

A Metro Stop

July 1997

I take the metro to the “world’s largest urban renewal site” in the center of Berlin and arrive at an underground stop partially sealed off behind temporary metal and wooden structures. Naked lightbulbs dangle overhead. For years, trucks and helmeted workers have been laboring underground to reconnect old metro networks and create new ones. They are also making a five-mile tunnel through which trains, cars, and shoppers will circulate under this emerging city center.

I think of the stories that *Wessis* (West Germans) have told me about this place, when Potsdamer Platz was located in the GDR, and how they would pass through the station without stopping, only catching a hushed glimpse of border guards holding their leashed, muzzled German shepherds in one arm and rifles in another. It was the only way to traverse the “death strip” (*Todesstriebe*), the West German term for the area between the two Berlin Walls that was chemically treated, filled with land mines, and heavily guarded by dogs, lights, barbed wire, and guns. I also think of the hostile tone in people’s voices whenever I ask why the Wall was removed so quickly; I assume *Wessis* feel this new Berlin will be better than the gray “island” (a term commonly used to describe West Berlin). No longer contained by Cold War division, the seductive promises of capitalism—its sparkling baubles and lustrous bodies—now spread beyond former boundaries and thrust skyward in architectonic displays of global power and wealth. The underground metal barriers seem to promise the anticipated pleasure and excitement of a future shimmering city, a “cosmopolitan” Berlin more like London, Paris, or New York.

My own memories and American presence define my experiences here. As I travel to this metro stop, I think of images of the city I have seen in history books and documentary films or imagined through novels. And therefore these construction tunnels



Checkpoint Charlie, 1992.

also evoke images of dystopian futures. The dim lights and underground settings for me trigger a strange nostalgia for 1970s and 1980s science fiction films that were defined by Cold War images of urban Armageddon, continual warfare, and destroyed worlds. Above ground, the nascent cityscape proclaims an American occupation of a different sort. Large buildings designed by Philip Johnson or the extra-wide security buffer demanded for the American Embassy (annexed from the space designated for the Holocaust Memorial) overwrite and wrap earlier American presences (from Weimar, World War II, the Cold War) as they create a new American facade for this aspirant global city (*Weltstadt*). Hungry American tourists, perversely curious about Germany’s spectacles and secrets, come to Berlin to experience the drama of modern history writ large (World War II, National Socialism, the Holocaust, the Cold War) “over there.” Like me, they search for places that exist but are not marked, such as Hitler’s driver’s bunker, which was sealed shortly after it was discovered. They indulge in Cold War tourism and walk the path of the no longer standing Berlin Wall and make the pilgrimage to Checkpoint Charlie. Visiting Americans solemnly go to memorials out of a sense of duty, all the while never questioning how much of what they see in this city is haunted by American specters, of which they and I are part. We are all voyeurs here, the researcher, the tourist, the architect.

As I walk up the exit steps I stop. I am bombarded by the noise of a frenetic construction zone, the size of twenty-four football fields outside. Gigantic yellow mechanical limbs—a “forest of construction cranes” according to city marketing ads—lumber slowly day and night to erect the metal frames of the new city. Underneath these oversized arms, dump trucks and tractors move about like busy ants creating and



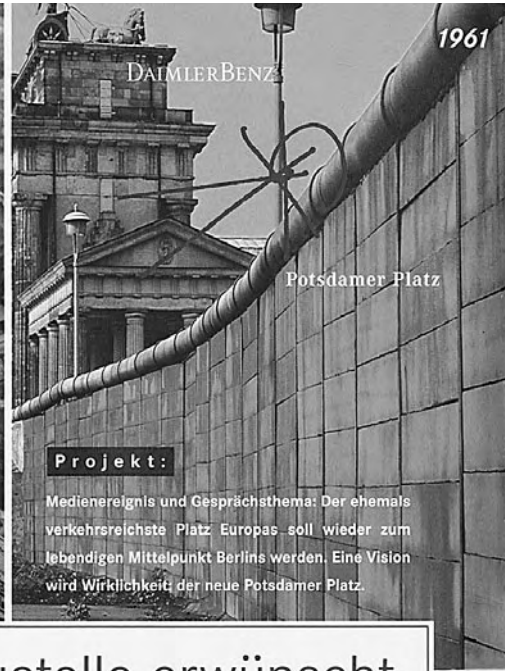
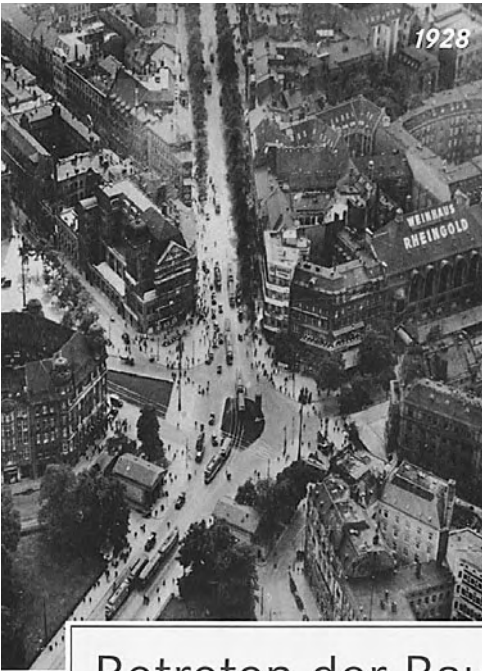
Checkpoint Charlie, 2002.



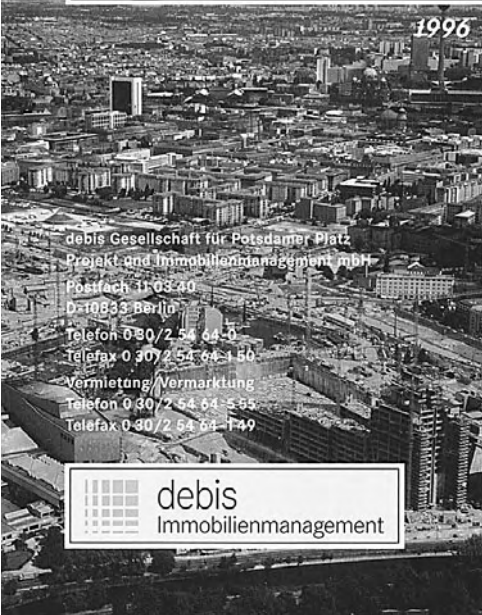
Potsdamer Platz, 1997.

relocating ponds, dirt piles, and iron rods. There, in the center of this moving landscape, stands a bright red oversized construction trailer propped atop silver struts: the INFOBOX.¹ In this high-tech cabinet of technological curiosities, visitors play with sound boxes, interactive models, and virtual reality simulations, hurling their bodies and imaginations through Berlin's staged future landscapes. It is then, standing partially below ground and partially above on the exit steps of the Potsdamer Platz metro station, that I realize I am in the city's Roman *mundus*, a site connecting the fertility and hopes of a New Berlin with the buried traumas, tragedies, and social imaginaries of new Berlins from the past.²

This page intentionally left blank



Betreten der Baustelle erwünscht.



You are welcome to come into the construction sites. Daimler Benz/Debis, 2004.

2

The New Berlin: From *Kiez* to *Kosmos*

Journal name: Wait a minute, was I really in Berlin?
Guide pen name: Mr. Wonka
Type of trip: Pleasure
Date created: 3/5/2003
Description: Nazis. Hitler. The Wall. These images have always been what came to mind when thinking of Berlin. But after spending a mere four days in this vibrant city, I realized those dark days are long gone, replaced by a cosmopolitan, laid-back vibe that permeates every facet of Berlin's infectious personality.

—<http://www.igougo.com/planning/journal.asp?journalID=17895>

In the early 1900s, Siegfried Kracauer bemoaned the loss of streets, buildings, and a city that seemed to vanish before his eyes.¹ His nostalgic descriptions of the old Berlin portrayed corner stores that had disappeared, vistas that no longer existed, and his unease about the new Berlin (and Germany) to come. In the first decade of the twenty-first century, not many people would feel Kracauer's sense of sadness for the lost city, nor would they feel apprehensive about the future. While most would admit that the Berlin Republic is far from perfect, few would want the Cold War city back.

Shortly after reunification, city marketers described the city under construction as a stage on which the performance of the new city could be watched; by 2000 the New Berlin was represented as a spectacular architectural exhibition. City officials, real estate developers, planners, and marketers encouraged this way of visualizing the city through virtual reality shows, live displays at construction sites, and exhibitions of the hundreds of architectural models and sketches submitted for different renovation and construction competitions. Curious visitors and residents could visit a room-size white model of the existing and planned city to find out about newly built and planned urban blocks and districts.² Tours organized by a private-public marketing firm brought locals to the "behind-the-scenes" reality of construction sites to watch experts and construction workers finish innovatively designed buildings and new city centers, gentrify courtyards



[Tour of Isosaki Building, Potsdamer Platz, 1999.] We want to bring the idea of Berlin into people's minds. . . . We don't want to ignore them [Berlin residents] in our marketing concept. They should feel comfortable in their city.

