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WHAT AN OLD FAÇADE WILL SAY ABOUT NEW BERLIN

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STEPHEN PAUL NAUMANN

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ABSTRACT

SOLVING THE STADTSCHLOSS DILEMMA:
WHAT AN OLD FAÇADE WILL SAY ABOUT NEW BERLIN

By

Stephen Paul Naumann

Berlin's plan for a reconstructed façade on the original site of its Stadtschloss has been a hotly debated topic for almost two decades. East German authorities tore down the war-damaged Stadtschloss in 1950, and in 1976 erected the Palast der Republik in its place. Following German reunification, advocates of each building have claimed rights to Berlin's most hallowed ground. In 2002, the German Parliament decided in favor of a Schloss façade reconstruction.

The reason Berliners are so emphatic about what happens on this historical site is that architecture can speak volumes. The interest of citizens, scholars and critics has been fueled as much ideologically as it has aesthetically. The façade will add to the surrounding architectural kaleidoscope in the unique German capital, no doubt impacting a nation's memory and German identity. While quickly advancing as a European capital, Berlin also maintains a connection to its past. The Stadtschloss façade will bridge the city's past and future, while contributing to its unity and diversity.

To my grandparents:
Oscar and Dorothy Naumann
Elmer and Charlotte Frank

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I. Introduction: The Berlin Stadtschloss and the Role of Visual Culture

"Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future,
And time future contained in time past."
--T. S. Elliot

Choosing a starting point for a discussion on the "Berliner Stadtschloss"[1] is as difficult a task as approaching the topic as a whole. So many single events have played such pivotal roles in the long and storied fate of old Berlin's longtime centerpiece. The small Spree island was the worksite of Prussia's great baroque architect, Andreas Schlüter, from 1699 to 1701, as he rebuilt the residence in anticipation of the arrival of Prussia's first king, Frederick I. Two centuries later Kaiser William II abdicated the German throne, thus ending the reign of the Hohenzollern monarchy and vacating the Schloss. In 1945, Allied bombs rained from the skies above Berlin's historical center, descending without prejudice upon countless buildings, among them the vacant palace that had long become an afterthought in Berlin. Just months later, three men signed a document at nearby Potsdam's unharmed *Schloss Cecilienhof*, thereby placing the burned-out Berlin Stadtschloss on one side of a line of ink—which would later become an imposing wall of concrete. Its placement would finally determine the Schloss' ultimate fate: GDR officials had the palace demolished in 1950.

Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, clashing ideologies have fueled an ongoing debate in Berlin concerning the future of this prominent site. While the debate still

[1] The "Berliner Stadtschloss" is frequently referenced in scholarly work written in English as the "Royal Palace," "Royal Castle" or "City Palace." From here on, I will refer to the building as the "Berlin Stadtschloss," and will most often use "Stadtschloss" or simply "Schloss." Similarly, I will use the German "Palast der Republik" or "Palast" to refer to the 1976 GDR structure, which in other literature in English has been referenced as the "Palace of the Republic."

continues in many circles, the decision has fallen. In 2002 the Bundestag voted to reconstruct a building with the original palace's façade. This new project has come at the expense of the Palast der Republik, a multi-purpose structure finished during the 1970s, purposefully placed by GDR leaders on top of the old palace's ruins. Wilhelm von Boddien calls the Palast "de[r] wichtigste Repräsentationsbau der untergegangenen DDR" (9). To many—particularly former East Berliners—it is the tearing down of the Palast der Republik that proved more offensive than the reconstruction of the Prussian palace façade.

What is it that makes the Stadtschloss decision so paramount to German cultural studies? To answer this question, one must first appreciate the importance of "visual culture," an area of study that has become vital to the postmodern era. Nicholas Mirzoeff goes so far as to say: "Postmodernism is visual culture" (4). Gail Finney (*Visual Culture in Twentieth-Century Germany*, 2006) defines the term as "variously understood as the culture we live in, as the visible phenomena within this culture, and as the interdisciplinary field that studies these phenomena" (2). She subsequently identifies urban architecture as one such "visual culture" subject that is "worthy of treatment" (Ibid).

Art historian Jonathan Crary emphasizes the inescapable bond between vision and history. He writes: "I have tried to show how vision is never separable from larger historical questions about the construction of subjectivity" (33). Thus, what one sees at such a historical site as the Stadtschloss and what one will remember about the German history it represents are unmistakably linked.

The decision regarding the Stadtschloss site is one that will not only affect the current Berlin generation, but generations to come as well. For in the realm of visual culture, there is another distinct correlation—namely, between memory and imagination (Miller 230). The concept linking memory and imagination is by no means new; it dates back to classical Greece and Rome, at which time terminologies illustrated the connection between memory and imagination much more clearly than does contemporary English. Consider Vico's comparison of the terms, as quoted by Jacque LeGoff:

> The Latins call memory *memoria* when it retains sense perceptions, and *reminiscentia* when it gives them back to us. But they designated in the same way the faculty by which we form images, which the Greeks called *phantasia*, and which we call *imaginativa*; for where we vulgarly say *imaginare*, the Latins said *memorare*....Thus the Greeks say in their mythology that the Muses, the powers of imagination, are the daughters of Memory. (LeGoff 86)

Wallis Miller follows LeGoff's words with the following analogy: "The intimacy of memory and imagination implies a similar intimacy of past and present" (230). In other words, what Germans see today in their storied capital city will trigger memory of the past; likewise, what they see fifty years from now will also recall certain events and images from Germany's past. Moreover, what they see will likewise have an impact on how Germans remember their past, as well as how they connect that past to the present and future.

Karen Till, in her book entitled *The New Berlin: Memory, Politics, Place*, makes exactly this point in her second chapter. Till also recognizes that memory and the past certainly can influence imagination, and hence the future. She writes that visions of the future Berlin can be understood through a memory structure another scholar—Michael Perlman—has termed "remembering the future"[2] (Till 39).

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[2] Till credits the term to Michael Perlman (cf. Perlman 37).

According to Perlman, "In [remembering the future], images of the possible and/or anticipated future are made present in the "past" of remembering" (Perlman 37). Throughout his book on memory and the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima, Perlman regularly refers to Greek mythology and the Muses, as well as to psychology. Here he explains the situation from a psychological standpoint:

> 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, 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. (Perlman 37)

These words are every bit as applicable to memory in Berlin. How one "addresses remembrances" or deals with the past certainly impacts how one also perceives the present and affects the future. Regarding the Stadtschloss, Berlin's dilemma is more specific: how to display the past. The crucial nature of the matter is perhaps multiplied by this specificity, however, since how the past is displayed can impact the way entire generations address their remembrances (or, as the case may be with younger generations, their historical knowledge) of the past.

Till, however, qualifies the past-future relationship, thus highlighting Berlin's situation: "Psychologically, images of the future can only have a resonance with what appears to be familiar, with known experiences from the past and present" (39). The two Berlin edifices—the Stadtschloss and the Palast der Republik—which in public debate have commonly been pitted against one another, are both distinctly "familiar," since they have both existed in one very prominent place in the city. That only one of the two will

be able to occupy that single space in the future allows politicians, citizens, and critics alike to carefully ponder the message portrayed by each of those two physical structures.

Till also mentions exploring the "past and contemporary visions of remembered new Berlins" (39). These various "new Berlins" are "modernist utopian visions of society, the nation, and global power" narrating "a history of national hopes for the future" (Ibid.). In other words, such political figures as Frederick the Great, Bismarck, Hitler, and Ulbricht—along with the architectural vision of figures like Schlüter, Eosander, Schinkel, and Speer—all had their own aspirations of what Berlin would look like, what its architecture would represent. Today these aspirations are still evident in the interwoven cityscape, continuing "to haunt the spaces of the New Berlin today" (Ibid).

Hence, one is led to the obvious question: which past, indeed, will Berliners see? Which *memory*—perhaps better stated: which *imagination*—will be triggered by the visual image the 2020 Berliner will see across the *Lustgarten* to the south? That is at its very core the issue at hand with the entire Stadtschloss debate. What, in fact, will Berlin remember? Is a discussion of Berliners' fond memories of Hohenzollern architecture blindly euphemistic? Or can scholars overcome their propensity for condemning all things Hohenzollern as part of a harmful militaristic wave that ended in war, genocide and destruction? If the Palast der Republik is removed, will Berlin essentially be erasing and thereby ignoring the forty years of the East German chapter of its history; or are there other places in (East) Berlin where that architecture is still prominently displayed and that history recognized? Will rebuilding the Schloss simply be one more strictly West Berlin (or West German) decision made in the post-Wall era, neglecting the perspective of those from the former East; or is it a decision that could benefit all Berlin's citizens?

In my thesis, I will focus on the various ideologies and identities visually reflected by each of three buildings on the palace site: Schlüter's baroque Stadtschloss, with its Eighteenth-Century additions by Eosander and Böhme; the Palast der Republik; and a future construction bearing the baroque façade. A description of any one of these buildings in connection with its visual ideological message is a complicated task in itself; for as Berlin is a city of conflicting political views and intertwining ideologies, so is each building the subject of several varying interpretations. Godfrey Carr and Georgina Paul sum up Berlin's latest architectural challenge with the following words: "[W]hat the debates reveal above all else is the dilemma of attempting to express a unified cultural identity in public buildings which are manifestations of a history of political discontinuity and ideological antagonism" (338). While the Stadtschloss decision in no way guarantees a solution to Berlin's "dilemma," a new façade will play no small role in re-unifying the reunited Berlin.

I will treat the topic in five chapters following this introduction. The second chapter will discuss the history and fate of the Stadtschloss, ending with its destruction in 1950. The third chapter will cover the Palast der Republik, where I will discuss the political climate in the GDR's East Berlin and its influence on the timeline of the *Schlossplatz* site during these 40 years: plans after the Schloss was destroyed; a two-decade vacancy; and the very important 1970s structure, the Palast der Republik. Despite the popular Palast replacing the Schloss on Berlin's nascent ground, there were those in the GDR who had not only opposed the Schloss' destruction; many even felt regret for its fate as late as the 1980s.

Fourthly, I will consider the post-Wall debate in the 1990s, and the ensuing 2002 decision to tear down the Palast and build in its place a new structure bearing a reconstructed Schloss façade. It was the debate that interested me even before the decision was made; therefore I feel obliged to discuss the alternate solution(s). What would a preserved Palast have said, had it been decided to maintain this more recent structure in place of the planned baroque reconstruction? Some also have suggested constructing a modern architectural building on the site in lieu of both palaces. With reference to Janet Ward's article "Las Vegas on the Spree," I will address this possibility as well.

Fifthly, I will discuss the palace's future as an important part of Berlin's visual face. It is here that I intend to consider Berlin's future not only as Germany's capital, but an influential European capital as well. The tourist influence in the city no doubt also plays an important role in the city's urban landscape. Any city should maintain a certain connection to its own history. Berlin's unique situation mirrors its many closely entwined histories, largely evident in the city's patchwork of architectures strewn across its streets and neighborhoods. In comparing Berlin to other European capital cities of present and past, I hope to be able to draw conclusions as to why the Stadtschloss decision came out as it did.

The aforementioned "political discontinuity and ideological antagonism" to which Carr and Paul refer are qualities that make Berlin a city worth writing about, researching, or simply visiting. It's a city like no other in Germany, Europe or the world. Its situation sui generis is thus one that has attracted a great deal of press and scholarship in the realm of cultural studies. These very qualities have drawn me to this particular thesis. It is my

hope to convey the fascinating and unique nature of this particular topic, while demonstrating the relation between Berlin's historical and future identities, as well as what role a Stadtschloss edifice might play.

