

# Berlin's "Critical Reconstruction" and the Politics of Memory and Identity

RALPH STERN

Universität der Künste Berlin

## INTRODUCTION

During the decade since reunification Berlin has undergone a profound transformation that has reconfigured the political contours of Berlin's social and cultural terrain. While architecture and urban design are the most concrete symptoms of this transformation, the problem confronting Berlin today is not one of form but one of identity: the problem of creating, defining and maintaining a specific cultural identity in the face of a fragmented past and a globalized future. In this regard Berlin is not alone, sharing its problems with cities around the world in which the homogenizing effects of globalization are eroding local identity and culture. However, issues remain that are unique to Berlin and its fight for identity has less to do with a new vision of the future than with a new vision of the past. It is on the very unstable terrain of the historical past that the search for cultural identity collides with the politics of memory. This paper examines some of the major themes and tensions associated with this search for cultural identity, their association with the notion of the city as the "place of collective memory" and the paradoxes of a reconstruction program emphasizing memory in a city in which, because of its very particular history, there is much many would rather forget.

In the early post-reunification period, deprived of its exceptional status, West Berlin grudgingly confronted the market-oriented environment of the late twentieth century. With a population largely comprised of widows, workers and students, the transition was an uneasy one. Arguably, post-reunification East Berlin adjusted to change more easily than its western counterpart. Still bearing the scars of the Second World War and sorely in need of new services and infrastructure, it was a speculator's dream and a planner's nightmare. It was also a legal quagmire. Following fifty years of state control, property reverted to private ownership. In the inner-city areas where original owners had perished in the Holocaust, this great "revolution backwards" was subject to lengthy legal disputes. During the 1990's the massive reorganization of the legal and logistical contours of East Berlin's often ruinous inner-city terrain supported both speculative development and a vibrant if ephemeral club and music scene reminiscent of Karl Scheffler's turn-of-the-century characterization of Berlin as "always becoming and never being".<sup>2</sup>

The giddy atmosphere and fluid landscape of the early post-reunification period have now hardened. Still, to understand the newly constructed landscape of Berlin it is necessary to comprehend the fluid political and ideological constructions that have governed Berlin's contemporary architectural discourse. Furthermore, reconstruction of both infrastructure and building substance has been followed by the move of the Federal Government to Berlin, a transition signaling not just governmental relocation, but a fundamental rethinking of West Germany's post-war decentralization of power.

As Berlin reasserts its role on an international stage, it alternately displays and conceals a myriad of tensions. Politically, the most obvious of these is the legacy of Berlin as a theatre of cold war confrontation. Today, the distinction between east and west, between "Ossie" and "Wessie", is understood less in political than cultural terms. In the language of the Annals School, it is understood as a difference in mentalities and to local Berliners the differences that remain between east and west are often described as the "wall in the mind".<sup>3</sup> In the built environment, this division manifests itself as resistance on the part of "east" Berlin to architectural and urban design projects it understands as being imposed by the "west". Whether in terms of the proposed demolition of the Palace of the Republic or the "densification" of areas around the Karl-Marx-Allee, the imposition of "western" ideals in architecture and urban design is perceived by the east as a form of internal colonization.

Just as the east-west axis can be characterized in terms of a difference in mentalities, it can also be understood as intersected by the ideological distinctions of left and right. National Socialism left deep scars on Germany's political consciousness and these lesions can be followed to Berlin's contemporary architectural discourse. For example, Bauhaus Modernism was reimported after the War as the architectural medium most capable of representing and guaranteeing a democratic, transparent political process: the architectural ideal for the post-war Federal Buildings of the former capital in Bonn. Norman Foster's glass dome on Berlin's Reichstag engages this tradition while doing justice to the original glass and iron dome,<sup>4</sup> which at the time of its construction had been understood as a symbol of political emancipation. Yet, reintroducing the figure of a dome departed markedly from the Bauhaus legacy and was hotly disputed.<sup>5</sup> For many, this symbolic device tread too close to both the imperial connotations of a "Reichstag" and to the overwhelming imagery of Albert Speer's domed *Volkshalle* of 1936.<sup>6</sup>

Berlin is acutely, perhaps pathologically, sensitive to the historic and symbolic associations embodied by architecture. Germany's disastrous experience with the unifying potential of fascist rhetoric has, until very recently, rendered taboo any reference to Speer and the classicizing architecture of National Socialism. Indeed, almost without exception, the over 800 participants in the 1993 "Spreebogen" competition for the new Federal District eschewed references to Speer's monumental north-south axis that had terminated in the Volkshalle.<sup>7</sup> Nonetheless, the past decade has witnessed a growing interest in a classicizing, if not classical, architecture. To circumvent associations with the politics of the 1930's, some architects and critics have turned their attention towards the architecture of the nineteenth century and the work of Karl Friedrich Schinkel and his followers. While it would be incorrect to dismiss this as merely a lingering post-modernist hangover, reengaging the architectural discourse of the nineteenth century carries its own perils. Schinkel was architect at the Prussian court of King Friedrich

Wilhelm III, and while some have dismissed Berlin's contemporary architecture as a form of post-Prussianism, others have provocatively attempted to theorize, or re-theorize, a "Prussian Style".<sup>8</sup>