—Interview with spokesperson for Partners for Berlin, 2000

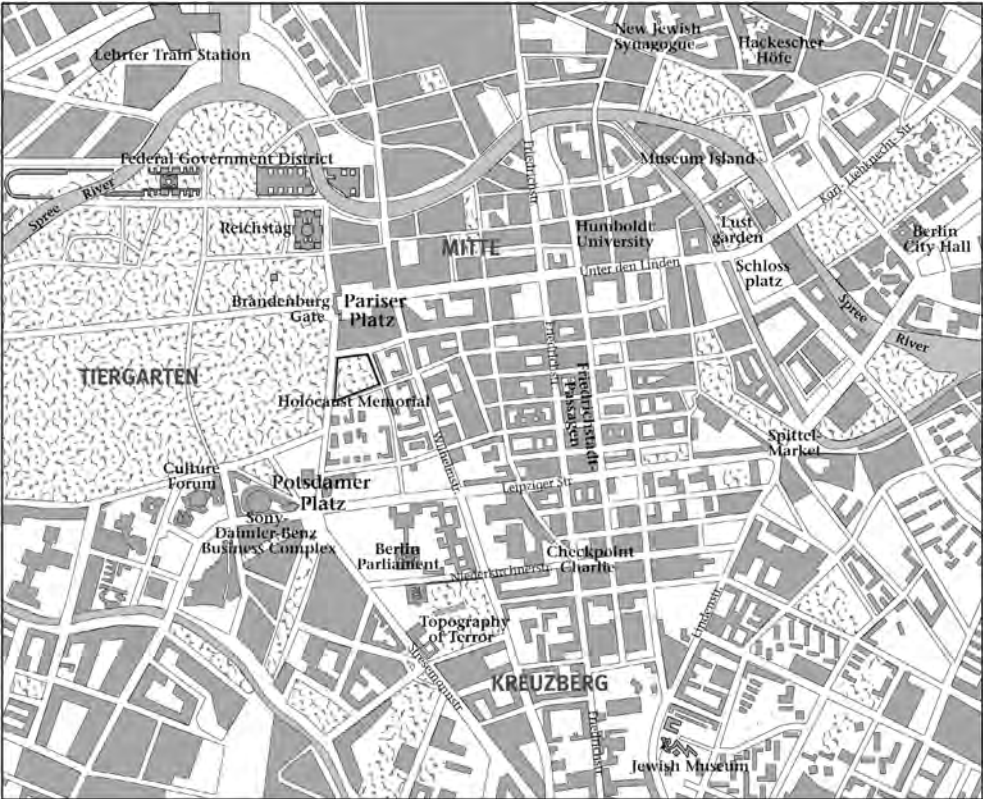
and blocks, and renovate nineteenth-century buildings in the historic district.³ Called *Schaustelle Berlin* (Showcase Berlin), these tours represented Berlin “as the largest urban renewal construction site of Europe.” For former Berlin mayor Eberhard Diepgen, through these tours, “Berliners and their guests have an unusual chance to participate in this exciting process of planning and construction. In front of the eyes of the public, a capital city that was once divided for decades grows freely together, the worksite of unification.”⁴

Such representations of the New Berlin were juxtaposed with images of the city’s past.⁵ Planners celebrated the city’s “second founding time,” suggesting parallels to Berlin’s first *Gründerzeit*, a time roughly beginning after the Franco-Prussian War and the establishment of the first unified German nation-state (1870), and ending sometime in the Weimar period of the 1920s. Advertisements for the new business centers at Potsdamer Platz similarly played with historic images to represent Berlin (again) as a turn-of-the-century “shock city.” In the 1990s and after 2000, just as the visitor gazed at past Berlins depicted in historic photos, sketches, ruins, and buildings, so the future city was literally being built up around him or her.

These planning visions, marketing representations, and architectural fragments were sites through which the “new” was visualized. When removed from historical contexts and displayed in a city in transition, those sites appeared as exhibitions that displaced the present-past and recent-past from the representational frames of the contemporary city. The stagings of the new city were largely located at sites of former division or in the former East. The north–south stretch that formerly stood between the two



Tour of Neues Museum, Museum Island, Historic District, 1997.



Central Berlin, 2002.

Berlin Walls in the center of the city, for example, has become the new fifty-hectare, \$5 billion Potsdamer Platz business-entertainment center with buildings designed by internationally acclaimed architects such as Arata Isozaki, Rafael Moneo, and Richard Rogers. One sixteen-building complex was developed by Daimler-Benz/Debis and designed by Italian architect Renzo Piano; another large complex was developed by Sony to function as its European headquarters.⁶ An estimated 100,000 people will walk along these privately owned streets and squares each day to work and play in offices, high-end apartments, cinemas, restaurants, indoor shopping malls, or attend cultural events at Marlene Dietrich Platz, but few may be aware of the history of past post-war division that too is part of this site. The only indication of a “former West” is the Cultural Forum (Kulturforum), originally designed by Hans Scharoun in 1956, which includes the golden-tiled Philharmonic concert hall, the state library (Staatsbibliothek) (where Wim Wenders’s angels, who could walk through the city’s walls, listened to the thoughts of anxious Berliners in *Wings of Desire*), and the Chamber Music Concert Hall.⁷ The original designs of the forum were only recently completed with the addition of the new \$140 million Gemäldegalerie (Painting Gallery), designed by Heinz Hilmer and Christoph Sattler, which displays European art from the thirteenth to eighteenth century.



Potsdamer Platz, 2000. “I am trying to understand why whole generations shaped by the violence of the long and dark years of pain, dictatorships, wars, bombing, and occupation, have the will to forget. . . . For somebody who comes from a different reality, the anger shown toward a city, which is guilty only of having been a silent witness and the innocent scene of a whole string of successive catastrophes, seems to be a crime. Today’s last remaining rubble is equal to precious archaeological finds of the present” (Giorgio Muratore, “Forget Not Berlin,” *StadtBauwelt* 154 [2002]: 48).

Just north of Potsdamer Platz stands the new federal belt. The historic Reichstag, once left empty in the former West as the promise of a unified Germany in the future, was renovated by Sir Norman Foster (for roughly \$382 million) and is Germany’s new parliamentary building. It anchors the new government quarter, close in size to the Washington Mall, which runs symbolically from west to east along the Spree River, the location of former division, where, along its former “Eastern” banks a Wall once stood. The nearby transportation hub at Lehrter Bahnhof to the north (in the former East) is also heralded as a unifying symbol; it will be Germany’s largest train station and function as a gateway connecting the cardinal points of the new Germany and Europe.

To the east of the federal belt, once standing behind yet another Wall, is one of the city’s historic icons: the Brandenburg Gate. A newly interpreted, and now open, historic Pariser Platz functions as a formal entrance into the historic part of the city. As one tourism company’s Web page described,

the pristine flower-beds and gushing fountains which fill historic Pariser Platz lend a touch of rural elegance to the urban jungle. Once known as “the Emperor’s reception room,” Pariser Platz

has been the first stop on visitors' itineraries since the 18th century. Located at the end of Berlin's grandiose boulevard, Unter den Linden, wartime destruction left much of Pariser Platz flattened, with only the Brandenburg Gate left standing. Yet money has flooded into Berlin since reunification and the square is being slowly restored to its former splendour.⁸

The original rectangular form and building density of Pariser Platz has been reconstructed with nostalgic yet modern reconstructions of historic buildings, such as Hotel Adlon, as well as more contemporary (and inspired) postmodern structures, such as the Academy of Arts designed by Frank Gehry.

Further east, the elegant baroque and neoclassical buildings and cultural institutions, opera houses, and universities that grace the grand boulevard of Unter den Linden are also renovated and embellished. The \$1 million renovation of the historic Museumsinsel (Museum Island), now classified as one of UNESCO's World Heritage sites, includes the restoration and modernization of five museums originally built between 1830 and 1930 (Alte Nationalgalerie, Altes Museum, Neues Museum, Pergamon Museum, and Bode Museum), which will be connected by underground walkways according to the master plan designed by British architect David Chipperfield.⁹ At the same time that these buildings are being renovated in the historic district, architectural fragments from Berlin's early royal past are displayed. Just across from the new/old Museum Island, visitors will find the foundations of the historic City Palace (Stadtschloss), surrounded by pictures, maps, and texts that describe the past royal residences of Brandenburg margraves and electors, Prussian kings, and German emperors. A citizen and business group has created this outdoor exhibit of Berlin's past as well as its imagined future, one that would include a modern reconstructed palace with a historically accurate exterior and a modern conference and cultural center inside.