II. History of the Berlin Stadtschloss to 1950

"[Das Stadtschloss] beherrscht das Zentrum Berlins, den Platz, den es bilden hilft, die Straße, die zu ihm führt, das alte Berlin, das für den, der die Vergangenheit Berlins verkörpert sehen möchte, den Begriff Berlin ausmacht."
--Richard Hamann[3]

Those wishing to validate the Schloss' importance to the Berlin landscape point out a relevant historical connection: the structure has been at Berlin's geographical core since the city's genesis. First came the seat of Hohenzollern monarchy to Berlin, and only then did a city grow and develop around it.

Other European capital cities expanded out from their historical centers, and only much later received the central building that characterized them. No one would dispute the unequivocal importance of the Tower to the city of London, the Louvre to Paris, or St. Peter's Basilica and the Vatican to Rome. Yet each of these cities existed quite prominently for many centuries before its respective longtime architectural trademark. Despite being later additions, each structure is crucial to its city's landscape and character.

The situation in the very young Berlin was, however, much different. With a history stretching back no farther than the Late Middle Ages, Berlin had never been a historically significant city—certainly not in the European community and not even in the German (i.e. Holy Roman) Empire until some 300 years ago. First mentioned in the Thirteenth Century, the small dual Spree towns of Berlin and Cölln remained largely insignificant until 1451, when they, as a single city, became the site of Elector Frederick

[3] qtd. in Boddien, "Das Schloss lag nicht in Berlin," 21

II of Hohenzollern's[4] royal residence as one of the empire's seven electors. The city grew very little, however, until the late Seventeenth Century, and as late as 1648 had a mere 6,000 inhabitants.

Nonetheless, the Hohenzollern residence remained the city's center throughout. Wolf Jobst Siedler perhaps put it best with his oft-referenced statement: "Das Schloss lag nicht in Berlin. Berlin war das Schloss!" (qtd. in Flierl). The cornerstone was laid on July 31, 1443, and the first structure was finished in 1451 (Rollka 11). The fortress, which Rollka refers to as "das burgartige Residenzschloss" (12), was known at that time as the *Zwingburg*. It had a distinct corner tower with an onion cupola, dubbed the "Grüner Hut," that had been part of Cölln's old city wall. This the Schloss' oldest element survived a host of additions, improvements and renovations, the Thirty Years War and World War II, until its 1950 destruction (Ibid.).

Petitioned by Joachim II to build a larger structure in order to accommodate the growing court, Saxon architect Caspar Theiß created out of the older *Zwingburg* a striking Renaissance-style Schloss in 1538 (Ibid.). After the Schloss suffered—along with the city—extensive damage and destruction during the Thirty Years War, Berlin recovered to enjoy a period of growth and prosperity under Elector Frederick William I (1640-1688). The Schloss was also repaired and enhanced.

Ever remembered for his 1685 Edict of Potsdam, "der Große Kurfürst" exercised religious tolerance and saw Berlin grow by fifty percent with the arrival of thousands of wealthy French Huguenots and Jewish merchants from Vienna who came seeking asylum. Berlin continued to prosper under his son Frederick III, whose wife Sophie

[4] The Hohenzollern family would rule continuously in Berlin until the abdication of Kaiser Wilhelm II in 1918.

Charlotte of Hanover and friend, philosopher Gottfried Leibniz, promoted and enhanced science and the fine arts in the growing city. When in 1701 Frederick (III) crowned himself Frederick I, "König *in* Preußen," Berlin gained a royal status and with it, a new residence.

Andreas Schlüter, renowned as "the most important German baroque architect and sculptor" ("The architectural history" 10), is the primary name associated with the baroque Schloss. Commissioned by Friedrich to convert the Renaissance palace into a grander baroque residence, Schlüter completed his grandiose project in time for the new king's triumphant return from his 1701 crowning in Königsberg. Inspired by the façade of Rome's Palazzo Madama, Schlüter's edifice was admired for generations thereafter. Some compared his sculptures to those of Michelangelo (Ibid.). Even Karl Friedrich Schinkel revered Schlüter's masterpiece and hesitated to change any outer feature of the structure, as he had done with so many other structures in Berlin (11). Hans Scharoun proudly refers to the building as "de[r] hervorragendste Bau des norddeutschen Barock" (Stadtverwaltung, "Umstrittenes Erbe").

After another project—the nearby *Münzenturm*—failed Schlüter because of unstable ground, the great architect was fired and left several years later for Russia. There, under Tsar Peter the Great, he developed plans for the renowned *Peterhof*, dubbed "the Russian Versailles." Schlüter died of an illness in 1714, one year after his arrival in St. Petersburg, but many of his plans and models were invaluable to the establishment and beautification of Russia's imperial port city with a decidedly European flavor.

Chosen to replace Schlüter was a Berlin contemporary, Swedish-born Johann Friedrich Eosander von Göthe. Eosander is also known for such impressive structures as

Schloss Charlottenburg and the *Rathaus* in Charlottenburg. His contributions to the Stadtschloss included a brand new cornered wing extending almost 100 meters to the west and another 80 meters south. Though he planned to erect a dome 100 meters high over the new portal, Eosander's work was interrupted because of Friedrich Wilhelm I's disapproval of his architect's lavish spending.

Eosander's successor and a former student of Schlüter, Martin Heinrich Böhme, filled in the final gap in 1716, thus connecting Eosander's wing back to the other side of the original and creating a second, larger courtyard (Rollka 31). The 1716 structure is essentially what Berliners knew in 1950. Only the dome, capping Eosander's western portal was added, constructed in 1850 by the court architect Friedrich August Stüler. While there followed additional renovations and improvements to the frame, the Schloss' shape did not change after 1716.

As mentioned, even Schinkel, the most renowned Prussian architect, did nothing to alter the Schloss' exterior, on account of his great admiration for Schlüter. Instead he brought more attention to the Schloss by focusing on it and the *Lustgarten* as Berlin's focal point. With his 1830 masterpiece, the *Altes Museum*, Schinkel enclosed the *Lustgarten* on its fourth side, positioning the *Dom*, the *Zeughaus*, the museum and the Schloss around the beautiful garden. This quadrilateral centrality is something those planning a new structure bearing the Schloss façade have highlighted, though their symbolic focus will be different than that of Schinkel. This comparison will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter V.

Germany's last monarch, Kaiser William II, also did very little to the Schloss. William only added a large monument in front of the dome-capped, western façade. The

monument portrayed an imposing statue of Kaiser William I, William's grandfather under whom Germany was united for the first time in 1871. Today the monument is "long gone and unlamented" (Ladd, *Ghosts* 54). Wilhelm II also tore down the old cathedral and had a newer, more imposing replacement built—one that "never had good press" (55). Ladd comments that in this case, ironically, "East German authorities (consistent only in their bad taste, some would say) eventually decided to keep the massive old building" (Ibid.).

After the Kaiser's 1918 abdication he fled to the Netherlands, leaving a vacant Schloss without a monarch. There was no monarch because the Weimar Republic followed the monarchy. The leaders avoided utilizing the Schloss as either a chancellor's residence or the seat of parliament. The building was used for little more than housing several temporary museum exhibitions. Likewise, the Third Reich shunned the Schloss. Since he wanted to avoid any association of "his 'Thousand Year Reich' with the idea of monarchial restoration," Hitler never even stepped inside the building (Taylor 31).

Perhaps the Schloss' last significant moment before its bombing and destruction came on the day of the Kaiser's abdication: November 9. Karl Liebknecht proclaimed a communist state from one of the Schloss' northern portals. Though Philipp Scheidemann's proclamation of a republic from the Reichstag just two hours prior had rendered Liebknecht's words obsolete, communists revered the portal. In fact, it was the only part of the Schloss carefully preserved and restored by GDR authorities in 1950. Though it was Portal IV that was actually incorporated into the 1964 *Staatsratsgebäude* to the south of the *Schlossplatz*, a well-known painting depicting that historical day shows Liebknecht at Portal V (Boddien, "Die Baugeschichte" 19).

During the winter of 1944-45 the Allies and Soviets advanced on their respective (Eastern and Western) fronts, and soon they began to close in around Berlin and the eastern part of Germany. Though the war's outcome was becoming quite clear, it dragged out for months. Sadly, though perhaps not surprisingly, Hitler refused to surrender. In February Allied air strikes ravaged Berlin and Dresden. The art historian and author Ernst Gall describes the scene at the *Schlossplatz* the morning after central Berlin was heavily bombed:

> Am Morgen des 3. Februar 1945...war das Schloss zwar nicht unversehrt..., aber doch noch immer in seinen wesentlichen Teilen...ein lebensvolles Ganzes. Um die Mittagsstunde lag unter einem von mächtigen Brandwolken verfinsterten Himmel die Ecke gegen Spree und Dom, sowie die Hälfte des Querbaus zwischen den beiden Binnenhöfen in Schutt und Asche, während alles Übrige lichterloh brannte. (qtd. in Buddée 168)

The fires burned for four days without efforts to extinguish them. Two years of continuous bombing had rendered any such effort in the minds of Berlin's frightened citizens useless against the attacks expected the next day and the day after (Boddien, "War Damage" 16).

The novelist and Berlin native Alfred Döblin described the Hohenzollern past as "entirely liquidated" after the war (Brett-Smith 127). According to Robert Taylor, however,

> this was not quite true, for in the battered walls of the Royal Palace, and in other Hohenzollern monuments, the past was still alive and would be a postwar source of as much embarrassment and controversy as pride. (24)

Whether or not the word "embarrassment" accurately portrays surviving Hohenzollern architecture in Berlin is at the very least questionable. "Embarrassment" certainly does not come to one's mind when admiring *Schloss Charlottenburg* or any of the noble Hohenzollern structures in Park Sanssouci. Taylor was right about the controversy,

however, which has indeed surrounded some Hohenzollern buildings. In the case of the Schloss, though, many would argue that the controversy hangs rather over its untenable destruction in 1950 than over its Hohenzollern origins.

A large part of today's debate regarding a new royal palace harkens back to an earlier debate in post-World War II Berlin. While surviving Germans were trying to breathe some life back into their ruined city, two very differing world views were competing for influence in that city and its future urban landscape. What was once a joint effort in winning back Europe from Hitler became a growing rivalry marked by distrust and suspicion. The Soviets and the Allies now saw each other with contempt, and these ideals were to a large extent learned and embraced by East and West Germans. The first Stadtschloss debate—regarding the damaged post-war structure—reflected these ideals. This debate is treated in greater detail in Chapter III.

After Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicated the German throne in November 1918, he left for the Netherlands and the Schloss was left essentially vacant for the remainder of its existence. Despite the building's several-decade vacancy, however, the Schloss was certainly put to use. In 1928 it housed the German Academic Exchange Service [DAAD], which had been founded in 1925. After the Second World War, the architect Hans Scharoun was named by the Allies as director of the city's building department. He utilized the Schloss to hold a number of exhibits, themes ranging from modern French painting (Petras 103) and the failed 1848 revolution (105) to the so-called "degenerate art" formerly banned by the Nazis (104). One exhibition, entitled *Berlin plant—Erster Bericht*, even featured Scharoun's own aspirations for reconstruction (98). Referring to the Schloss' 1950 destruction, Goerd Peschken poses the question: "Warum mußten seine

Mauern fallen, nachdem sie schon 32 Jahre – eine ganze Generation lang – Museen und Sozialeinrichtungen in sich gefaßt hatte?" (qtd. in Petras 6).