Thus, to the polarities of east-west and left-right comes yet another: that of Berlin as the capital of the former state of Prussia and Berlin as the capital of the whole of Germany. The original unification under Prussian auspices of the smaller states that comprised Germany was never wholly accepted, and tensions remain between the different regions that comprise modern Germany. During the Cold War, as Berlin played a central role in the east-west conflict, these issues were of lesser importance. But reunification has again brought this ambivalence, if not hostility, towards a Prussian Berlin to the fore. The converse, however, is also true: Berlin is reluctant to shoulder the responsibilities and legacies of the entire German nation. In terms of architecture, the rejection of Peter Eisenman's Holocaust Memorial by Eberhard Diepgen, Berlin's recent Mayor, should not be understood as indicative of a rightist political stance. Rather, Diepgen objected to Berlin bearing the burden of a Holocaust perpetrated by an entire nation. When Hitler became Reichskanzler on January 30th, 1933, Berlin did not support the National Socialists: they were catapulted to power by the right-wing states of southern Germany.

The poles of east-west, left-right, and north-south might have been subordinated to the excitement generated by Berlin's reconstruction and the tremendous energy marshaled for Berlin's move into the future if the city's search for this future had not been so clearly tied to its past. Nowhere is this clearer than in the theory and practice of Berlin's architecture and urbanism of the past decade. Berlin is not merely concerned with reconstructing a damaged urban fabric, but also with synthesizing its fragmented legacies in order to forge a new identity for the future now at hand. In terms of architecture and urbanism it has attempted to achieve this by a program of "critical" reconstruction. Conceived of as a "dialogue between the traditional and the modern",<sup>9</sup> Critical Reconstruction turned to the tenets of Italian Neo-Rationalism for its theoretical foundation. Expanded at the end of 1996 to include the "Planwerk Innenstadt",<sup>10</sup> it delivered both the vision and the program for the reconstruction of the post-reunification city. Under the leadership of Hans Stimmann, the self-declared "Pope of Construction",<sup>11</sup> Critical Reconstruction created the instruments of power necessary to implement a particular vision of Berlin's new identity. First as Berlin's municipal building director, then as the powerful city secretary, and now again as building director,<sup>12</sup> Stimmann cultivated (and was cultivated) by a small cadre of local architects and theoreticians. Working together as a tightly knit group rhetorically positioned between "tradition and innovation", they defined the architectural debate and much of the architecture of contemporary Berlin. Whereas a politician may laud Berlin as the new capital city and an economist may dream of Berlin as a world city, Critical Reconstruction insists on Berlin becoming a new, traditional "European city". This raised the stakes, for the identity that Critical Reconstruction seeks to build upon is neither liberal nor pluralistic. Rather, it elevated recuperative strategies concerned with history, memory, place and identity to the status of an imperative and a polemic. The imperative is that of creating—or inventing—Berlin as a "European City" and this imperative that must be read against the background of the political, cultural and ideological axes sketched above. The polemic, often voiced by the "68'ers", the cold war generation that experienced Berlin as a center of radical protest against the Vietnam war and American "colonialism" in general, is directed against the so-called "American City". Civically determined, place oriented and tradition bound, the European city is contrasted with cities functionally determined and lacking any sense of place or tradition. As if echoing Madame de Stael's view of "the new cities [...] in America: their nature and freedom speak clearly enough to the soul, so that it doesn't require any memories [but] on our old part of the earth, it is necessary to have a memory"<sup>13</sup> the European city, steeped in tradition and memory, is explicitly opposed to the American.

To most concerned with twentieth-century culture, however, Berlin is not identified with the poles of east-west, right-left, north-south or European-American. Rather, Berlin's identity is inextricably linked with International Modernism and the metropolitanism of the Weimar Republic. The housing estates of Hans Scharoun, Walter Gropius, Hugo Haring, Max and Bruno Taut, the illuminated shop windows in the Friedrich- and Leipzigerstraßen, the first European traffic light at Potsdamer Platz, the pulse of the industrial facilities, the tempo of a modern underground and cityrail system, and the continual influx of new arrivals at the busy train stations comprised the physical landscape of metropolitan Berlin that encompassed over four million inhabitants from 1919 until the economic collapse of 1929. What remained when the National Socialists came to power in 1933 dissipated quickly, although not immediately. Seizing on the propagandistic potential of modern technologies and cultural expression—film, radio, sport—they deployed the scenographic and ephemeral to a degree never seen before. As such, the National Socialists sought to overcome older dichotomies of the traditional and the modern by unifying technical advance with the production of a strong emotional identification with the political regime. In terms of architecture, identified by at least one scholar as "one of the most notorious areas of Nazi cultural practice", early modernist idioms such as the "Stadtkrone"<sup>14</sup> were adopted while the expressionistic work of architects such as Poelzig was rejected as a "direction in modern architecture absolutely antagonistic to art and ornament" that sought to "drive the aesthetic elements of tradition out of the art of building".<sup>15</sup> Most emphatically, the National Socialists rejected International Modernism with its glazed, dynamic forms including Germany's own Bauhaus, which increasingly came to be associated with a "Bolshevik" style of building.<sup>16</sup>

