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Harry & Helen Gray
Humanities Program Series
Volume 7

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BERLIN: THE NEW
CAPITAL IN THE EAST
A TRANSATLANTIC APPRAISAL

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Edited by
Frank Trommler
University of Pennsylvania

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American Institute for Contemporary German Studies
The Johns Hopkins University

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FOREWORD

What should Americans make of the relocation of the German government more than three hundred miles east of the Rhine River? The year to ask this question was 1999. Leading newspapers portrayed the abandonment of idyllic Bonn as an ominous prelude to the newly labeled Berlin Republic, but they raised more expectations concerning the new role of Berlin than most German papers did. Many ruminations could be heard about the fact that Germany, being led by a new government in this fateful city, is in the process of disentangling itself from American tutelage. Yet looking at the broad participation in the current agenda for Berlin, one cannot help but notice the continued interest of Americans in working upon Berlin's symbolic status in Germany and Europe. What to make of the eastward move? The question was asked but not yet answered. It cannot be answered yet.

However, one can take stock of the current problems and debates concerning Berlin's emerging role between East and West, as well as the history of American involvement with this city since World War II and the beginning of the Cold War. This volume presents an appraisal of these issues. It is based on a Harry and Helen Gray Humanities Program workshop that AICGS organized under the title, "Berlin: Catalyst of a New Culture? The City's Emerging Role between East and West," on January 29, 1999. Drawing a large audience, speakers from Germany, the United States and Hungary discussed a city that is revitalizing itself not only through work at hundreds of construction sites but also through a new engagement with its history and the symbolism of its spaces, streets and buildings.

The volume opens with an assessment by today's foremost Hungarian writer, György Konrád, who was elected President of the Academy of Arts in Berlin in 1991. Konrád, who lives in both Budapest and Berlin, also received the prestigious Peace Prize of the German Book Trade in 1991. In the ideal position both as an insider and outsider, he weighs Berlin's credentials as center of Central Europe and its potential for becoming a world city. Barbara John, who has been Berlin's Senate Commissioner of Integration and Foreigners' Affairs since 1981, highlights Berlin's immigrant community of more than 440,000 individuals and discusses its interaction with Germans. John's central question is: "How can the city succeed in being a bridge between

Western European and Eastern European countries if it fails to build a bridge between Berliners of different ethnic and political cultures and religious beliefs?" John outlines the tough agenda that this question requires. Berlin's success or failure will depend on many factors, not least of which is its ability to reconcile its long-standing division between East and West.

The next two papers focus on the historical and symbolic dimension of Berlin as an agglomeration of space and spaces. Peter Fritzsche, historian at the University of Illinois and author of *Reading Berlin 1900* and *Berlinwalks* (together with Karen Hewitt), illuminates the amazing mobility of the Berliners in their constantly expanding city one hundred years ago which contrasts with the recent history of immobilization due to the infamous Wall. Historian and architectural critic Brian Ladd, author of *The Ghosts of Berlin* and Fellow at the newly founded American Academy in Berlin, investigates the changing interrelation of private property and public space, thereby developing criteria by which Berlin's architectural legacies of the Third Reich and the German Democratic Republic can be included in an overall assessment of the current reorganization of its space.

The volume concludes with a comprehensive look at the astounding transformation of Berlin, from the capital of Hitler's Germany to America's Berlin, whose exuberant welcome in 1963 made President Kennedy into a staunch believer in Berlin's centrality for the American identity as a superpower. Andreas Daum, Research Fellow at the German Historical Institute, presently writing a major study on Berlin and the Cold War in American politics and culture, undertakes a review of the unswerving interest of the United States in this city. Daum highlights crucial moments of the American presence from the Airlift in 1948/49 and the protest rallies of students against American institutions during the Vietnam War to the participation of architects Daniel Libeskind and Peter Eisenman as well as former U.S. Treasury Secretary Michael Blumenthal in establishing the Jewish Museum and the Holocaust Memorial in the 1990s. At the workshop, Daum's paper provoked a lively discussion about the appropriate ways of accounting for the engagement of the United States in Berlin's contemporary developments. While the discussants agreed on the importance of Berlin for the American understanding, even internalizing of the Cold War, and the fact that this period has come to an end with the fall of the Wall, they remained divided over the question whether the future image of

Berlin in the United States will still be connected with America's self-perception as a world power.

The Institute expresses its gratitude to the authors for their participation in the workshop and their intriguing contributions to the ongoing discussion about Berlin.

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March 2000

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INTRODUCTION

Frank Trommler

The Berlin Republic is the fifth Germany of which Berlin has become the capital in the last century. The others were Imperial, Weimar, Hitlerian, and Communist. Not its legal position—never fully suspended—but rather the symbolic function of the city has changed dramatically. Long before the Cold War made its western part a beacon of freedom and Western political resolve, Berlin played a crucial role in the symbolic battles over the dominance of Europe, the fate of modernity and the success of socialism. Like no other place, Berlin symbolized the defeat of Germany after 1945. Its loss of political responsibility and economic leadership during the Bonn Republic made it a symbol of national impotence. When the *Bundestag* decided on June 20, 1991, with a narrow majority of eighteen votes, to move the government of the Federal Republic of Germany from Bonn to Berlin, its decision followed an impressive debate full of symbolism. Eighteen votes instigated an explosion of new symbolism whose national and international markers highlighted the debates of the 1990s about Germany's path after the unification of its two postwar states.

It is not hard to understand why Berlin's main export in the 1990s, symbolism, was such a hot commodity inside and—even more intensely—outside of Germany. The memory of national impotence, displayed in the images of the walled-in Brandenburg Gate, is as forceful as the memory of national strength, displayed in the images of Hitler's triumphant rallies in front of the same Brandenburg Gate. Both memories fostered expectations and anxieties to which both the planners of the new Berlin and the representatives of the relocated government responded and continue to respond. Crucial were two public debates—one about a democratic architecture for the new government buildings and the other about the creation of a national memorial to the killing of six million Jews under the Nazi regime. Recognizing the fact that Berlin's future role cannot and will not be decided by Germans alone, both issues—the new architecture and the Holocaust Memorial—were opened to international competitions. The inclusion of foreigners in the final design represents itself a symbolic decision of the new Germany, visible in Sir Norman Foster's glass dome of the *Reichstag*, Daniel Libeskind's architecture for the Jewish Museum and Peter Eisenman's design for the Holocaust Memorial.

More difficult to understand is how the production of symbolism correlates, if at all, with everyday life in Berlin. This city, with 3.5 million people of whom more than 400,000 are foreigners, has lost most of the industrial base that made it the magnet for millions of Germans and East Europeans one hundred years ago. With the rise of National Socialism, its defeat and Germany's partition, Berlin has lost its political establishment (Ernst Reuter and Willy Brandt came back from outside, as exiles) and its business elites. It has lost the preeminence of its academic institutions. It has lost its Jewish establishment, which helped achieve the city's dominant role in European culture in the early twentieth century. It has lost its dominance in the media and opinion markets. And it has lost, at least for now, its ability to be a catalyst for the current problems of the German social welfare state in a globalizing economy as it has been, for half a century, a weighty dependent of social and political welfare itself.

Correlating the symbolic standing of Berlin for German affairs with these devastating losses is a cumbersome enterprise indeed. It is seldom done in a big sweep—too many sensitivities would be stirred up. It is rather done piecemeal, in everyday conversation, in company boardrooms, in newspaper columns about the tax burden, and in meetings of local politicians elsewhere in Germany. It is experienced and expressed, with different degrees of self-pity, by the Berliners themselves who go about their business during the week and tend to flee to the outskirts or to the Brandenburg environs on the weekends. And it is done, increasingly critically, by incoming government officials, *Bundestag* members and thousands of civil servants who look for apartments, supermarkets and schools and decide, often enough, not to sell their houses along the Rhine or in the Eifel mountains.

Since Berliners provide still relatively little personnel in the higher ranks of the new government, another, more personal disconnect opens between those who fulfill Berlin's mission as a capital and those who maintain Berlin as a city. It is in their individual encounters that the viability of the new capital in the East is given the first test. Although the friction between the government and the city population is not unknown in other national capitals, the encounter in Berlin includes a clash of cultures, dialects, traditions, and mentalities. In the 1990s much of this disconnect was buried under the energizing construction and relocation boom. As a topic it was not as exciting as the debates about the rebuilding of the old center of the city and the construction of the Holocaust

Memorial, which consumed much reporting about Berlin in German and foreign newspapers. After the year 2000 it will become more obvious that this disconnect still reflects Berlin's fifty-year absence of active management of politics and economics. In the words of the painter Klaus Fussmann from 1991:

In Berlin no decisions were made, no responsibility assumed, and no money made. One was only an observer; the trend was set in the West, even in matters of culture. Here the bad conscience of the nation was preserved, to the irritation of progressives in the West, who would have preferred to be subsumed in the French, later in the American culture. In Berlin, that didn't work. In the dying city the results of the war were inescapable.¹

Fussmann is optimistic that Berlin will overcome this postwar and pre-1989 disconnect from the West German economic and political power network, when he adds: "In Berlin, which for so long stood aside and regarded the heaping up of wealth so skeptically, the culture of the Federal Republic will finally realize itself fully."² Or will it? Berlin optimists and pessimists part ways right here. Much can be said for either side. What needs to be said in addition is that this disconnect will throw its shadow far into the twenty-first century, slowing down the growth of a Berlin elite of politicians and opinion makers who will be widely accepted in their articulation of national issues.

This shadow weighs heavily on the Berlin press, which cannot compete with the influence of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Die Zeit*, and *Der Spiegel*, located in Frankfurt, Munich and Hamburg. The German media and TV industry—with a strong concentration around *Westdeutscher Rundfunk* in Cologne—shows no inclination of relocating and the movie industry holds on, despite the attraction of the Babelsberg studios, to established ventures in western Germany. The shadow seems to be less onerous for the academic, intellectual and artistic elites, although the proposition of a "Generation Berlin" in preparation of the new republic that the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* made and *Die Zeit* expanded in 1998, did not carry much substance beyond a listing of some younger and stimulating opinion makers in Berlin.³ The attempts to expand the sizable number of research and academic institutes, for which the founding of the *Wissenschaftskolleg* in 1980 with a

strong American and Israeli presence led the way, have only partially been successful, due to the enormous financial obligations which the city of Berlin and federal institutions like the Max Planck Institute cannot shoulder much longer. At any rate, scholars, intellectuals and artists are obviously better equipped to live with the increased distance to the Western networks of power than are businessmen and politicians. They can participate, if the financial basis is provided, in what visitors never tire to bring up with fascination (and good arguments)—the challenge that Berlin poses to the other parts of Germany with its recovery of urbanity, its unparalleled agglomeration of cultural institutions and its potential for an intellectual engagement with Central and Eastern Europe.

While this challenge has been articulated in many intriguing ways in the 1990s, journalists seldom forget to mention that industry and business have shown only limited interest in Berlin as a location, despite the DaimlerChrysler and Sony buildings at Potsdamer Platz. As long as East Central Europe and Russia do not emerge as strong forces on the European scale, Berlin cannot count on serving as a mediator. In this volume, György Konrád lays out the potential for this role. It is doubtlessly impressive. Yet, even the *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, a staunch supporter of Berlin's role as capital, gave exposure to the view that with the increasing unification of Europe, Berlin's position tends to be, at least at this moment, even more marginalized than in earlier years. The phrase "*Brüsseler Republik*" (Brussels Republic), as opposed to the Berlin Republic, makes it painfully clear that Germany must undertake enormous efforts to reestablish its national capital at a time when national sovereignty is more and more dismantled in favor of European laws and regulations.⁴ It will be hard for the German government in Berlin to overcome the legacy of fifty years of geographical and mental disconnect while the integration of German, Dutch, Belgian, Luxembourgian, British, and French interests along the Rhine had almost the same number of years to become reality.

Unsurprisingly, the correlation between Berlin symbolism and everyday life is most difficult, if not impossible for former East Berliners. They deserve to be considered prime witnesses for the distance both to the Berlin rhetoric and the West German agenda of economic identity. After a short period of wavering when the Wall fell, many of them learned to internalize their isolation and loss of direction in the language of memory and nostalgia. By voting for the PDS (Party of Democratic Socialism), the successor of the SED (Social

Unity Party), they gave expression less to a political conviction than to their sense of alienation in the new Germany.

Is Berlin's glass half empty or half full? At the end of the AICGS workshop the discussion entered the stage where so many exchanges on contemporary Berlin end—the mutual labeling of the discussants as optimists and pessimists, without much middle ground. The fascination with a new and expanding urbanity was as much represented as the skepticism about the city's economic potential. And as so often in these encounters, Americans found the Germans morose in their pessimism and the Germans labeled the Americans naive in their optimism. This, of course, demonstrates Berlin's unique catalytic power to provoke a lively transatlantic exchange.

ENDNOTES

¹ Klaus Fussmann, "Bedenke, daß du tot warst," in *Die Zeit* No 14, 5 April 1991, quoted after Gordon A. Craig, "The Big Apfel," in *New York Review of Books*, 7 November 1991, 32.

² Ibid.

³ Heinz Bude, "Generation Berlin: In Vorbereitung auf die neue Republik," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 18 June 1998 (Feuilleton page); Susanne Gaschke, "Die Generation Berlin," in *Die Zeit* No. 31, 23 July 1998, 3.

⁴ Dirk Schümer, "Die Brüsseler Republik. Provinz Berlin: Wo liegt die Macht in Deutschland?" in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* No. 9, 12 January 1999, 37.

A BUDAPESTIAN ON BERLIN IN WASHINGTON

György Konrád

In Budapest, if I switch my television to *Deutsche Welle* for the news, the announcer says he is speaking from Berlin, “*von der Mitte Europas*,” (from the center of Europe). “Okay,” I say, “after all, I have written the same thing. As of 1989, they are Central Europeans too.” The concept of Central Europe has not disappeared, but broadened. With the demise of the Iron Curtain, the two original Central European big cities, Berlin and Vienna, returned to their geographically and culturally appropriate place, namely Central Europe. The truth is, if someone claims to speak from the center of Europe, from its navel, if you will, such a boast sounds more credible from Budapest, possibly from Vienna, Prague or even Krakow, except that our colleagues and Hungarians’ ethnic-linguistic relatives in Tallinn would feel hurt to be left out of the narcissism of centrality.

Everyone would like to be in the middle, in the vicinity of the heart, between right and left arms. Everyone would like to be spared from the raucous temporality of extremes. If the question is not who has the most tanks, if the center is not a military-political, but rather a geographical-demographic-sociological-artistic concept, if the subject is not power ranking or even value ranking, if we speak of cities not in opposition to each other, then Berlin does appear to be in the center of Europe’s east-west axis, though it is north of center. In Moscow, many people are of the opinion that they are in the center of the London-Beijing axis. Centrism has become a fashion. The new German chancellor won the election “*von der Mitte*” too. And the new opposition is preparing to re-conquer the middle. Successful parties generally style themselves centrist. Like sumo wrestlers they try to avoid being squeezed out to the edges. We may regard this centralism, which is usually paired with rational caution and thoughtful initiative, as a forgivable vanity. Every little boy wants to be a king and every little girl wants to be a queen.

Considering bare facts, Berlin is not in bad shape at the turn of the new century in terms of allure, interesting attributes and prospects for development. Since I regard the population of the city a much more valuable and important feature than the infrastructure in the long term, I believe the union of the two half-Berlins is a great human gain, precisely because of their differences. *Wessis* and *Ossis* read and studied different things. All of that now coming together is

another advantage. As a Budapestian, I am glad many Berliners, former citizens of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), know and have pleasant memories of my city. During the time of the Wall, they liked traveling there—to the most colorful and relatively free capital in the Soviet bloc. Budapest was not destroyed by World War II, and one felt a kind of restless energy there.

Without the experience, intellectual achievement and bearing of Eastern Europe, Europe would not be what it is. Together we are more complete and more interesting. The same can be said of whole entities formed from halves—Berlin, for example. It is probable and logical that contacts between Berlin and Budapest will grow more lively and extensive. They are the two largest cities in Central Europe, with economic and cultural activity befitting this status. Our neighbor's neighbor is usually more sympathetic than our immediate neighbor. Therefore, there is no resentment between Berlin and Budapest. It is a better idea to be on good terms with each other as Europeans than within the framework of the Axis, for example. Budapestians usually like Berlin and Berliners usually like Budapest. We are able to find friends in each other's cities because we somehow understand each other; there is an overlap between the two cities' humor.

Berlin's metropolitan area has grown substantially in recent years. I am a commuter, a *Pendler*, a guest president. I fly between Budapest and Berlin once or twice a month—into a taxi at 6:30 A.M. in Budapest and at my desk in Berlin by 10:00 A.M. This is an increasingly normal phenomenon. If crossing borders is not a complicated matter—if the European Union expands—then only physical distance remains, while we have common money, fundamental values and familiarity inside the networks. Even if we speak several languages, if we begin to learn Europe and how to use it, then Europe will logically become a polycentric continent. It will have several active centers, several high-traffic airports and train stations. Visitors will be surrounded by a big city or even metropolitan phenomena: a multitude of people, diversity of choice, rapid change, variety of merchandise, the grand scale of visible work, the urban jungle with its seductions and dangers, and the archipelago of “villages” surrounding the large conglomerate.