Despite having played virtually no role in the catastrophic thirty years following the Kaiser's 1918 abdication, the Schloss fell victim to a reactionary ambition. There would be neither repair nor renovation for Berlin's damaged Stadtschloss as would be successfully accomplished with residences in Munich, Würzburg, Stuttgart—even several miles west in Charlottenburg. Ironically, even the Russians repaired their own Schlüter structure damaged in World War II: the impressive *Peterhof* in St. Petersburg. Not so in Berlin.

In 1950 Ragnar Josephson, a Swedish professor, chastised those in power for their decision, while also warning them of how history would remember the motivation for their decision:

> The people in power in East Berlin perceive the fame of the Palace as a discordant note from a long past cult of nobility. This has irritated their sensitive eardrums and must now be hushed. They prefer to hear their own noises on the demonstration square which they have built on the site of the demolished Palace. Yet this bleak square will also one day become a monument, a monument to lack of respect, to narrow mindedness, and to spiritual poverty. (qtd. in Boddien, "War Damage" 17)

III. The *Schlossplatz* in the GDR: From Vacancy to Palast der Republik

"There is no greater immortality than to occupy a place you cannot fill."
-Napoleon

Schinkel's *Neue Wache* in Berlin, built in 1818, has been the site of several "renovations" (each following a change in political system) to introduce different memorials, each of which publicly portrayed a decidedly different political ideology. In the opening paragraph to an article on this structure, Miller pinpoints the controversy which surrounds architectural debates and urban landscape in contemporary Berlin. The (architectural) balance holds on either side the respective weights of history and ideology. Consider Miller's words:

> Since the beginning of the eighteenth century the instability of the Prussian/German state has affected the shape of Berlin. Constant shifts in the boundaries of the empire as well as in its ideology have forced countless architectural redefinitions of the center of its capital. The decisions to preserve, renovate, or replace Berlin's monuments have thus always been caught between considerations of their ideological impact and their effect on the body of historic documentation. (Miller 228)

Though Miller refers to the situation surrounding a memorial, much the same applies to the Stadtschloss debate. Both the Palast der Republik and the Schloss are caught between exactly those two opposing principles described by Miller: "their ideological impact and their effect on the body of historical documentation" (Ibid). Does one principle outweigh the other? Can a building's historical significance trump a tainted ideology, allowing it to maintain a prominent place in the same urban landscape that the building's ideology has visibly wounded?

On the other hand, at what point might an unwanted ideology, e.g. Nazism, justify eliminating a viable historical structure? In comparing buildings to state officials, Elizabeth Strom poses a similar question from a different angle:

> Berliners have a vivid awareness of the potency of physical symbols....Berlin, which has served as the capital of so many notoriously failed regimes, has several times in modern history been the site of the construction and deconstruction of the built symbols. As first socialist, then Nazi, and today communist rulers have been purged from the political scene, Berlin planners have had to address the question of whether buildings and monuments can be so imbued with the ethos of their creators that they too must be 'purged' in order to assure the new regime a fresh start. Germans refer to state officials who are thoroughly identified with a discredited regime as politically *belastet*, or 'burdened.' Can buildings also be politically and morally burdened? (67)

This entire study focuses on two buildings, both of which were (and for many still are) certainly identified with a particular "discredited regime," as Strom puts it. After examining at the end of Chapter II the fate of the Stadtschloss, this chapter turns its attention to the subsequent vacancy and, finally, the building that was Palast der Republik.

In 1949 there was a need, notes Brian Ladd, for the new GDR to "establish its own identity, distinct from both the previous (nazi) regime and the rival West German state" ("East German Political Monuments," 91). Nowhere would this identity be on such display as in the capital city of (East) Berlin, particularly since its West Berlin counterpart belonged to a western nation and reflected a liberal democratic political ideology and capitalist way of life. Nowhere else in the GDR would the architecture be as transparent—certainly also to the West—as in Berlin. The need to "establish its own identity" no doubt played a large role in influencing major decisions regarding the rebuilding of East Berlin's architecture.

Paul Connerton makes the following observation of regime changes: "To pass judgment on the practices of the old regime is the constitutive act of the new order" (7). The GDR did well to reflect this statement, as its regime (under significant Soviet guidance) made swift and permanent changes. The topography of a city like Berlin saw as much change as anything, for one in the politics of names. Public streets and plazas were named after communist historical figures and socialist leaders instead of Hohenzollern monarchs and members of the royal family.

One of the most intense decisions involved the key structure at the focal point of Berlin's very center: the site of Schlüter's damaged—but intact—royal palace. The GDR decision to tear down the Schloss fit right into what Ladd identifies as the necessity to establish a distinct identity; it also typified Connerton's comment about passing judgment on the old regime.

Of the 1950 debate writes Goerd Peschken: "Diese Debatte erforderte mehr Mut als die heutige, sie bleibt menschlich bewegend und für uns Deutsche bedeutsam, ganz gleich, wie die gegenwärtige Debatte ausgehen wird" (qtd. in Petras 6).

Walter Ulbricht's statement on July 23, 1950, at the Third Party Congress of the GDR's ruling Socialist Unity Party summed up the attitude of the decision makers:

> Das Zentrum unserer Hauptstadt, der Lustgarten und das Gebiet der Schloßruine, müssen zu dem großen Demonstrationsplatz werden, auf dem der Kampfwille und Aufbauwille unseres Volkes Ausdruck finden können. (qtd. in Petras 115)

Ulbricht's words demonstrate the Communist ambition to cut ties with that part of their German past and begin their own new chapter.

In hearing of the planned destruction, there were naturally protests from intellectuals and others from the West. Yet nothing any Westerner could say would have

influenced what would be done on Berlin's most hallowed ground. The decision was even controversial in the East Berlin public forum; certainly there were those there who also opposed the palace's destruction. Hans Scharoun, city planning councilor[5] in Berlin, advocated the preservation and repair of the damaged Schloss. With this 1946 statement he stressed the importance of the building to German architecture:

> [Der Wiederaufbau] dürfte bei der Bedeutung die dem Schloß als dem hervorragendsten Bau des norddeutschen Barock und einzig erhaltenem Werk Schlüters zukommt, als ein Gebot erscheinen, zumal seine städtebauliche Funktion...einen künstlerisch prägnanten Ausdruck verlangt. (Stadtverwaltung, "Umstrittenes Erbe")

Another building councilor, Heinrich Starck,[6] saw the Schloss ruin in an altogether different light. His own 1946 statement reflects the common (at least for those with communist/socialist ideological views) association of the Schloss with Prussian militarism leading to fascism and war: "Das Schloss war das Symbol einer für uns nicht tragbaren Zeit. Man sollte diese Dinge beseitigen" (Ibid.).

East German art historian Richard Hamann, an authority on baroque art, also publicly and emphatically defended the Schloss on account of its aesthetic architectural value. Hamann, here quoted by Ladd, compares the Schloss to other cities' central structures that have remained despite revolution and ideological change: "The Louvre in Paris has survived all revolutions, and the Kremlin in Moscow, likewise the former seat of forces opposed by the government, is still today the seat of government" (*Ghosts* 56).

Yet such arguments as Scharoun's and Hamann's were to no avail in the young GDR, as it was those in Starck's camp who would prevail. For it was not a pseudo-Kremlin which GDR officials were originally interested in creating and maintaining in

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[5] Scharoun's original German title was *Stadtrat für Bau- und Wohnungswesen.*
[6] Starck was identified as *Stellvertretender Stadtrat für Bau- und Wohnungswesen.*

central Berlin. Rather, they were thinking of something along the lines of another well-known Moscow site: Red Square. A central, meaningful place for the people to be able to assemble would be crucial to the socialist atmosphere and mindset in their new East Berlin. As cited earlier, Ulbricht had called for a "Demonstrationsplatz" where the GDR citizens' "Kampfwille und Aufbauwille" could be expressed (Petras 115). Writes Ladd: "It was above all [the GDR leaders'] desire to create a vast square for mass demonstrations that prompted them to demolish the badly damaged palace in 1950" ("Monuments" 92). The dynamiting on the Schloss began September 6, 1950, and dragged on for three months until the project's completion on December 30 (131).

The Schloss' destruction in December of 1950 was as a single event successful in establishing a new identity in East Berlin—an identity that would last forty years and, in a very real sense, beyond. SED authorities had accomplished one powerful goal: altogether eliminating the most visible and hallowed Hohenzollern structure from Berlin's landscape. Strom remarks:

> Certainly the decision of GDR leaders in 1950 to blow up the remains of the damaged City Palace...was not made on engineering grounds alone; to all observers this act represented an intentional and dramatic break with German history. (68)

GDR authorities were, in essence, placing the blame for World War II and the Holocaust on the Nazis, whom they viewed as the natural heirs of the conservative Hohenzollern monarchy. By tearing down such structures as the Schloss (there were many other buildings and monuments which met a similar fate), they were essentially ending that dark chapter in German history, and in effect, freeing themselves from an emotional burden they could now place onto those in the West.

The West, meanwhile, though dealing with blame and guilt differently, was in a sense similar in that it diverted some of the blame to those in the East. The unique bipolar climate in Berlin and Germany during the Cold War not only allowed for allocation of blame; it encouraged the same. Commenting on the lingering Cold War bias widely held in the post-Wall West, Laurence McFalls writes: "This hypothesis of East German backwardness, of course, fed into the West German Cold War stereotype of the GDR as the perpetuation of Nazi authoritarianism" (303). On the other hand, many East Germans continued to associate fascism with capitalism, from which their government claimed to be protecting its citizens with the Berlin Wall. Friedrich Ebert, East Berlin's mayor in 1950 and son of the Weimar Republic's first President of the same name, shared this opinion, as he blamed the "eighty percent destroyed" Schloss on "English and American bombing attacks" (Ladd, *Ghosts* 56-57). According to Ladd, "Ebert's allocation of blame typified the early Cold War: Hitler bore some responsibility, but the main source of troubles was the current capitalist enemy" (57).

Such misled Cold War conceptions (from both sides) illustrate the complicated nature Germans have had in dealing with the past during the existence of two separate rival German states. Each state guided its citizens in dealing with the German past in a different way, often readily shifting much of the blame on to its respective ideological counterpart state. Not until 1990 were Germans for the first time confronted with addressing their past together—as one nation. That is a challenge which the German people are forced to address in many areas today, one of which is Berlin's urban landscape. The lingering bias ingrained in many of Berlin's citizens is not easily

forgotten. Thus the Schloss debate is thereby intrinsically linked to the notion of a unified nation dealing with its complex past and searching for its current identity.

Though many proposals were offered, essentially nothing was done in two decades on the *Schlossplatz*, which had been renamed *Marx-Engels-Platz*. Ladd writes that "plans for new, monumental buildings came and went" and little changed for years, "as the proletarian will became less demonstrative (or as the GDR became less bourgeois)" (57).

To the west of the vacant site Schinkel's *Bauakademie* was torn down and the East German Foreign Ministry Building built in its place in 1961. This imposing new structure incidentally had enough space to accommodate offices for a united socialist Germany. Plans at *Marx-Engels-Platz* remained stagnant, however, and for the time being the planned site was used as a parking lot.