Instead, the National Socialists returned to search for a national identity and a German, or Prussian, architecture conjoined with the mythification of a distant Germanic past. The creation of this mythical past often meant the selective erasure of the real past and in Berlin many of the historic buildings on the Wilhelmstraße were demolished to make way for the "backwards-oriented drive forward" propagandized by the National Socialists; a drive that often resulted in a "negative preservation" whose "goal was the eradication of certain elements of history from public memory".<sup>17</sup> The new architecture that would be built, a monumental, rhythmically simple stone façade with punched windows, indicated the correct relationship to the German soil and represented the stability appropriate to a Thousand Year Reich.<sup>18</sup> It was also the architecture deemed appropriate for Berlin as "Germania"; a city of eight million party functionaries. As Albert Speer began work on his masterpiece—the grand North-South Axis cut through the center of Potsdamer Platz—metropolitanism was not the goal.<sup>19</sup> Rather, it was the representation of power on a scale dwarfing anything that Rome, Vienna, Paris or London had to offer.<sup>20</sup> As allied bombs fell on Berlin, Speer noted that Hitler was pleased, for it would save the demolition costs associated with the task of reconstruction.<sup>21</sup> By 1945 Berlin lay in ruins.

## IDENTITY

*Germania Anno Zero* is the title of Roberto Rossellini's 1947 film depicting Germany's early post-war period and nowhere was this notion of the *Year Zero* more applicable than in Berlin.<sup>22</sup> It would not be incorrect to say that for Berlin history stopped in 1945. At the start of the post-war period both East and West Germany were anxious to reject history and memories of the past and equally anxious to develop new identities embodying their respective visions of a socialist or a democratic society. The architectural embodiment of these new values became an immediate issue.

As the two Germanys struggled to reintegrate themselves into their respective community of nations, any form of architectural Nationalism was vigorously rejected. The myths of architectural origins and the virtues of the past were debunked and the focus remained squarely on the problems of the present and the promise of the future. Thus, in the early post-war years, Berlin—both east and west—experimented with various models for a new architecture and urbanism. The first great reconstruction project was that of the Stalinallee—now the Karl-Marx-Allee—built largely under the direction of Hermann Henselmann. The Soviet vision of the future had rejected modernism as early as the 1930's and the Stalin Allee, the "first socialist street" in East Berlin, oriented itself towards the proclivities of its great patron.<sup>23</sup> Its monumentalism aside, the Stalinallee, lined with "residential palaces [of] socialism instead of the barracks of capitalism"<sup>24</sup> exhibits the basic tenets of post-modern urbanism, and it has increasingly come to be appreciated by urban theorists.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, architects such as Hermann Henselmann involved with its design explicitly rejected the tradition of the Bauhaus and the *Neues Bauen*, insisting that "Our workers, who are building a new world atop the ruins of the past, have a right to beauty. But our workers also have the right to recognize themselves and their country (*Heimat*) in the new architecture".<sup>26</sup> The first stone was laid on 13. February 1952, commemorating the seventh anniversary of the city's worst bombing attack of the Second World War.

It is not surprising, that Cold War politics would dictate an immediate and opposing response and in 1956 the West initiated the first *internationale Bauausstellung* [IBA]. Under the direction of Otto Bartning buildings in the Hansaviertel adjoining the northwestern section of the Tiergarten—heavily damaged during the war—were demolished and a strictly modernist vision of glazed towers and pavilions in the park was realized.<sup>27</sup> For the west, transparency was equated with open and participatory political processes and contrasted with the heaviness of classicism, whose opaque masonry walls were emblematic of the obscure political processes associated with absolutism, fascism and Stalinism. If there was any doubt about these associations, it ended abruptly on August 13, 1961 as East Germany embarked on the greatest of its post-war reconstruction projects: The Wall.

The Wall, as the ultimate fact and symbol of the politics of division, was the determining feature of Berlin for more than a quarter century. Ironically, it allowed for a *rapprochement* between the architecture and urbanism of East and West. Enforced separation and isolation diminished the need for an overt expression of ideological competition through architectural form and the architecture of both East and West became more directly determined by the economics of construction.<sup>28</sup> During the 1960's and 1970's both East and West abandoned the inner city for the periphery in what some today describe as a "self-punishment" for the sins of history that architecture inflicted upon itself.<sup>29</sup> Whatever such a moralizing rhetoric may hope to achieve, there are few essential differences between the housing estates of the *Gropiusstadt* and *Märkisches Viertel* in the West and those of Marzahn and Hellerdsdorf in the East.

In the 1980's this situation underwent a fundamental change in the western half of the city. Following the tenets of postmodernism, architects returned their attention to the city center and to the city as the place of collective memory. Condemning the atomization and social fragmentation engendered by Modernism's insistence on technological efficacy and functional separation, postmodernism took aim at modernism's negation of history, its inability to foster cultural identity and, ultimately, its failure to create civic morality and virtue.<sup>30</sup> Advancing the need to return to historical precedent and the urban context, postmodernism often indulged in a freewheeling stylistic eclecticism while retaining the highly normative social goals of modernist utopianism. The futurist vision of towers in the park producing healthy, happy and virtuous citizens was exchanged for a classicizing vision of the town square capable of achieving the same desired result.