There are plenty of big national cities, but few world cities. Even those few have their own sort of provinciality, the feel of “it is always the same people” and the insularity of the social elite. Even in world cities, the notables are sometimes bored with each other and if we look for real value, sometimes

the sheer quality we encounter there may not be enough. There is much immigration to world cities. Gathered there are fortune seekers, the ambitious and the resourceful—people who want to go where things are happening. Like in New York, London and Paris, the Third World tends to be amply represented. A diversity of both skin color and beauty comes together on the streets. On closer examination, we find that each world city attracts immigrants mainly from its own geographical-political environment. London draws people from the former English colonies and Paris attracts mainly Francophones from Africa and Central America, while Berlin's traditional sphere of attraction is Eastern and Southeastern Europe.

Karl Schlögel's beautiful recently published volume *Berlin Ostbahnhof Europas: Russen und Deutschen in ihrem Jahrhundert* depicts Russians in Berlin between the two World Wars. Although they came from various political backgrounds, all 300,000 of them possessed one common feature—they belonged to the learned strata of Russian society. There are Russians in Berlin now as well—it is natural. Going west from St. Petersburg or Moscow, Berlin is the next major station after Warsaw, as Vienna is the first one after Budapest in my neighborhood. Berlin's Eastern European—mainly Slavic—immigrant group is white-skinned. In terms of skin color, Berlin will not be as diverse as New York, London or Paris. Perhaps New York is the only world city where people from all over the globe come to seek success.

It is not clear how well eastern Germans and western Poles can be ethnically distinguished, but in Berlin, there is a place for these ethnic dots and patches. If I have *scsit* with friends at the Pasternak Café, under a picture of Bulgakov, in Prenzlauer Berg on Käthe Kollwitz Square—where it is better to make reservations these days because the *Wessis* discover every interesting place formerly frequented by relatively daring intellectuals from East Berlin—I do not know whether the owner is Greek Orthodox or Jewish, but in either case, if he wants a name that appeals to the German ear, Pasternak, Bulgakov and Mandelstam will be the company's drawing card.

What I want to say is that precisely these cultural islands, societies, colonies, groups of friends, ethnic networks, and Mafias make world cities. Berlin has a tradition of hospitality to emigrant cultures and I believe that tradition will continue. During the time of the Wall, the German government in Bonn subsidized Berlin with American approval and support. The United States supported the

construction of the *Freie Universität*. The Arts Academy of which I am now president was built with a donation from an American of German descent.

The presence of Allied troops in West Berlin metros and on the sidewalks actually did the city good. It relaxed rather than stiffened. Compared to Prussian bearing, English, American and French soldiers were civilians, ready for a joke and a smile.

In Berlin, I first enjoyed the hospitality of DAAD and later of the *Wissenschaftskolleg*. About fifty Hungarian writers and artists came to know and like Berlin by spending a year or two there within the framework of this arts program. The scheme seemed an expensive luxury for the state; neither London nor Paris offered such possibilities to Eastern Europeans. The political intent was clear: to make West Berlin a Western international focal point, and draw attention to it, so that it would not melt into the Soviet Bloc. But now that the Wall is gone and we can come and go as we please, the question is who absorbs whom, how much and in what respect. Only providence has the answer, because integration, which is partial and somewhat mutual, is at the core of this question.

The average Berliner still shops for groceries in the same store he did before 1989. Why would he go further away, to a neighborhood he does not know as well? Apparently, there remains a certain sentimental attachment to East Berlin and West Berlin. But people from both sides meet in one workplace. They are colleagues in the same office. They are polite to each other and try to handle each other's prejudices with understanding. The *Wessis* are more relaxed, more ironic, the *Ossis* weightier and more apt to moralize. Life has created a common foundation, which can be nothing but European democracy with variations unique to Germany and to the city.

Berlin is a multitude of cities and subcultures. It is a workshop of liberal democracy precisely because it treats the worlds that are formed organically with interest and respect. There is a human dimension to tolerance of cultural models, while at the same time, common taste and range of interests are evolving gradually. One can observe that Berlin's vitality is based on an above average interest in culture, good will toward talents from afar, and a curiosity that seeks amusement. People here like to go out at night. Those who prefer curling up at home can find tranquility and lower prices in the now accessible suburban environment.

Berlin and Brandenburg are becoming acquainted. A portion of the city's retirees is likely to move out. At the same time, dynamic, ambitious people who want to be in the center will come to Berlin from all over Germany and beyond.

Along with the government and political groups, some corporate headquarters are relocating too, bringing a multitude of new workplaces and increasing the number of educated workers who will absorb Berlin's traditions or perhaps will be absorbed by them. This movement from the West to Berlin will automatically create the eastward broadening of the elite's boundaries.

After Berlin, Budapest is Central Europe's largest city and boasts the greatest proportion of Western capital invested in Eastern Europe. Economic analysts and experts in economic expansion proceed from there to the east and southeast. Israeli capital, for example, goes in that direction. Hungarian and foreign capital goes from Budapest to Romania, mainly Transylvania. If the situation in the Balkans stabilizes, Budapest will again play an important role in the maintenance of civil contact within the region, particularly in resolving human and ecological issues.

This process is now under way in Berlin. If Berlin represented the West to Eastern Europeans until 1989, now, with the end of the East-West confrontation, reunited Berlin is a Central European metropolis in several senses. The main criterion is that the center should be made up of two parts—eastern and western—and Berlin satisfies this prerequisite. One hears laments about the *Wende* (the changes of 1989), but for the younger and more talented, the change in the east was a good thing. As for the retired schoolteacher in her apartment in the East Berlin projects, I have heard differing opinions about when things were better for her. It appears the elderly teacher has not done badly either. Berlin grumbles, naturally, and that is the way it should be, but I have not spoken to many Berliners who want to leave. I have, however, spoken to plenty of Germans not from Berlin (or artists from Budapest) who long to go to Berlin.

The more sensitive and the more alert always want to go where something is going on, where a mystique is being created, or revived, where some sort of new and high-spirited local patriotism is born, where there is a need for a variety of things. What kind of a big city is it if you can't buy a lion at night?

I am thinking of an instance thirty years ago when I asked my friend Szeleny Ivan to describe New York City. He was able to spend a year in the United

States on a Fulbright scholarship and today is an esteemed professor of sociology at UCLA. After leaning back and puffing a great cloud of smoke from his pipe, he said, “Well, New York is the kind of city where you can buy a lion at night, too.” This pronouncement was spoken in 1965. My first visit to New York was in 1976. I stayed at the Chelsea Hotel. After unpacking, I went outside to have a look around. I asked the doorman, an African-American in a red shirt who was eating a tin of sardines in tomato sauce where I could buy a lion around midnight. This gentleman gave me an amused nod and asked, “Man, are you all right?”

So, there was no lion, but there was almost everything else. There is much of everything in Berlin, too; the range of choices is quite wide. If a person wants to go somewhere at night, there are places one can go. To stay safely, perhaps selfishly, close to home, there are plenty of customers in the bookstores and audience members at readings in the halls of the academy.

A lot of things get attention; the local radio and press is lively and quick to react. Although, many may feel that they are not well-known enough, and never can be, my experience is that an open and intelligent public awaits those who have something to say.

The importance of the populace cannot be overestimated. Demand to be stimulated and challenged helps to create and nurture works of art. Though a lot depends on an interplay of a number of factors, it can still be predicted that Berlin, as a consumer of culture, will blend various traditions in an exciting way. The nurturing environment can even be a *Berliner Zimmer* with a dinner table inside and a memory of good conversations around it. It is logical that one of Berlin’s most expensive restaurants—Paris-Moskau—is located in a solitary little house near the railroad tracks. Berlin gladly recalls memories of the twenties, that short golden age, which might have been a dream even then—otherwise post-1933 events would not have happened so easily.

I believe that ingenuousness is also part of the past. Military style does not appeal to today’s Berliner, who is a civilian—an objective, sharp-eyed and spicy-tongued urban citizen. He can show respect, but he is not afraid to question authority. I perceive that an audience is not apt to be misled, and cannot be led easily into foolishness. At the turn of the century, Berlin is more bourgeois, more urban than it was in the twenties. The Cold War is in the past. I do not sense any renewed allure of the two belligerent world views, or revived rhetoric of national and social revolution. The competition for capital,

manpower and achievement cannot be avoided. It seems that there are no career side-elevators to the top. Manners are cool, encouraging but not fawning. People here are in tune with the current developments; everyone is busy.

I see many older people and some younger ones visiting Rosa and Karl—this is what they call them. In this unusual cultural circle, religious respect surrounds the memory of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht. Everyone may bow to his or her own saints, according to his or her own faith. Every creed receives its due in courtesy. The creative power of micro-societies is common knowledge in the history of culture, as literary history was created around some great writer and host, like Rachel Varnhagen, Mme. De Stael, Gertrude Stein, or Virginia Woolf.

Posterity associates the city's past with a salon or with a few novels. Today it is acceptable to speak of Balzac's Paris, Dostoevsky's St. Petersburg, Dickens' London, or Fontane's Berlin, though the contemporaries of those authors would certainly be astounded. The overall picture is painted by solitary masters, surrounded by friends and helpers. The great mutability of groups, subcultures and societies enables democratic negotiation of values and makes liberal democracy possible.

At the turn of this century in Central Europe the challenge is for the majority democracy to develop into liberal democracy. I call the Adenauer period an era of majority democracy. The radicalism of the New Left of 1968 could have been an ideological system that relied on the purported substantive majority and held little patience for minority opinion and formal rules of play. We may regard the Berlin Republic as the school of liberal democracy, if we toast with a drink of pedagogical optimism. Assuming a positive scenario, that is if the present trend continues and no great problems arise, the search for common ground will continue, accompanied by confrontations of values as a continuous intellectual practice. Civilized friction is refreshing and unavoidable, just like the spread of the cosmopolitan tone. If metropolitan progress is selected, then administration will be more flexible and will not dress up in a *petit bourgeois* armor, and the personality as a unique phenomenon will be appreciated.

There is also a question of how generously Berlin will go about buying brains and becoming a magnet for intellectuals. Or will it recoil from this prospect and choose the spirit of national isolation instead? Will it buy talents and bond them to the city? Temporary concentration of talent is the secret of golden

ages. It requires generous investment on the part of the centers of attraction, and thus naturally evokes jealous resentment of home-grown mediocrity. I dwell upon this subject for a reason: in my judgment of a city's career, I attribute decisive importance to sex appeal. Its basis is, in fact, not even as important as reputation or promise in this regard, because the latter has a multiplicative effect.

For West Berlin, it is a great challenge to become open through East Berlin and East Germany to all of Eastern Europe. The city has become almost a connecting station. In order to go along with this change, it is compelled to create a new, more active self-image, and to face the envy of the other German provinces. In its own defense, it must be an initiator of national consensus. There is a chance that the self-conscious provinces—players of federal autonomy—will be nervous and suspicious of the interweaving of the city and the government in the new capital.

There is no doubt that within Germany and in its eastern and southeastern vicinities, lively and ambitious rivals will appear and continue to rise in the future, because for Bucharest, Kiev, Moscow, and St. Petersburg to be interesting as centers of attraction after Budapest, Prague and Warsaw, there is no need for war, only time and peaceful civil development. In this new context, Berlin is compelled to see itself differently than before. Within the network of European cities, the time has passed for one metropolis to imagine that it is the determining center. The network itself is the determinant, and complementary centers are formed within it.

Berlin faces a choice. If it extends itself, it can be a world city. If it cringes, it will not. Then it will stay the capital of Germany and nothing more. That is not bad either, but there is something better. I hope it will develop into a world city, because in that case resentment will not be created and ideological hatred will not be awakened. I regard the latter as the overture to a bloody conflict and the barbarities of war. If Berlin is good humored, if it willingly cooperates with its environment and does not go looking for enemies, if it is able to love itself just a little like beautiful women and world cities do, if it does not follow fashion, but makes it, if it honors rather than oppresses the elite of talent, if it avoids the anti-elite populism of the left and right, then life will be calmer in Budapest too, and the new millennium will begin amidst optimism.

As far as principles for handling East–West German cultural heritage, I like the *Akademie der Künste* practice best. It collects the legacy of both

West German and East German artists and writers. The *Akademie* preserves, cares for, processes, and stores, leaving opinion, commentary and judgment to other institutions and individuals. And, if it does not come for free, the *Akademie* pays the market price fixed by dealers for every piece of paper that preserves art's past.

To summarize: the Bonn democracy was a state of law and a majority democracy. It only became a liberal democracy through inner progress, the movements of 1968 among other events, and not least importantly, reunification. For a capitalist democracy to digest a state socialist dictatorship is a difficult course. The parallel, underground consciousness of the former East German state, which is expressed perhaps only in whispers or winks, is also a part of the new culture being formed. Faiths, myths and packages of memory live side by side. Like a sunken continent, the GDR has moved into individual memories, and since it no longer exists, since it is no longer a menacing power, it has become a community of nostalgia. Few people like to view their own past, their own youth, as depressing.

Value and taste are revitalized. One may regard the friendly intimacy of the other as foreign, or strange, but it is precisely this big city mix of manners, respect and humor that gets people accustomed to democracy. There are rooms where *Ossis* and *Wessis* sit around a table and get along well enough. Some of their memories are similar, others are very different, but a conversation is taking place. Let us hope the culture of the third millennium will be defined by dialogue rather than combat, since conversation is easier than armament. Let us call this curious, understanding, therapeutic and collegial behavior "dialogism." Sometimes it is worthwhile to put a new "ism" into the dictionary. Who will believe in the power of words, if not a writer who knows that words, not rockets, made the Wall crumble?

In Berlin, it is popular to perceive the movement of the horizon as an intellectual challenge. If things go well, Berlin will be a significant cultural meeting place. Posterity smiles in wonder at how few people are responsible for great innovations, for the productive periods and surges of cities, for the golden ages that are invented afterwards. Every other form of spectacle is more expensive than that of ideas.

GERMANY AS A COUNTRY OF IMMIGRATION

Barbara John

When Richard von Weizsäcker became mayor of Berlin in 1981, he established the office of the Commissioner for Foreigner's Affairs, the very first one on the state level, and the government appointed me to run this new administration. I can well remember having to answer curious questions about the prospective length of my service. I tried to give a well-grounded honest response and claimed that my special mission would be completed by the end of the 1980s. My prediction was primarily based upon the official governmental doctrine stating that Germany was not a country of immigration and did not intend to become such in the future. Moreover, it was reinforced by the fact that the continuous flow of immigrants that started in 1955 when Germany agreed to temporary labor migration, began to decline in the early 1980s.

However, since the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989, the vanishing of the borders between Central and Eastern European countries and the subsequent liberalization of travel restrictions, the number of people immigrating to Germany has been skyrocketing. A steady flow of migrants coming to Germany ranges from asylum seekers and political refugees from the former Yugoslavia—approximately 350,000 war refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina and 110,000 persons from Kosovo are currently living in Germany under temporary protection—to economic immigrants from the former Soviet states. (Ethnic Germans are not included in this category as they are legally considered German citizens.)

As a result, Germany has a greater percentage of foreign-born persons (13 percent) than the United States (9 percent). Thus, Germany, a self-proclaimed non-immigration country, is the *de facto* second largest immigration country in the world after the United States, a country of traditional immigration. Currently, out of 600,000 immigrants flocking to the European member-states ever year, 300,000 persons come to Germany. And their number will continue to grow due to networking among immigrant groups, whose presence is already significant. For example, 70 percent of all Turkish immigrants in Western Europe live in Germany, comprising the largest ethnic immigrant group. One hundred seventy thousand Turks live in Berlin, making the German capital the second largest Turkish city worldwide after Istanbul. Never before in the history of the German nation-state has its population been so culturally, religiously and

linguistically diverse. Nevertheless, the notion of Germany as a multicultural society is not yet accepted.

THE DEBATE ON GERMAN *LEITKULTUR*

In June 1998, a public debate initiated by Jörg Schönbohm, former Senator for the Interior and currently chairman of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) party in the state of Brandenburg, stirred up the city. In an interview published in *Berliner Zeitung*, Jörg Schönbohm stated that one can no longer find Germany in the local community of Kreuzberg. Moreover, he depicted districts like Kreuzberg and Neukölln, two inner city areas where 34 percent of the population belong to immigrant groups, as ethnic ghettos which no longer resemble Germany. He also asserted that the idea of a multicultural Germany defies and even undermines German culture. Most importantly, he denounced the notion of Berlin as a multicultural city as endangering the German identity of the city. According to Jörg Schönbohm, multiculturalism should be judged as a manifestation of leftist intellectuals who want to destroy Germany.

He depicted Berlin's large immigrant community, consisting of 440,000 individuals who still hold non-German passports and of 60,000 others who have become German citizens, as a visible expression of failures in immigration policies. He insisted that integration policies did not work and pointed out that:

- unemployment among ethnic minorities is nearly three times higher than among the indigenous German population;
- the concentration of immigrant families in some local communities is too dense;
- many immigrants do not acquire the German language properly; and
- Muslim beliefs shared by a large immigrant group are alien to the majority culture.

The senator suggested that to overcome these flaws and detrimental effects of immigrant ghettos on local communities, Berlin needs to embrace a German *Leitkultur* as a dominant culture. It should not be surprising that the majority

of the population agreed with the minister: the public shares the ideas of *Leitkultur* and this concept is quite popular.

A TOUGH AGENDA FOR BERLIN

I would like to focus on how we can better understand and exploit more systematically potential gains of immigration, i.e., economic, social and demographic ones, and at the same time find better ways to effectively control and manage its adverse effects, namely crowding and segregation, poor education of particular immigrant groups and competition among marginalized groups for all types of resources. Exploring and understanding the complex interaction between foreign newcomers and Berlin's other residents is important and critical for two reasons. First of all, throughout its history Berlin has never had a larger culturally and religiously diverse population than at present. At the same time, the vast majority of the newcomers, such as labor migrants from the Mediterranean countries and refugees from Lebanon, Pakistan or Sri Lanka, are unskilled. There is no longer a demand for unskilled labor in Berlin, except for those who work for low wages, like for instance illegal immigrants from Poland and Ukraine or legal migrant workers from Portugal and Great Britain, who, as members of the European Union, enjoy freedom of movement.

