable inner-city housing, too, inevitable? The renewal experience of the 1980s still holds promise as an alternative model. Governments and urban policymakers in the "New Berlin" now have an opportunity to step back from a market-driven approach and reassess its postunification urban policies in their attempts to address the growing social inequalities.

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