By the 1980's this thinking was beginning to exert an enormous influence on the architectural scene in West Berlin. Not one, but two new International Building Exhibitions were organized: IBA Alt and IBA Neu.<sup>31</sup> Under the direction of Joseph Paul Kleihues, the IBA Neu began to develop the concept of Critical Reconstruction with projects conceived of as low-rise inner city projects designed to repair and "densify" the urban fabric. Ranging from the urban villa to the perimeter block, many coyly experimented with the picturesque, preindustrial urban principles developed by Camillo Sitte over a century ago. This was international postmodernism at its best. Sometimes innovative, often ironic and always heavily subsidized, these projects extended a program of social housing implemented to keep the island of West Berlin afloat. On the other hand, it was also international postmodernism at its worst: renouncing none of the modernism's universal aspirations while approaching the vapidity of nineteenth-century historicist eclecticism. As an elitist game of historical quotes removed from their original contexts, the IBA projects arguably remained ahistorical and placeless, incapable of generating specific cultural identities. When, on November 9th, 1989, the dam containing East Berlin finally burst the problem of forging a new national identity became acute. The conceits of postmodernism were quickly washed away and what remained was Critical Reconstruction.

## MEMORY

In opening his collection of essays on Berlin, the architectural historian Tilmann Buddensieg cites Schinkel's lament that he "can see no way out of this labyrinth".<sup>32</sup> The labyrinth is an apt metaphor for Berlin and we are re-minded that at the heart of the Greek labyrinth lay the Minatour; the half-man, half-beast that devoured all those who came too near. If there is a Minatour to be avoided in the many truths and histories of Berlin, it is the memory of National Socialism and the Holocaust. One of the difficulties facing Critical Reconstruction is that the sum total of its preferred architectural vocabulary—perimeter block, low-rise buildings, punched windows and stone façades—generates buildings that are indeed part of the historical precedent of Berlin. Not only is this vocabulary reminiscent of the "Berlin of stone" criticized by Werner Hegemann in 1930,<sup>33</sup> it is also very similar to the National Socialist architecture of the 1930's. An exemplar of this vocabulary is the recently renovated building for the Third Reich's Ministry of Aviation, originally designed by Ernst Sagebiel, who was also the architect responsible for Tempelhof Airport. Upon its completion, the Ministry of Aviation was proclaimed by Hermann Göring to have been "created in the spirit of Adolph Hitler and National Socialism"<sup>34</sup> and it was in this building that the bombings of London and Rotterdam were planned. Today it will house the Finance Ministry, its architectural vocabulary easily paralleling the tenets of Critical Reconstruction. Its rehabilitation has not be particularly controversial, and its architectural vocabulary is being extended to the adjoining structures of Leipziger Platz. In closing, I will sketch the issues pertaining to two projects of Critical Reconstruction that are controversial, projects which must be understood within the larger discussion of memory and identity.

Before proceeding however, it is worth noting the fate of the two most notorious symbols of National Socialism: Hitler's *Reichskanzlei*, the "crown of the Greater German political Empire"<sup>35</sup> designed by Albert Speer and located in what would become the former East, and the eighteenth-century Prinz-Albrecht-Palais—containing rooms re-designed by Schinkel and later occupied by the Gestapo—located in what would become the former West, were demolished shortly after the end of the war.<sup>36</sup> The grounds of the Prinz-Albrecht-Palais have been turned into the *Topography of Terror*, a site for remembrance and reflection.<sup>37</sup> The grounds of the Reichskanzlei, partly for fear of its becoming a right-wing pilgrimage site, has been "disappeared" into the

greater Potsdamer Platz area. Despite their “correctness” from an architectural and urban perspective, no one is clamoring to reconstruct these buildings.

The attitude of Critical Reconstruction to the old Imperial Palace stands in marked contrast to this.<sup>38</sup> As it had destroyed the Reichskanzlei as a symbol of fascist power, the East German government destroyed the heavily damaged Palace as symbol of imperial power, retaining only the bay with the balcony from which, in 1918, Karl Liebknecht proclaimed the new Communist Republic.<sup>39</sup> The bay was incorporated into the East German State Council House across the street, where it is today and the ponderous Baroque structure was replaced with an equally ponderous modern structure called the Palace of the Republic, completed in 1976. This structure was closed in 1991 and since then has been at the center of a raging dispute concerning its demolition and the rebuilding of the Imperial Palace.

The often polemical debate pertaining to the Imperial Palace is complex, with different factions attempting to secure different goals. The reconstruction of the Imperial Palace would essentially complete the erasure of the “socialist landscape” at this location. Although the cost would be enormous, many feel that the symbolic value of such a reconstruction is worth the price. Wishing to prove their point, advocates in 1993 erected a fabric simulation of the façade and envelope of the building which remained in place for more than a year. This has led critics such as Thies Schröder to comment that “in dealing with symbols, Berlin only thinks of one thing: de-molition, then building new symbols, demolition, relocation [...]”<sup>40</sup> In terms of history, the noted architectural historian Helmut Borsch-Supan has written that “it belongs to the history of the city, that [Berlin] is determined by the denial of it’s history.”<sup>41</sup> Tilmann Buddensieg has also discussed the denial of tradition; that the replacing of the old with the new instead setting the new next to the old as the very essence of the Berlin tradition. However, what is of concern in the examples just cited is not that the new is replacing the old, but that the new is now claiming to be old, thus legitimizing its own claim to replace the recent.