Meanwhile, in the time that had elapsed since the palace's destruction, the Cold War had been heating up on the international scene. No longer just a difference in post-war political ideologies, now the relationship between the members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Warsaw Pact had genuinely soured. In a period characterized by suspicion and competition, opposing sides anticipated the worst. NATO prepared for a potential Soviet invasion of Western Europe, while Soviet and GDR authorities erected what they called an "anti-fascist protection wall" in Berlin—which would come to be more commonly known as the Berlin Wall.

Despite SED party leader Walter Ulbricht's infamous statement of assurance in June of 1961, "Niemand hat die Absicht, eine Mauer zu errichten," on August 13 that same summer the border was indeed closed and secured with barbed wire and military

presence. The construction of the wall immediately ensued. As the historian Eckhart Stratenschulte puts it, "In der Nacht vom 12. auf den 13. August 1961 hatte das Undenkbare dennoch begonnen" (99). In actuality, for the city, the wall served to further isolate West Berlin from the rest of West Germany and Western Europe. It also widened the rift between East and West Germany, since that entire border had been closed off and guarded as well.

The erection of the Berlin Wall was by no means a sudden or isolated incident in the Cold War era. 1956 and 1968 revolts were violently squashed by Soviet troops in Budapest and Prague, respectively. The United States deployed troops to defend against communist expansionism—both in Korea during the 1950s and in Vietnam during the 1960s. Both were long, drawn-out affairs that lasted several difficult years. Soviet military action in Afghanistan in December 1979 renewed international tensions after a several-year period of relative security.

Neither was the Berlin Wall's erection the only major event in the city of Berlin during the Cold War period. In June 1948 Soviet occupational authorities blocked road and rail traffic entering or exiting West Berlin. They also shut off water and electricity within the Western part of the city, essentially creating a type of siege situation for West Berlin's citizens. Kirchner describes it as "Druck auf eine Millionenstadt mit verletzbaren Versorgungswegen und in ungünstiger goegraphischer Lage" (14).

Those events prompted American and British pilots to launch under the direction of American General Lucius Clay what became known as the Berlin Airlift—a continuous stream of airplanes raining food and supplies to the helpless West Berliners. Clay described the Western perspective as such: "Wenn Berlin fällt, folgt

Westdeutschland als nächstes" (Ibid). The airlift continued until October 1949—a total of 462 days. At its height in April, over 1,000 flights left each day and transported as much as 13,000 tons of supplies to Berlin daily (17). The Soviets, impressed by the West's determination for maintaining control of West Berlin, opened the borders on May 12. In all, over 20,000 planes made the trip to West Berlin as part of the airlift during this period.

A few months after the erection of the wall—in October 1961, a standoff occurred at Checkpoint Charlie involving a number of American and Soviet tanks. When several American military officers were not allowed to return through the checkpoint—one of just four (albeit heavily guarded) "gateways" between East and West Berlin—tanks began to assemble on Friedrichsstraße facing each other from across the border. Although no shots were fired, many—most of all Berlin's citizens in both East and West—feared their still recovering city would witness the start of yet another war. Fortunately for Berlin, no shots were ever fired, and the war remained "cold": one fought with spies, positioning, diplomacy, and an arms race.

While the Cold War may have been about the world's two superpowers, the central location that defined that so-called "war" was in neither the Soviet Union nor the United States. That defining place, rather, was Berlin. The city that was trying to pick up its pieces and start over after total destruction in 1945 became the world's political focal point in the next two decades, though it had little to do with Berlin's own citizens. The city was divided, first formally, then with a wall. And the former German capital grew apart as did the entire world around it.

This political and ideological rift in the city no doubt exists to a certain extent today, and has molded the way most Berliners perceive the Palast der Republik. For many, the Palast represents more than anything one side of the bipolar Cold War ideology. Make no mistake: the alleged "Mauer in den Köpfen" (wall in the heads) (McFalls 304) is very real in Berlin today, even sixteen progressive years after reunification. This psychological "wall" in the minds of many of Berlin's citizens guides the respective arguments both for and against the Stadtschloss reconstruction.

In 1968 the SED *Politbüro* made the following statement regarding the future of GDR architecture, which would affect first and foremost the East Berlin capital:

> Bold and original urbanistic and architectural solutions are needed to counteract monotony...in order to give built manifestation of the optimism and strength with which our people create socialism. (Wise 51)

Erich Honecker succeeded Ulbricht as head of state in 1971 and soon after began construction on what architectural historian Michael Wise calls "the flashiest element on the Marx-Engels-Platz" (Ibid.). A structure would now epitomize the GDR ideal that Ulbricht hoped to accomplish in a large square at the renamed *Schlossplatz*. Wise describes Honecker's structure, completed in 1976, as follows:

> The building was encased in copper-tinted reflective glass and white marble. Its oblong form equally recalled the Palace of the Soviets in Moscow and the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. and filled roughly the footprint previously covered by a central courtyard of the Royal Palace leveled in 1950. The design of this people's palace strove for what its chief architect Heinz Graffunder called a "bright, festive elegance," and it did succeed in bringing unaccustomed glitz to the dreary East Berlin center. The colored façade mirrored sunlight during the day and shone by night from inner illumination, giving the city a new focal point at the eastern terminus of Unter den Linden. (Ibid.)

Wise calls the Palast's interiors "lavish and fanciful," and describes its decorative elements such as "myriad chandeliers of dangling glass ropes, a black and white marble

floor in a swirling psychedelic pattern, and curved banquettes of plush tufted velvet in a series of theme restaurants whose styles ranged from faux neoclassical to rustic baroque" (51-52). The abundance of lighted lamps and chandeliers earned the building the nickname "Erichs Lampenladen," with reference to Honecker. Aside from the many restaurants, cafes and banquet halls, the Palast housed the GDR *Volkskammer* (parliament), a bowling alley, and a 5,000-seat auditorium for musical performances. Both inside and out, the structure was indeed a sharp contrast to its dark gray surroundings in East Berlin's center.

The palace was designed to be attractive to East Berlin (and East German) citizens, and most would agree it succeeded in that role in the GDR. Godfrey Carr describes the importance of the so-called "Volkspalast" [people's palace] to its citizens, something unique to East Germany:

> It was here that citizens of East Berlin were married, celebrated birthdays, and took part in a range of leisure pursuits, all at very little cost. It was open to all and affordable by all. As such, it represented a much appreciated facility for urban cultural and social life unparalleled in the west of the country. (338)

According to Wise, the concept and form of the Palast were imitated in "communist-built halls" for Prague, Sofia, and Havana (52).

However widespread it may have been, admiration of the Palast was by no means universal, not even in the GDR. In 1980 François Bondy still refers to regret in East Germany on account of the fallen Schloss. This was decades after the Schloss' destruction but still before reunification—and perhaps more significantly—while the then very new Palast der Republik was proudly standing on the very site. He comments on the role East Berlin and East Germany would play in supporting the Prussian Cultural Foundation and an exhibition illustrating both the glory and problems of Prussia. With

this exhibition came a renewed appreciation for architects and urban planners such as Schinkel and Lenne who are part of that tradition. Concerning the Schloss Bondy writes:

> In East Berlin, the complete razing of the ruined Royal Castle of Berlin and other such acts of destruction are now regretted, and national pride is turning toward the monarchic tradition, architecture and monuments. (275)

After the Wall fell in fall of 1989, the Palast was the site of a monumental occasion in German history. It was here, in July of 1990, that the *Volkskammer* voted to dissolve the GDR and join the West German *Bundesrepublik*, thereby uniting the German people once more into a single nation. This event would provide an important argument for advocates of the Palast in the coming architectural debate, who have said that this event alone makes the Palast worth keeping on account of its role in reunification.

McFalls brings to light a crucial difference in the post-Wall life of former East Germans as compared to those from the West:

> Whereas West Germans had by and large grown up with or into a modern, liberal-democratic capitalist society, East Germans had cultivated traditional petit-bourgeois values—modesty, solidarity, and equality—that were hardly adapted to a competitive, individualistic consumer society. (303)

Citing Jürgen Habermas along with Michael Brie and Dieter Klein, McFalls points out that "even critical intellectuals in East and West embraced the hypothesis that East German society was simply retarded in its modernization and would catch up to the West with time" (Ibid.). This oft-voiced though uninformed view, on account of its belittling and arrogant nature, only succeeded in widening the rift between respective supporters of the Palast and of the Schloss.

Though to some a visible representation of a corrupt East German government, the Palast der Republik could in no way be equivocated to Hitler's bunker or the *Stasi* headquarters, even to the most biased Western opinion. Neither was the Palast first and

foremost identifiable as the place of government, despite housing the *Volkskammer*, which met just a few times per year. It was open to the public, a place to be socially utilized and celebrated by the people of the GDR. In fact, the building itself was far less a representation of GDR authority than was the ground it stood upon. Likewise, for many, its erection paled in comparison to the Stadtschloss' destruction. The Palast's placement far outweighed its function in the attention it gained and controversy that surrounded it, especially after the Wall had fallen. Had it been placed almost anywhere else in the city, it would very unlikely have ever been in any danger. Considering where it stood and how its predecessor was so hastily removed, however, the Palast der Republik found itself suddenly the center of a nation's attention.

IV. The Post-Wall Debate and 2002 Decision

"What the debates reveal above all else is the dilemma of attempting to express a unified cultural identity in public buildings which are manifestations of a history of political discontinuity and ideological antagonism."
-Godfrey Carr (338)

Reunification has presented Germany with a serious issue, which—according to Godfrey Carr—the nation had been able to avoid since the end of the Second World War: namely, what it means to be German. This issue has led to "a profound trauma," the depth of which, he writes, "is seen most obviously in the realm of architecture and especially in Berlin" (336). He then addresses the importance of resolving this issue through urban planning: "The many ugly gaps in the very heart of the city which were the legacy of the Cold War now had to be filled, but how and to what end?" (Ibid).

This is another crucial question that has lain at the heart of the Stadtschloss Debate since Reunification in 1990: how does Berlin move forward architecturally in the post-Wall era? Nearly two decades later, the question has been answered many different times in different places throughout the city. Yet, as one might expect, it has hardly been with the same consistent answer.

Berlin has long been a city with many faces, particularly in the past two centuries. Consider the whirlwind of political, societal and industrial change that has swept across the young European metropolis on the sandy banks of the Spree: Prussian monarchy, *das deutsche Kaisertum* and the late republic; Fredrick the Great, Napoleon and Bismarck; Hitler, Stalin and Ulbricht; industrialization, hyper-inflation and war; the Enlightenment, the Holocaust and the Wall; destruction, division and reconstruction; reunification, debate and globalization. Each of these persons, movements, events and ideas—as indeed many

others—has not only had a great influence on Berlin. Each has also made literally a "landmark" impression, leaving behind its (his) own ideology on the city's buildings and layout. Berlin is an architectural kaleidoscope, which is obviously part of what makes it so unique in today's Europe. Through its current urban face Twenty-First-Century Berlin still bears witness to each of the very different eras it has seen and survived.

MIT architectural scholar Francesca Rogier likens the post-Wall era in Berlin to the city's period of *Aufbau* and change following Germany's initial unification in 1871. She writes, "The post-Wall phase of Berlin's history that began with the 1990 unification is already being referred to, with a characteristic combination of pride and sarcastic pessimism, as the second *Gründerzeit*, or 'founding time'" (44). She cites the addition of public buildings in Berlin's center, changes to infrastructure, and "rings of dense apartment blocks" spilling into rural areas as the parallel factors connecting both eras. In 1871 it was French war reparations that financed the changes; following reunification it has primarily been Western taxes and entrepreneurial investments.