The New Berlin's staging also includes a revitalized cultural scene in the former Eastern residential district of Berlin-Mitte, now home to "Europe's SoHo," where "New Berliners" frequent the district's numerous art galleries and institutions.¹⁰ The new Museum of Contemporary Art, for example, opened in 1996 in a renovated abandoned railroad station, the Hamburger Bahnhof, and now displays major works by artists such as Joseph Beuys, Anselm Kiefer, Andy Warhol, and Roy Lichtenstein. Artsy professionals frequent the avant-garde galleries and architecture studios that have emerged in renovated historic residential blocks known as the Hackesche, Sophien, and Gips Höfe. These turn-of-the-twentieth-century gentrified courtyards, with their trendy cafés, movie theaters, galleries, bars, and entertainment blocks, provide a taste of the alternative art scene for hip Berliners who consume and are consumed by the arrogant gaze of those who enjoy this street-courtyard culture, reminiscent of both Greenwich Village and an imagined cosmopolitan Berlin from the early 1900s. Even the dilapidated buildings of Tacheles along Oranienburger Straße, the site of a postunification squatters movement, is being gentrified by the Fundus Group and Johannishof Project Development Inc. Previously, artists created courtyard "gardens" of refuse and mechanical art and made



City Palace, Historic District, 2000.

studios, exhibition galleries, and performance spaces from these buildings with no back walls. Spontaneous discos, film viewings, alternative events, and local bars also took place here. Soon it will become the city's first New Urbanism project, complete with a master plan by Miami-based Duany Plater Zyberk and Company. Located in the vicinity of the renovated Jewish Synagogue, the new Tacheles is being marketed as an "open ensemble of spaces, courtyards and streets" that will offer a mix of "traditional" architectural elements, retail outlets and restaurants, a "designer" five-star hotel, office space, apartments, and a series of courtyards run by the artists of Art Forum Tacheles.¹¹

Other areas of reconstruction to the south include the historic shopping district along Friedrichstraße, where more than six thousand million German marks were invested since 1995 on 800,000 square meters of high-end retail and office space. The Friedrichstadtpassagen, a few blocks from Checkpoint Charlie, connects the new buildings (by O. M. Ungers, I. M. Pei, and Jean Nouvel) filled with luxury boutiques and office space connected by underground courtyards, shopping areas, a gallery, escalators, and bodies continuously in motion. Nearby, a building by Aldo Rossi presents a facade of differently sized and textured surfaces with ornaments from various epochs, behind which stands a single block-shaped building.

Berlin's contemporary city planners and marketers, like other urban professionals elsewhere, selectively borrowed urban forms and lifestyles of imagined past Berlins to "remember" a new global city for the future. Planners known as "critical reconstructionists," for example, argued that their job was to bring back the historic texture of the city that was destroyed by poor postwar urban design; they described their approach as the "counter-position to the urban landscape of the contemporary."¹² Through rigid



[Interior courtyard, Hackesche Höfe, 2000.] Other cities are completed; you know where everything is. Berlin is not a complete city yet. In ten years probably I could show the finished product. We want to say that Berlin is a large architectural exhibition. Each and every year things change.

—Interview with spokesperson for Partners for Berlin, 2000

planning guidelines based on nineteenth-century building facades and densities, planners intended to restore a unified vision of the authentic city. Marketers represented the city as a spectacle and drew from images of Weimar cosmopolitanism. Such contemporary stagings of the New Berlin located Cold War and National Socialist Berlins elsewhere, into the undesirable spaces of the “old” (often assumed to be in the former East), or mapped as consumable objects in the spaces of global tourism.

Nostalgias for the imagined “historic” royal city or the projections of a modern world-class city (*Weltstadt*) revealed a strong dissatisfaction with, and anger toward, the pasts embodied through National Socialist and Cold War Berlins that continued to define Germany’s place in the contemporary world even after unification. Planners’ disdain for the postwar period and its alleged destruction of the real city also suggested a desire to return to a dignified place and time, where Germany was no longer a special case for modern European nation-states. Yet the very possibility for Berlin to be created as new—in terms of material landscapes, economies, politics, and of course through symbols—was itself a historical outcome of previous modern attempts (during the Weimar, National Socialist, and Cold War periods) to reimagine the city as new, and through those visions to stage national futures. These past desires and lingering

hopes for Germany's modernity are as important to the historic texture of the city as are Berlin's gentrified nineteenth-century courtyards or unearthed seventeenth-century ruins. Indeed, the persistent presence of the recent past in the city and in the minds of Berliners may explain why city elites and planners feel a need to remember the future in the ways that they do today.

Visions or prophecies of the Berlin that is yet to come—both historically and in the contemporary period—can be understood through a memory structure that Michael Perlman defines as “remembering the future.” Psychologically, images of the future can only have a resonance with what appears to be familiar, with known experiences from the past and present. As Perlman describes,

Images of past and present inevitably point to future possibilities. . . . If we recall and explore childhood memories, as in psychoanalysis, we see that these fantasies of the past speak too of what is and will be in our lives (including transformative possibilities), for we are remembering foundational complexes. So too with collective memorial fantasies, which “present” the cultural psyche and its future possibilities. When we address remembrances of Hiroshima and Nagasaki [or of Berlin], we will discover ways in which these images tell not only of the past but also of the present and (the imaginal presence of) the future.¹³

Through the act of recalling and situating the past through place-based images, the presence or endurance of imagined futures is made possible ontologically. Places are remembered in one's imagination, and through that memory the future is located in the past. Modernist utopian visions of society, the nation, and global power in Germany (and in other nations) have been staged through contemporary historic urban landscapes and architectural fragments understood as standing for times gone by—and for times to come.¹⁴

Because Berlin represents the imaginal presence through which Germany's hopes for the future are performed, city planners, architects, and promoters have always played an important role in representing the nation through material and symbolic reconstructions of the city. In the following sections, I explore past and contemporary visions of remembered new Berlins that narrate a history of national hopes for the future—desires that continue to haunt the spaces of the New Berlin today.

Past New Berlins: Politics, Architecture, and Urban Design

The ideal of a remembered new Berlin that symbolizes the nation-state and a modern German society is not new in the history of the city and has been tied to phases of economic reconstruction, political (re)representation, and symbolic and functional change. Berlin has changed many times and quite rapidly at different moments in time; it was already marketed as a new, world-class European city of the twentieth century by the turn

of the last century, if not earlier. Figures responsible for building the new city included officials, politicians, elites, planners, artists, and architects who believed that the forms, material presence, and representations of particular buildings and urban designs would communicate political ideals and worldviews. They also believed that by building a new city they could create a new society.

Hitler's New Berlin

The most dramatic and obvious example of remembering the future through Berlin is Hitler's fantasy of Germania. His idea for a new Berlin was to supersede ancient Rome and stand as a model of German supremacy for centuries to come:

Nothing will be too good for the beautification of Berlin. . . . One will arrive there along wide avenues containing the Triumphal Arch, the Pantheon of the Army, the Square of the People—things to take your breath away! It's only thus that we shall succeed in eclipsing our only rival in the world, Rome. . . . Let [the center of the new Berlin] be built on such a scale that St. Peter's and its Square will seem like toys in comparison!¹⁵

Hitler's national imaginings were given a form through the mythic past of the Roman Empire on which he based his grandiose plans for Berlin. By evoking Rome, Hitler wanted to remember a timeless, monumental city that would “outlast the centuries” and “speak to the posterity of our times.”¹⁶ Hitler's sketches for Berlin were translated through the designs, models, and buildings of court architects Albert Speer and Paul Ludwig Troost, among others, and indicated that he viewed these buildings as performances of his political project and the future Germany. The built environment was to represent the “purity” of the National Socialist state and its “people,” which meant that “the style of its architecture would, by necessity, be classical—not only for the use of heroic forms, but because the Greeks and the Germans were racially linked.”¹⁷

Contemporary accounts of Berlin's National Socialist architectural history tend to emphasize the monumental and fantastic visions Hitler had for the future. The most familiar image used is the designs for the Triumphal Arch or the Grand Hall located at one end of the planned *via triumphalis*, the vast north–south axis of the future city. The Grand Hall, for example, was to be so large—accommodating up to 180,000 people—that Albert Speer anticipated the problem of clouds forming beneath the vaulted ceilings of this massive structure. Such descriptions are perhaps pleasurable to imagine in the present day because they seem so unreal, so insane, and so dystopian. Scholars often use such historical evidence and imagery to encourage readers to visualize the “imperious nature of the Nazi state and the megalomania of its head.”¹⁸ Recent scholarship has demonstrated, however, that planned or existing monumental built environments do not provide much evidence of coherent political agendas or of a state's popular appeal. John Agnew's discussion about Benito Mussolini's Rome, for example, demonstrates how the

aesthetic “overproduction” of monumental places under fascism denoted the regime’s ideological incoherence.¹⁹ Using monuments as evidence to understand the quest for power by elites also does little to interrogate critically the geographies established in their making. These include complex relations between cultural and economic systems, state institutions, and the social-spatial relations of power created through everyday routine.