Secondly, and in addition to the poor job opportunities, there is a growing segregation. For the first time in the postwar history of Berlin more affluent citizens can move to suburban areas like Kleinmachnow or Grünau, leaving a less prosperous group behind. Just some days ago there were newspaper reports about two elementary schools in Kreuzberg where 100 percent of students do not speak German as their mother tongue.

How can the city succeed to be a bridge between Western European and Central and Eastern European countries if it fails to build a bridge between Berliners of different ethnic and political cultures and religious beliefs? How can the German capital become a dominant political center for solving the national problem in Germany if it fails to manage its local ones?

The notion of being divided—not integrated—is still engraved in the collective memory of most Berliners: in the western part, in the eastern part and in the inner city districts where 60 percent of minorities now reside due to the unique political history of Berlin. Everybody learned that after the end of forced political division, being a Berliner is no longer unusual or advantageous.

It does not give you added value in money in socialist states nor does it win national attention.

This also applies not only to the inhabitants but also to the city itself. Berlin has to reinvent itself politically, socially, financially, and economically. This reinvention will not come about automatically as Berlin has become a place where the federal parliament and the federal government work alongside with numerous lobbying groups and institutions. But it can help the city because there will be a greater exchange of ideas and experiences between the national and the local elites. Since the department for “foreign workers”—as it is still called in the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs—is located in Berlin, it became much easier to get financial assistance for pioneer projects like training staff to care for elderly people or introducing integration programs for immigrant parents of preschool children.

Nevertheless, in order to break political, social and ethnic segregation the city has to adopt a far-reaching integration program. Otherwise the trend towards accelerating social and ethnic segregation will continue. Berlin has already accumulated a great potential to succeed in this area. This applies to West Berlin where 13 percent of the population is postwar immigrants. They make up 20 percent of people under the age of twenty. This proportion will grow in the next fifteen years to nearly 40 percent. Future Berliners will be more ethnically and culturally diverse than ever in the city’s history. Will Berlin manage to serve and protect this diversity and to capitalize socially, economically and politically from its rich human resources?

In the 1980s West Berlin was a core town for immigrant and citizenship policies nationwide. My office was established to design and encourage structural participation and responsibility for minority groups. We spend 20 million DM for self-help groups created to inform, educate and advise their communities. For instance, we started a program to encourage and direct labor migrants toward becoming entrepreneurs. Its aim was to turn them into credit card holders instead of welfare recipients. As a result, there are now 12,000 new small- and medium-sized businesses employing 30,000 people.

In East Berlin the situation is totally different. Only 5 percent of its residents are of foreign origin, compared to 17 percent in the western part. It is very hard to convince ethnic minorities to move their offices from Charlottenburg to Prenzlauer Berg in order to save money on rent. Minority members feel less protected physically in the eastern parts of the city. It is even worse when they

have to move to Brandenburg. I remember a recent case, when a young German Army recruit of Turkish origin wanted my help in transferring him from the barrack in Potsdam to Reinickendorf. The story was quite unusual but representative of the general anxiety among minorities who reside in the eastern part. This young man and his Turkish friend were attacked in a subway in the district of Wedding by a skinhead who identified one of them as Turkish on the basis of his nametag “Yildiz.” The incident was widely reported. The young man told me that he had already received some nasty remarks from other soldiers in Potsdam. He was sure that nobody would protect him in Potsdam, if something similar to the described incident happened there. He finally got a transfer to Berlin.

Two-thirds of all violent incidents in Berlin happen in its eastern part. This example might give you an impression that segregation has not only an economic aspect, but also a safety component. I have to admit that some Germans express the same uneasiness. The vision of an “integrated city” does not mean that everybody in Berlin will have the freedom to choose, for example, whether to live in the affluent suburbs of Dahlem and Pankow or in the poor inner-city neighborhoods like Kreuzberg and Lichtenberg, whether or not to finish a formal education, to get a college diploma and to find a well-paying job. But it makes all the difference if you have no freedom of choice at all because you are poor, lack a good education or belong to a certain ethnic group, or if your freedom of choice is supported and protected by the city institutions because they are obliged to respect everybody and to be responsible for the city community as a whole. It makes all the difference if the following guarantees, protected by the internal institutional agreement and by political leadership exist for everybody:

- protection of every citizen against discrimination and criminal offenses (“no go” areas will not be tolerated),
- equality in educational opportunities and quality regardless of where a child attends school,
- availability of German language courses to all interested individuals,
- respectful treatment by the municipal services regardless of origin and background, and
- ability for all inhabitants to support themselves through gainful employment.

An integrated city requires that everyone play responsibly. This means that there is a strong necessity to learn German in order to communicate with each other. All these goals may sound self-evident, but we are still far from achieving them. However, we do not have to start from scratch in Berlin because there are good suggestions under way, including:

- a program sponsored by the European Union to ensure close cooperation between the local police and different ethnic community groups,
- training courses for the city's employees to ensure their multicultural competence and knowledge of different communities,
- multilingual employees able to cooperate with other institutions, such as hospitals and police offices, whenever translations are needed, and
- a new set of schools, called European Schools, where children are educated bilingually beginning in kindergarten (thirteen elementary schools altogether, offering classes in Turkish, Polish and Greek, in addition to German).

The ongoing course toward an integrated city needs serious political dedication on all levels of the city government as well as the involvement of voluntary organizations and the business community. Some of it is already underway. However, the political leadership still needs to fully understand that an integrated society and an integrating city are not homogeneous entities, as I have pointed out. Berlin should not be treated as an urban space in which culturally diverse groups just happen to live. Instead, Berlin should be treated as a place where these groups are always in a dynamic relationship. Only this way will Berlin win the capacity to act as the national workshop for a relaxed cultural and religious pluralism in Germany.

A CITY OF STRANGERS OR A CITY OF NEIGHBORS? BERLIN CONFRONTS METROPOLIS

Peter Fritzsche

A LOOK INTO BERLIN'S *HINTERHOF*

The precious ecology of the tenement courtyard, the *Hinterhof*, is lovingly described by Peter Schneider. “The windows of my rear apartment look onto a small, rectangular garden,” he writes, “in a chimney-like recess between the windowless fire walls stands a maple; it bears leaves only from the fifth floor up, where it catches the sunlight a few hours a day. Flowerbeds have been marked out with stones along the rear walls of the building. Surprisingly, they sometimes produce flowers and strange bushes whose names no one knows.” Full-blooded tenants sometimes show their heads too—in the lower apartments they “have to stick their heads out the window to determine the state of the weather.” But their names are not known either, since “the tenants of my building seldom meet; I know them mostly by their noises.” Taken as a whole, this is the sweet, strange blue flower of the *Hinterhof*. “These rear apartments offer a peace and quiet in the midst of the city not to be found anyplace else in the world, not even in the country.” This ecology of lives lived in stillness and itineraries followed in solitude is enforced, Schneider adds, by “the Germans’ habit of hearing their own noise through their neighbors’ ears.”¹

The tone and grammar of Peter Schneider’s *The Wall Jumper* is post-apocalyptic, the genre is provincial. This is a story taking place after it’s over. Paragraphs leave behind the tenants who have been forgotten and live by themselves. The plot neglects the tenement buildings themselves, which slowly decay as pieces of sandstone plaster fall off red-brick walls. It is surely an autumnal aesthetic: “there are always new cracks in the asphalt.” “I like Berlin best in August,” Schneider exclaims, “when the chairs stand empty inside open barroom doors, and the two solitary customers no longer raise their heads even if a third one enters.”²

These images of Charlottenburg in the 1970s also capture Prenzlauer Berg, where Peter Schneider himself recognized that the East German “state was powerless against the tiled stove.”³ The *Kachelofen* circumscribed a treasured, but nearly impenetrable sphere of privacy and inward retreat sealed off from Berlin as surely as East Berlin was once sealed off from the West. These

sheltered spaces—the apron around the *Kachelofen*, the *Hinterhof*, the *Nischengesellschaft* that Gunter Gaus famously described—are still anxiously defended, although today, with the Berlin Republic at the city gates, vigilance is no guarantee of success.⁴

Having grown up in the East, Jens Sparschuh, now resettled as a writer in the reunified capital, prizes the forgotten and neglected *Hinterhöfe* as much as Peter Schneider. Berlin's back buildings and interior courtyards, he reflects, conserve "something that has been irretrievably lost in the world outside"—that is, time. "Grass shoots in the gutters, a rusted bicycle, without a chain or pedals, carefully locked up along the iron bars of a basement window, made visible by time that apparently is standing still."⁵ Unfortunately, for Sparschuh, this stillness has been jeopardized by reunification—street names switched around, zip codes re-calibrated. The buildings that had always looked as if the battle for Berlin had been fought precisely at that location in 1945 have been renovated and painted in bright pastels, new landlords have assumed ownership and new rental contracts have arrived. "I realized, furtively, overnight, we had been moved out of our street," a passive construction that nicely approximates the sudden, unwanted and unexpected transformation of East Berlin neighborhoods.⁶ But if Berlin by day is no longer recognizable, Berlin by night is still "familiar" (*vertraut*). Along the darkened street, renovations do not seem so permanent and the dilapidation of the place comes back into view. "Somewhere, in a bar on a corner, I drink one more beer [...] I get to know Heinz." The two beer drinkers discuss their uncertain future in a place where most of the jobs that existed in 1989 no longer exist. The idled Sparschuh is no longer the powerful, corruptible agent of the state housing agency and Heinz is out of luck as well. "It doesn't matter," comments Heinz in Berlin dialect, "we'll figure it out. It took us forty years to ruin socialism. We'll bring down capitalism too, right? *Prost!*" "Berlin's black humor," remarks Sparschuh. "Now I know where I am. In Berlin N.O.—and right at home."⁷ It is among the still, intimate ruins of empire and the shreds of ambition that Sparschuh feels at home. "I never thought they would find us" (*Ich dachte, sie finden uns nicht*) is the title of one of Sparschuh's essay collections. But the real-estate developers and commercial agents have in fact found him, and Heinz too, which makes the Berliner *Zimmer* and the Berliner *Hinterhof* all the more melancholy and all the more precious.

COSMOPOLITAN CITY A HUNDRED YEARS AGO

Berlin as dilapidated *Hinterhof* is a striking, resonant image. The attributes of *Kiez* (neighborhood) and *Kneipe* (bar) that so many Berliners cherished in the 1970s and 1980s basically described a *Hinterhof* interior of comfort, familiarity and stillness in which neighborhood is set against the “outside” of the city and gathers up its stragglers, generally single or childless and often men, just like Schneider and Sparschuh. Indeed, Kreuzberg, with its carefully drawn territorial demarcations—the old zip code “36,” a venerable municipal designation that was replaced by a new national five-digit scheme in 1993—its studied inwardness, which was often dressed up as political correctness, and its basic disinterest and even intolerance toward the rest of Berlin is typical of this prevalent *Hinterhof* mentality.

How strongly *Kiez*, *Hinterhof* and *Kachelofen* contrast with the geographical imagination of Berlin one hundred years ago. To be sure, then as now, Berliners mistrusted the shovel and pick of the developer. Arthur Eloesser, the *Vossische Zeitung*'s influential *feuilletonist* at the end of the nineteenth century, rebuked the generation of 1871 which had proudly anticipated “intoxicatingly great times” and always applauded “whenever there was something to be leveled or carried off” as the “old *Bürgerstadt* was torn down street by street.”⁸ Nostalgic accounts of the last *Kremser*, the horse-drawn wagons that used to bring merrymakers into the Grunewald, of the last *Pferdeomnibus* (Line 4c, Stettiner Bahnhof to Hallesches Tor), of the last *Droschke*, the horse cabs that finally disappeared in 1928, or of the *Krögel*, the sole surviving medieval alleyway in twentieth-century Berlin (until its destruction in 1935)—these were all typical newspaper items that surveyed the destruction of the city.⁹ These *Abschiedswörter* made up a motion picture of hundreds of endings and closings, one after the next. “Again and again, the places where old Berlin laughed and lived and drank are being torn down,” went a typical story in *BZ am Mittag*. In this case, the *Pilsener Bierstube*, Unter den Linden 13, was scheduled for demolition to make room for a modern office building.¹⁰ In the ceaseless rounds of urban development, Berliners no longer recognized the city of their youth. Their places were found, torn down and replaced.

But replacements in the city did not bother everyone, not least because so many Berliners had no youth in the city to lose, but were themselves displaced

persons. “I believe most Berliners are from Posen and the rest are from Breslau,” quipped Walther Rathenau before World War I, a statement that in its precision is not accurate but in its sensibility rings true. At the time, no other large European metropolis counted as large a percentage of immigrants among its citizens as did Berlin.¹¹ The unprecedented influx of newcomers and immigrants at the end of the nineteenth century insured that Berlin was truly a city of strangers. Berlin was unremittingly brand new, as newcomers crowded out of the Schlesischer Bahnhof or the Anhalter. And while this may have been grist for the mill of those who thought that Berlin was “too cosmopolitan” or “too eastern” or “too Jewish” or just “too foreign,” what is striking is how few observers thought so.

Around 1900, it was not the quiet *Hinterhof* that fascinated Berliners but rather places of exchange and collision and contrast—Potsdamer Platz, Friedrichstrasse and the teeming working-class suburb of Vorstadt. Texts in the city inclined toward places which brought all kinds of opposites together, presented an “always changing, always colorful picture” and thus told much more interesting stories.¹² Berlin’s chroniclers repeatedly strolled Friedrichstrasse, lingered in the Kaiser-Passage (the showy arcade at the corner of Behrenstrasse), turned right at the busy intersection with Leipziger Strasse, and continued south, down to the traffic circle at Potsdamer Platz—a crooked corridor through the central city that purportedly offered the most diverse alternation of characters and atmosphere. Just a few hundred steps along Friedrichstrasse exploded the senses—“cacophonous blowing of traffic horns, melodies from organ grinders, cries of newspaper vendors, bells of Bolle’s milkmen, voices of fruit and vegetable sellers, hoarse utterings of beggars, whispers of easy women, the low roar of streetcars and their screech against the old iron tracks, and millions of steps dragging, tripping, pounding.”¹³ On to Potsdamer Platz—“every second a new picture,” marveled *BZ am Mittag* in 1905. “The world of elegance and the world of work, workers, traders, teachers, a sampling of Berlin’s entire population.”¹⁴ Only on Potsdamer Platz did “everything that makes up a metropolis flow together, elegance and work, tragedy and harmlessness, commerce and entertainment.”¹⁵

Alexanderplatz rather than Potsdamer Platz was the treasured place for Alfred Döblin, who had lived in its precincts since the turn of the century. Döblin provided Alexanderplatz with a restless and mutable quality that resisted any authoritative or definitive representation. In his hands, Berlin constantly

lost its single-mindedness. The unforgiving power of the industrial city to destroy its inhabitants, a staple image in late nineteenth century literature, as practiced by Max Kretzer or Clara Viebig, for example, fell apart into countless pieces—into odd adventures and unexpected experiences which may or may not have been tragic but which in any case did not add up to a complete or coherent whole. In this fragmented metropolitan universe, in which no single interpretative template applied, people made their way and encountered the city in disparate and idiosyncratic ways. “Tenants, landlords, Jews, anti-Semites, poor people, proletarians, class warriors, hustlers, dispossessed intellectuals, little girls, prostitutes, teachers, parents, trade unions,” Döblin described the Berlin of the Weimar era that inspired his writing with a diverse roll-call of characters whose versions and editions of the city were even more proliferate. “Two-thousand organizations,” he continued, “ten-thousand newspapers, twenty-thousand reports, five truths.”¹⁶ Strangeness and transgression had an enticing sensational appeal, and—given five truths—also broke down authority and authoritative renderings. Precisely the degree to which Berlin’s busiest streets seemed to bring new and ferocious forms to life was the reason they attracted Germany’s most famous writers (such as Döblin) and painters such as Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Ludwig Meidner and later Georg Grosz and Otto Dix.¹⁷ Again and again, angles of viewing inclined toward contrast and difference and toward what was incomprehensible or unexpected.