Rogier's comparison is quite viable. Of his 1891/92 visit, Mark Twain called *Gründerzeit* Berlin "the newest city I have ever encountered," claiming it "took [him] by surprise" (Kruse 34). Till entitled her book about the current post-Wall city: *The New Berlin*. She quoted one interviewee as saying:

> Other cities are completed; you know where everything is. Berlin is not a completed 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. (38)

Certainly Rogier is on to something with her comparison of the two Berlin eras that saw the respective "turns" of the past two centuries.

One might argue that the city has been in a continuous state of flux since the *Gründerzeit*. While this—depending on how strictly one interprets the term "continuous"—may well be true, change and growth are not necessarily equivocal. Both the *Gründerzeit* era and today's Berlin are identifiable with unification and growth. In terms of state unification and a concerted trend toward national unity, the similarities lie in plain sight.

Most would have to agree with Rogier's point from an architectural standpoint as well. The only difference might, in fact, be the increased multi-level complexity of today's Berlin, given the range of additional events during the past century of German (Berlin) history. These events themselves have, in no small way, become part of Berlin's present.

Thus, in this post-Wall, pseudo-*Gründerzeit* era stigmatized by clashing ideologies and cultural identity questions without answers, the Stadtschloss debate took center stage. "To rebuild or not to rebuild" was the question in the city divided—no longer by a wall, instead simply by public opinion. According to Rogier, "the question of who decides [the conflicts'] outcome is crucial" (Ibid).

The question of what to do with the *Schlossplatz* quickly became a matter of public debate and concern after Reunification. The notion of reconstructing a Schloss on the site was aided by the discovery of asbestos in the Palast der Republik. On September 19, 1990, the *Volkskammer* decided to close the Palast on account of the harmful material they discovered in the summer of that significant year. According to Berlin's *Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung*, over 720 tons of raw asbestos were found to have

been used in some 5,000 tons of the structure's material—a financially crippling hazard not uncommon to buildings of this era ("Asbestsanierung"). In October 1997 the renovation was begun to safely remove the asbestos from the building. After five years and over € 60 million, the renovation was finally completed in November 2002 (Ibid.).

In 1993 the debate intensified when supporters of the Schloss reconstruction—led by the Hamburg businessman William von Boddien—set up a painted canopy around the perimeter of the *Schlossplatz*, simulating what a reconstructed façade would look like. The organization Boddien established, called the *Förderverein Berliner Stadtschloss e. V.*, continues to lead the reconstruction initiative today. The simulation remained into 1994, and was intended to win the support of Berliners by depicting the aesthetic advantages the baroque Schloss had on the Palast.

Similarly, in 2004, the opposing supporters of maintaining the Palast placed large white block letters spelling out "Zweifel" (doubt) on the roof of the Palast facing the West. Their intention was to create just that: doubt in the minds of Berliners as to whether an expensive demolition and reconstruction were really the best decision.

The Palast der Republik is more than just an expendable building, however. Godfrey Carr calls it "a relic of the communist regime in a very prominent site" (338). Given its location, the Palast allowed its proponents to bring their argument of justifying the place of communist architecture to the arena of a very opinionated and concerned public.

Advocating the Palast's preservation and criticizing the Schloss are strategically one in the same. Thus, a significant part of the reasoning of those who backed

maintaining the Palast took on that secondary role: casting doubt on the notion of a reconstructed Schloss.

One of the major concerns many opponents to reconstruction share is the view that a return to the glorification of this Prussian architecture will also lead to a renewed admiration for Prussian militarism. Robert Taylor already voiced this opinion of Prussian architecture in his 1985 book *Hohenzollern Berlin: Construction and Reconstruction.* Taylor summarizes in his introduction: "Hohenzollern kings and emperors tried to use architecture as a symbolic buttress for their rule" (1). His ideas, though written before the debate took center stage in the 1990s, mirror many of the arguments of the Schloss' opponents.

As much as it may have meant to Germans, Taylor maintains the Schloss was always disliked by non-Germans. He writes that non-German historians and journalists "almost always disliked" the Schloss, and "few...lamented its demise" (30). To a 1919 French diplomat, it was "pompous and theatrical;" to a 1972 American merely "an ugly stone building" (Ibid). To another American, all Prussian palaces are simply "museums of war" (28).

Despite the unflattering view of the Schloss that certainly may have been prevalent beyond the German borders, one might inquire as to its relevance. After all, it is the *German* identity that is at stake here, namely: how Germans identify with themselves, their nation and its past. In his 1988 critique of Taylor's book, Rand Carter criticizes that the author "relies so heavily not on the judgments of architectural historians (nor on the view of the majority of the Berlin population)...but rather on the opinions of ideologues, politicians, and journalists" (Carter 93). For that matter, especially valued are American

and French opinions, "whose own nationalist fervor made them unlikely to respond favorably to expression of Prussian might and majesty" (Ibid.). Carter also points out the fact that even Taylor, himself, was writing to an English-speaking audience, which may have subtly influenced his own portrayal of Hohenzollern architecture (Ibid.). Hence, one must take caution with the wealth of comments that abound on the Stadtschloss debate. Impartial perspectives are rare, and scholarly literature is certainly no exception.

Interestingly, Carter points out that even the East Germans had begun to become more accepting of certain Prussian images. The irony is thick, of course, since those who indeed tore down the Schloss in the first place were as anti-Prussian as anyone. So Carter:

> [T]he East German authorities have within the past decade returned Christian Daniel Rauch's Equestrian Monument to Frederick the Great to its original site on Unter den Linden along with such other former ideological offenders as the sculptural groups of Goddesses and nude Warriors by assistants and students of Rauch, which once again stand on the granite pedestals above the breakwaters of Schinkel's Palace Bridge. The Baroque Arsenal, no longer seen as a symbol of "monarchic tyranny," has been converted into a museum outlining a Marxist view of history....After four decades of total neglect, the neobaroque Evangelical Cathedral nearby is under restoration as a symbol of religious toleration in the socialist East German state. (94)

Hence, even East Germans seemed to have appreciated the architectural value of these important central structures to German citizens, since they brought some of the structures back *in spite of* the ideology represented.

Finally, whatever happens in post-reunification Berlin should not be stained by ideological prejudices and "we vs. you" comparisons. Rather, those responsible for how future Berlin looks and what its walls will say must have a different approach altogether. They must decide the city's future by looking to its past. They should also let the past speak for itself, rather than hiding certain parts of it. How, indeed, can history teach us anything if we are not willing to consider it because we are too fearful of what it might

have to say? The city's walls should explain the past—dark chapters alongside proud ones—and perhaps influence how a given society impacts the future.

Before November of 1989, a wall prevented Berlin's two separate identities from interacting or mixing with one another. Perhaps more precisely, the governments on either side of this wall prevented any interaction. Carter summarizes Taylor's prediction in 1985 that the "current effort of the authorities in both East and West Berlin to use architecture to score political points will, like that of their Hohenzollern and Nazi predecessors, probably fail" (Carter 94). To a large extent, time has proven his statement to be correct. Yet, judging by the conclusions in his book, he would almost certainly oppose a Stadtschloss reconstruction today. Is that not contradictory? Would not disguising the past be in itself using architecture (or the lack thereof) to "score political points"? Carter writes that "great buildings have a way of transcending temporal politics" (Ibid.). The Berlin Stadtschloss truly was—surely for Berlin and Prussia, if not also for Germany—a great building.

Taylor calls into question the actual significance the Schloss had to the Hohenzollern monarchy—a significance upon which much of Schloss advocates' argument is based. He points out Frederick the Great's move to Sanssouci in Potsdam, as well as several of the subsequent kings who had other preferences all the way to William II, the "Reisekaiser" (traveling Kaiser), whose residence there he also downplays (31). Were the Schloss not important to the Hohenzollern dynasty—for whom it essentially was built, and without whom it would never have had such a prominent place in the city—how could one justify tearing down another building to re-erect it? And this nearly a century after the last ruling monarch stepped down! Challenging the Schloss'

significance to the monarchy weakens its historical relevance and therewith the hope for its reconstruction.

Contemporaries of the Palast were certainly not the first to criticize the Schloss and Hohenzollern architecture. The Hohenzollern era had its share of critics as well, particularly in the *Gründerzeit* era of the *Kaiserreich.* Alfred Döblin entitled a 1910 essay on Berlin "Das märkische Ninive," in which he wrote of his hometown: "Hier war vom Anfang an alles verdorben" (313). The anonymous author of the 1892 essay "Berlin die Stimme Deutschlands?" harshly criticized the city's architecture as well as the general appreciation for art there: "Welche Gedankenarmut, Geschmacklosigkeit und Oberflächigkeit Berlin in seiner Bauten offen zur Schau stellt" (219).[7]

Karl Scheffler[8] wrote in 1910 an entire book, entitled *Berlin – ein Stadtschicksal,* on Berlin's cultural and societal shortcomings, one chapter of which he dedicated to "Gründerarchitektur." Despite his extensive, overbearing—if not at times reprehensible—criticism of Berlin's Slavic inhabitants, what he writes in regard to Berlin's architecture is certainly worthy of consideration. He refers to Berlin as "die Stadt der tausend Stile" (158), and "dieses tolle architektonische Parvenütum der Gegenwart" (156). He condemns the capital for its "Traditionarmut und Kulturlosigkeit" (164), as well as its "verderblichsten und kulturfeindlichsten Eklektizismus" (156) and "Emporkömmlingsstil" (158). Likening it to architecture in the young United States, he

[7] The anonymous author freely voices in this article strong negative remarks toward citizens of both Jewish and Slavic descent. This citation should be considered only in regard to the anonymous author's comments on Berlin's architecture, as this author wishes neither to reflect nor condone the racially subjective views expressed.

[8] Similarly, Scheffler's writing includes pejorative sections where he criticizes Berlin on account of its Eastern and Slavic inhabitants. While considering Scheffler's assessment of Berlin, the author of this thesis wishes not to advocate the short-sighted racial views expressed by Scheffler.

coins the phrase "yankeehaft" (165), meanwhile citing "amerikanistische Stupidität" (160) and "Quantität statt Qualität" (171) as typical qualities of Berlin.

Other contemporaries of Scheffler, such as city councilor Walter Behrendt, appreciated, for example, Berlin's American flavor. In his 1929 journal on urban planning, Behrendt complimented Berlin's ability to combine "European tradition with...American modernity" (Till 56).

Yet the cutting and complementary remarks alike are nothing more than a matter of opinion. The debate essentially has little to do with anyone's degree of fondness or affinity for the city of Berlin. Rather, the Schloss' historical presence in Berlin and its value as a baroque representation are the key principles at stake. No one erased certain buildings from Vienna's landscape because a group of critics did not care for Art Nouveau architecture.

Berlin certainly was a working-class city, one that grew exponentially during the industrial Nineteenth Century on account of immigration and opportunity. Lest we forget, New York took much the same path—albeit somewhat earlier—to becoming a world metropole. Chicago was very comparable to Berlin in its Nineteenth Century growth, yet the cosmopolitan face of today's Chicago has long since shed its reputation as a reckless meatpacking city run by bootleggers and gangsters.