While Hitler’s writings are filled with metaphors of construction, these literary and theatrical stagings had material and social consequences. At the most mundane level, large areas of streets and buildings were demolished to make room for the new Berlin and its grandiose buildings, plazas, and boulevards. In terms of the larger infrastructure needed to build the city, new social and economic geographies were created and supported through social relations of slave labor and genocide. As Jan van Pelt has described, an important but understudied part of Nazi architecture and urban design was the regime’s modern industrial projects and related systems of concentration, death, and work camps.²⁰ Building materials from nearby and distant quarries were brought to the capital city through the use of forced labor, such as the stones and tiles made by concentration camp inmates at Sachsenhausen just outside of Berlin that were sent to build Hitler’s Germania.

Architecture, art, and urban design—elements contributing to the built environment—may not convey inherent political meaning but are often used to justify political needs in the present. The “glass and steel modernism” used in the construction of the Bundestag building in postwar Bonn under a democratic Federal Republic, for example, was also used in Mussolini’s Casa del Fascio (House of Fascism) in Como, Italy.²¹ In Bonn, “transparent” glass was understood as representing democracy, whereas in Como, it was a symbol of fascism, “a glass house into which everyone can peer.”²² The use of the built environment to justify political agendas was also an important part of the making of post-World War II new Berlins.

Cold War New Berlins

Plans and images for a new Berlin after the war reflected and contributed to fears that the legacies of National Socialism would continue to be part of Germany’s future.²³ As early as 1947, fears of the past were encoded in competing urban-planning designs for a “new world class city” that demonstrated “the inner necessity, after . . . Auschwitz and Stalingrad, to completely redefine Berlin.”²⁴ Although the vast destruction of the city during the war—including the loss of more than one-third of Berlin’s housing and the presence of 75 million cubic meters of rubble in the city center—provided the material space to redesign the city, additional buildings and streets were intentionally destroyed to rid the city of any remnants of the “Nazi disease” and to create a new slate to build the future.²⁵

Although both Germanys (founded in 1949) claimed to build a new city through a new architecture, how they interpreted the past to design Berlin was quite distinct. Deborah Howell-Ardila describes how the “eastern and western ideals for the ‘city of tomorrow’ diverged greatly in their approaches to historicism (such as classical ornament), the use of

stone cladding, and the mixed-use city fabric (which combined living and work environments).”²⁶ Thus different forms and building materials were used to legitimate the political ideals of their respective new states. Each Germany pointed out those differences to assert that its “new city” broke from the fascist past, whereas the buildings and designs of the “Other Germany” reflected continuity with National Socialist ideology.

Howell-Ardila argues that urban landscapes functioned as rhetoric, providing the material appearance of having moved beyond the recent past toward a better future. In East Berlin, the construction of the neoclassical 2,300-meter Stalinallee (formerly Frankfurter Allee and now Karl-Marx-Allee) in the 1950s was a symbol of the “city of tomorrow.”²⁷ Modeled after Moscow’s Gorki Street, the grand boulevard of classical Greek proportions and mixed-use design was said to embrace local architectural traditions and adhere to socialist-realist tenets of urban design and the newly drafted “Sixteen Principles of Town Planning” (also known as the anti-Charter of Athens). The traditional city fabric was considered the “culturally richest form of settlement for community life”; neoclassical design was considered an appropriate model for the GDR because of its “origins” in the French Revolution (a misleading claim that Howell-Ardila argues was used by East German officials to restore selected imperial buildings).²⁸ In the words of the Socialist Unity Party’s (SED) leader Walter Ulbricht, Berlin’s historic structure and “monumental edifices” corresponded “to the significance of the capital.”²⁹

West German critics, in contrast, viewed the boulevard as “Speerish” rather than as expressing the “liberation of our people from Hitler’s fascism.”³⁰ Responding to the hype surrounding the Stalinallee, FRG chancellor Konrad Adenauer promoted a “Rebuilding Germany” campaign in 1954 that would clearly locate German cities in a Western tradition of modern, democratic architecture and open urban design.³¹ Yet even this campaign was far from consistent within postwar West Germany, as Gavriel Rosenfeld demonstrates. In cities like West Berlin and Frankfurt, modern architecture and design were used to represent democracy, whereas in Freiburg or Nuremberg, officials advocated nineteenth-century traditional architecture to promote local agendas while distancing themselves from the National Socialist past.³²

An example of the new modern German design in West Berlin was the Hansaviertel, comprised of high-rise buildings of glass, steel, and cement with no ornamentation, designed by architects Walter Gropius, Klaus Müller-Rehm, and Gerhard Siegmann. These buildings, according to the Hansaviertel designers Willy Kreuer and Gerhard Jobst (with coworker Wilhelm Schliesser), were to lie in “open naturalness” surrounded by “free areas” of lawn in contrast to “buildings designed for dictatorial needs.”³³ They felt that the scale of their project, located at the edge of the Tiergarten, “spoke of a world class city (*Weltstadt*).”³⁴ The new Hansaviertel was the showcase of the Interbau 1957 architectural exhibition and was considered the “most famous example of the NEW (West-) BERLIN of the 1950s established on the grounds of the nineteenth century city.”³⁵ Not surprisingly, planners in East Berlin argued that the functionalist, capitalist, and imperialist international style of architecture at the Hansaviertel had much in common with National Socialist design.³⁶

Perhaps the most important project that came to represent West Germany’s new

Berlin was Hans Scharoun's Philharmonic Hall.³⁷ For Scharoun, no place in Berlin represented the presence of a *Weltstadt*; the new postwar open architecture had to "consider the meaning or significance for art in our space/area [in] the middle, between east and west, between north and south."³⁸ In 1956 he designed the Kulturforum (Cultural Forum), consisting of a major music hall, library, and arts museum, to stand in an "open" urban landscape—the antithesis to the uniform regularity of nineteenth-century Berlin.³⁹ According to Alan Balfour, Scharoun's vision for the future was heavily influenced by Martin Heidegger. Scharoun viewed the Kulturforum as a spiritual and "symbolic home of German music with the power to renew life and order at the center of devastation, to renew and yet reject the past history of this place."⁴⁰

The bright gold tentlike building of the Philharmonie (completed in 1963) was the foundation stone of the Kulturforum that later included the Staatsbibliothek (1978), the Chamber Music Concert Hall (completed in 1987), and Gemäldegalerie in 1998. Scharoun designed the Philharmonie as a challenge to the "lurid theatricality of Nazi performance space" by creating a "revolutionary, democratic asymmetrical organicism."⁴¹ Drawing from a range of pasts to imagine the future, his expressionistic design for the building blended socialist and naturalist ideals.⁴² Although the orchestra and conductor visually stand in the middle of the hall, Scharoun wanted no segregation of "producers and consumers." Rather, he wanted a "community of listeners" (up to 2,200 people), who would sit in intimate, orchestra-sized sections that ascended in tiers around the central podium, to cocreate a musical experience with the performers.

Architecture and urban design, imagined pasts and remembered futures, are always interpreted by contemporary spatial, cultural, and temporal values. Although Scharoun's designs were intended to create a cultural center for a devastated city, by opening night the golden Philharmonie stood adjacent to the newly erected Wall and was interpreted as a political challenge to the GDR, now located at the borders of West Berlin. In the divided city, each Germany constructed objects, buildings, and spaces in opposition to its "Other."⁴³ These material and symbolic landscapes were, of course, a legacy of the National Socialist past, one that every postwar German administration has tried to normalize through geopolitical and cultural relations since 1945. The tension between the simultaneous renewal and rejection of the past, and the difficulties of remembering the future after National Socialism, continues to be central to the processes of place making and social memory in Berlin today.

Remembering the New Berlin: "From *Kiez* to *Kosmos*"

After unification, planners, architects, and city boosters sought again to create a new world-class European city. Their marketing and planning strategies have been rather similar to those pursued in many contemporary European and North American cities. As Linda McDowell describes for central London, for example, a new city was created and marketed through scenographic built environments designed by internationally known architects. Business practices were pursued to entice international investors that produced corporate landscapes of privatized public spaces.⁴⁴ New city spaces, buildings,

and bodily performances were contrasted to the old London at the same time that they blurred traditional distinctions between work and leisure for international professional middle classes. Similarly, Berlin officials have pursued an economic development strategy to transform the city into a European service center through its architecture, new business and cultural centers, and marketing strategies, in particular for investors.⁴⁵

The sheer scale of renewal and construction in Berlin after 1990, nonetheless, was unprecedented. According to one Debis public relations director, rebuilding Berlin's center was "an experiment of building an entirely new city from scratch, an experiment similar to and on the scale of Brasilia."⁴⁶ Similarly, Berlin's director of Building Affairs, Hans Stimmann, described the city as "the only place in the world where the center is empty."⁴⁷ Since 1990, hundreds of billions of dollars have been spent to renovate the once divided city and erect a new capital city for Germany.⁴⁸ In 1994 there were more than two thousand building sites, for which \$25 billion was spent on construction investment alone. Development at this scale usually occurs not at city centers in Europe but rather at urban edges in new suburbs and edge cities, such as La Defense just outside Paris, a high-tech office high-rise complex connected to the metropolis through high-speed rail. Most major European cities have dense urban cores with landscapes reflecting their uneven growth from the thirteenth century to the twentieth. City and state ordinances have historically regulated land use and restricted building heights, and urban land markets have influenced the location, scale, and pace of development. But because of Berlin's particular and peculiar modern history—the attempts by National Socialists to create a new urban center through grandiose architecture, the physical destruction of those centers during World War II, and subsequent Cold War division, destruction, clearing, and rebuilding—the new city after 1990 was built largely at these central sites of former power and division, in addition to a growing suburban ring.