There is little doubt that Berliners themselves used the city in a highly sensational way, and thereby coveted the encounters among strangers, which is Richard Sennett’s definition of a city: a place where strangers meet.¹⁸ *Omnibus*, a theatrical review featuring temperamental passengers, recognizable cityscapes and a colorful *trottoir roulante*, played to packed audiences at the Apollo-Theater, its success testimony to the public’s fascination with haphazard social combinations and urban *flânerie*.¹⁹ Newspapers also reported on countless *Strassen- und Strassenbahnbekanntschaften*, the friendships and affairs made on streets and streetcars.²⁰ Guidebooks indicated that what attracted visitors were distinctively metropolitan as well as grandly imperial sights: the busy streets, the department stores and the elevated *Stadtbahn*. Everyone’s destination was “Potsdamerplatz, Leipziger Strasse and Friedrichstadt,” reported the *Berliner Morgenpost* one Sunday in April.²¹ The city guidebook, *Berlin für Kenner*, returned visitors to the same downtown geography again and again: “Dinner at Kempinski” (day 1); “lunch at Rheingold

on Potsdamer Platz,” coffee at the Piccadilly and, at night, “strolling” around Friedrichstrasse (day 2); “Apollotheater” (day 3); “movie theater on Potsdamer Platz” (day 5); “stroll through Friedrich- and Leipziger Strasse” and “Wertheim” (day 6); “dinner on Potsdamer Platz” (day 7); “coffee in the Fürstenhof or at Piccadilly on Potsdamer Platz” (day 8). “The scene of this unbelievable movement of people, lights, and cars—” the guidebook added, “this is Berlin!”²² Strolling, coffee, Wertheim—guidebooks recommended tourists adopt the *Bummelschritt* that Berliners themselves had expressly designated.²³ Haus Vaterland, the Rheingold restaurant, and Wertheim on Potsdamer Platz, Lunapark at the end of the Kurfürstendamm, the parkways of the Tiergarten, and the parade grounds at Tempelhof as well as the beach complex on the Wannsee were the distinctly metropolitan places that Berliners sought out to be amidst sensation and among strangers. Indeed, on any fair-weather Saturday or Sunday in the years before World War I, about one-third of all Berliners actually bought a streetcar ticket, left the *Kiez* and explored the city.²⁴

Municipal institutions such as the press spoke in the name of the city of strangers and browsers. The spectacle that was too much for Berlin’s police president, Traugott von Jagow, for whom electric lighting on Behrenstrasse was too bright and street noise too loud, was the foundation of a new civic culture as far as the *Berliner Tageblatt* was concerned. If new municipal regulations were put into effect, editors sported, police would have to confiscate the bells on Bolle’s milk trucks, proscribe newspaper vendors from calling out the evening edition in anything but a whisper and require garrisoned soldiers to parade on tiptoe. What “would happen to a city in which one could throw nothing out of the windows, neither dust nor noise?” the paper asked—a question that revealed a rather remarkable conception of the metropolis as a colorful, confusing, contradictory place that frustrated regulation from above and one that had little in common with the stillness of Schneider’s postwar *Hinterhof*.²⁵

Berlin does have another story to tell. Dusty, noisy—one hundred years ago, it was a place where people moved about the metropolis as strangers and spectators, indulged in the pleasures of “just looking” and approached one another with increasing measures of tolerance. As they did, Berliners figured as crucial constituents of a public sphere in which strangers were likely to meet and actively exchanged opinions and goods. In this respect, browsing’s visual thrills were an extension not only of capitalism’s commodity exchanges

and also of democracy's free and haphazard movements.²⁶ To be sure, Berliners have always prided themselves on their tolerance of strangers and no history of Berlin is likely to pass over the city's acceptance of French Huguenots in the seventeenth century, of Viennese and other Jews at the beginning of the eighteenth, of the massive in-migration of Poles, Jews and Russians at the beginning of the twentieth century, and of the substantial Turkish settlement since the 1960s. These migrations were never quite so happy as city boosters suggest, but the ethnic diversity they created underscored the degree to which Berlin has always been an unfinished, improvised product. But the point is also that ethnic markers were hardly the only characteristics of difference and strangeness.²⁷ In the years before World War I, social, economic and particularly cultural or "lifestyle" differences were central to the way the city represented itself. I doubt if this had much to do with a cultivated tolerance. It seems rather more a function of the speed with which the city grew, doubling in population from two to four million in the thirty years before 1914, of the economic opportunities as migrants poured into the city, of the raucous movements of people and things around the commercial city, of the thirty-four streetcar lines that converged on Alexanderplatz, of the hundreds of thousands of commuters and shoppers who crossed Potsdamer Platz every day, and of the half of Berlin that moved every six months (at least in the 1880s). Berlin in 1900 did not simulate multiculturalism or set out to build a bridge between East and West. It stimulated strangeness by the very incomprehensible terms by which it doubled its size and layered its people.

CHANGES IN THE WEIMAR YEARS

Just how seriously this cosmopolitan tradition around 1900 ought to be taken might be revealed by a quick glance at the Weimar years. After the hardship years of war and revolution, the crowds on Potsdamer Platz and Friedrichstrasse appeared to break up. To be sure, Berliners continued to replenish metropolitan culture during the 1920s. They still read the *Morgenpost* on Sundays, crowded the ever-popular carnival grounds at Lunapark, dined at Aschinger's, and flocked to the movies. Nonetheless, the metropolitan crowd assembled less easily than it had before the war. Partisan politics separated and isolated various parts of the public making chance encounters more difficult and exclusive loyalties to social groups more important. The

Sunday suit and everyman's bowler in which men browsed the prewar city were exchanged, more and more, for exclusive party and paramilitary uniforms or for distinctively proletarian wear like the balloon cap.²⁸ By the late 1920s, after political tensions between Communists and Social Democrats exploded in street battles, neighborhood strongholds such as "Red Wedding" nurtured protective subcultures. At the same time, the Great Depression hastened the psychological flight of the middle classes into neighborhoods—Wilmersdorf, Zehlendorf, Schmargendorf, Reinickendorf, and Hellersdorf—which were reimagined as idyllic villages between the folds of the dangerous metropolis.²⁹

In these circumstances, the various lines of difference and scattered points of exchange that had once excited the modernist imagination around 1900 were increasingly regarded as troublesome. Dance halls and boulevards, which before the war mixed a diverse metropolitan crowd, now threatened what was taken to be a healthy, but beleaguered *Volk*. Nowhere is this shift in the evaluation of difference more clear than in the popular writings of Hans Ostwald. For Ostwald, Imperial Berlin had been an exciting journey of discovery and his *flanerie* challenged the pretensions of the Wilhelmine establishment with sympathetic portraits of prostitutes, vagabonds and other metropolitan marginals. The *Grossstadt-Dokumente* that he edited after 1905 are a landmark of vernacular urban sociology. But after the war he mapped out a fearsome and disreputable cityscape in his influential *Sittengeschichte der Inflation*, published in 1931. Many of the characters introduced before the war reappear in the *Sittengeschichte*: criminals, gamblers, hustlers, prostitutes, musicians, and occultists. But rather than exotic mutations on the shifting ground of the new industrial city, they are vilified as extraneous parasites. Rather than expanding the idea of *Volk* and bringing city people of all kinds closer together—the explicit goal of Ostwald's prewar journalism—the *Sittengeschichte* polices the borders surrounding the *Volk*, at once distinguishing and segregating the margins in an effort to make more sanitary the core. Ostwald's post-1918 Berlin repudiated noise and dust in the name of efficiency and cleanliness.

For more and more Berliners, the carnival of the city at the turn of the century had collapsed into a house of horrors. The modernist features of the city in 1924 recall those of 1904—instability, mutability and uncertainty—but they are invoked to extinguish rather than celebrate difference. The colorful play on metropolitan identities and metropolitan niches has been subsumed by the grinding work of social homogenization, which emphasized the virtuous

sameness—the basic thrift and hard work—of the German people. This “displacement of difference” takes the measure of the violence that ominous cultural projects of the postwar years exacted on the prewar metropolis.³⁰

PRESENT-DAY BERLIN

In more innocuous form, the *Hinterhofkultur* and the *Nischengesellschaft* of contemporary Berlin persist in displacing difference. Of course, multicultural pieties are on everyone’s lips. And there is no grand homogenizing project that can compare with the National Socialist one in the 1930s. Nonetheless, Schneider and Sparschuh report on a basic mistrust of strangeness and difference and express a valorization of intimacy and familiarity that inhibits the creation of a metropolitan culture in which strangers are apt to meet. Ethnic others are not the only *Fremden*, the only strangers. Otherness exists also in the variations of lifestyle, wealth and sexual preference, in the ambitions Berliners have for themselves and their children, in the memories and complicities and fates they carry with them, and in the uncertainties they admit their ability to fully understand or easily reproach their neighbors. And urban culture succeeds in the degree to which metropolitans are curious about these frictions and differences. The stillness of the *Hinterhof* seems to me to resist this level of engagement.

The neighbors in the *Hinterhof* also righteously resist the encroachments of the builder, the developer and the technocrat. Up in Prenzlauer Berg, Sparschuh heard the pneumatic drill of renovation and he shuddered, “we had been moved out of our street.”³¹ At one level, Sparschuh simply recapitulates Arthur Eloesser, who had lost the nineteenth century city of his youth in the frantic pace of the *Gründerzeit* and both Sparschuh and Eloesser display a mistrust of the exchange and circulation of modern capitalism that makes difference in the metropolis possible. There is a blindness at work here since the production of risk and novelty and opportunity is what cities do. On another level, however, the criticism against the master builders needs to be heeded. Again and again in the history of modern thought, the city has been characterized as a metropolis and as a capital. In the first place, the city looks like a Babel of contesting voices and intentions. As a marketplace and hub, it invites social and political diversity. In the metropolis there are as many stories as viewpoints. At the same time, however, the metropolis often doubles as capital, which enforces regimentation and discipline in the name of political mastery and

economic efficiency. Both the metropolis and the capital coexist in the same urban place and the one challenges the pretensions of the other.

If the metropolis is not to be overshadowed by the capital, if Berlin is to be the crucible of a new kind of German city that cherishes rather than displaces difference, then the powerful technocratic impulse to make Berlin simply a place of efficient traffic must be questioned. I would not do it from the *Hinterhof*, though, or from the *Kiez*, but from the metropolitan places that resist order, definition and oversight. Today, Potsdamer Platz and Friedrichstrasse and even the renovated Gendarmenmarkt and Pariser Platz have been surveyed, planned, rebuilt, and restored by the experts, but I doubt whether they will endure as vital urban spaces. They are overplanned, do not invite exchanges and collisions and are therefore basically uninteresting. Urban culture cannot be simulated. Instead unlikely places such as the Scheunenviertel and Rosenthaler Strasse collect unanticipated crowds. Indeed right next door is one of the strangest places in Berlin: Alexanderplatz. The loud, unfamiliar and somewhat disreputable place that Döblin recounted found determined opponents in generations of city planners who endeavored to redo Alexanderplatz in cosmopolitan fashion. It was here that the *Rotes Rathaus* was erected in the 1860s and the central police station was located in 1885. Even as fashionable department stores such as Wertheim and Tietz opened their doors here in the 1880s, Alexanderplatz never lost its rough-edged reputation or scattered the night workers, petty criminals and prostitutes who retrieved their places in its cafes and bars. In the 1920s, Berlin's city planner, Martin Wagner, reconceived this intractable plaza as a paradigm of functionalism in the constantly changing city. In 1928, he commissioned Peter Behrens to design two flanking Bauhaus structures in the functionalist style of *Neue Sachlichkeit*, but not even Behrens could tidy the place up. Today, the strict modernist style of his office buildings has been disarmed by kitschy touches such as lace curtains and potted plants in the windows. After World War II, Communist authorities in East Berlin attempted to renovate Alexanderplatz as a vast socialist forum at the intersection of huge boulevards that led to Unter den Linden and the Stalinallee. But those plans did not quite work either, since throughout the 1970s and 1980s Alexanderplatz always attracted a rebellious, recalcitrantly non-socialist youth element: punks and hippies from Pankow and beyond. And after 1989, the horrific pretensions of DDR socialism, particularly the TV tower, endure as strange, almost endearing obstacles to

any kind of elegant improvement of what most West Berliners think is a desolate and ghastly complex. For more than one hundred years, Alexanderplatz has persisted as a place that does not live up to aesthetic expectations, that keeps falling out of the frame of official intentions and that therefore retains a genuinely metropolitan aspect. It is from Alexanderplatz that I would start thinking about the metropolitan promise of Berlin between East and West and reconsidering what is strange and what it is about the city that makes us uneasy and realize we are no longer comfortable in the *Hinterhof*.

ENDNOTES

¹ Peter Schneider, *The Wall Jumper*, Leigh Hafrey, trans. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), 15-7.

² Schneider, *The Wall Jumper*, 6.

³ Schneider, *The Wall Jumper*, 41.

⁴ Günter Gaus, *Wo Deutschland liegt: eine Ortsbestimmung* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1983).

⁵ Jens Sparschuh, *Ich dachte, sie finden uns nicht* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 1997), 58-9.

⁶ Jens Sparschuh, *Der Zimmerspringbrunnen* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 1995), 12-3.

⁷ Sparschuh, *Ich dachte, sie finden uns nicht*, 66-7.

⁸ Arthur Eloesser, "Die Strasse meiner Jugend" *Berliner Skizzen* (Berlin: Das Arsenal, 1987 [1919]), 12.

⁹ On the "Kremser," "Im Kremser," *BZ am Mittag*, no. 182, 5 Aug. 1905; and "Sonntagsfahrt im Autobus," *Berliner Tageblatt*, no. 419, 19 Aug. 1907; on the "Droschke," "Das letzte Droschkenpferd," *Berliner Tageblatt*, no. 215, 29 Apr. 1906; "Einzug des 'Eisernen Gustav' in Paris," *Berliner Morgenpost*, no. 133, 5 June 1928; no. 135, 7 June 1928; no. 219, 13 Sept. 1928; Fritz Wirth, "Sport und Massenpresse," in W. Joachim Freyburg and Hans Wallenberg, eds., *Hundert Jahre Ullstein* (Berlin: Ullstein, 1977), vol. 3, 343-44; and Hans Fallada, *Iron Gustav*, Philip Owens, trans. (London: Putnam, 1940); on the Pferdeomnibus, Egon Jameson, "Der letzte Pferdeomnibus," *MP*, 23 June 1920, reprinted in *Augen auf! Streifzüge durch das Berlin der zwanziger Jahre* (Frankfurt: Ullstein, 1982), 88-9; and on the Krögel, "Am Krögel," *BZ am Mittag*, no. 88, 14 Apr. 1906. See also Ernst Friedel, "Der Kampf um die alten Bauwerke Berlins," *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, no. 1, 1 Jan. 1910; Albert Dresdner, "Stadtzerstörung und kein Ende!" *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, no. 435, 28 Aug. 1910; and "Ein Stück des alten Berlin geht wieder dahin," *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, no. 451, 7 Sept. 1910. Important early twentieth-century artists such as Heinrich Zille and writers such as Hans Ostwald also drew attention to the "old" Berlin that was being evacuated by the new.

¹⁰ "Unter den Linden 13. Ein Abschiedswort," *BZ am Mittag*, no. 171, 24 July 1906.

- ¹¹ Rathenau quoted in Alexandra Richie, *Faust's Metropolis: A History of Berlin* (New York: Carrol and Graf, 1998), 860. In 1905, 60 percent of all Berliners had been born elsewhere. See Paul Goldschmidt, *Berlin in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Berlin: Springer, 1910), 383-4.
- ¹² Hans Ostwald, *Dunkle Winkel in Berlin* (Berlin: Seeman, 1905), 21.
- ¹³ Walter Kiaulehn, *Berlin: Schicksal einer Weltstadt* (Munich: Biederstein, 1958), 19-20. See also A. H. Kober, *Einst in Berlin*, Richard Kirm, ed. (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1956), 7-11.
- ¹⁴ "Über den Potsdamer Platz," *BZ am Mittag*, no. 240, 12 Oct. 1905.
- ¹⁵ "Geständnis," *Berliner Morgenpost*, no. 248, 23 Oct. 1906.
- ¹⁶ Döblin's response in "Berlin und die Künstler," *Vossische Zeitung*, no. 180, 16 April 1922.
- ¹⁷ Charles W. Haxthausen, "'A New Beauty': Ernst Ludwig Kirchner's Images of Berlin," in Charles W. Haxthausen and Heidrun Suhr, eds., *Berlin: Culture and Metropolis* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 58-94.
- ¹⁸ Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 39, 47.
- ¹⁹ "Berlin im Omnibus," *BZ am Mittag*, no. 156, 6 July 1906.
- ²⁰ "Strassenbekenntschaften," *Berliner Morgenpost*, no. 257, 3 Oct. 1909; Johannes Trojan, "Kalte Tage," in *Berliner Bilder* (Berlin: Grote, 1903), 28-31; Paul Schlesinger, "Isolde in der Strassenbahn," in *Das Sling-Buch* (Berlin: Ullstein, 1924), 200-3; and, of course, Walter Benjamin, "The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire," in *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the the Era of High Capitalism*, Harry Zohn, trans. (London: New Left Books, 1973), 45.
- ²¹ "Sonntagspublikum," *Berliner Morgenpost*, no. 213, 28 Apr. 1907.
- ²² *Berlin für Kenner: Ein Bärenführer bei Tag und Nacht durch die deutsche Reichshauptstadt* (Berlin: Boll und Pickardt, 1913), 10, 28-31.
- ²³ "Zwischen 5 und 7," *BZ am Mittag*, no. 240, 12 Oct. 1906.
- ²⁴ Peter Fritzsche, *Reading Berlin 1900*, 18, 61-3.
- ²⁵ "Das lautlose Berlin," *Berliner Tageblatt*, no. 588, 17 Nov. 1912. See also Arthur Eloesser, "Die Blumen des Herrn von Jagow" (1913), in *Die Strasse meiner Jugend. Berliner Skizzen*, 57-61.
- ²⁶ This argument is developed in Fritzsche, *Reading Berlin 1900*.
- ²⁷ The "ethnicization" of difference is manifest in Walter Siebel, "Fremde in der Stadt," *Die Zeit*, no. 48, 19 November 1998, 59.
- ²⁸ On the bowler, Fred Miller Robinson, *The Man in the Bowler Hat: His History and Iconography* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993).
- ²⁹ Erhard Schütz, "'Kurfürstendamm' oder Berlin als geistiger Kriegsschauplatz: Das Textmuster 'Berlin' in der Weimarer Republik," in Klaus Siebenhaar, ed., *Das poetische Berlin: Metropolenkultur zwischen Gründerzeit und Nationalsozialismus* (Berlin: Deutscher Universitäts Verlag, 1992); "Kleinstadt Berlin," *Reclams Universum* 48, no. 50 (8 Sept. 1932), 1840-1.
- ³⁰ Hans Ostwald, *Sittengeschichte der Inflation: Ein Kulturdokument aus den Jahren des Marktsturzes* (Berlin: Neufeld und Henius, 1931); and Michael Geyer, "The Stigma

of Violence, Nationalism, and War in Twentieth-Century Germany,” *German Studies Review* (Winter 1992), 75-110.