Although Critical Reconstruction explicitly juxtaposes the “European” with the “American” city, valorizing the former and discrediting the later, these procedures of memory and identity creation closely resemble strategies deployed in American cities. For example, Sharon Zukin has discussed such Disney creations as Disneyland, the “reconstruction” of Times Square and the development of Celebration City, demonstrating how Disney creates or restores identity by means of “invent[ing] collective memory” and creating Main Streets not as they were, but how they really “should have been.”<sup>42</sup> Zukin concludes that this is a form of utopianism and that its success lies in projecting this utopianism not forwards, but backwards. In Berlin, projecting this utopianism backwards collides with the real historical past and it therefore becomes comprehensible why Berlin, a city straining to invent a new collective memory, is trying with equal desperation to erase the collective memory that it already has. One of the great frustrations of Berlin is that the deeply haunting memories of its real history stand in such stark contrast to those of the shiny new, [historical] Berlin it would like to create. Whereas Celebration’s past resides only in the minds of it’s Imagineers and New York’s Times Square can comfortably flirt with memories of glamour and honky tonk, Berlin’s mainstreet—Unter den Linden—must contend with memories of book burning, military parades and occupation. It is in mediating between a fictional past and the many real pasts of Berlin that reconstruction has assumed its “critical” position: selecting, revising, editing and blending a mixture of pasts both real and imagined.

The consequences of this become apparent in another project recently completed across from the Imperial Palace: the Foreign Ministry. In 1993 the Federal Government initiated the Spreebogen competition for the new Government center, of which the Reichstag renovation and the new Chancellery are a part. By 1994 it was already clear that the Federal Government could not afford many of the new

buildings it had planned. Nor were they necessary; the existing surplus of unused space in the city would increase vastly with the speculative investments of the private sector. The relatively new East German Foreign Ministry was demolished in 1995 and thus it was decided that the new Foreign Ministry should occupy the old Reichsbank Building.

The Reichsbank itself resulted from a competition, the guidelines of which insisted that “an expansion of the state bank is unthinkable as a merely rational office building. It must have the character of a monument, it should be an ornament for the state capital and should represent the dignity of a world institution.”<sup>43</sup> Held in 1933, the competition included prominent modernist architects but their entries were rejected by the German Chancellor Adolph Hitler, who personally awarded the project to the bank’s in-house architect Heinrich Wolff.<sup>44</sup> Construction began in 1934 and during the war the vaults of the bank held many of the valuables and gold confiscated from those deported to the death camps. After the war, the building became the headquarters of the East German Communist Party, eventually housing the offices of Eric Honecker.

At first, members of the Federal Government maintained that the Reichsbank was simply a “banking institution”. As a manager of the Reichsbank had been tried at the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials this proved an untenable position and was quickly abandoned. Nonetheless Hans Kollhoff, an architect who became a central figure in the Critical Reconstructionism and responsible for the recent renovation of the bank, insists that “this is a very solid building, one has the feeling it could stand for centuries.”<sup>45</sup> While appearing to flirt with references to the “Thousand Years” of the Third Reich, Kollhoff emphatically rejects associations of the Reichsbank with National Socialism, bemoaning that “Everything that has a stone façade and a large door is regarded here, in this paranoid situation, as a fascist building.”<sup>46</sup>

## CONCLUSION

With statements such as this Critical Reconstruction has arguably come full circle; reducing the city as a place of collective memory to the city as a place of collective forgetfulness. In the case of the Reichsbank such forgetfulness is particularly jarring. As construction was underway in 1937, the bank was featured in the architectural press with the assertion that “this building will become the symbol for the building of our Third Reich”.<sup>47</sup> Seeking to address such difficult histories, it has recently been argued that classical architecture has been so abused by the agendas of both the right and the left, that it should now be free of all political associations. If one follows this line of reasoning, the classicizing architecture in the Germany of the 1930’s was not designed by National Socialists, but simply by good architects. Similarly, it is claimed that the classicizing tendencies of today’s Critical Reconstruction have no political or social significance. A dangerous game, this disassociation of architectural form from social values catapults architecture out of the realm of the normative into that of the absolute, serving to elevate the architect to the position of an oracular figure beyond the reach of history.