Today's Berlin has no doubt also advanced from its turn-of-the-century state characterized by *Mietskasernen* and a poverty-stricken working class. Despite its tumultuous Twentieth Century full of catastrophe and change, Berlin has regained its prominent position as Germany's national capital. Its past will not be forgotten, as there are many prominent and striking visual places to commemorate that, such as Daniel

Libeskind's renowned Jewish Museum, the *Topographie des Terrors*, the *Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe*, and the *Neue Synagoge* on Oranienburgerstraße, to name but a few. A new Stadtschloss façade will do nothing to erase these current memorials. Moreover, reviving the city's longtime focal point prior politically-motivated elimination should be no cause for concern in Berlin.

That the Stadtschloss was once the focal point in Berlin is a difficult concept to grasp in the Twenty-First Century. Today one thinks first of the Brandenburg Gate as Berlin's *Wahrzeichen*: the paradoxical "gateway" to the city that was incorporated into the Wall for 28 years, but is once again open and heralded as a symbol of unity and freedom in Europe. Others may think of the Reichstag, the *Fernsehturm*, *Schloß Charlottenburg*, or the *Siegessäule* as other symbolic structures in Berlin. Fewer Berliners remain who have ever seen the Stadtschloss before its 1950 destruction. Even before its removal, the Schloss was avoided by two regimes over three decades.

Though its prominence was lost early in the Twentieth Century, the Schloss had always been *the* Berlin symbol until that point. In his 1822 "Briefe aus Berlin," Heinrich Heine provides a vivid description of the *Schlossplatz*, albeit in his typical ironic style. He points out the "ewiges Menschengedränge" on the *lange Brücke*, certainly quite telling of early Nineteenth Century Berlin, when the city was swiftly developing into a *Großstadt* (10). He further describes:

> Auf dieser Brücke ist ein ewiges Menschengedränge. Sehen Sie sich mahl um. Welche große, herrliche Straße! Das ist eben die Königstraße, wo ein Kaufmannsmagazin ans andre grenzt, und die bunten, leuchtenden Waarenausstellungen fast das Auge blenden. Laßt uns weiter gehen, wir gelangen hier auf den Schloßplatz. Rechts das Schloß, ein hohes, großartiges Gebäude. Die Zeit hat es grau gefärbt, und gab ihm ein düsteres, aber desto majestätischeres Ansehen. (Ibid.)

A century later, in 1931, Scheffler still wrote convincingly of the Schloss—thirteen years after it was vacated: "Schlüter's Schlossbau ist die schönste Berliner Architektur geworden" (*Wandlungen*, 71).

Even the Brandenburg Gate was built to complement the Schloss. Intentionally designed after the Propylaea—entrance to the Acropolis of Athens—Berlin's gate was meant to draw attention to Unter den Linden's culmination. On the other side of the city's grand boulevard stood the "Acropolis" of the "Spree-Athen": the Berlin Stadtschloss.

To fully appreciate many Berliners' desire for a restoration of the Schloss, one really must consider the importance of aesthetically significant architecture to the citizens there. They take a pride in their city's appearance. According to Jane Kramer, Berliners continue to believe in their 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. ("Living with Berlin," 54).[9]

Berliners have "believed in" the Stadtschloss as long as any other piece of architecture in the city's storied history of growth, turbulence, and change. Since becoming the Hohenzollern residence in 1443, Berlin was a capital city until its fall in 1945. In 1995, it was once again given the chance to be the capital of a united German nation.

Without question, the decision to make Berlin the German capital worked in favor of those advocating the Schloss' reconstruction. Writes Strom: "The demise of the GDR and the decision to move the capital of united Germany to Berlin once more prompted discussion of the political significance of the urban landscape" (68). As the capital city,

[9] Quoted from Till, 56.

Berlin would be the face of united Germany. What Europe and the rest of the world would see in Berlin would mold their impression of the German nation. Berlin had become Germany's beacon once again. Europe eagerly awaits Berlin's development as an international metropole, a city reborn into the present era.

With that in mind, how the city looks and what visitors—political guests, business travelers and tourists alike—see and perceive of the city is by no means unimportant. Though those local to Berlin are, for obvious reasons, more directly concerned with their city's appearance, its urban landscape has also become a matter of national interest.

Moving the capital to Berlin in 1995 also gave Germans a chance to change their image. Till summarizes the thoughts of "many officials and boosters" regarding the new government buildings in the *Regierungsviertel*, who hoped the new architecture would express "ambition and pride" instead of "the modest discretion" of the former capital, Bonn (56). Oscar Schneider, building minister to former chancellor Helmut Kohl had this to say about German identity in future architecture: "We Germans must finally take off this tattered Cinderella's dress and find our way back to a healthy self-confidence" (Wise 17).

Many argue that Berlin's current financial challenges (the city is over € 50 billion in debt) should be enough to dissuade the city from reconstructing a building bearing the Schloss façade, which has been estimated at € 80 million (*Berliner Extrablatt*, 35). Dr. Richard Schröder, Professor at the Humboldt University, criticizes this view by drawing two engaging while markedly pertinent comparisons in the realm of post-World War II reconstruction: "Zu teuer? Die Polen sind kein reiches Volk und haben trotzdem ihr Schloss von unten an neu aufgebaut. Die Dresdner haben mit dem Aufbau der

Frauenkirche bewiesen, dass da scheinbar Unmögliches möglich ist" ("Die Berliner Schlossdebatte," 148). These comments bring to light the underlining importance of a city maintaining a connection to its history. For Schröder, as for many of Berlin's citizens, that the Schloss should be reconstructed is simply a given. Rather, for them, the questions are *when* and *how*.

Dresden's 1743 baroque *Frauenkirche* is the quintessential example of a successful reconstruction in the absence of ample support from state funding. After having been leveled in the infamous Allied fire-bombings of February 1945, the city's architectural jewel lay in ruins for 45 years. When Germany was reunited, the church building was the same pile of rubble it had been in 1945. Shortly after reunification, however, enthusiastic and hopeful citizens founded an initiative to rebuild their church. The $170 million project was funded solely on the basis of donations—coming from over 600,000 individual benefactors (Siemon-Netto 11). Though some donors—such as the British royal family—were international, the majority were German citizens.

The scholar Uwe Siemon-Netto now calls the reconstructed church the "most important Lutheran sanctuary in Germany" (10). Rededicated in a Reformation service on October 31, 2005, the masterpiece has drawn much international attention in the architectural community. Boddien's camp in Berlin was surely watching, as they hope their own baroque project to the north would have similar success. One factor the Schloss has in common with the *Frauenkirche* may aid its donation success: the building will not have a political function. Unlike the *Frauenkirche*—which is once again being used by patient Dresdners as a place of worship—the Schloss will not be used for its original purpose. The Schloss will have a cultural function rather than a political one: housing the

Humboldt Forum along with various museum exhibits will work in its favor. There has already been a politically-heavy structure recently rebuilt in Berlin—and that for its original purpose: the Reichstag. Though controversial a decade ago during its beginning phase of renovation, surprisingly little political controversy still surrounds the home to the German parliament. The Reichstag's very existence plays an important role in justifying the Schloss' reconstruction. This is further discussed at the end of Chapter V.

Not to be overlooked is the motivation behind Schloss supporters' objective. Some, as journalist Joachim Fest, dwelled still on the "Communists' justification for destroying the palace in 1950" (Ladd, *Ghosts* 61). Ladd records Fest's 1991 statement:

> In the worldwide conflict that lies behind us, not the least of our goals was to prevent the advance of that kind of control. If the destruction of the palace was supposed to be the symbol of its victory, reconstruction would be the symbol of its failure" (Ibid.)

Despite the Schloss' politically motivated removal, no retaliating blow or symbolic nail in Communism's coffin should be the reasoning behind the Schloss' reconstruction. As Ladd points out, many former GDR citizens "saw the initiative to rebuild the royal palace, dominated by Westerners, as a denial of their experiences, or as an attempt to erase an unwanted chapter of recent German history" (62). If revenge were the reason for reconstruction, the initiative would have no legs on which to stand. Such thinking can only serve to define the debate as another East vs. West cultural inconsistency, which is to misjudge the situation entirely.

The debate centers, rather, on the central historical structure of a city deserving the restoration of this crucial part of its identity. The Schloss once belonged to the urban landscape that was recognized and enjoyed by its citizens—before there were two groups

of citizens separated, at first, only by a geographical distinction. A restored Schloss would again anchor the urban landscape with which all citizens once more can identify.

Not all Berliners, however, have been in favor of either the Schloss or the Palast. Many thought the site could be used to build something completely modern—and unrelated to either of the aforementioned edifices—as a type of compromise between the two lobbying factions. Says Carr: "Common to all these affairs is a hesitation between the desire, on the one hand, to link up with the past and, on the other, to affirm the foundation of a new state with emphatically modern, indeed daring architecture" (338).

In the eyes of those wishing to see neither the Palast nor a new Schloss façade, erecting a modern structure on the *Schlossplatz* would almost be the perfect answer to an impossible decision. The decision would thereby grant Berlin the opportunity to separate itself from its respective jaded pasts suggested by the site's two previous structures. It could also be a step toward a unified Berlin—the city of the future.

Yet so many felt that Berlin's history—for better or worse—is something the city will never be able to shed. Rather, its history makes a place what it is. Berlin's residents will not simply forget what has happened at a given site; nor will historians, scholars, journalists, visitors or tourists. Rather, history is what defines a city, and to hide from the past would be neither ethical, practical nor responsible.

Furthermore, cutting all ties to the past is hardly prerequisite to achieving a city's desired future identity. On the contrary, achieving a plausible future identity requires accepting the past—embracing the positive while learning from the negative. No city with an urban landscape that prominently displays the jagged-steeple of a bombed-out

church shell[10] and a striking five-acre field of over 2,700 massive stone steles remembering Jewish Holocaust victims[11] is in any danger of forgetting the negative aspects of its past. Nor can the city's citizens be admonished for trying to cover up the past. Rather than replace certain chapters in the city's history—which would no doubt still be displayed elsewhere—a Schloss façade would complement Berlin's visual display of its history.

Janet Ward discusses Berlin's modern commercial architecture in her 2006 article "Las Vegas on the Spree: The Americanization of the New Berlin." Ward addresses Berlin's Potsdamer Platz and other places in association with certain elements of Las Vegas, which she describes as "ahistorical fabrication and unashamed self-invention" (83). She points out two main factors contributing to "the Americanization of post-Wall Berlin": the influence of commercial architecture and the sale of formerly public properties to private investor groups (87). In addition to the highly commercialized film and entertainment district at Potsdamer Platz, which has become a tourist mecca, Ward references the new Friedrichsstraße with its row of chic shopping *Passagen*, the *Hackesche Höfe*, and kitschy Checkpoint Charlie (91). These and other places, says Ward, have contributed to a perceived transformation of the former "Spree-Athen" of Frederick the Great into "Vegas on the Spree" (89).

As one might imagine, such urban landscape comparisons are anything but flattering to the European. Ward is able to easily portray the common feeling of disgust and dissociation widely held by critics, as she assembles an array of outspoken criticisms,

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[10] Reference to the *Kaiser Wilhelm Gedächtniskirche* at Breitscheidplatz in Charlottenburg.
[11] Reference to Peter Eisenman's 2005 *Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe.*

such as Martin Filler's condemnation of the "grotesque speculative frenzy of the classic boomtown" that "overwhelmed all other impulses in 1990s Berlin" (96).