³¹ Jens Sparschuh, *Der Zimmerspringbrunnen*, 12-3.

SHRINE, STAGE, OR MARKETPLACE? DESIGNING PUBLIC SPACE IN THE NEW CAPITAL

Brian Ladd

My paper builds on a very literal reading of the notion that Berlin is the meeting place of East and West. The physical division of the city made it like no other during the Cold War. The reorganization of its space, therefore, can serve as one measure of the integration, unification or reconciliation of East and West. The work of urban planners to overcome the physical (and also the social) division of Berlin has attracted a great deal of attention and a great deal of controversy. In the wake of the city's physical and ideological division, a central and understandable goal of much of this planning has been the restoration of both Berlin's physical coherence and its historical identity. Many of these efforts have met with opposition, however, raising questions about the feasibility and even the desirability of any kind of urban restoration in Berlin. These questions form the basis for my paper. The first part focuses on attempts to dispose of the legacy of the East German socialist city; the second, on the broader question of reconciling urban coherence with the legacy of the Third Reich.

I

Municipal advertising slogans can offer us hints about both the language of a particular public and its desires. Marketers of Berlin present the integration of East and West as both an accomplished fact and as an advantage for the city. A promotional brochure proclaims that Berlin "has unique experience on how East and West can come together in one city. Berlin has mastered the specialist knowledge, the mentalities and the languages of East and West."¹ That is wishful thinking. In reality, some would say that *Ossis* and *Wessis* live in parallel worlds. Nearly a decade after the fall of the Wall, studies continue to show a cleft between the public worlds of Easterners and Westerners—that they tend to read different newspapers, for example, and approach their government with different expectations. Geographers' work on "mental maps" reveals that Easterners and Westerners largely follow different paths through the city, and that those paths typically stop on either side of the now-vanished Wall.² If urban public culture depends on shared public space, on face-to-

face contact between people from different backgrounds and places, then these divided paths need to be brought together. Only then, of course, can Berlin live up to its own hype.

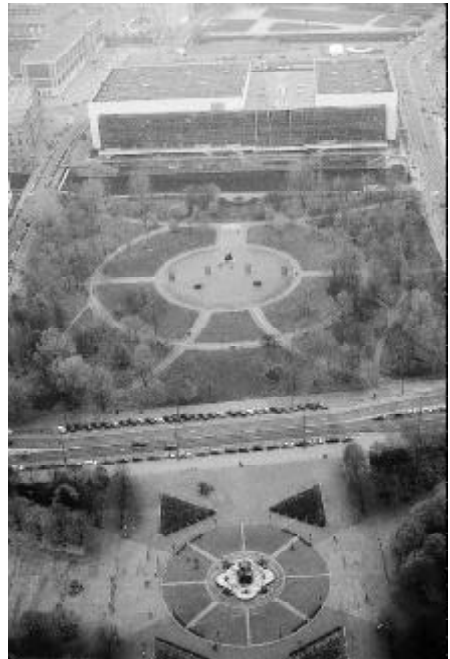
What keeps Easterners and Westerners apart? Among many answers, I propose to look at differing perceptions of urban space, and specifically of private property and public space. Public and private relationships developed differently in East and West—relationships in private life, between individuals and authority and between public and private activities. All this created different ways of looking at and living in public space. These differences are difficult to characterize and, for the same reason, they may be hard to overcome.

Historians associate a separation of public and private space with the rise of bourgeois society and the development of a protected world of domestic comforts, on the one hand, and a public sphere of political activity, on the other. (This was a strongly gendered division.) Marxian socialists sometimes proclaimed the abolition of such distinctions. Indeed, urban planning in the German Democratic Republic (GDR), following Soviet models, first devoted all attention to public space of a particular kind—space for marches and mass demonstrations. Later, however, notably with the Honecker era, came a greater emphasis on the creation and protection of the private space of families and their dwellings, as reflected in the massive housing construction program of the 1970s and 1980s. That emphasis raised new questions about the creation and maintenance of public space in cities, questions that resembled those being asked in the West. As bourgeois liberals worried about maintaining a visible and lively community in the face of growing private comforts and private spaces, socialists, too, wondered if their socialist community was in danger.³ A fundamental difference distinguished Eastern from Western debates: the existence of a private real-estate market in the West. Nevertheless, by the 1980s we see surprising similarities between discussions of the problem of urban public space in East and West.

With German unification and the end of socialism, the different systems of property were reconciled by a scheme of restitution—that is, by privileging inherited property rather than by, say, granting rights to users of property. This may have been the only legally and morally defensible choice in the Federal Republic, and I do not propose to question it, merely to observe that it was a very Western solution to the problem, that it created some bitterness, and that it has important implications in Berlin.

One way to make the issues of private property and public space more comprehensible is to look at the results of Eastern planning in Berlin and how they are being disposed of. In assessing East German urban development, we should distinguish between results and systematic plans. The results are the product of complicated and messy interactions between planners and government or party leaders. Here and there it may be possible to recognize them as incarnations of socialist ideology; certainly both sides freely bestowed such descriptions during the Cold War. More generally, one can say that they display certain characteristic tendencies of a planning based on public ownership of property. Notably, in the very heart of Berlin, we see open, public space even where it did not exist previously, extending from a greatly expanded Alexanderplatz across a newly created band of open space to the former site of the royal palace.

After 1989 arose the question of what to do with this open space. Official policies have been guided by the principle of “critical reconstruction,” a set of planning regulations that attempts to restore Berlin’s block structure, building heights, facade dimensions, and street corridors.⁴ The goal is reurbanization, a word that connotes the restoration of an endangered urban public space. One means to that end is, paradoxically, privatization. For example, the most systematic plan, the so-called *Planwerk Innenstadt* of 1996, emphasizes the narrowing of major public streets to the widths they were at the beginning of the century by selling the land once used for the wider street to private developers to erect buildings there. In parts of Friedrichstrasse and Leipziger Strasse, this has already been done.



Center of the Former-East Berlin

Reurbanization is motivated in part by nostalgia, and specifically nostalgia for central Berlin before division—that is, before the GDR. Thus, as some critics have complained, its effect can be to erase East Germany from the city. This objection has been raised most vehemently with reference to the former site of the royal palace, the remains of which were destroyed in 1950 to make way for a vast parade ground, next to which was supposed to rise a grand Stalinist skyscraper. The skyscraper was never built; in its later, less demonstrative phase, the GDR developed the area in a less grandiose manner. The open space on one side of the Spree river finally took form in the 1980s as “Marx-Engels-Forum,” a dispersed landscape of statuary displaying the heritage of the founders of “scientific socialism.” The aesthetics of these sculptures is not widely admired, and their didactic purpose is obvious; however, this is public space clearly not designed for either regimented marching or transfixed upward gazing, and thus it differs markedly from many Soviet models of public space.



Marx-Engels Forum

Across the river, covering part of the old palace’s site is the “Palace of the Republic.” Upon its completion in 1976 this became East Berlin’s central building, not only because of its location but also because of its accessibility and many public uses—as convention and concert hall, restaurant and café, bowling alley and meeting place. In other words, it became a hub of urban public space for many East Germans. Although it has been closed because of asbestos contamination since 1990, subsequent proposals to tear it down met with fierce opposition from East Berliners.⁵

Many other Berliners, especially Westerners, are passionately committed to rebuilding the royal palace on the same site. The desire to bring back the palace is not motivated by royalist sentiment, or indeed by any delusions of grandeur.



Marx-Engels Forum and the Palace of the Republic

It is restorative in another sense—in the sense implied by the word “reurbanization,” but with particular resonance in the center of the German capital. Hardly anyone would argue that a flourishing urban life requires a king, but a surprising number of influential people believe that only the royal era can offer the urban forms necessary for a thriving communal life. Reurbanization in general is thus not directed only against the socialist city. It is an attempt to repent the sins of modernist urbanism, which in all its destructive forms—Nazi and Stalinist, socialist and capitalist—favored megastructures over neighborhoods. In central Berlin, however, the East German socialist city is the chief villain.

The attempt to restore spatial continuity has many implications. It can be seen as a pretense of chronological continuity and wholeness, wiping away the decades of the GDR (as noted) and also the Third Reich (see below). But it can also, and perhaps simultaneously, represent an attempt to knit together diverse communities, notably East and West, and promote the multicultural ideal of the city as a meeting place. Yet again, some critics say that instead of multiculturalism the effect is quite the opposite, a leveling globalization in which the visually intact cityscape is commodified as a kind of stage set. This, in turn, can promote gentrification (Germans use the English word and may see the process as an American import), and that might mean pushing the poorer and less worldly Easterners out of the city center. This accusation has in fact frequently been leveled against recent city plans.

Central to the specter of Westernization in general and Americanization in particular is the development of shopping malls—enclosed, privately owned substitutes for shopping streets. Many have sprung up in the outer districts of Berlin as well as outside the city. The famous addresses of central Berlin offer more complicated cases. The redevelopment of Friedrichstrasse preserved the contours of the street, but the major retail stores there are also connected by an underground shopping corridor. The enormous development at Potsdamer Platz offers itself as a restored street grid, but its critics argue that the recreated streets merely divert attention from the fact that the heart of the complex is an enclosed, three-level shopping mall.



New Potsdamer Platz Development with Shopping Mall

What we have here, in the eyes of critics, is the privatization of public space, accompanied by the reduction of public life to the experience of consumption—in other words, the city as a shopping experience. Indeed, commercial boosters might seem to agree. To quote from another promotional brochure: “In terms of culture, Berlin has been at the top for a long time, more so than London or Paris. But what it still lacks is a well-developed tradition of shopping.”⁶ My point here is not to rehash familiar laments about the demise of public values that may never have actually existed. I want to make the more general point that global capitalism is being imposed on something, not nothing. This is not to say that a socialist mentality maintains its grip in the East, but rather that with the end of socialism the East (of Berlin, of Germany and of Europe) is not simply characterized by a lack of shopping opportunities, or a

lack of, say, civil society. There was an ideal of the socialist city, and there was a rather less impressive reality, and out of this grew—and persist—a set of expectations about what public space might be—and what it should not be. Certainly the now-ubiquitous graffiti in Berlin reinforces many citizens' estrangement from public spaces.

Marx wrote vividly of the destructive and creative powers of capitalism, and already in the Manchester of the 1840s, Engels observed it creating a new city while it destroyed lives and communities. As a response, many people embraced the ideal of the socialist city, and some may still embrace it. I want merely to draw on its critical potential for the benefit of our capitalist cities. That critical potential is there in the minds of many citizens, and we ignore it at our peril.⁷

II

The desire for wholeness visible in recent plans for Berlin is a reaction to the trauma of division and to the second German dictatorship of the century. That division, in turn, has its roots in the greater German trauma, and the dictatorship that preceded it. The German capital's role in Europe depends on the images it projects of national wholeness and continuity—in other words, of German national identity. That national identity remains a hostage to the legacy of Hitler. That is, for German intellectuals and German political leaders, the shadow of the Third Reich hangs over any image of itself that Germany presents to the world. (Whether foreigners looking at Germany are as obsessed with the Nazis is another question, one that hardly matters for my purposes. The importance of Berlin is going to depend in part on how foreigners react to expressions of German power, but sometimes I think the Germans may be more afraid of themselves than anyone else is afraid of them.)

The treatment of urban space in the new capital again furnishes the evidence I use to crystallize parts of this German self-image. What kind of identity is Berlin projecting? A building boom is typically offered as evidence of confidence and strength. Obviously the new Berlin can be viewed as an expression of German vigor and power. But the well-established reflex of many West German and especially Berlin intellectuals to object to any expression of German power guarantees that any such reading of the new Berlin will raise objections.

Indeed, some see the new Berlin as a monument to self-effacement or, even more, to self-abasement, if not sheer indecisiveness. On this view “critical reconstruction” is a policy straitjacket that deliberately precludes any grand urbanistic gesture. (That is the view of many frustrated architects.) At the same time, “critical reconstruction’s” attempt to stitch back together a battered urban fabric is criticized as an expression of nostalgia, which is to say denial of the historical disruptions of the city and the nation. In general, then, anything that is done or proposed to rebuild Berlin is attacked as an inadequate confrontation with the past.

The alternative, then, is **not** to rebuild. This is obviously not feasible as a general policy, but it has been applied successfully to individual sites. That is to say, the wholeness or continuity of urban space can be intentionally and obviously disrupted, creating a kind of “open wound” in the city. Among many examples in Berlin, some take a rather traditional form—for example, the site of the destroyed synagogue in Levetzowstrasse that was used as a collection point during the deportation of Berlin Jews. The vacant lot here is marked by a sculptural memorial to the deported Jews as well as an explanatory plaque. A newer, more self-consciously artistic example is Christian Boltanski’s installation, “The Missing House,” at a vacant lot on Grosse Hamburger Strasse, where irreplaceable loss is recalled by simple signs giving former residents’ names (some obviously Jewish, some not), occupations and dates of residence, mounted on the blank firewalls of the neighboring houses on either side.

The most prominent and successful example of an “open wound” is the “Topography of Terror” exhibit at the sprawling site where SS and *Gestapo* headquarters once stood.⁸ Activists who drew attention to the long-neglected land in the 1980s were rewarded with the decision to set aside the entire site for an exhibition devoted to documenting the activities directed from here. When the Wall came down soon afterward, this site next to it suddenly became a central location, but one devoted to memory rather than bureaucracy or business.

A special case is the site of the proposed Holocaust memorial. As the new Berlin is built up around it, this vacant section of the former no-man’s-land by the Berlin Wall is, increasingly, a striking “open wound” in the new city center. It is by no means clear, however, that in its final form—whether as sculptural memorial, garden, library, archive, or visitors’ center—it will serve as a provocation or a disruption of the capital, or that its presence will matter to the affairs of government or of business being conducted nearby. Some of

the opposition to proposed designs for the site has arisen from the fear that any completed project will too effectively heal the urban space of the capital and thus the symbolic unity of the historical nation.



“Topography of Terror” Exhibition

The debates about memorial sites, and at least some of the designs, compel remembrance. This way of coming to terms with the events of the twentieth century—this insistent remembrance—is a kind of multiculturalism in the sense that it denies the cultural (and spatial) wholeness of the nation. As such it is bound to be controversial. Berlin’s Mayor Eberhard Diepgen, for example, argues that the city, Germany’s best example of diversity and tolerance, is being unfairly appropriated as the scapegoat for Germany’s sins: “It is not acceptable for the capital to be given responsibility for the nation’s remorse while the provinces claim its pride.”⁹ Although he has a point, we must remember that the privilege of serving as capital carries a price; and moreover, what the capital offers, or can offer, is not merely remorse, but complexity—a pride, if any, openly and visibly tempered by an acknowledgement of the price of German national identity.

Insistence on German national pride holds a certain appeal for some intellectuals, but it is far weaker than most foreigners realize, because it is far weaker than in most other nations. Unselfconscious national pride is simply not respectable in Germany. The loss of that certainty of identity carries a price in terms of social solidarity and political will—in that the conservative intellectuals have a point. But I am more impressed by the opposite argument, that the new Germany has definitively removed chauvinism from its political mainstream and that it thus has something to teach the rest of us about modesty in the definition of national interests and national purposes.

One other development endangers that potential. Although investors in the new Berlin display no great interest in German nationalism, they may be more inclined toward a different alternative to the painful grappling with Germany’s twentieth century—the alternative envisioned by the technological

utopians who think they can look only forward and never back. A recent article on Berlin in *Wired* magazine concludes with this observation: “As the locus of some of the most terrible governmental crimes in history, Berlin has had a special meaning for the twentieth century—but the century is now over.”¹⁰ In other words, it’s history—mere history. For all the official desire to promote Berlin as forward-looking, to wipe the historical slate clean would leave little reason for anyone to choose Berlin. Berlin has to market its historical significance, but the implication here is that this attempt may fall on deaf ears. Who cares about the twentieth century, anyway? In fact, in Berlin even some developers and investors care. And those who do not, find their plans blocked at every turn, because influential people in Berlin, whatever their differences, are trying not to forget the twentieth century. I hope Berlin can serve as an example for cities and nations that might be tempted to invoke a collective amnesia to grant themselves amnesty from the painful roots of their own identities.

ENDNOTES

¹ “The New Berlin,” leaflet from Partner für Berlin, 1998.

² Josef Zens, “Zwei Geographen machen die Mauer in den Köpfen sichtbar,” *Berliner Zeitung*, 9 December 1998.

³ GDR planners debated this issue openly already in the 1960s. Examples are cited by Frank Werner, *Städtebau Berlin-Ost* (Berlin: Kiepert, 1969), 278; and Harald Bodenschatz, *Berlin auf der Suche nach dem verlorenen Zentrum* (Hamburg: Junius, 1995), 149. And see Christiane Lemke, *Die Ursachen des Umbruchs 1989: politische Sozialisation in der ehemaligen DDR* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1991), 210-28.

⁴ For contributions to the debate over “critical reconstruction,” see Alan Balfour, ed., *Berlin* (London: Academy Editions, 1995); Gert Kähler, ed., *Einfach schwierig: eine deutsche Architekturdebatte* (Braunschweig: Vieweg, 1995); *Arch+ 122* (June 1994), “Von Berlin nach Neuteutonia.” On the Planwerk Innenstadt, see *Planwerk Innenstadt Berlin—Eine Provokation* (Berlin: Architektenkammer Berlin, 1997); *archithese*, no. 3, 1998, “Berlin im Zeichen des Rekonstruktivismus?”