This is a difficult discussion and not one in which the Federal Government was happy being a participant. Therefore, in 1995 it organized a competition for a new addition to the Reichsbank. The competition brief indicated that this new building was to make “a powerful impact of its own” and should serve to alter the impression made by the Reichsbank, whose “architectural identity will be determined by the new structure”. The jury awarded the first prize to Max Dudler, praising his entry as “a new urban composition in the spirit of Schinkel” as well as “precise, restrained architectural details.”<sup>48</sup> However, the Federal Government rejected this decision, citing Dudler’s scheme as “incapable of making a statement about our age, about our totally different democratic identity”,<sup>49</sup> awarding the project to Thomas Müller and Ivan Reimann.<sup>50</sup>

However different these two entries may be, both of them, along with the competition organizers themselves, appropriate the memory of Schinkel as a means of legitimating their respective positions. Provided by the competition organizers, the base model already reconstructed the missing *Bauakademie* and Dudler has taken care to draw the *Bauakademie* as part of his exterior perspective, interpreting Schinkel's first "modern" building as an exemplar of modern classicism. In contrast to this, Müller and Reimann have incorporated a reference to the entry hall of the Altes Museum, interpreting one of Schinkel's later classical works as an exemplar classical modernism. Negotiating these fine lines is a highwire act of differentiation. However, when this thin line is understood as separating tendencies towards the political poles of—ultimately—democracy or fascism, the politics of memory and identity become a central issue. Faced with the very real and difficult problems of healing divisive memories while forging a cohesive identity for post-reunification Berlin, the advocates of Critical Reconstruction attempted to negotiate this fine line. However, although their intentions may have been admirable, in elevating this program to a normative imperative it has become possible—indeed, necessary—to be critical of Critical Reconstruction.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup>"Revolution rückwärts": Hans Stimmann, "kritische Rekonstruktion und steinerne Architektur für die Friedrichstadt" in: Annegret Burg (ed.), *Neue Berlinische Architektur: Eine Debatte*, (Basel: Birkhäuser, 1994): 107-22; esp. 108.
- <sup>2</sup>Berlin [ist] dazu verdammt: immerfort zu werden und niemals zu sein" in: Karl Scheffler, *Berlin. Ein Stadtschicksal*, (Berlin-Westend: Reiss, 1910). (reprint: Berlin: Fannei und Walz, 1989): 219. Scheffler completed the book in 1908, but didn't find a willing publisher until 1910.
- <sup>3</sup>"Die Mauer im Kopf" is the German phrasing for this and is applied equally to those of the former east and west.
- <sup>4</sup>Paul Wallot; 1884-94. See Michael S. Cullen, *Der Reichstag. Die Geschichte eines Monuments*, (Berlin: Frölich & Kaufmann, 1983). The dome itself was destroyed in the fire of February 27, 1933. A Dutchman, Marinus van der Lubbe, confessed to having set the fire, but the National Socialists have often been suspected of setting the fire in order to seize and consolidate power. Whatever the case, Hitler passed the "Reichstag Fire Decrees" the following day, resulting in the arrest, imprisonment and torture of thousands of Communist Party members and many Social Democrats.
- <sup>5</sup>See: Tilmann Buddensieg, "Die Kuppel des Volkes. Zur Kontroverse um die Kuppel des Berliner Reichstages" in: *Berliner Labyrinth*, (Berlin: Wagenbach, 1993): 74-82. Foster original design proposals did not include a dome, proposing instead a roof floating above the Reichstag. Foster succumbed to pressure on the part of the government and, after a myriad of design studies, produced the design that was opened to the public in 1999. It has proven to be an enormous popular success.
- <sup>6</sup>Intended to "encompass the "nation as a body" (Volkskörper) [...] and to elevate it to the object of its own cult", a cult of national identity. See Susanne von Falkenhausen, "The Sphere: Reading a Gender Metaphor in the Architecture of Modern Cults of Identity" in: *Art History*, 20:2, (June, 1997): 238-67; esp. 238.
- <sup>7</sup>The "Spreebogen" Competition was won by Axel Schultes. For a catalogue of all the entries see: Arbeitsgruppe Berlin-Wettbewerbe, Hrsg., *Hauptstadt Berlin. Parlamentsviertel im Spreebogen. Internationaler Städtebaulicher Ideenwettbewerb 1993*, (Basel: Birkhäuser, 1993). Speer's own North-South axis as a counter-point to the dominant east-west axis running from the Schloß through the Tiergarten was not the first proposal of this nature; owing a great deal to the earlier proposals of Martin Mächler.