Berlin's postunification economic development strategy was also unusual because city officials had to create an economy from scratch. Using marketing and planning tools outside usual public-sector channels, local and federal governments encouraged private investment through nonpublic task forces that liquidated East German property to package sites for national and international real estate and commercial developers.⁴⁹ These developers typically build corporate high-rise centers in world cities offering mostly office space but may also include high-end apartments and shopping and entertainment districts.⁵⁰ City officials also hired city planners and marketers, two groups of urban experts directly involved in the capitalist real estate and development markets, to influence the production of Berlin's postunification material and symbolic landscapes.

Even though Berlin's planners and marketers both evoke historic images to imagine and represent the new city, they have different understandings of what the "new" means. Planners largely understand the "new" as a term that signifies the recent past, in particular the Cold War modernist "open-city" designs. They see their job as returning Berlin to its pre-1933 status as a classical European world city and do so by advocating a neotraditional approach to urban density and contemporary social and spatial relations. They, with marketers and city elite, promote the nostalgic concept of the *Kiez*: compact urban neighborhoods that have a European vitality and are defined by distinctive

Berlin architecture, density, and street design. Unlike planners, however, city marketers celebrate the new as a signifier for a better future. They represent the New Berlin as a cosmopolitan, open, youthful city using images and terms that allude to Weimar Berlin of the 1920s. They define “new” in normative terms, as a positive category of progressive modernity defined in opposition to “the old.” Marketers feel their job is to create an image of the new city as a dynamic place to replace dominant images of the gray, Walled Cold War Berlin or the dark Nazi Berlin.

Neotraditional Critical Reconstruction

In 1991 the Berlin Senate created a new position called “city architect” and appointed Hans Stimmann to handpick expert commissions that judged the numerous architectural and development competitions in the city.⁵¹ Stimmann exerted enormous power over the form of new emerging Berlin by advocating a planning approach of critical reconstruction, also known as “the new simplicity.”⁵² Critical reconstruction, or “a modern interpretation of the model of the European city,” was first advanced during the 1980s in West Berlin by the International Building Exhibition movement (Internationale Bauausstellung). The IBA was created by a group of architects, planners, and historians who conducted research and “rediscovered” the urban ground plans and architectural heritage of the city, particularly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.⁵³ The goal of the IBA’s critical reconstruction program was to “establish a dialogue between tradition and the modern . . . [to] find the contradictions of modernism not in a break, but in a development that remains visible over stages of place and time.”⁵⁴ While postunification critical reconstructionists may have borrowed the IBA’s technical, rational approaches and designs, they do not share in its social agendas.

City planners and architects today who promote a vision of contemporary Berlin as a traditional European city of the twenty-first century revived the traditional image of Berlin’s historic “urban house,” which they nostalgically called *Kiez*, a late-nineteenth-century term used to describe local neighborhoods typical to Berlin. The mixed-use, high-density block form of the *Kiez* was destroyed, according to contemporary planners, not only by World War II bombing and urban guerrilla warfare but also by poorly planned, rapidly constructed postwar urban redevelopment projects.⁵⁵ Critical reconstructionists therefore distinguish their vision of Berlin from postwar open-city designs, such as those for the Hansaviertel, that typically included high-rise modern buildings surrounded by open spaces and serviced by automobile transportation. According to Stimmann, postwar planners in West Berlin

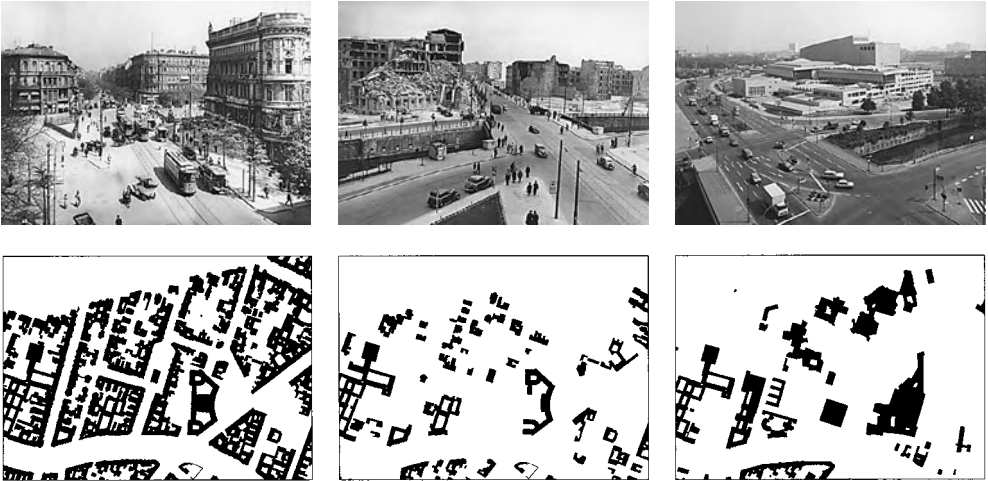
consciously declared war on the surviving texture of the city. They replaced the density of the old city with spatial disintegration. . . . The goal was to replace the old Berlin with its historical and political rejections with new images. As a consequence of the division of the city, Berlin became the showcase for ambitious urban planning and architectural competition between the [GDR

and FRG] systems, the protagonists of which in both east and west felt themselves to be committed to the dictates of the modern, car-friendly city.⁵⁶

To maintain Berlin's traditional form and avoid the destruction of "the centre of Berlin [as] a European metropolis," contemporary planners strictly regulate the materials, lot sizes, and forms of new developments; some new business centers and buildings, including those at Potsdamer Platz, were approved before these planning ordinances went into effect.⁵⁷ Because they view architecture as communicating the form of "the historical city plan," critical reconstructionists in general reject deconstructionist and postmodern forms, arguing that radically new designs have previously destroyed the urban fabric of Berlin and would only add to the "aesthetic noise and chaos" of the contemporary city.⁵⁸ Instead they attempt to re-create these late-nineteenth-century urban forms and spaces by enforcing rigid city block building and development restrictions.⁵⁹ They define Berlin's traditional form through the "strict division between public streets, squares and parks on [the] one hand and private lots on the other." New buildings are required to maintain consistent frontage lines along streets and squares, use traditional stone for their facades, and maintain block height restrictions of twenty-two meters to the cornice and thirty meters to the ridge. To gain approval, new buildings developed for office and retail space must also provide at least 20 percent of the overall floor area for housing.⁶⁰ "The aim of the new development is the urban house on one lot; the maximum admissible lot size is the block."⁶¹

These strict regulations were based on "an extensive analysis of the existing and historical traces" of the city. City planners developed a series of what they call "black plans," or snapshots of built-up areas (represented by "footprints" of buildings) in black—"irrespective of any other architectural or topographical differences"—and non-built-up areas as white.⁶² Stimmann argues that through these plans, "Berlin urban planning and architectural history, and by extension, an important part of German history, can be read more easily than ever before."⁶³ The idea of the black plan originated with postwar West Berlin IBA planners such as former critical reconstruction director Josef Paul Kleihues, who argued that the ground plan was the "permanent gene structure of the city" and communicated the "spiritual and cultural idea of the foundation of a city . . . the 'fundamental' character of the place."⁶⁴ Similarly, Stimmann's black plans assume that Berlin's "spiritual" foundation can be read through its legible "gene structure" and traceable "footprints."

The black plans, which have been drawn up for the entire Berlin inner-city area at different historical moments, are a visual data bank for the planners and are considered to be the "building memory" of city residents.⁶⁵ In exhibitions at planning conferences and in published articles, for example, black plans are displayed next to historical photos as a time sequence of the changing city. A special 2001 issue of *Foyer*, a planning and marketing journal, reprinted a series of black-and-white photos from 1900 through the 1920s, the 1950s, and the present day. Below these images were black plans for Berlin around 1940, 1953, 1989, and 2000. This time series communicated a narrative of loss.