⁵ See Brian Ladd, *The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 58-70; William J.V. Neill, “Memory, Collective Identity and Urban Design: The Future of Berlin’s Palast der Republik,” *Journal of Urban Design* 2 (1997): 179-92; Jürgen Trimborn, “‘Palast der Republik’ oder preussisches Stadtschloss? Wie soll man mit Berlins Mitte umgehen? Die Diskussion um den Wiederaufbau des Hohenzollernschlosses,” *Die Alte Stadt* 25 (1998): 212-28.

⁶ Anno August Jagdfeld, in *Berlin Brief*, no. 10, 1998. Some might argue that the same is true for Eastern Europe as a whole.

⁷ Good examples of this critical perspective include Bruno Flierl, *Berlin baut um—Wessen Stadt wird die Stadt?* (Berlin: Verlag für Bauwesen, 1998); Simone Hain, *Archäologie und Aneignung* (Erkner: Institut für Regionalplanung und Strukturentwicklung, 1996); and Wolfgang Kil’s regular contributions to the journal *Der Architekt*.

⁸ See Ladd, *Ghosts*, 154-67.

⁹ See the city’s official Web site, www.berlin.de (January 1999).

¹⁰ Gary Wolf, “Venture Kapital,” *Wired*, June 1998, 207.

**AMERICA'S BERLIN 1945-2000:
BETWEEN MYTHS AND VISIONS**

Andreas W. Daum

VIEW ON BERLIN

In the beginning we look into the sky. Our view is directed upward, into the heavens. Slowly, the camera pans down. Coming from above, it captures a chariot drawn by four horses, a quadriga, harnessed abreast and steered by a female, goddess-like figure with angels' wings. The upper part of the architectural piece then comes into view. We first see the broad architrave, then the six massive gray columns holding it; these architectural elements altogether form a massive gate.

We now know where we are. Or do we? The voice of the movie's narrator (some of us might recognize the actor James Cagney at this moment) starts to accompany the camera's panning, but leaves us confused for a moment. "On Sunday, August 13, 1961, the eyes of America were on the nation's capital"—the camera still focuses on what we can unmistakably identify as the Brandenburg Gate—"where Roger Maris was getting home runs number forty-four and forty-five against the Senators. On that same day"—the camera has now reached the street level while Cagney continues—"without any warning, the East German communists sealed off the border between East and West Berlin. I only mention this to show the kind of people we are dealing with—real shifty."

Here we are, in the center of Berlin, the highly contested German capital during the peak of the Cold War. And we are in the city that was not only the United States' much acclaimed outpost of freedom but also—as I will argue in this paper—its Cold War's "City on the Hill," a place of almost mythical quality and visionary projections for many Americans.¹ Film director Billy Wilder, who was born in Austria, but had worked as a film journalist and movie author in Berlin during the 1920s and later emigrated to the United States, ironically captured the multiple meanings of postwar Berlin as a capital in the opening scene of his motion picture *One, Two, Three*, released in 1961. The film introduces the audience to an energetic American Coca-Cola representative, played by Cagney, who tries to make Coca-Cola the "first American company to crack the Iron Curtain." The camera's motion in *One*,

Two, Three blends the capitalist manager's memory of American baseball and the erection of the Berlin Wall—showing seconds later a lascivious woman in a bathing suit on an advertising billboard with the Coca-Cola slogan “*Mach 'mal Pause.*” Indeed, the film demonstrated Berlin's ambivalent meanings for Americans. In *One, Two, Three* even Scarlet, the teenaged daughter of a Coca-Cola boss in Atlanta (her name unmistakably an allusion to *Gone With the Wind*) feels a bizarre attachment to Berlin without having the faintest idea of what is going on in this city. On her arrival at Tempelhof she shrieks: “I hear this is a real swingin' town [...] Don't you ever read the headlines: everybody says Berlin is the hottest spot in the world right now.”² This definitely holds true for Scarlet, who immediately falls in love with a young communist from East Berlin. In fact there were other Americans at this time, particularly men, who had similar daydreams that Berlin (and this meant, of course, West Berlin) could provide them with opportunities to fulfill their private hopes. As documented in the city archives, for example, in the 1950s the mayor of the western part of the city received letters from the United States requesting support in finding a proper wife.³

Setting aside these kinds of sweet or unfulfilled expectations in what follows, my essay will focus instead on some broader attitudes of Americans toward Berlin between the end of World War II and the end of the millennium. I would like to develop an argument that might prove useful to the reassessment of Berlin's new role between East and West, between Germans and non-Germans. My aim is to show that Berlin's capacity to play a new role depends only partly on what we consider to be the city's intrinsic potential or its acquired historical heritage; the latter are not natural qualities but are heavily imbued with, and defined by, what others outside Berlin and Germany think they encompass. I would like to argue that Cold War Berlin became indeed an American city, i.e., in the perception and the rationale of parts of American society Berlin embodied a bundle of qualities which made the city a place that mirrored important historical myths and political visions of the United States. (Here I will concentrate on examples from the political establishment in the United States and focus on West Berlin; a monographic study will later elaborate on many other aspects as well.)⁴

Reconsidering Berlin's role between East and West in such perspectives raises fundamental questions about the impact of cultural perceptions, intellectual traditions and symbolic relations between different nations and societies.⁵ In

fact, American support for Berlin since 1945 has never derived from merely strategic and military reasoning, nor did it represent simply Cold War rhetoric. Both reasoning and rhetoric were based on self-assuring historical interpretations of America's **own** past as much as they were directed toward the future. **America's Berlin**, in other words, was a political and symbolic place embedded in historical myths and articulating political visions that incorporated Berlin into the history of the United States and linked the often dramatic events in the German capital—such as the Blockade, the Airlift, the building and fall of the Wall—to America's own cultural memory. In the following I will focus on these cultural aspects of America's Berlin, which have found far less attention than the political history of Berlin and American involvement in the city. The aspects of political history, however, should not be dismissed by this approach. On the contrary, studying the impact of image-making, cultural symbols and language on America's Berlin is meant to demonstrate that politics, culture and ideology have been heavily intertwined in the post-World War II era and cannot be separated from each other.

FROM CAPITULATION TO THE AIRLIFT: REINTERPRETATIONS OF BERLIN

After exclusive Soviet rule began with the German capitulation in May 1945, the very start of the American presence in postwar Berlin was already more than an administrative or military act. As a result of Allied negotiations, culminating in the agreements of June 5 between the governments of the United States, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, and France,⁶ the Western powers were assigned their sectors in the western half of the city. The first American troops entered Berlin on July 1 to occupy the assigned sector. On the Fourth of July, the leading elements of the Second Armored Division of the United States arrived. They observed this most sacred national holiday with a parade and, together with Soviet troops, celebrated their occupation of the American sector.⁷ “The Stars and Stripes were hoisted over Berlin on this greatest of American anniversaries,” proudly remarked the journalist William L. Shirer, who had been well familiar with prewar Berlin, in his book *End of a Berlin Diary*.⁸ From now on, the Fourth of July parades would be inscribed in Berlin's annual calendar of political rituals.

The presence of American troops in West Berlin began with a celebration of America's independence. America's Berlin after the Nazi dictatorship did not begin with a violent battle or a period of postwar atrocities committed by Allied soldiers against the domestic population. This was in striking contrast to the encounter between the Berliners and the Soviets, who had finally defeated the last *Wehrmacht* and *Volkssturm* troops in bitter street-fighting with enormous losses on all sides. What Americans discovered in Berlin from July 4, 1945, onward was a city destroyed by war and already suffering from the excesses of the Soviet occupation regime.⁹ Berlin was no longer a city mobilizing its last resources in a desperate effort to uphold the cynical Nazi propaganda and to combat Allied troops.

This shift in time and perception at the time of the American arrival in Berlin, a shift that created a sharp contrast to the confrontation between Berliners and Soviet troops, had a major impact on the meanings Americans ascribed to the city at a very early stage of the postwar period. Accounts of the year 1945, still widely publicized in the United States, minutely depicted the waves of—as it was often described—barbarian, animal-like Soviet brutality, especially against women, that traumatized Berlin in the months following Germany's unconditional surrender. Simultaneously, American reports tended to emphasize the general disaster of postwar destruction and the civilizational breakdown in Germany; they often depicted minutely the nihilism of devastated urban life embodied *par excellence* by Berlin. These reports and accounts scarcely, if at all, attempted to link the desolate situation to its concrete cause, the Nazi dictatorship. William Shirer, certainly not the mildest critic of Germany, sought refuge in a remote, yet almost timeless analogy—to the destroyed Babylon—when he encountered Berlin for the first time after the end of World War II.¹⁰ Even more telling is President Truman's account of his tour through Berlin in mid-July 1945. The city's destruction seemed to him depressing and almost unique. At the same time, Truman reduced the cause of the disaster to one person and to Hitler's hubris alone: "That's what happens [...] when a man overreaches himself." Watching the "long, never-ending procession of old men, women, and children wandering aimlessly along the *autobahn* and the country roads carrying, pushing, or pulling what was left of their belongings," Germans appeared to Truman as the last victims of Hitler. The "unbelievable devastation of the war" reminded the president less of the process that had triggered this catastrophe in Germany itself. Instead, the ghostly scenery

assumed the character of a universal warning; the devastation of Berlin encapsulated, in Truman's words, a "great world tragedy."¹¹

This perception reveals an attitude toward postwar Germany that has for some time been ascribed almost exclusively to Germans themselves. In recent years, historians have written extensively about the tendency of Germans and Berliners after 1945 to attempt to shed the role of perpetrators and to assume the role of victims and heroes. New research has viewed attempts such as these not only as an escape from the past but also as strategies to build up a renewed national identity that tried to come to terms with the personal responsibilities for and under the Nazi rule by claiming the role of victims of exactly this regime.¹² It might be equally important to notice that many Americans of the time, either in governmental positions or as commentators, travelers and academics, contributed to the reevaluation of the role of Germans under Hitler and enhanced the victimization of postwar Germans. As the accounts of Shirer and Truman demonstrate, Berlin provided a prominent stage for this process. Undoubtedly, a certain negative image of Berlin as the site of Hitler's *Reichskanzlei* and *Führerbunker* has been preserved in American public memory as a reminder of Germany's worst past. But this image was increasingly accompanied and dominated by a striking reinterpretation of Berlin's role under National Socialism.

Many American journalists and historians have argued since the war's end that Berliners had in fact never been real Nazis. According to this view, the Berlin population had been predominantly resistant to totalitarianism in the 1930s and 1940s; this attitude then foreshadowed the courage of the Berliners in the face of subsequent postwar communist threats. A highly sophisticated version that articulates the positive reinterpretation of Berliners can be found in the writings of Gordon Craig, the eminent historian of Germany in the United States. Above all, Craig's best-selling and masterful book, *The Germans*, is interesting in this regard. The book devotes a whole chapter to Berlin. Craig has expressed similar views in an article for the special issue of *Foreign Affairs* commemorating the Berlin Airlift. In these publications Craig has developed a panorama of seemingly timeless qualities of the Berliners, such as "courageous," "energetic" and "optimistic." According to these descriptions, even during the Hohenzollern era Berliners were "profoundly influenced by the dynamism, the ability to surmount crisis, and the orientation toward the future that characterized their rulers [...]."¹³ Craig mentions the Berlin of the Nazi period mainly to

document that the Berliners sustained their peculiar wit and did not share much sympathy for Hitler.

Accounts like Craig's praise political qualities and reiterate personal virtues that have been well familiar to Americans from the description of their own national history. In fact, tropes such as "courageous," "future-oriented" or "dynamic" have often been applied to capture the spirit of the American people since the times of the Pilgrims. This holds especially true for those strands of American historiography that have maintained a consensus interpretation stressing the liberal and constitutional elements in the development of the United States as a history of the rise of democratic values and freedom; it was during the first two decades after World War II that the works of consensus historians were particularly prominent in the American public.¹⁴ In this context West Berlin was increasingly described in categories of America's own successful past at the same time that the city, thanks to the American presence, had become a part of these narratives. In the perception of many Americans, Berliners were now embodying virtues very similar to those that have shaped Manifest Destiny and the rise of the United States. America's Berlin began to demonstrate those virtues that had shaped the development of the American republic since the eighteenth century and were, as such, universal virtues of human progress. Postwar Berliners, being characterized as victims of both the World War and Soviet occupation rule, were characterized as almost historically predisposed to master new challenges, among which the Soviet threat was the most urgent.

The reinterpretation of Berlin experienced its decisive breakthrough during the Berlin Blockade of 1948-49 and the Airlift. Now, Berliners in the western sectors of the city showed a remarkable mixture of steadiness, courage and ability to improvise, supported by the logistical masterstroke of the Western Allies and the strong backing of American General Lucius D. Clay to counteract the Soviet pressure. Not in a strict military sense, but on the political, emotional and symbolic levels, the Airlift made allies out of foes. The endeavor undoubtedly documented the sharp contrast between the Soviet policy of blackmailing and the efforts of the Western powers to secure the basic needs and rights of West Berlin's population. The public commemoration of this success in the United States, however, has ever since transcended the meaning of the actual events which condensed into a heroic success story that has hardly been affected by recent historical research. New investigations, for

example, have focused on the discussion within the American military and political establishment about whether to implement and how to carry out “Operation Vittles.” They have also revealed that West Berlin in fact was neither completely sealed from its environment by the Soviets nor did it stop receiving goods, electricity and other supplies from the eastern part of the city.¹⁵ These findings have not trickled down into American mass media reporting on the history of the Airlift, which has celebrated the heroism of Allied pilots and West Berliners alike. Untouched by any doubts, the Airlift has been depicted once more as a triumphant American enterprise. During a symposium devoted to the memory of the airlift at the National Archives in Washington, D.C., in June 1998, a group of soldiers officially presented the American National Colors, marching shoulder-to-shoulder through the narrow floor of the packed theater hall onto the small stage. General Joseph Ralston, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, later followed with a speech in which he frankly stated that the story of the Airlift is a “story about American greatness” and proof that “America is the indispensable nation” (hereby reiterating the phrase that Secretary of State Madeleine Albright has introduced in the second Clinton Administration to characterize the role of the United States in the post-Cold War era).¹⁶

At least with the Blockade and the Airlift, West Berlin had become the embodiment of those universal virtues that at their core were in fact American virtues. The myth of the eternally courageous Berliners who never completely submitted to the Nazis became an essential element of the image of the “Free World” resisting a new totalitarian, that is, communist, menace. West Berliners could thereby assume a new role after 1945—as good Germans among bad Germans, indeed, as the Americans of Germany. George F. Kennan, America’s prominent foreign policy intellectual and, during the late 1940s, one of the most influential diplomats of the United States, even went a step further. He found in the Berliners the good Americans among bad Americans. During two visits to postwar Germany with Berlin as a key part of his itinerary and impressed by a conversation with Ernst Reuter, Berlin’s charismatic mayor, Kennan became outraged—not about the effects of the previous regime on the German soul, but, as he wrote in his diary and later published in his memoirs, about the “stubborn inertia of the social habits of us Anglo-Saxons.” At the Harnack House in Berlin, the United States’ guesthouse and most important club in the American sector, Kennan personally encountered the contrast

between the pale and exhausted Germans, who played in the music band during social gatherings of Americans, and the self-confident attitude of members of the occupation army. From his impressions, Kennan drew the conclusion that the Americans were “[...] camping in luxury amid the ruins of a shattered national community, ignorant of the past, oblivious to the abundant evidences of present tragedy all around them [...] setting an example of empty materialism and cultural poverty before a people desperately in need of spiritual and intellectual guidance [...]”¹⁷

Kennan’s judgment might not be representative for other Americans or even the majority of them who did not share the inclination to observe their own people through the lens of cultural criticism. Most Americans, however, and certainly many in the political establishment were willing, if not eager, to slip into the role of those who would provide the “spiritual and intellectual guidance” that Kennan was missing and that was easily taken as their almost natural mission.