- <sup>8</sup>For the insertion of the term "Prussian Style" first into Berlin's modernist and then into its contemporary architectural debate, see: Fritz Neumeyer, "Auf dem Weg zu einer neuen Berlinischen Architektur?" in: Annegret Burg (ed.), *Neue Berlinische Architektur: Eine Debatte*, (Basel: Birkhäuser, 1994): 17-22; esp. 19. The correct date Wassili Luckhardt's article entitled "Vom Preußischen Stil zur neuen Baukunst" appearing in the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* is March 26, 1933: pp. 143-144. For a discussion of the origins of the term "Preußischer Stil" itself, see: Fritz Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair: A Study in the Rise of the Germanic Ideology*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961). esp Part III.
- <sup>9</sup>A "Dialog zwischen Tradition und Moderne" - Joseph Paul Kleihues. Quoted in: Hans Stimmann, *op. cit.*: 109.
- <sup>10</sup>Divided into "east" and "west" and under the direction of the following: Planwerk-Ost: Dieter Hoffman-Axthelm and Bernd Albers; Planwerk-West: Fritz Neumeyer and Manfred Ordner.
- <sup>11</sup>Quoted in: Michael Mönninger, "Stadt im Leistungsvergleich" in: *Die Berliner Zeitung*, 40, (17. February 2000): 13, 15.
- <sup>12</sup>Hans Stimmann's political affiliation is with the SPD. He was Senatsbaudirektor from 1991-1996 and Staatssekretär from 1996-99.
- <sup>13</sup>"Ich für meinen Teil würde die neuen Städte und die neuen Gesetze in Amerika lieben: Dort sprechen Natur und Freiheit deutlich genug zum Gemüte, so daß es keiner Erinnerungen bedarf; auf unserem Erdteil jedoch bedarf es der Vergangenheit". In this regard, however, M. de Stael was critical of Berlin. "Berlin, diese ganz moderne Stadt, amcht, so schön sie ist, keinen wirklich bedeutenden Eindruck; man spürt hier den Gang der Geschichte des Landes noch den prägenden Charakter des Einwohners". Madame de Stael, *Über Deutschland*, (Berlin: Union, 1889): 120.
- <sup>14</sup>Rudy Koshar, *Germany's Transient Past. Preservation and National Memory in the Twentieth Century*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998): 155-57. The "Stadtkrone" or city crown was a concept familiar to the Glass Chain movement and can be found in the work of such individuals as Bruno Taut, Hermann Finsterlin, and even Hans Scharoun. Koshar has made the point that under the National Socialists "each major city's physiognomy would not be dominated by the traditional structures of church and Rathaus but by new "urban summits" or *Stadtkrone*, of Nazi buildings. Speer's *Volkshalle* would certainly have been the highpoint of such an ensemble. Moreover, Koshar has argued that this very monumentality was intended to be "völkisch, which in practice meant that architecture should be built so as to promote maximum popular mobilization in the regime's festivals and meetings".
- <sup>15</sup>"Poelzig gehört zu der Richtung der modernen Architektur, die, absolute kunst- und schmuckfeindlich eingestellt, sowohl die ästhetischen Elemente der Tradition als auch die ergänzenden Künste aus der Baukunst getrieben hat". See: Robert Scholl, "Der "Fall" Poelzig" (1932) in: Anna Teut (ed.), *Architektur im Dritten Reich 1933-1945*, (Berlin, Ulstein 1967): 58.
- <sup>16</sup>See: Paul Renner, "Die politische Hetze gegen das neuen Bauen" (1932) in: Anna Teut (ed.), *Architektur im Dritten Reich 1933-1945*, (Berlin, Ulstein 1967): 59-62.
- <sup>17</sup>Rudy Koshar, *op. cit.*: pp. 141; 159.
- <sup>18</sup>The architecture preferred by the National Socialists and its relationship to the scale and detail of classicism has been the subject of much discussion if not argument. In his recent biography of Albert Speer, Joachim Fest writes that Hitler, belying his origins, appears to have been personally inclined to the Imperial Baroque of the Austrian Empire. The simplicity of the Prussian classicism was something from which he remained distant. Nonetheless he recognized in classicism a valuable ambiguity in that it could be deployed for the representational programs of both democratic as well as authoritarian governments. As to the great scale of many NS buildings, Wolfgang Peht has located this desire for monumentality within a broader framework of early- to mid-twentieth-century architecture. In this regard it is associated not only with the utopian projects of the Glass Chain movement, the construction of highrises and the planning of Moscow, but is also associated with the "rediscovery" and publication of the works of Claude-Nicolas Ledoux and Etienne-Louis Boullée by Emil Kaufmann. In terms of realizing this great scale, Fest indicates that Speer, who on a visit to Rome had been shocked at how small St. Peter's appeared, was to a degree even more megalomaniacal than Hitler himself. The latter remained fascinating with the "gigantic, never-seen-before" because of its inherent theatricality and its ability to both grant the masses a positive self-consciousness and to silence any opposition. See: Joachim Fest, *Speer. Eine Biographie*, (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2001): 95-132, esp. 108-112; 127.