The black plans (*below*; from left, 1940, 1953, and 1989) depict “this process of extinguishing, the transformation of a historic city and the changes to its physiognomy” (Hans Stimmann, “The Texture of the City,” *Foyer: Journal for Urban Development* [2000]: 10). Kulturforum black plans courtesy of Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung Berlin. The photographs (*above*) of Potsdamer Straße were taken in (*from left*) 1913, 1952, and 1979. Courtesy of Landesarchiv Berlin.

The first image depicted Berlin’s “authentic” form and social life with a visually interesting photograph and a map filled with footprints of former buildings. With each subsequent pairing, the urban texture decreased, until the final map is represented as largely white “empty” space. The visual authority of maps and black-and-white photographs, understood as historical documents, demonstrates how Berlin became a “nonplace” during the Cold War: they record a history of loss. At the same time, these images legitimate the expertise of planners who claim they can return the city to its “natural” status as a world-class city through good urban design.

Critical reconstructionists interpret the city as a subject whose genetic structure and true essence can be observed and documented by the all-knowing expert. They also represent the city as an object, as a text that the city planner can and should edit: “the planner, urban developer and architect must, therefore, repeatedly revise his city, examine it for spelling mistakes, add a new chapter at some points, shorten other bits, read the text from the angle of social and political guidelines without however completely rewriting it.”⁶⁶ These metaphors of the city have been commonly used in the history of European urban planning.⁶⁷ The city is an object located in Cartesian space that can be surveyed and mapped; its essence can be known through the objective and masculinist gaze of the expert planner who is both scientist and social visionary. The all-seeing urban expert surveys the city to find its true, natural form (such as through black plans and other historical documents) and carefully adjusts the buildings, streets, and urban elements (the text) to realize that ideal form.

The story of urban decline and renewal presented by Stimmann and other critical reconstructionists is also similar to more contemporary recovery myths typically found in European and American neotraditional planning narratives. The recovery myth follows

the narrative structure of the Judeo-Christian story about the fall from the Garden of Eden and the promise of redemption through a return to “natural” states.⁶⁸ For example, royal Berlin, as the classical European city, fell from its civilized status during the “bad modern” Nazi and Cold War periods. After unification, the heroic planner promises to return the city (and the nation) to its dignified historic status and protect further destruction from happening in the future. Implicit to planners’ claims to return the city to its “true” status are nostalgia for a lost city and fears about continued damage in a rapidly changing present.

Such a narrative about modern decline and contemporary redemption through past forms has been a defining part of neotraditional planning and social movements in the United States and United Kingdom since the 1980s.⁶⁹ Considered a set of conservative reactions to contemporary economic and social changes, neotraditionalism is a post-modern urban development typified by the search for past authentic forms to imagine better futures.⁷⁰ For neotraditionalists, the place of the modern “new” (as radically Other from the past) is not warm and comforting: it is mechanical, cold, militant, and impersonal. The modern new also signifies the loss of a more innocent age, of what is represented as the real self, home, or neighborhood (*Kiez*). Neotraditional planners blame modern urban designs, codes, and planning approaches, and high modernist international architecture for the destructive, alienating, chaotic, and environmentally unsound cities and landscapes that urban citizens currently live in.

That neotraditionalism should appear after unification in Berlin is not surprising. The end of the Cold War created a significant temporal break for Germany as a nation that allowed planners and other groups to search for usable pasts. In other countries, however, the modern city that neotraditionalists rejected was not part of a national inheritance of National Socialism. Contemporary neotraditionalism in Berlin indicates a hostile rejection of the Cold War city as well as anger toward the National Socialist past that always haunts the possibilities for remembering Berlin’s future. The controversial “Architects’ Debate” that erupted in 1993 demonstrates how central National Socialist history continues to be in defining acceptable or appropriate architecture and urban design in the city.

In these public controversies, critics called Stimmann and a small group of local officials the “Taste Dictators” because of the “authoritarian” manner in which their nostalgic ideals limited what would normally be a creative and democratic process of urban design and innovation.⁷¹ Supporters of critical reconstruction rejected such vilification. Vittorio Magnago Lampugnani, for example, stated that a “provocative conventional architecture” inspired by archetypal models from the past was possible within the new city guidelines.⁷² This new architecture, he argued, would provide precision and order for Berlin’s residents in the face of a chaotic contemporary world and draw from classics such as Weimar Republic housing projects, the works of “heroes Le Corbusier, Gropius, and Mies” (who “rescued” architecture from late-nineteenth-century historic eclecticism), and even aspects of National Socialist architecture. While acknowledging its megalomaniacal classicism, Lampugnani argued that “the Nazis also produced an architecture of exceptionally solid, detailed buildings.”⁷³ In response to Lampugnani’s

provocative article, a heated series of discussions ensued, with the so-called Chaotics labeling Lampugnani and other critical reconstructionists as reactionary conservatives and fascists, and the so-called Guardians of the Block defending themselves against such staunch criticisms. Architects like Hans Kollhof who supported critical reconstruction stated simply that using stones in Berlin didn't make a person a fascist. Further, he stated that the 1930s shouldn't be put off limits for contemporary inspiration, noting that many important European buildings were erected at that time.⁷⁴

What was notable about these debates was not the titillating or moralistic use of the National Socialist past to gain authority for contemporary understandings of the city. Rather, what is surprising is that the debates did not revolve around the history of, and associated problems with, selectively using past urban forms to solve contemporary social problems. Neotraditionalists believe that modern interpretations of model historic cities offer a solution to contemporary social ills. But nineteenth-century urban forms also displace contemporary ways of knowing about and living in cities. As M. Christine Boyer describes, when architectural fragments that were originally built as expressions of nineteenth-century needs are manipulated for present uses and inserted into contemporary contexts, not only does the city feel distant, but new social problems may emerge.⁷⁵ The architectural critic Cengiz Bektas describes his response to a blending of facades and fragments in the New Berlin.

Around Friedrichstraße, I get suspicious of anything that looks as if it were real. Just a couple of blocks from this underground "Passagen," I confront Aldo Rossi's last work. . . . As I entered one of the octagonal courtyards, I approached a wall that seemed to have been plastered with a technique used in the previous century. I knocked on it. From the hollow sound I could tell that there was nothing beneath this surface. No, this is not real plaster. Is it fake? This kind of "plaster" may have its virtues economically and in terms of insulation. But why should it look as if it was from the previous century?⁷⁶

Not only do these fragments seem oddly placed and contrived as "traditions," but when past forms of the city are used to displace the recent past, they become problematic sites through which to imagine contemporary and future social relations. For Boyer,

Engulfed and enframed by a set of new constraints forged in contemporary times, these fragments from the past appear denigrated by nostalgic sentiments that fuel their preservation or reconstruction, while our collective memory of public places seems undermined by historicist reconstructions. When juxtaposed against the contemporary city of disruption and disarray, the detached appearance of these historically detailed compositions becomes even more exaggerated and attenuated.⁷⁷

One of the few people who raised the problem of the contemporary meanings and forms of public space and citizens' rights to the city in the Architect's Debate was Daniel Libeskind. Libeskind, considered a Chaotic and a deconstructionist, yet also a respected figure in Berlin for his design of the Jewish Museum, stated that the early postunification rapid-development strategies were targeted for profits and did not consider the associated declines in the quality of life for city residents. He also argued that critical reconstruction would ultimately ruin the unique historical qualities of the city, including its divided legacy. Rather than rid the city of its Cold War past, he recommended leaving Potsdamer Platz as a large, abandoned field and advocated preserving some GDR buildings.⁷⁸ For Libeskind it made no sense to

romanticize the past and become nostalgic for anything, either for the pre-unification of Berlin or some 19th century Berlin or some 1930s Berlin as the planners do. . . . History is not something you can just choose. We see it from all the people who have tried, usually dictators, and never succeeded. They choose a certain history, but it fails miserably because people need a reality. Making all these schemes in somebody else's stencil has not helped Berlin in my view and has not helped it to become a truly public city, with places where people can really sit and talk and where events can take place.⁷⁹

Despite claims to save the city's building memory for its inhabitants, it is striking how infrequently residents appear in planners' representations of the city. Nor were local residents included in the actual process of planning and debate. In this respect, Stimmann's understandings of critical reconstruction break sharply from the progressive social goals of the IBA. While IBA practitioners may have also viewed the city as "ruined" and looked to the past for inspiration, they believed that local residents could "create possibilities of repairing part of the city" and identify "deficits of modern urban development."⁸⁰ For the "careful urban renewal" program in particular, IBA planners tried to include local residents in the planning process, an approach "based on collective democratic decisions, not on measures pushed through from 'above.'"⁸¹ Critical reconstructionists today, however, justify the development of office space, hotels, department stores, and scenographic enclaves—rather than subsidized housing—because of the new economic and urban needs that accompanied unification.⁸² And while the creation of a new economy was necessary, other pressing social needs, such as affordable housing, were ignored. While planners claim to return Berlin to its rightful European status, locals were not included in discussions about defining that postunification status. Many cannot even afford to live there.