What this entire article demonstrates is the large scale commercialization that has existed in Berlin since reunification. Whether that is good or bad for Berlin, it certainly has already been widely evident throughout the city. The trend seems likely to continue in the constantly changing capital, which is all the more reason to embrace the city's history at various important sites. No site has been a longer part of Berlin's history than the *Schlossplatz*, where Berlin was born. Future generations of both Berliners and visitors need more than just simply knowing—they need to be able to *see* that Berlin's history goes much farther back than the 1990s city burdened with the task of unity and assimilation; that its history goes back far beyond the city that was unfortunately and abruptly divided by guarded borders and a Wall.

Interestingly enough, however, Ward also criticizes the seemingly obvious alternative to a modern "Las Vegasization" on the *Schlossplatz*: namely, a Schloss reconstruction. She writes:

> Any future Stadtschloß...will surely provide as much of a mélange through architectural time and taste as can be found by Vegas's urban tourists as they walk within (or go on foot or by monorail from and to) ancient Egypt, New York, Paris, and Venice on the Strip—or, more specifically, when they access the new Koolhaas-designed Guggenheim-Hermitage galleries that are located inside the urban mock-up of the Venetian Hotel's intricate exterior façades. (93-94)

Without offering any solution to the prominent site being vacated by the Palast's removal, Ward makes Berlin's situation out to be a type of catch-22, in which city planners would have no other choice than to build something that merits sharp criticism. What she fails to realize (or at least mention), however, is that a new structure bearing the Schloss façade will have something that very plainly and convincingly distinguishes it

from any of Las Vegas' series of artificial replicas: the genuine original space. That the Schloss will be reconstructed on exactly the original building's site makes any Las Vegas analogy somewhat far-fetched. The new Schloss will share the *Museumsinsel* with the *Pergamon* and *Altes Museum*, and will stand across Unter den Linden from the *Lustgarten* and *Dom*—not across the Strip from the MGM Grand.

Informed tourists—no doubt well-accustomed to the reality of war as part of history—will be as forgiving as those who daily flock to the reconstructed door of Wittenberg's *Schlosskirche* where Luther posted his "95 Theses;" historians' depiction of how Mozart's study may have been arranged in his Salzburg home; or a reenactment of the Battle of Gettysburg. History is remembering, visualizing, imagining. As fascinating as an authentic Pompeii apartment or the Roman Colosseum might be—even as originals, each is only as intriguing as the visitor's imagination. The site and surroundings are what fuel that imagination. In that sense, the "new" Berlin Stadtschloss will be no different in the historical mood it will create on Unter den Linden, where Schröder maintains the Schloss is necessary to anchor one end. Without anything at that end opposite the Brandenburg Gate, Berlin's most famous boulevard would be reduced to a "Witz ohne Pointe" (Schröder 147).

On July 4, 2002, the German Parliament passed a resolution to remove the Palast by a vote of 380 to 133, and in 2006 workers began disassembling the structure. This was the first step in a decision to re-erect another building bearing the Schloss façade. The financial details for reconstruction remained to be finalized. Costs have been estimated at € 80 million, the majority of which would be expected from donations and private

spending. Yet the die had been cast, and while many mourned the fate of the Palast der Republik, victory had been granted to Schloss revivalists.

V. The Old Façade in New Berlin

"Debate is the death of conversation."
-Emil Ludwig

The "new" German republic has taken the place of the two pre-1990 German states. It is now centered in Berlin, a city long defined by and ever since synonymous with the East-West rift of the Cold War. Unification and togetherness have been major themes in the reunified German capital in terms of urban space. In fact, with the move of the German capital from Bonn to Berlin, it brings Berlin under the public eye—not only on account of reunification, but also as the most prominent and promising scene for a nation reunited.

Svetlana Boym describes the impact the fall of the Wall has had on the urban landscape: "After the wall came down, the former border zone between East and West became the city center" (178). Within the past decade a modern entertainment district centered at Potsdamer Platz and the new *Hauptbahnhof* (formerly *Lehrter Bahnhof*) have been purposefully built on ambiguous space spanning both sides of the former wall. Hence, neither East nor West Berlin—nor, perhaps more importantly, their former citizens—can lay claim to either one of the aforementioned sites. Neither can claim one of these sites as its own, as both citizens and visitors alike have so naturally done in the years since reunification. Nor could one side criticize the other on account of any such site. These sites would not fall into an East or West categorization as do so easily Kurfürstendamm and Alexanderplatz. Instead, Potsdamer Platz and the *Hauptbahnhof* have, indeed by both default and intention, become specifically identifiable *only* with the reunited Berlin of the Twenty-First Century.

Even before reunification, Berlin had always been internationally recognized for the quality of its museums and collections. Bondy remarked in 1980 that even despite its losses, Berlin had become "the most interesting museum city of Europe" (274). Yet collections were still divided, as was the city throughout the Cold War. During the 1960s West Berlin even built a series of museums as part of the *Kulturforum*, the site of the Berlin *Philharmonie*. These galleries were intended to house West Berlin's collections and compete with the *Museumsinsel* heirloom possessed—as was everything in the old city center—by East Berlin.

With reunification, however, the museum rivalry ended. Berlin's museums in east and west—once fierce competitors—have worked quickly and efficiently to combine their (i.e. unified Berlin's) collections and exhibitions in well-organized and convenient locations, namely the *Kulturforum* and *Museumsinsel*. This has helped to create a sense of unity in the city, a desired effect similar to that which motivated the selection of Potsdamer Platz and the site of the new *Hauptbahnhof* as the locations for those new building projects—strategically ambiguous to East or West.

Now no longer rivals, the museum complexes have shared, consolidated and collaborated art and artifacts, pieces and exhibitions, as they have jointly taken on the process of renovating the individual historical buildings of the *Museumsinsel*—several of which had been in dire need of the same since the end of the war—and semantically reorganizing the city's collections in the best way to serve its citizens and visitors. What planners intend to house inside the reconstructed Schloss façade are the collections attributed to African, Asian and Native American culture. These collections, currently

housed in Dahlem near the *Freie Universität*, will culminate a series of collections representing cultures from all continents of the globe, to be housed on the same small Spree island that is home to the Berliner Dom, the *Lustgarten*, Schinkel's *Bauakademie*, and, of course, the site being treated as the topic of this study.

Furthermore, these former exhibits from West Berlin will now be on display in the former East—or perhaps better stated: the pre-division and now post-unification geographical and historical center. The Stadtschloss structure will not emphasize Prussia at the expense of GDR history; rather, it will house a concerted effort to focus on a unified Berlin in a building that guides memory to Berlin before there was a division, a totalitarian regime, two wars, or an economic depression. Palast der Republik, though a valid historical structure representing—no doubt—a crucial part of Berlin's history, would have been capable of representing just that: merely one of essentially two "Berlins" during this relatively short, divided era. Moreover, that single era is hardly the one by which present-day Berliners want their city to be defined at its most central and historical place.

Thus, in the sense of historical representation and the architectural message it portrays, a Schloss façade offers two dimensions incapable of being attained by a potentially preserved Palast. First, in terms of the past, it represents Berlin's history at its very roots, long before the tumultuous twentieth century of German history. Secondly, on account of its purpose and function, the Schloss represents the unified Berlin of the future, operating as part of the city's museum collection.

Some speak skeptically of Berlin and its future at Germany's political center. They fear that centralism and nationalism still exist as a sort of sleeping giant that could be easily awakened by a renewed emphasis on Prussian architecture. In spite of such doubts, J. K. A. Thomanek and Bill Niven maintain that "Berlin holds more promise than it represents threat" (93). In fact, they cite many historians who "dismiss fears of renascent German nationalism" in Berlin (91-92).

According to Hagen Schulze, whom Thomanek cites, contemporary Germany's shape, position, the principle of freedom in its *Grundgesetz* (underlying law), and the attitude of Germany's neighbors reassure his view that nationalism in Germany is not a threat. He (Schulze) argues that today's shape of Germany is the only possible shape; that shape and this unified German state have been established—for the first time—with the *consent* of the German neighbors; both freedom and unity are now being enjoyed by Germans there for the first time; and finally, the new German state is part of the West (Thomanek 91, quoting Schulze 263-265).

Jürgen Kocka and Michael Salewski both see the (October 3) 1990 reunification date as the mark of a brand new era, the likes of which no Germany has ever seen. For Kocka, it marked the end of Germany's *Sonderweg* and the confirmation of Germany's belonging to the west (Thomanek 91, Kocka 32). Salewski sees it as the date which finally, after a 300-year long struggle, defined Germany's place in Europe (Thomanek 91, Salewski 428).

Thomanek maintains that it is "the lack of inner unity within Germany" that is still a concern for historians (92). As mentioned above, Berlin's plan with the Stadtschloss and its position as part of the *Museumsinsel* complex is just one in a number

of steps the city is taking toward more inner unity in the future. It will require time for this plan to be effective. It may, indeed, prove to be a generational development toward accepting Berlin as a unified city. In any case, a great deal of progress has been made in the decade and a half since 1990. Certainly worthy of additional consideration is the fact that GDR authorities themselves restored certain "Prussian" structures and objects in central Berlin, such as Frederick the Great's equestrian statue on Unter den Linden and the former armory (*Zeughaus*) adjacent to the *Lustgarten* (cf. Chapter II). Furthermore, the revived image of the Stadtschloss at Berlin's geographical center will play an intricate role in presenting Berlin as a unified city.

Today's Berlin is pained with its ongoing East-West identity struggle, fueled by its citizens who refuse to forego the connection they had with their pre-unification identity. Likewise, many have tried to make the Stadtschloss debate into another episode of East vs. West—this time on the battleground of ideology in architecture. But to paint this debate with an East vs. West brush would simply not be entirely appropriate. Granted, the Palast der Republik was an East German structure, built by the GDR for its citizens. Yet to regard the Stadtschloss as its West German (or West Berlin) counterpart is to consciously ignore German history.

Neither the pre- nor post-1990 Federal Republic has ever had any connection to the building—nor, for that matter, has West Berlin. The people of the GDR only knew the original building in its damaged state for a few years before its government made the decision to remove it. Hitler's fascist state as well as the failed Weimar Republic before it both shunned the building, which stood essentially vacant for the decades between Wilhelm II's 1918 abdication and its 1945 destruction. A return to prominence in Berlin's

central urban landscape would by no means bring a West Berlin element into Berlin's center; rather, it would bring a nostalgic return to the Berlin long before the city—and with it the entire German nation—suffered political division that lasted forty years. In fact, it would symbolize—if anything—the Berlin even before the tumultuous decades that have scarred the German identity ever since.

This gesture toward the past Berlin that knew the functioning Schloss will at the same time be a nod to the future of unified Berlin. The city is in no danger of forgetting its difficult era of division. Bringing back the façade of the Schloss will insure the memories of the Berlin that was—before the Twentieth Century wars. Berlin will once again honor this part of its classical past, just as other European cities proudly maintain a connection to theirs by celebrating their historical castles, palaces and residences—the original homes of the cities' ruling families.

Consider the Polish cities Warsaw and Cracow. While the former saw the mass-scale World War II destruction parallel to that of Berlin, the architecture of the latter—for many intents Poland's historical and cultural center—was left largely untouched by the war. Sixty years later Warsaw has been built up with modern high-rises and cutting-edge architecture, taking on the role of an ascending business center in the new, fast developing Eastern Europe.