FROM THE FREEDOM BELL TO THE KENNEDY VISIT: BERLIN’S PLACE IN AMERICA’S MISSION

The celebratory commemorations of the Airlift in 1998 gave a faint resonance of what Americans have been familiar with since 1948, namely, that America’s engagement on Berlin’s behalf assumed a strong performance quality, visualizing and even theatricalizing political decisions to an enormous degree. This engagement served the fundamental purpose of opposing the Soviet Union in what soon became the Cold War. In addition, however, it sought to establish a close ideological cohesion between the United States and West Germany and remained embedded in America’s own political mythology, closely linked to what was defined as the United States’ unique mission in the world. Furthermore, America’s Berlin exceeded Germany’s Berlin—in the eyes of many Americans the virtues of the West Berliners could not be confined to the divided city but should be universalized. John F. Kennedy’s famous dictum of 1963 “*Ich bin ein Berliner*” meant exactly that. His proclamation was aimed less at the Berliners themselves and more at situating Berlin in a much broader context, turning, as Kennedy emphasized, “all free men, wherever they may live,” into “citizens of Berlin.”¹⁸

The theatricalization of politics, the American leadership in the new ideological alliance with West Germany and the use of Berlin as an example of universal virtues coalesced around a symbol the prominence of which during the Cold War has almost been forgotten: The Freedom Bell. In early 1950, Lucius D. Clay, the former U.S. Military Governor in Germany and chief promoter of the Airlift, initiated with several other Americans the so-called Crusade for Freedom to stir up moral and financial support against communism. Their efforts were part of a broad movement within the United States that aimed at combating communism at the ideological front and was strongly supported by the United States government and in part co-financed by the CIA. The year 1950 should mark an important turning-point toward increased propaganda activities with the National Security Council's decision to advocate militarization in the Cold War against the Soviet Union (NSC 68) and the Korean War entangling the United States again in a military conflict.¹⁹ Also, in Berlin itself anti-Soviet forces, who were advocating basic principles of the free world, were flourishing: the Congress for Cultural Freedom, a group of writers and intellectuals, first met in Berlin in June of 1950, and also the Free University, founded with American support in late 1948, enjoyed increasing public attention.²⁰

For the Crusade for Freedom, Berlin quickly became the focal point of its activities. An American committee ordered the casting in England of a new "Freedom Bell," analogous to the Liberty Bell, an icon of public historical imagination in the United States that is enshrined in Philadelphia. The Freedom Bell was first displayed in a celebratory parade along New York's Broadway in September 1950. From there, the Freedom Bell toured the United States and received enthusiastic applause at stops between the East Coast and San Francisco. During the tour, \$1,317,000 was raised to finance the project and more than sixteen million Americans signed a "Declaration of Freedom"—a confession of anti-Communist faith drafted in the form of a Christian confession, later to be stored in scrolls in the bell tower of the Schöneberger Rathaus.²¹ Pseudo-religious themes also permeated the dedication ceremony of the Freedom Bell in Berlin on October 24, 1950. The bell was referred to as a "shrine" of freedom and the whole event constituted, in Clay's words, a "spiritual Air Lift."²² The American imprint on this ritual took literal form; the bell's rim bore a broad inscription repeating slightly modified words from the closing

sentence of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address: "That This World Under God Shall Have A New Birth Of Freedom."²³

One year later, Berlin's new Freedom Bell, which the Crusaders now called the "World Freedom Bell," was integrated into a kind of bell ringing across the Western world. Mayor Reuter in West Berlin joined General Eisenhower, at that time NATO's Supreme Commander, in Paris and Harold E. Stassen, then president of the University of Pennsylvania, in Philadelphia, in a minute-long broadcast introduced by the pealing of the Freedom Bell, the bells of Notre Dame cathedral and the Liberty Bell to emphasize the moral values of the Crusade for Freedom.²⁴ In the following years, the Berlin Senate promoted the Freedom Bell as a symbol to such an extent that the Berlin local press warned against trivialization. Mayor Reuter even presented Miss Germany with a small china bell on her way to Hollywood; American businessmen visiting Berlin and President Truman at the White House also received their copies.²⁵ While in the United States, Berlin officials never missed an opportunity to distribute this symbol of the courageous fight for freedom. Berlin's city administration reached its limits, however, when in 1959 the organizers of a luncheon for Mayor Brandt in New York City asked for 2,500 miniature freedom bells, "appropriately boxed [...] for distribution to each guest;" unfortunately, the request was declined.²⁶

In spite of the obvious popularization of this symbol, the story of the Freedom Bell represents much more than a triviality or a mere propaganda coup of the Cold War. It is indicative of the extent to which America's Berlin mutated into a part of the consensus interpretation of American history. The post-World War II generation, both in the United States and in Germany, worked hard to link Berlin to almost every hero of American political history, starting with the Founding Fathers, extending to the Great Emancipator and reaching into the twentieth century. Thomas Jefferson was evoked when the American Memorial Library was dedicated in Berlin in 1954. Benjamin Franklin's words decorated the Congress Hall in the *Tiergarten*, built in 1957 with the support of the Benjamin Franklin Foundation, inspired by Eleanor Lansing Dulles, the sister of the secretary of state and Berlin officer at the State Department.²⁷ During his visit in the United States in 1959, Willy Brandt, then West Berlin's mayor, was invited to give the commemoration speech on the occasion of Lincoln's 150th birthday. Brandt was extraordinarily well received by the public, and even ordinary Americans outside the establishment,

who had followed his performance, sent congratulations and thanks to Brandt's Berlin office.²⁸ In the aftermath of Brandt's speech in Springfield, Illinois, the U. S. Information Agency considered giving Berlin a full-scale replica of the log cabin where Lincoln was born. A film on Brandt's visit to the United States was supposed to be shown in the same exhibit. In fact, Brandt himself kept a bust of Lincoln in his Berlin office.²⁹ In 1962, Robert F. Kennedy used a visit at the Free University to draw an analogy between George Washington and Ernst Reuter. For Robert Kennedy, the Berlin mayor was the "contemporary hero" of the "world-wide revolutionary movement of our epoch," i.e., the "great adventure of humanity," which took its modern form in 1776 in the American colonies.³⁰ And the memory of Madison, Jefferson and Franklin was eventually evoked by John F. Kennedy during his triumphant tour through Berlin in June 1963 to underline that a free world would require erudition as well as political skills.³¹

READING BERLIN: THE NEW FRONTIER CITY

It is a common feature of all types of political regimes to use the historical past selectively and to evoke heroic images to legitimize present policies. America's Berlin, however, is a special case. A city outside a nation's geographical realm served to reinforce the dominant national self-interpretation, was developed into the testing ground for the values emphasized in this interpretation, and acquired a key function in establishing a close political and emotional relationship with a formerly hostile country. This process is almost unique at the same time that it mirrors cultural traditions that reach deep into American history.

When the Americans entered Berlin in July 1945, they returned to a city from which they had been expelled only four years previously³² and which was still contaminated by the recent memory of Nazi rule. Americans also came back to a place, however, that before the Nazis came to power had represented—more than any other in Germany—urban vitality, ethnic diversity and cultural innovation in high and popular culture, in addition to outstanding academic achievements. Based on these assets, the Berlin of the early twentieth century had developed a high degree of self-assurance. Berliners, as well as foreign observers, saw in this city the epitome of modernity with all its inherent contradictions of integration versus disintegration, progress versus poverty,

culture versus physical brutality. Reflecting on Berlin meant undertaking a reading of the texture of urban modernity.³³ Since the late nineteenth century, the term “America” had assumed a central notion in this texture as a signifier of capitalist endeavor, mass democracy and materialist thinking, to name only a few keywords that were popularized by many European cultural critics.³⁴ Not coincidentally, observers on both sides of the Atlantic soon began to depict Berlin as an American city, blending the signifiers for America with the stereotypes of Berlin. Mark Twain thought Berlin was the “European Chicago,” other Americans perceived the city in a similar way as a “thoroughly modern city,” which did “not offer Old World memories.” For the German intellectual Herwarth Walden the city of Berlin was simply “America [in] microcosm.”³⁵ In his *fin-de-siècle* book, *Berlin—ein Stadtschicksal*, Karl Scheffler claimed that Berlin not only epitomized the crudest “Americanism” but was in fact a “pioneer city,” which during industrialization became again a “colonial city,” placed at the front-line between civilization and the wilderness, similar to the settlements in the New World.³⁶

When the Americans returned to Berlin in 1945, many of these images experienced a remarkable resurgence and were simultaneously filled with new meanings. The epithet “American,” which had been discredited under the Nazis and even before by cultural critics, served until the 1960s as a positive indicator that Berlin could in fact look back on a long tradition of cultural links to the West. Even more, the description of Berlin as a city on the front-line revived. Within only three years after the end of World War II, the front-line against the Nazis, however, changed in into one against communism. In January 1950, Hans Hirschfeld, speaker of the Berlin Senate, émigré to the United States in the 1940s and one of the most important brokers in the growing German-American exchange of political elites, wrote to Robert Kempner: “*Berlin ist eine Frontstadt und wenn man an der Front steht, muss man mit einer gewissen Zuversicht auf den Sieg erfüllt sein.*” (“Berlin is a front-line city, and when one is at the front one has to be even more convinced of victory.”)³⁷

The leitmotif of a city on the front-line soon acquired an even broader meaning, slipping into what might be called the most powerful self-interpretation of American history. Here, “front” was transformed into “frontier.” The “frontier” had long represented the uniqueness of the American experience of constituting a new and just society, which stood in contrast to the Old World and expanded by defeating the forces of “wilderness” and “uncivilized” people in the West.³⁸

In a geographical sense, the frontier of American history as the open space in the West had been closed toward the end of the nineteenth century. From then on, however, the term “frontier” was often employed to evoke new challenges for American society or to frame new visions for American politics. New geographical spaces and new imagined spaces turned into “new frontiers,” harking back to the old myth of westward expansion, such as when John F. Kennedy proclaimed space as the “New Frontier” in pursuit of an ambitious research program in 1961.

Since the early Cold War, Berlin provided one of these new territories for American society—a clearly definable geographical spot that was simultaneously evoking reminiscences of the historical geography of the early United States and appealed to the mental mapping of many Americans.³⁹ Berlin became a place where old patterns of cultural self-identity were revived. The city provided the stage on which a new enemy raised new challenges, demanding courageous steadfastness as well as new visions. Although this “outpost of the free world”⁴⁰ did not lie west of the Mississippi but east of the Elbe, some of the images in which it was described resembled those which had been used to depict the role of the pioneers’ outposts in the American West. Berlin became a place that witnessed the struggle between good and evil. The city turned into a place where visions of a civilized society could materialize in obvious contrast to the perils of tyranny and where the ideology of free political and economic enterprise could be tested.

The concept of Berlin as a new frontier clearly combined a uniquely American experience with a universal mission. “*Euer Kampf ist unser Kampf*” (“Your struggle is our struggle”), proclaimed Walter and Victor Reuther, leaders of the U.S. labor movement, in Berlin in July 1953.⁴¹ On his lecture tour of the United States in 1955, Hans Hirschfeld had great success reiterating this connection: “Modern Berlin has much in common with the most challenging chapters in American history. Our city, thriving 100 miles within the Iron Curtain, is a 20th century frontier of freedom, and its citizen are, of necessity, hardworking pioneers. I hope my visit will make Americans curious to see Berlin for themselves and discover how we have rebuilt it from a wasteland of rubble to a cosmopolitan center of art, fashion, industry, and education.”⁴² Some years later, Robert F. Kennedy reminded his audience in Berlin of another new frontier. He drew a parallel between the battle for racial equality and the

fight against communist injustice. In both instances, Robert Kennedy argued that the “wall” separating underprivileged from privileged people be removed.⁴³

One can even go so far as to argue that Berlin provided a space in which to embed the visionary elements of frontier ideology into the Anglo-Saxon tradition of utopianism. Since the times of ancient political philosophy, and strengthened by the reading of Thomas More after the sixteenth century, two metaphors have provided the foremost imagery for depicting utopian societies: that of an island and that of an ideal city. Both metaphors can be applied to Cold War Berlin and, in fact, soon were. Berlin became the “beleaguered city,”⁴⁴ and simultaneously “an island of free men surrounded by a Communist sea.”⁴⁵ Also, utopian societies have traditionally been based on two assumptions. These societies stand in opposition or in contrast to a hostile environment or a corrupt enemy. And the impetus for their founding and the core of their existence is the search for a better, an ideal world. We can find traces of all these characteristics in the American images of Cold War Berlin as well as in statements of Berlin officials who were addressing audiences in America. In an interview with Edward Murrow six days before Ernst Reuter’s death, Berlin’s outstanding mayor was asked what “the best method of combating Communism” was. Reuter’s response: “To build up a new world. That’s the best thing. See, what we are doing here in Berlin is to build up a new city to show to the eastern world what the free world is able to do; [...] We have to be heroes—we don’t want it—what can we do?”⁴⁶

The utopian search for a better world has often been heavily steeped in religious zeal and has always demanded courageous fighters for the good cause. If one looks at the activities of the Crusade for Freedom, the dedication of the Freedom Bell, the opening of the Congress Hall as a “[p]lace of spiritual freedom,”⁴⁷ and many other political rituals initiated by Americans for and in Berlin after 1945, one can easily notice a pseudo-religious language and many religious forms of commemoration. Using these forms, the self-proclaimed task of the United States with regard to the frontier-line in the center of East Germany lay in “creating this new Berlin,”⁴⁸ as Eleanor Dulles, Berlin’s most enthusiastic supporter in the American political establishment, put it: “[...] we took an enormous amount of initiative in making the city something which it had never been before, and which nobody thought it was going to be. This was a new line. It was a new departure.”⁴⁹

THE UNITED STATES AND BERLIN AFTER KENNEDY: PARADOXES AND CONTRADICTIONS

Ten years after the fall of the Wall, the idea of Berlin as an extension of America's historical heritage—the utopian city of the Cold War and its postwar denizens playing the part of pioneers on a new frontier—has lost much of its pathos and seems to belong to an increasingly remote past. Today, these notions appear clearer than before in their meaning as invented traditions whose purpose was to aid in imagining a transatlantic community.⁵⁰ The myths and visions embedded in these notions, however, did more than serve a prominent role in redefining Berlin's place in the post-Hitler world. They also met with public approval both in the United States and in Germany. They were filled with life and with the peripatetic activities of German-American alliance managers, such as Lucius D. Clay, Eleanor Dulles, Ernst Reuter, Willy Brandt, and Hans Hirschfeld, who significantly contributed to the building of a dense Berlin-American network of state and non-state institutions and elites.⁵¹ Undoubtedly, the peak time of America's Berlin as described in this essay was reached between the Berlin Airlift and President Kennedy's celebrated visit to the city in 1963.

Yet the Airlift, the creation of the Freedom Bell and the Crusade for Freedom, the last of which annually sent opinion leaders and businessmen from all over the United States to this new frontier city, never formed a cohesive ideological whole. America's Berlin always comprised diverse, and sometimes competing elements, some of which saw Berlin as an extension of American historical tradition, others as a new beginning, or some as a revival of the positive traditions of the American-like modernity in Germany before 1933. It would require another essay to look more closely at the negative and critical images of and symbols for Berlin, such as the traces of National Socialism, that have been discussed in the United States. Also, all images mentioned were not static but could change and erode over the course of time. Already two years before Kennedy's triumphant visit to Berlin, in the middle of the second Berlin crisis, such myths and visions began to crumble. In a secret memorandum from July 1961, General Maxwell Taylor, a Berlin veteran and one of Kennedy's top advisors, pleaded "utmost reluctance" in pursuing a new airlift if the GDR or the Soviets threatened Western access to West Berlin. Besides military and logistical reasons, Taylor doubted that a new airlift would

revive the late 1940s spirit of courage. He feared that such a measure would “remind a prosperous city of the grim days of the past” and would “profoundly discourage the Berliners,”⁵² who were now accustomed to a high standard of living. The old memories were no longer suited to the present political climate. Also, the old heroes were beginning to lose their mission. Unwilling to pursue serious counter-measures, Kennedy had sent Lucius D. Clay, together with Vice President Johnson, on a symbolic solidarity trip to Berlin in August 1961, six days after the first barbed wire had been drawn around the Western sectors. Three months later, disappointed about the lack of sufficient authority as a special envoy of the president in Berlin, Clay complained to Secretary of State Rusk that he served, in his words, “only [as] a symbol and I am not even sure as a symbol of what.”⁵³

Symbols began to fade and heroic narratives lost their immediacy. Even worse for many Americans, the gulf between their visions of Berlin and the views Berliners held themselves was growing ever wider.⁵⁴ Nineteen sixty-seven marked a significant turning point. Official Berlin celebrated the opening of the *Klinikum*, a new medical center financed with a massive grant from the Ford Foundation and enthusiastically supported by Eleanor Dulles; the Free University opened its John F. Kennedy Institute for North America Studies in the presence of Eleanor Dulles; and Los Angeles became Berlin’s sister city. For the first time in its postwar history, however, an American official encountered public protest — students demonstrated against the visit of Vice President Hubert Humphrey, himself an early supporter of West Berlin during the Cold War. This event would be followed by numerous protests against the American presence in Berlin and against U.S. foreign policy, particularly in Vietnam. While the United States government had tried for years to link Berlin to Saigon in order to draw a common defense line against Communist aggression, the Berlin-Saigon analogy was now used by protesting students to accuse the United States of imperialist strategy and Auschwitz-like politics of destruction.⁵⁵

America’s Berlin became a cultural paradox: American officials and those who had served in the city during the various crises became nostalgic about the city and its place in the postwar era—despite the fact that their images of Berlin no longer represented without any doubt the consent of almost all West Berliners. Certainly a majority of West Berlin’s population preserved a positive attitude toward the United States while single groups and the younger generation

tended to diverge from this consent. But even within the majority, the relationship with the United States lost the spectacular and emotional commitment that had marked the years of the Airlift and the Crusade for Freedom. The tacit acceptance of the Wall and the Four Powers Agreement of 1971 relaxed the political situation and normalized Berlin's current status. For those who wanted to revive or at least appeal to Cold War experiences, the city increasingly became the backdrop for proclaiming an uncontested commitment and a site for sentimental memories. During the two visits of President Reagan in 1982 and 1987, it became clear that reality could diverge in a shocking way from these memories when groups of Berliners vehemently protested against the American president, who was a strong supporter of the highly contested double-track decision of NATO and backed an immense strengthening of American military forces. At the 1987 visit, roughly 10,000 policemen were ordered to contain street protests and to cordon off entire districts. A generation earlier, during President Kennedy's visit, the East German regime had blocked the view through the Brandenburg Gate with red cloth. Delivering his "Mr. Gorbachev, Tear Down This Wall" speech, President Reagan stood in front of the same gate, which now lacked any "decoration" coming from the east; rather, Western officials had covered up this section of the Wall to mask aggressive and certainly non-telegenic graffiti.⁵⁶

The dramatic opening of the Wall on November 9, 1989, with all major American networks covering the events live, came to mark the end of the Cold War.⁵⁷ For the last time, political actions of the U.S. government coincided with the long-standing emotional attachment to Berlin. Interestingly, the critical support of the Bush administration for a peaceful transition and for German unification has been far less acknowledged by the German public than the role Gorbachev played.⁵⁸

America's Berlin of the Cold War found its final refuge in the United States itself and in the American pantheon of memory, to be revived here and there for memorial and commercial interests. After November 1989 tourists from all over the world, clever entrepreneurs and officially ordered demolition companies hammered the Wall into millions of pieces, large and small; today, Berlin takes pains to identify the former Wall line and to preserve a small stretch of it.⁵⁹ During the same time, individual sections of the Wall have been re-erected and memorialized at prominent sites in the United States, more than in any other country in the world. These little walls have become icons of

what many perceive as the American victory in the Cold War. For example, parts have been enshrined in front of the Reagan Presidential Library, in the Kennedy Presidential Library, on Massachusetts Avenue in Washington, DC, and in Freedom Park in Rosslyn, Virginia. Pieces of the Wall are scattered around the United States. In the fall of 1998, the year of the fiftieth anniversary of the beginning of the Blockade, in some major bookstores in the nation's capital, nearly one-third of the shelf space assigned to German history held books on Berlin; this selection included new general histories of the city, accounts of the Airlift, Cold War reminiscences, and reflections on the architectural shape of Berlin as a mirror of its political development.⁶⁰ Since 1998, a new communications company on the East Coast, Starpower, has been advertising telephone and television services with photos and television commercials showing the November 1989 Wall occupied by celebratory masses; potential customers are invited to "Let Freedom Ring" and "Join the Revolution."