As Libeskind suggests, imagining the city through an idealized, selective past is destructive to the range of meanings, times, and social spaces that make Berlin a unique and complex place. The city's historic texture emerges from ever-changing spaces, representations, economies, and political systems made and remade by people in the past and

present. Berlin is a city of multiple modernities, each typified by different desires for the future, including the future-oriented (now hip retro) modernism of the Weimar period, the romantic and reactionary modernism of National Socialism, the socialist utopian modernism of the GDR, the Cold War capitalist modernisms of the FRG, and now post-modern neotraditionalism. There is no singular past that can be reclaimed by planners, for the past is continuously defined by and defines the city. Residents and visitors also deploy different pasts, narratives, and remembered futures to constitute the place and idea that is Berlin. By continuously remaking the past through everyday routines as well as through more dramatic material expressions, people live in, confront, and define their city in the present and future.

Marketing the Cosmopolitan New Berlin

A cultural icon of West Berlin is juxtaposed with one of the new. Scharoun's yellow sculptural Philharmonie is framed at dusk by images of an emerging Potsdamer Platz: a bluish glow of the Mercedes Benz neon icon sits atop a skyscraper, a construction crane looms in the background, and blurred traffic moves in the foreground. A banner on the building proclaims "Welcome, Sir Simon!" to indicate the cosmopolitan flair, creative genius, and youthful vitality of the New Berlin.⁸³ On the back of this postcard advertising the city, we read that Berlin "has 150 theaters, 880 choirs, 3 opera houses, 8 large orchestras, 160 museums, 200 galleries, and 260 exhibitions daily and an alternative scene that is always in motion and enables that motion."⁸⁴



Advertising the New Berlin.

This advertisement is part of the New Berlin marketing campaign that began in 1998. *Das neue Berlin* was depicted as a capital city, creative city, cultural metropolis, “perfect place to live,” and an East-West metropolis.⁸⁵ Throughout the city, bright red logos and posters promoted the new city through advertisements on billboards and magazines, promotional tours, and investors’ newsletters; even the bodies of corporate sponsors wearing New Berlin lapel pins on their executive suits became walking advertisements for the city. The New Berlin was represented as a place of artists, youth, creative energy and experimentation, and a node of corporate savvy: “everything doesn’t just happen anywhere but rather directly here.”⁸⁶ As a cosmopolitan city, Berlin is a *Kosmos* (world) attracting people, ideas, and investments from other places.

The agency responsible for these images and the New Berlin marketing campaign is Partners for Berlin, founded in 1994 with the support of former Berlin mayor Eberhard Diepgen.⁸⁷ Partners for Berlin is subcontracted by the city-state of Berlin (Land Berlin) and is primarily financed by private corporate sponsors (the partners). In 2000, Partners received about DM 8 million from Berlin and DM 15 million from corporate sponsors in fees and material services, including transportation and advertising.⁸⁸ Rather than focus on one niche market, Partners markets the city to a diverse group that includes corporate investors, potential business owners and residents, locals, and tourists. Another goal is to change Berlin’s old image by educating people about the material and functional changes of the new city. According to one Partners director, “someone has to communicate information about the new opportunities and the new city, and the old marketing organizations did not feel responsible for that. We inform people who are new to the city about the city. We have lots of information on the Internet, in brochures, and so on” (interview, 2000).

Given such a broad target audience, the concept of “new” makes sense. It can mean many different things but always creates a distance from negative images of the old city. For corporate investors, the New Berlin is represented as a global city of youthful bodies, flows of capital, and innovative ideas. In one ad, young, hip women (white corporate managers by day and exotic Asian cyborg designers by night) represent the beautiful surface of the “creative city” (through their bodies as well as the urban images they produce) and frame the “real” (economic) city inside: male managers, scientists, high-tech researchers, and executives making business deals.⁸⁹ In another ad, the New Berlin is described as the “perfect place to live,” with an edgy avant-garde cultural scene, classical historical districts, flashy new architecture, sports centers, and numerous parks and waterways. This ad describes Berlin as a place where European peoples and pasts meet:

Germany’s largest city is open and cosmopolitan, allowing for every kind of life style. The inexhaustible urban diversity of Berlin makes for a quality of life that is particularly appealing. Berlin is rich in signs of its history and its present, in inner city landscapes and urban closeness, in big city life, and in peaceful places.⁹⁰

The general marketing themes of the New Berlin campaign—an emphasis on the future, a good quality of life, and centrality (the city as gateway)—are common to post-industrial city makeovers in North America and Western Europe.⁹¹ Such campaigns are intended to attract and retain investments, consumers, businesses, and residents. Yet Berlin's economic and geopolitical status is fundamentally different from other Western cities trying to renovate their image after a decline in manufacturing and heavy industries beginning in the late 1970s. By the late 1950s, West Berlin had already become postindustrial: companies left for safer investments elsewhere because of Cold War divisions. Both East and West Berlin were subsidized geopolitical showcases that emphasized high culture, shopping districts, and, in the West, an alternative scene. Berlin was largely isolated from larger global economic structural changes until 1990, when its subsidies were suddenly cut and the federal funds earmarked to help integrate the city proved to be only temporary.

The New Berlin marketing campaign intentionally distances contemporary images from dominant postwar images of division, economic decline, and isolation. In 2000 one Partners spokesperson, responding to my question “What’s wrong with the ‘old’ Berlin?” stated that the prevalent images of the city for locals, tourists, and investors were negative, based on understandings of the Cold War city. She said that people think of the history of National Socialism, of the Wall that one couldn’t pass through, and of division. When asked about the history of National Socialism in contemporary Berlin, she immediately mentioned the existence of the memory district in the center of the city (the Jewish Museum, the Holocaust Memorial, and the Topography of Terror), even though these places of memory were not part of Partners for Berlin’s marketing campaigns. More important for city marketers was to replace the Cold War metaphor of Berlin as an island city (*Inselstadt*), an idea that evoked the walled city with no productive or innovative industry (with the exception of tobacco firms and coffee production) and few connections to the outside world. Immediately following unification, Berlin was often in the news as a result of its economic devastation, record unemployment rates, industry shutdowns in the former East, and technological problems with communication and travel. “No wonder no one wanted to invest in the city!” This consultant, while acknowledging economic problems, pointed out recent changes in that trend, noting the new economies related to the rise of smaller innovative companies in the information and communications, biotechnology, medical technology, and transportation sectors. In 1999 the major media and press firms moved from Bonn to Berlin with the German Parliament. In addition, during the mid- to late 1990s, before the collapse of the dot-com markets and the aftermath of September 11, 2001, start-up Internet firms also proliferated in Berlin.

Another way marketers downplayed Cold War images was by emphasizing the central status of Berlin as a European gateway and cosmopolitan city, evoking new Berlin marketing campaigns from the 1920s. In Weimar Berlin, just as today, marketers sought to promote Berlin as a world-class city on par with London, Paris, and New York; they represented the city as a modern metropolis, a cultural center, and a livable city.⁹² The 1928 guidebook to the city, for example, described Berlin as

The *Weltstadt* [world-class city] of order and beauty,
 the city of work,
 the most active *Weltstadt* of the continent,
 the European center of economics and transport,
 the city of music and theater,
 the great city of sport,
 the metropolis with the most beautiful surroundings.⁹³

City boosters at the time highlighted Berlin's cultural life, its museums, theaters, and concert halls, and its centers of alternative artistic creativity. Berlin was represented as a city of the future, illuminated by lights, moving with trains and trams, and sparkling with the display of shop facades, modern architectural forms, and female bodies. The guide also described Berlin's cosmopolitan stature through its different "foreign colonies," with foreign street names, restaurants, and places of entertainment, which offered visitors "a taste of the exotic."⁹⁴ The new Berlin was "the liveliest city in Europe," with a dynamic West End (around Kufürstendamm) and other areas that offered visitors an Americanized, youthful commercial center typified by its quick tempo and energetic nightlife.