Cracow, meanwhile, has thrived as a tourist destination, based largely on its historical architecture and visible connection to Poland and its past. Buildings such as the renaissance Royal Castle at the *Wawel* complex, *Sukiennice* (cloth hall), St. Mary's

Basilica, and the old university provide a glimpse of Poland in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

According to the polish national Institute of Tourism, Cracow welcomed 2.3 million overnight guests in 2004, compared to just less than 2.0 million in Warsaw, though the latter is a city twice as large ("Arrivals in Accommodation").[12] The 2005 numbers were just as convincing: Cracow welcomed 2.5 million to Warsaw's 2.2 million (Ibid.). This statistic is perhaps more staggering when one considers that Warsaw is much more accessible by railroad and automobile. Its position between Berlin and either Moscow or Kiev puts it on major ground travel routes, whereas Cracow is tucked out of the way in Southeast Poland, at the foot of the Tatry mountain range. Warsaw also already draws a myriad of political, business and financial visitors as the nation's capital.

Almost three times as many visitors to Poland arrive annually in Warsaw as opposed to Cracow (Ibid.). Yet Cracow's edge in overnight visitors shows its superiority in the tourist market. The fact remains: Cracow's place is secured by its historical and cultural significance to the Poles and their heritage. This is most evident in the face of its architecture—a message of which visitors are constantly reminded by Cracow's historic walls and edifices.

This is merely one example. Consider the other European cultural and political capitals, whose historical residences and architectural centerpieces have remained and are still as important to their twenty-first-century citizens as to those of the sixteenth century: London's historical Tower; the Louvre in Paris; Prague's castle complex; Rome's Vatican—and the ancient Forum; Edinburgh's medieval castle; Vienna's *Hofburg*;

[12] The statistics are based on the political voivodships of Cracow and Warsaw (Małopolskie and Mazowieckie, respectively) and not solely on the cities themselves, though each city accounts for the vast majority of its voivodship's population.

Bratislava's Primate's Palace as well as the fortress perched on a hill above the town; St. Petersburg's Hermitage; the Buda castle overlooking the Danube in Budapest...the list could go on to Stockholm, Copenhagen, Madrid, and Athens. Each of these places is a trademark for its city, adorning the front of visitor guides and brochures and attracting tourists to the city. Each structure also serves its city's residents as an important identifier that has been a fixture of the urban landscape for generations—something just as important to their ancestors generations ago. Furthermore, each of these buildings is a source of not only city, but also national pride.

Why should Berlin be any different? Why should the German capital be deprived of what had been its centerpiece since its beginnings as a Prussian capital? Granted, the city's recent (Twentieth Century) history has been somewhat more complicated than most of the aforementioned cities. But the logic is no different. Berlin should be permitted to revive a connection to its historical centerpiece, the Stadtschloss: for its city residents, for Germans, and for visitors.

Some might insist that Berlin, on account of its recent Twentieth-Century history, has a situation incomparable to the other European cities mentioned above. In this context, it is crucial that another Berlin structure mentioned in Chapter IV not be ignored: the Reichstag. Itself the subject of both German and international debate and controversy in the 1990s, the Reichstag was renovated and designed in a way that honored the original architecture, incorporated a new symbolism, and accommodated Germany's parliament all at once. Germans and international tourists line up daily outside the Reichstag for a free tour of the parliament building or a trip to the unique viewing

platform in the glass dome. The building has shed its controversy to become an important structure of identity for even Germans as well as Berliners.

That the government is now represented there rather than at the *Schlossplatz* clearly supports the Schloss façade initiative. It will dispel the associations some will want to make between the Schloss and Prussian nationalism and militarism. Rather than what *will* be housed there—a central place anchoring Berlin's museum system—it is what *will not* be found inside the walls of the new Schloss façade that should be significantly reassuring to skeptics. The government is elsewhere represented—namely in the new *Regierungsviertel* to the west. The *Schlossplatz* and *Museumsinsel* will represent and honor the history of Berlin, Prussia, Germany, and now—with the Dahlem museum additions—various cultures from across the globe. As the cultural center in the capital of a nation so rich in culture, what better place to visually honor Schlüter et al. by restoring the grand baroque masterpiece to its original context.

VI. Conclusion: The Stadtschloss as a Symbol of Unity and Diversity in Berlin

"You may delay, but time will not."
-Benjamin Franklin

In order to truly appreciate the Stadtschloss debate from all sides, one must properly consider the various possibilities of what might have been done in regard to the future of that historic site. This particular study has not merely examined the *what*: that is, the decision itself in the various architectural possibilities or elusion thereof. Rather, the focus here has been on the *why*: what would these different structures say about the city, its history and identity in present and future?

With this in mind, let us briefly review the past and proposed potential future structures on the Stadtschloss site, namely: the 18th-century Prussian palace built by Schlüter, its modification and maintenance by several generations of the Hohenzollern monarchy, and its subsequent vacancies during the Weimar and Nazi eras; the GDR's debate and solution(s) of the war-damaged Schloss, ending ultimately with the 1970s construction of the Palast der Republik; the proposal of a modern, 21st-century structure, perhaps of no relation to either of the previous politically-tainted edifices; the preservation of the Palast der Republik; and finally, the reconstruction of a building bearing the Stadtschloss' original façade.

In regard to the two most recent buildings no longer in existence—i.e. the Stadtschloss and the Palast der Republik—what *did* each of these buildings say with its very existence on that hallowed site in central Berlin? Then, considering the latter three proposals of what shall fill that space in the future Berlin—what *would* each of these structures have to say about the German history and identity?

During the *Gründerzeit* age leading up to the Twentieth Century, Berlin was growing at an unprecedented rate. Contributing to the growth was the wealth of workers who had come with their families, attracted by the industrial jobs available. Berlin's population multiplied almost tenfold in just two generations.[13] Many workers came from the Slavic areas in and to the east of Prussia. In fact, Scheffler (again with his narrow-minded approach toward those from Eastern European areas) mentions 720,000 who moved to Berlin from Eastern areas between 1870 and 1890—as opposed to just 120,000 from the West and South of Germany (*Stadtschicksal* 123). This certainly added to Berlin's diversity, which already had significant French and Jewish populations.

Likewise, since reunification, Berlin has again become known for its diversity. The city has strong Turkish, Greek, Polish, Russian, Italian, Serbian, and Croatian communities, to name but a few. As of 2005, Berlin had over 463,000 residents representing 192 different non-German nationalities. This represented 13.6% of the city's total population (Senatsverwaltung, "Bevölkerungsprognose").

Berlin's diversity is not limited to its citizens, however. It is also evident in the architecture. A one-hour stroll through Berlin Mitte—from Potsdamer Platz to Pariser Platz and on to Alexander Platz—is all it takes for one to see this kaleidoscope of architecture on display. Oft referred to as "Stadt der Vielfalt" (city of plurality/variety/diversity), Berlin fits the bill in many ways.

[13] In 1857 the city's population was 400,000; by 1920 it had grown to 3,800,000 (Härtel 24, 33).

For a final perspective, consider the following words of Christian Morgenstern in his 100-year old poem entitled "Berlin":[14]

Ich liebe dich bei Nebel und bei Nacht,
wenn deine Linien ineinander schwimmen, –
zumal bei Nacht, wenn deine Fenster glimmen
und Menschheit dein Gestein lebendig macht.

Was wüst am Tag, wird rätselvoll im Dunkel;
wie Seelenburgen stehn sie mystisch da,
die Häuserreihn mit ihrem Lichtgefunkel;
und Einheit ahnt, wer sonst nur Vielheit sah.

Der letzte Glanz erlischt in blinden Scheiben;
in seine Schachteln liegt ein Spiel geräumt;
gebändigt ruht ein ungestümes Treiben,
und heilig wird, was so voll Schicksal träumt.

In this poem, written in 1906, Morgenstern contrasts night and day, darkness and light in the massive working-class city of the growing *Gründerzeit* era, characterized by diversity. Notice in particular the closing line of the second stanza, where the contrast is between "Einheit" (unity/oneness) and "Vielheit" (multiplicity). While describing the look of the city and its architectural face throughout, he writes: "Und Einheit ahnt, wer sonst nur Vielheit sah." Interesting is that Morgenstern's poetic voice senses unity, while having seen only diversity by daylight. Perhaps he was hinting at the need for the city to grow and become one, embracing all its diversity. Sadly, the Twentieth Century held all but unity for the people of Berlin.

Yet, exactly one hundred years after Morgenstern wrote this poem, the Twenty-First Century has dawned, and Berlin finds itself in a similar position. Germany has once again been recently united, and Berlin is her new capital city. Surrounded by diversity, its

[14] Poem taken from: *Die Berliner Moderne, 1885-1914*. Eds. Jürgen Schutte and Peter Sprengel. Stuttgart: Reclam, 1993. 297.

citizens are witnessing growth, building and change. Poverty is again a challenge, this time due in large part to unemployment challenges. *Vielfalt*, *Toleranz* and *multi-kulturell* are the societal watchwords. In fact, the similarities are almost uncanny.

Will this Berlin's future hold the unity for which the narrator longed in Morgenstern's poem? Can unity be achieved while diversity is maintained? In accepting and remembering its past, what "memories of the future" will Berlin's citizens have?

If the Stadtschloss debate has proven one thing, it is that Berlin is certainly far from united—at least in the realm of public opinion. To be fair, no one would have expected Berlin to grow together overnight following 1990 reunification. And while most would admit the city has come a long way in sixteen years, the scars of separation—beneath which lie the healing scars of war—are still quite visible. For many, the pain of assimilation will not be soon forgotten either.

Yet Berlin's division will, too, become a part of history—and of memory. While the respective cultures of the divided Berlin should never be historically neglected or forgotten, neither shall they remain an obstacle to the city's hope for a future of unity. In the closing paragraph of his 2003 book *Berlin: Eine kleine Geschichte*, Christian Härtel defines the most dramatic development in Berlin during the past century: "von der kaiserlichen Kapitale zum Zentrum des Großdeutschen Reichs über die geteilte Inselstadt wieder zu einer gesamteuropäischen Metropole" (76). The Schloss will bridge the two bookend eras Härtel describes: already the central fixture in visual images of the *Kaiserreich*, it will regain its prominent place in the future "European Metropole."

Härtel also highlights the city's great irony: in spite of once being the living reminder of Europe's Cold War rift and still being remembered above all for its division,

Berlin has become a bridge between East and West in the new Europe. As the capital of the European Union's largest nation, and given its central continental position, Berlin has overtaken such East-West gateway cities as St. Petersburg, Vienna and Istanbul. Though seemingly always left in the large shadow cast in Europe by London and Paris, here both Berlin's position and history offer it a role neither Paris nor London would be able to accommodate. As Härtel says of the "geteilte Inselstadt": "In diesen Erfahrungsschatz liegt auch ihr größtes Kapital für die Zukunft" (Ibid).

While time may be the largest factor in Berlin's division becoming part of history, architecture will also play its part. With the Stadtschloss anchoring one end of historical Unter den Linden, the city's grandest boulevard will once again become symmetric—as the Brandenburg Gate will once again have its counterpart opposite it. The Stadtschloss façade will complete the long project of restoring the *Museumsinsel*, making room for art and historical collections from Asia, Africa, and the Americas. Instead of a monarchy, the military, church, and culture represented on the four sides of the *Lustgarten*, the island will feature art, history and culture from the four corners of the earth in that one place. This atmosphere will complement Berlin's future role as a city of unity and diversity in Germany and Europe.

The grandest visions of Schinkel will once again complement those of Schlüter, and will be appreciated in a time of European peace and stability. Instead of a central structure that portrays division and ideological competition, at Berlin's center will stand a structure beaming with aesthetic beauty and artistic form, and housing a practical function. The site that put Berlin on Europe's map will finally regain its own rightful place on Berlin's map.

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