The "great spectacle of nostalgia"⁶¹ that marked the fiftieth anniversary of the Airlift in 1998 was a heavily American event. President Bill Clinton was present at a large public ceremony at Tempelhof Airport and dedicated a cargo plane with the name "Spirit of Berlin." At the *Gendarmenmarkt*, in the center of old Berlin in the former Soviet sector, a young American conducted a "Freedom Concert," where the orchestra performed Beethoven's *Eroica Symphony* and Copland's *Lincoln Portrait*. Among the guests was the son of Lucius D. Clay. Allied veterans paraded through Zehlendorf, where the Allied Museum officially opened its permanent exhibition on Clay Allee. PBS broadcast an impressive production on the Airlift, condensed by the *New York Times* headline into "When Airborne Angels Saved Berlin."⁶² Dan Cranshaw covered the story of an airlift pilot in his mini-series "Home of the Brave" on NBC. Former airlift pilot Gail Halverson from Provo, Utah, flew an old cargo plane into Berlin. Much to his distress, the former candy bomber was not allowed to drop the 5,000 bars of Hershey's chocolate and 7,500 packs Wrigley's gum which he had wrapped in original 1948 paper in anticipation of the event.⁶³

After 1945 Berliners had become the good Germans among bad Germans, being depicted as resistant to National Socialism and victims of both Hitler and Stalin. Berliners had mutated into Germany's Americans and into frontier pioneers, even into true Americans among bad Americans. The final years of

the Cold War and the commemoration of the fall of the Wall and the 1948 Airlift have demonstrated that Americans have finally become the true Berliners, who are now filling the symbolic gaps that have opened since America's myths and Berlin's realities started to diverge.

TOWARD A NEW BERLIN

Revisiting America's Berlin between 1945 and 2000 allows us to realize that Berlin's role between East and West has always been the result of dialectical processes of self-definition and cultural appropriation by others. This role has been codetermined by cultural ideas that have linked the city to old myths within the framework of new visions. Many of these ideas have faded with the end of the Cold War, leaving open spaces for new imagination and updated political visions. One important question for the future is how these porous spaces of the imagination can be filled anew without restricting oneself to a reflexive response to old anxieties when describing the new uncertainties about unified Germany, the country that has acquired the label "Berlin Republic" due to its capital and its most ambiguous and internationally renowned city.⁶⁴

Against the background of reexamining America's Berlin in the second half of the twentieth century, two aspects might deserve special attention. As the example of the Americans reentering Berlin on the Fourth of July 1945 has shown, the timing of the arrival and the historical baggage brought along to Berlin can contribute to important preliminary decisions about succeeding attitudes. America's attachment to Berlin also illustrates that the city will hardly be able to redefine its new role all by itself. Instead, and as the American example has shown, this redefinition must rely on a dialogue with others who will evoke traditions that generate emotional attachment, who will incorporate Berlin into their political mythologies and who will create new identities that turn non-Berliners into Berliners. For some, Berlin has already become the ubiquitous representation of a new universal experience of post-modern urbanity in a world that, as Ian Buruma has put it, "is becoming more like the New World everywhere. Perhaps we are all Berliners now."⁶⁵

There are some indications that the Berlin of the coming decades will provide space for more pluralistic approaches to open the city for those who have been separated from each other for a generation: Easterners and Westerners, Germans and Poles, Jews and non-Jews, among others. There are already indications that these diverse groups will find new symbols, will

dig up suppressed pasts and will—as the Crusade of Freedom and the Ford Foundation once did—leave their own marks on the city’s architectural environment. One of the most remarkable events of recent years has been the growth of a renewed Jewish community, with the influx of conservative Jews from the East and liberal Jews from the West. The American Jewish Committee has opened an office in Berlin, Daniel Libeskind’s magnificent Jewish Museum has been opened under the directorship of Michael Blumenthal and the Leo Baeck Institute is considering opening a branch in Germany’s capital.⁶⁶ Activities such as these—including the opening of the American Academy in Berlin—might lead one to predict that the city will continue to profit from American support, albeit in different ways compared to the Cold War years. Surely, the “almost mystical belief that the United States will do what is necessary for Berlin,” as Eleanor Dulles remarked in 1959,⁶⁷ is gone for good. But there are many signs that from now on Berlin will be embedded in even more cultural traditions by those across the Atlantic who gain an attachment to this city. Perhaps Scarlet from Atlanta, that charming young woman in Billy Wilder’s *One, Two, Three*, had it right: Berlin can and hopefully will remain a “real swingin’ town.”

ENDNOTES

I would like to thank three scholars who took time to read an earlier draft of this article and provided me with valuable comments: David E. Barclay, Thomas L. Hughes and Anselm Doering-Manteuffel. I shall not fail to mention that the latter two remained critical about single points in this text as well as my general approach; even more so, I appreciate their willingness to share their thoughts on Berlin with me.

² All quotes from the opening sequence of *One, Two, Three*, directed by Billy Wilder, 1961.

³ Landesarchiv Berlin, Rep. 2, Acc. 1405, n. 975, 976.

⁴ In the following I will sketch some arguments that are part of a larger book project on “America’s Berlin: The Divided City and the Cold War in American Culture, Society, and Politics after 1945.”

⁵ My arguments have been particularly inspired by recent discussions among American historians about the impact of culture on international relations; see Akira Irye, “Culture and International History,” in *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, ed. Michael J. Hogan and Thomas G. Paterson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 214-25; “Culture and Power: International Relations as Intercultural Relations,” *Diplomatic History* 3 (February 1979), 115-28; Frank Ninkovich, “Interests and Discourse in Diplomatic History,” *Diplomatic History* 13, n. 2 (Spring 1989), 135-61; Melvyn P.

Leffler, "New Approaches, Old Interpretations, and Prospective Reconfigurations," *Diplomatic History* 19, n. 2 (Spring 1995), 173-96.

⁶ *Documents on Berlin 1943-1963*, eds. Wolfgang Heidelmeyer and Guenter Hindrichs (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1963), 12-3.

⁷ Lucius D. Clay, *Decision in Germany* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Comp., 1950), 27, 31; Frank Howley, *Berlin Command* (New York: Putnam), 47-8.

⁸ William L. Shirer, *End of a Berlin Diary* (New York: Knopf, 1947), 87.

⁹ See Norman M. Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945-1949* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995).

¹⁰ See Ruth Andreas-Friedrich, *Battleground Berlin: Diaries 1945-1948*. Translated by Anna Boerresen. Afterword by Jörg Drews (New York: Paragon, 1990); Stephen Spender, *European Witness* (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1946), 231-46; Shirer, *End of a Berlin Diary*, 45, 87, 120 following.

¹¹ All quotes in Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs. Vol. One: Years of Decisions* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1955), 341.

¹² Elizabeth Heinemann, "The Hour of the Women: Memories of Germany's 'Crisis Years' and West German National Identity," *American Historical Review*, 101, n. 2 (April 1996), 354-95; Robert G. Moeller, "War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany," *American Historical Review* 101, n. 4 (October 1996), 1008-48; Petra Goedde, "From Villains to Victims: Fraternalization and the Feminization of Germany, 1945-1947," *Diplomatic History* 23, n.1 (Winter 1999), 1-20.

¹³ Gordon A. Craig, "Berlin, the Hauptstadt: Back Where It Belongs," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 77, n. 4 (July/August 1998), 162. See also *ibid.*, *The Germans* (New York: Putnam, 1982), 261-86.

¹⁴ See Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 320-60.

¹⁵ Daniel F. Harrington, "The Berlin Blockade Revisited," *International History Review* 6, n. 1 (February 1984), 88-112; William Stivers, "The Incomplete Blockade: Soviet Zone Supply of West Berlin, 1948-49," *Diplomatic History* 21, n. 4 (Fall 1997), 569-602. For the reaction of the broader public see Alan Cowell, "Not to Debunk the Berlin Airlift, but Have You Heard This?," *New York Times*, July 9, 1998, A 17.

¹⁶ Berlin & The Cold War. A Symposium in Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Berlin Airlift, presented by the Eisenhower Center for American Studies, the National Archives and Records Administration and Foreign Affairs Magazine at the National Archives Theater, Washington, D.C., June 11, 1998.

¹⁷ George F. Kennan, *Memoirs 1925-1950* (Boston, Toronto: Little, Brown, 1967), 432, 428-9.

¹⁸ "Remarks on the Rudolph Wilde Platz, Berlin," June 26, 1963, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States. John F. Kennedy. Containing the Public Messages, Speeches, and States of the President. January 1 to November 22, 1963* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1964), 525.

¹⁹ Walter L. Hixson, *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture, and the Cold War, 1945-1961* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1998).

- ²⁰ Michael Hochgeschwender, *Freiheit in der Offensive. Der Kongress für Kulturelle Freiheit und die Deutschen* (München: Oldenbourg, 1998); James Tent, *The Free University of Berlin. A Political History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988).
- ²¹ *The Story of the World Freedom Bell*. Published by the Nate L. Crabtree Company, Minneapolis (Grand Rapids, Minn.: The Herald Review, n.D. [ca. 1951]), 45.
- ²² *Ibid.*, 36.
- ²³ In Lincoln's address, the text ran "that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom." See Garry Wills, *Lincoln at Gettysburg. The Words That Remade America* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 263.
- ²⁴ Lucius D. Clay to Ernst Reuter, August 7, 1951, Landesarchiv Berlin, Rep. 2, Acc. 1405, n. 973.
- ²⁵ For Ernst Reuter's meeting with Miss Germany, Christel Schaak, see *Von Uns zu Ihnen. Hausmitteilungen des amerikanischen Universal Filmverleihs*, Heft 13 (July/August 1953).
- ²⁶ Richard Salzmann, Director of Public Services, Research Institute of America, to Hans Hirschfeld, January 14, 1959, Landesarchiv Berlin, Rep. 200, Acc. 2014 (Hans E. Hirschfeld Papers), n. 14, vol. 2.
- ²⁷ *Congress Hall Berlin* (Berlin, n.d. [1957]); Harald Reissig, "Die Kongreßhalle. John-Foster-Dulles-Allee 10," in *Tiergarten. Teil 1: Vom Brandenburger Tor zum Zoo. (Geschichtslandschaft Berlin - Orte und Ereignisse; 2)* (Berlin: Nicolai, 1989), 163-75.
- ²⁸ Willy Brandt, "Amerikanische und deutsche Einheit," in *Aussenpolitik. Zeitschrift für internationale Fragen* 10, n 4 (April 1959), 209-13; Landesarchiv Berlin, Rep. 2, Acc. 1405, No. 982.
- ²⁹ Proposal, United States Information Service, Foreign Service, March 6, 1959, Landesarchiv Berlin, Rep. 2, Acc. 1405, n. 685; Willy Brandt, *Begegnungen mit Kennedy* (München: Kindler, 1964), 39.
- ³⁰ Robert F. Kennedy, "Address before the Ernst-Reuter Gesellschaft," Berlin, February 22, 1962, Landesarchiv Berlin, Rep. 200, Acc. 1180, n. 346. See Robert F. Kennedy, "We must meet our duty and convince the world that we are just friends and brave enemies" (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 152-61, quote 160.
- ³¹ John F. Kennedy, "Address at the Free University of Berlin," June 26, 1963, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States. John F. Kennedy [...] January 1 to November 22, 1963*, 526-9.
- ³² Kennan, *Memoirs 1925-1950*, 134-7; Charles B. Burdick, *An American Island in Hitler's Reich. The Bad Nauheim Internment* (Menlo Park, Cal.: Markgraf Publications Group, 1987).
- ³³ See Peter Fritzsche, *Reading Berlin 1900* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998); *Berlin. Culture and Metropolis*, ed. Charles Haxthausen and Heidrun Suhr (Minneapolis, Oxford: University of Minnesota Press, 1990).
- ³⁴ Alexander Schmidt, *Reisen in die Moderne. Der Amerika-Diskurs des deutschen Bürgertums vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg im europäischen Vergleich* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1997), 242-66.
- ³⁵ Mark Twain, "The German Chicago," in *ibid.*, *The £1,000,000 Bank-Note and Other New Stories* (New York: Webster & Comp., 1893; new edition New York, Oxford: Oxford

University Press, 1996), 210-32; Christopher Endy, "Travel and World Power: Americans in Europe, 1890-1917," in *Diplomatic History* 22, n. 4 (Fall 1998), 588; *Die Metropole. Industriekultur in Berlin im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Jochen Boberg, Tilman Fichter and Eckhart Gillen (Munich: Beck, 1984), 7.

³⁶ Karl Scheffler, *Berlin. Ein Stadtschicksal* (Berlin-Westend: Erich Reiss, 1910), 144, 141, 145.

³⁷ Hans Hirschfeld to Robert W. Kempner, January 18, 1950, Landesarchiv Berlin, Rep. 200, Acc. 2014 (Hans E. Hirschfeld Papers), n. 33, vol. 1.

³⁸ Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Dover Publ., 1996; originally publ. New York 1920); Matthias Waechter, *Die Erfindung des amerikanischen Westens. Die Geschichte der Frontier-Debatte* (Freiburg i.Br.: Rombach, 1996).

³⁹ See Alan K. Henrikson, "Mental Maps," in *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, ed. Hogan and Paterson, 177-92.

⁴⁰ Reinhold Niebuhr, Chairman Iron Curtain Refugee Campaign of the International Rescue Committee, to Lasky, December 12, 1952, Landesarchiv Berlin, Rep. 200, Acc. 1180, n. 113.

⁴¹ Press Release of the Senate of Berlin, July 9, 1953, Landesarchiv Berlin, Rep. 200, Acc. 1180, n. 171.

⁴² *Temple University News*, March 2, 1955; *Syracuse Herald-American* March 6, 1955 with the headline "West Berlin is Freedom's New Frontier, says Visiting German Government Official."

⁴³ Robert F. Kennedy, "Address before the Ernst-Reuter Gesellschaft."

⁴⁴ James B. Conant, "Charter Day Address: Freedom and Slavery in a Divided Germany," University of California at Berkeley, 23 March 1956, Briefing Book on Germany (2), Box 13, Eleanor Lansing Dulles Papers, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Abilene, Kansas (hereafter: Eisenhower Library).

⁴⁵ Commencement Address by Paul G. Hoffman, Chairman of the Board, The Studebaker Corporation before Occidental College, Los Angeles, Cal., 14 June 1953, Landesarchiv Berlin, Rep. 200, Acc. 1180, n. 113.

⁴⁶ Transcript of an interview with Edward R. Murrow, broadcast 15 June 1954, Eleanor Lansing Dulles Papers, Box 16, Correspondence 1954, Eisenhower Library.

⁴⁷ *Congress Hall Berlin*, Documents from Congress Hall, Scrapbook (2), Box 13, Eleanor Lansing Dulles Papers, Eisenhower Library.

⁴⁸ Eleanor Lansing Dulles, *Berlin. The Wall Is Not Forever* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1967), 20.

⁴⁹ Interview with Eleanor Lansing Dulles on 13 September 1965 by John T. Mason Jr. in Washington, D.C., Oral History Transcripts, n. 70: Eleanor Dulles, folder 17, 669, Eisenhower Library.

⁵⁰ For the underlying methodological concepts for this argument see *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) and Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Rev. and extended ed. (London, New York: Verso, 1991).

⁵¹ See Thomas Alan Schwartz, "The United States and Germany After 1945: Alliances, Transnational Relations, and the Legacy of the Cold War," *Diplomatic History* 19, n. 4 (Fall 1995), 556.

⁵² Memorandum, Maxwell D. Taylor, 14 July 1961, "Considerations of the Desirability of a New Berlin Airlift," Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Countries, Box 81 A, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass. (hereafter: JFKL).

⁵³ Letter, Lucius D. Clay to Dean Rusk, 2 December 1961, "Germany, Berlin, General Lucius D. Clay" folder, Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Countries, Box 86, JFKL.

⁵⁴ Gabriele Heidenfelder, *From Duppel to Truman Plaza: Die Berlin American Community in den Jahren 1965 bis 1989* (Hamburg: Lit, 1998).

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