Both Weimar and postunification city marketers promoted new Berlins through an ideal of cosmopolitanism and openness, and through sites of foreign encounters and Americanized youth and energy. Yet the futures to be remembered were fundamentally different because of the distinct pasts from which planners wished to depart and reject. Urban developers, city elites, officials, artists, politicians, and residents celebrated the world-class status of Berlin at the beginning of the twentieth century as a way of breaking sharply from their Prussian military and monarchical heritage. They wanted to forge an open, democratic, artistic, and commercial modern city. However, that break with the past was never entirely complete. City elites, while promoting the idea of the new Berlin, also wished to contain the new, as evidenced in debates over art and urban social life at the time. Paintings and writings about the rapidly modernizing Berlin published in *Der Sturm* after 1910 contributed to a new way of viewing and experiencing the city. The city was depicted as a restless, nervous place, and as a place in motion with circulating fashion, commerce, advertising, and bodies.⁹⁵

Some authors and artists also expressed fears about the shadows and dark sides of the "city of lights," fears of the Other, and fears about the possible loss of social order. Marketing images of the new Berlin in the 1920s that claimed to combine the best of the United States and Europe distinguished the city from New York through its order and cleanliness. Unlike its American competitor, Berlin was neither socially nor architecturally chaotic. It was a city that maintained an elegant Wilhelmine presence. The cosmopolitan ideal of the new city meant that in practical terms, Jews were increasingly allowed to participate in and contribute to the secular sphere, but "in this Prussian city of the royal household . . . cosmopolitanism also lent itself to exploitation by those for whom terms like internationalism and alien art became racist code words."⁹⁶

In contrast, postunification Berlin draws from the long-standing stable democracy

of the FRG—which now includes a history of trying to work through two authoritarian regimes. Contemporary marketers reject the Cold War city to imagine the future and celebrate the new. Yet this diverse and cosmopolitan Berlin is not advertised through its well-established communities, such as Turkish and other immigrant communities. Rather, foreign ambassadors and educated professionals symbolize a particular foreign status and elite understanding of cosmopolitanism. According to Elizabeth Strom and Margit Mayer, the presence of privileged international people is a desirable form of diversity for well-paid professionals who work in the information, media, and service sectors and will come into contact with diplomats and foreign professionals when they shop at boutiques, eat at expensive restaurants, or attend cultural performances. Officials who pushed for the relocation of the national capital from Bonn to Berlin hoped that such a move would bring this corporate and international elite to the city. “Berlin’s policy makers rushed to accommodate office builders not only to balance the budget, but because these developers promised to deliver the kind of city [and bodily presence] Berlin’s elites long for: corporate, international, and clean.”⁹⁷

Memory in the New Berlin

Some scholars, like Peter Marcuse, are wary of the proud new buildings, rigid design codes, and establishment of the Holocaust Memorial, signs that he feels indicate a renaissance German nationalism and anti-Semitism. Others, like Scott Campbell, point out that nostalgia for the lost city indicates a longing for a time when the Left had a clearer identity and agenda in Germany. The image of an edgy, polluted, corrupt, gray, and abandoned Berlin at the heart of the Cold War geopolitical conflict signified a time and place from which it was easier to identify capitalism and related evils.⁹⁸ These different responses to the New Berlin suggest that every “new” finds legitimation through what it excludes.⁹⁹ Given Berlin’s history, the idea of the new is a complicated one, a temporal category that is used in distinct ways to realize political agendas in the present moment.

For planners and marketers in the contemporary city, the postwar past of 1945 to 1990—itself a temporal category defined by the legacy of 1933 to 1945—is a period that is rejected in favor of other pasts through which to remember the future city. These experts use the category “new” to distance the Cold War (and hence National Socialist) past from their visions of the future for different audiences. City planners, in their attempts to combine modern and traditional approaches, associate the new with postwar modernism and arrogant architecture. The neotraditional expert claims authority in planning circles by recovering the genetic code of Berlin through historical documents (the black plans) and strict design codes. Yet such an approach prevents public participation in the future city and may lead to the destruction of important landscapes of the recent past. In contrast, city marketers promote the New Berlin as a youthful city in motion, as an architectural stage on which the new city is performed. They wish to replace negative images associated with the walled city for investors and visitors by emphasizing Berlin’s cosmopolitan heritage. Their marketing campaign is reminiscent of claims made in the late 1920s, such as those made by city councilor Walter Behrendt, who wrote an article

entitled “Berlin Becomes Capital—Metropolis in the Heart of Europe.” In the pages of a 1929 urban planning journal *The New Berlin*, Behrendt claimed that Berlin combined the best of European tradition with that of American modernity.¹⁰⁰

Discussions about the proposed architecture for the new capital indicate that officials as well as many citizens are resentful about the expected humility that they believe outsiders think Germans should have for their future.¹⁰¹ Many officials and boosters felt it was appropriate that the new federal buildings express “ambition and pride” rather than “the modest discretion of its former capital, Bonn.”¹⁰² One architectural adviser to former chancellor Helmut Kohl argued that German “citizens want their government to be located in a fixed place, not hidden in sackcloth and ashes. They want to be proud. . . . Perhaps not proud. But they don’t want the government to have to creep away into any old mouse hole.”¹⁰³ Similarly, Kohl’s building minister stated, “We Germans must finally take off this tattered Cinderella’s dress and find our way back to a healthy self-confidence.”¹⁰⁴ The cultural editor of the popular national magazine *Der Spiegel* boldly proclaimed, “We should finally dare to be great again in our state architecture. The dream of representative buildings . . . is neither fascistic nor *Grossdeutsch*. It is as European as urban capitals like Vienna, Florence, Paris, London, Stockholm, and Berlin.”¹⁰⁵ In response to these discussions, the cultural critic Jane Kramer aptly noted that Berliners continue to believe in architecture

theologically, the way Paris believes in bread or Los Angeles believes in plastic surgeons. They live in a capital from which the worst of Germany’s history was decreed, and now that the government is moving back to that capital they have convinced themselves that the right buildings will somehow produce the right attitudes in the people inside them.¹⁰⁶

Discussions about architecture in the new Berlin Republic foreshadowed, even created the possibility for, debates about the appropriateness of German patriotism. For perhaps the first time since 1945, there is a general sense that German nationalism is not a bad thing, a taboo category. The new German self-confidence stems from more than forty years of stable democracy and the critical role of its state in transnational organizations, such as the European Union and more recently the United Nations peacekeeping forces. Mainstream politicians now claim they “are proud to be German” despite recent anti-immigrant attacks and the use of this slogan by xenophobic right-wing parties.¹⁰⁷ In March 2001, for example, chancellor Gerhard Schröder declared himself “a German patriot, who is proud of his country,” resulting in calls for his resignation. Guido Westerwelle, the general secretary of the Free Democratic Party, criticized German president Johannes Rau, who stated that Germans should be “glad” or “thankful,” but not “proud,” to be German. Westerwelle argued that “we must not allow neo-Nazis and skinheads to define what national pride is. We democrats, from conservatives to social democrats, must show pride in our country.”¹⁰⁸

My sense is that this (Western) search for defining national pride relates to conserva-

tive nostalgic impulses to restore the national capital to a time of grandeur, even if it is at the cost of ignoring citizens' needs in the present, including housing, jobs, and public spaces. Nostalgia of this sort is often motivated by a desire to replace apprehension about change in the present and future through the pleasures of remembering a known place in the past.¹⁰⁹ The contemporary search for the "essence" of Berlin and the hostility articulated toward the Cold War period, when understood as reactionary nostalgic impulses to control time through place, also indicate a desire to find a mythic, untarnished Germany. Nostalgia need not necessarily be reactionary, however. As Elizabeth Wilson suggests, it may be used to promote *awareness* and even ultimately acceptance that cities are always in a process of change,¹¹⁰ that their spaces and times cannot be controlled by design, or their essence captured by maps, photographs, or advertisements. Urban nostalgia, as a process, as a reaction, as a kind of mapping of time onto place, for example, can be used constructively to help residents, urban experts, and scholars understand how normative (and sometimes negative) meanings of the "new" and "historic" city are created to pursue socially exclusionary nationalist agendas in the present based on utopian visions for the future.

Hostility toward the old city and the recent articulations of national pride suggest unresolved anger about the haunting presence of National Socialism even after reunification. These tensions between utopian hopes for the future and nostalgic desires to return to a golden age, between keeping some pasts buried while calling forth others, between wanting to feel proud of one's identity yet feeling angry at one's shame for national histories of violence, are central to the experience of modernity and national belonging. According to Rudy Koshar,

modernity is the experience of growing asymmetry between dominant hope and marginalized but still resonant memory. . . . The nation has defined this asymmetry, seeking to control its more radical and unsettling effects and striving to make it explicable to subject populations through both force and aura.¹¹¹

The contemporary staging of Berlin through architecture, urban design, and marketing images projects aspirations for a new, yet historic, cosmopolitan city, a European cultural center. It also proposes design solutions for a still lingering violent national past. Yet, as Jeff Kelley reminds us, the present is always littered with "anticipations of futures that never happened, and layered with the natural and social landscapes that happened instead—landscapes that are usually vernacular, subversive, and sometimes chaotic adaptations of a failed master plan."¹¹² As I explore in the following chapters, when remembered futures encrypt other pasts and social presences from the lived experience of the city, new social traumas may emerge. Rather than return to an idealized time to contain what feels like an unwieldy past and present, places can be made to confront the nation's multiple historical legacies, both positive and negative; through place, people may imagine different possibilities for national, social, and even transnational belonging in the future.

This page intentionally left blank