- <sup>19</sup>This grand axis was to be, according to Hitler, two and one-half times as long as the Champs-Élysées and to exceed its width by at least twenty meters (to 120 meters). The mayor of Berlin, Julius Lippert, felt that such plans were to grand for Berlin and resisted the implementation of such designs through bureaucratic means. This became the focus of Hitler's anger and resulted on January 30th, 1937 (the fourth anniversary of Hitler's "Machtergreifung") in Hitler promoting Speer to the position of "Generalbauinspektor für die Reichshauptstadt" (G.B.I.). In addition to his having the status of a Secretary of State (Staatssekretärs der Reichsregierung) this position included a number of exceptional benefits to Speer who, at the age of only thirty one, began to dream of "becoming a second Schinkel". In: *ibid.*: 89-93.
- <sup>20</sup>The rebuilding of Berlin was to have been completed by 1950; after the successful completion of all the wars of conquest associated with the establishment of the German world empire (Weltreich).
- <sup>21</sup>Speer, in his *Spandauer Tagebücher*, notes that in November of 1944 Hitler "Mit einer großen Armeebewegung wies er auf die Zerstörung draußen: „Wahs hat das alles schon zu sagen, Speer! Für unseren neuen Bebauungsplan hätten Sie allein in Berlin achtzigtausend Häuser abreißen müssen. Leider haben die Engländer diese Arbeiten nicht genau nach Ihren Plänen durchgeführt. Aber immerhin ist ein Anfang gemacht!" Quoted in *Mythos Berlin—Wahrnehmungsgeschichte einer industriellen Metropole*, U. Baehr (ed.), (Berlin: Ästhetik und Kommunikation, 1984): 92.
- <sup>22</sup>The issue of whether there was such a moment of a "Year Zero" in Germany has received much scholarly attention in recent decades. Most scholars would now argue for a much more differentiated understanding of the trajectory reaching from Weimar to post-war Germany. Gunter Grass wrote that "There was no collapse, no absolute beginning, just sluggish and murky transitions." (Quoted in Rudy Koshar, *op. cit.*, pp. 200.) In terms of architecture and urbanism, the historian Werner Durth has convincingly argued for an underlying continuity between the years of the NS regime and the early post-war era. See Werner Durth: *Deutsche Architekten: Biographische Verflechtungen, 1900-1970*, (Braunschweig: Vieweg, 1986) and Werner Durth and Niels Gutschow: *Träume in Trümmern: Planungen zum Wiederaufbau zerstörter Städte im Westen Deutschlands, 1940-1950*, (Braunschweig: Vieweg, 1988). Nonetheless, with the total collapse of the Third Reich, Berlin as capital was most effected by the notions of a "Year Zero" and a new beginning.
- <sup>23</sup>See Bruno Flierl, "The Stalin Allee" in: *Zodiac*, New Series 5, (1988): 76-115.
- <sup>24</sup>Hanns Hopp (an architect involved with the design of the Stalin Alle buildings). Quoted in Flierl, *ibid.*: p. 91.
- <sup>25</sup>See Hans Kollhoff, "The City is Dead. Long Live the City" in: *Lotus*, 80, (1994): 71. The Karl Marx Allee has been praised by both Aldo Rossi and Hans Kollhoff, since reunification it has undergone extensive restoration 2 billion Mark and is frequently visited by architectural tourists..
- <sup>26</sup>Hermann Henselmann, "The Reactionary Character of Constructivism" in: *Neues Deutschland*, 4. December 1951. Quoted (as translated) in Flierl, *op. cit.*: p. 90.
- <sup>27</sup>The participating architects included Hugh Stubbins, Paul Baumgarten, Werner Düttmann, Oscar Niemeyer, Arne Jacobson, Walter Gropius and Le Corbusier. Throughout the post-war period, West Germany remained loyal to the re-imported vision of a transparent glass architecture developed in the Germany of the 1920's, placing this at the service of new democratic institutions and developing a new tradition that, as we have seen, is only now being rethought as the Federal Government transfers to Berlin.
- <sup>28</sup>If the West increased its minimum standards of housing while the East experienced a corresponding decrease this can be understood as a reflection of their respective economic strengths and not as a function of ideological differences.
- <sup>29</sup>"[...] eine Geschichte der "Auflösung der Städte" beginnen, die sich im landschaftlichen Städtebau der Nachkriegszeit fortsetzte, und zu jener Form von Städtebau- und Architektur verzicht führte, die man aus heutiger Sicht nur als einen Akt der Selbstbestrafung verstehen kann. Die Architektur der Stadt büßte stellvertretend für begangene historische Sünden." F. Neumeyer, *op. cit.*: 20.
- <sup>30</sup>The opening salvos in the campaign against utopian modernism were first fired by such prominent theorists of postmodern urbanism and Aldo Rossi in his "Architecture of the City" [1966], Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter in their "Collage City" [1978] and in the various writings of the Krier brothers.
- <sup>31</sup>The IBA Alt was concerned with rehabilitating the inner-city building substance. The IBA Neu attracted the efforts of, among others, Aldo Rossi, Rob Krier, Mathias Ungers, Mario Botta, Gustav Peichl, Herman Hertzberger, Alvaro Siza, John Hejduk, James Stirling, Peter Eisenman, Rem Koolhaas and Zaha Hadid.
- <sup>32</sup>K. F. Schinkel (1829): "Ich sehe keinen Ausweg aus diesem Labyrinth" quoted in: T. Buddensieg, *op. cit.*: page 7.
- <sup>33</sup>See Werner Hegemann, *Das steinerne Berlin*, (1930). Reprinted in the *Bauwelt Fundamente*, vol. 3, (Braunschweig: Vieweg, 1988).
- <sup>34</sup>Quoted in: Michael Z. Wise, *Capital Dilemma. Germany's Search for a New Architecture of Democracy*, (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998): 102.
- <sup>35</sup>"[...] daher ist dieser Bau die Bekrönung des Großdeutschen politischen Reiches". Adolf Hitler, "Der Führer anlässlich der Übergabe der Reichskanzlei am 9. Januar 1939 in Berliner Sportpalast" in: Angela Schönberger, *Die neue Reichskanzlei von Albert Speer. Zum Zusammenhang von nationalsozialistischer Ideologie und Architektur*, (Berlin: Gebrüder Mann, 1981): 183-6.
- <sup>36</sup>Speer's Reichskanzlei was demolished in 1949. The American reporter William Shirer wrote: "This building, in whose stately rooms they so confidently and cold-bloodedly planned their obscene ideas is now, like they themselves, forever destroyed" in: Tony le Tissier, *Berlin Damals und Heute*, (London: Battle of Britain Prints, 1994): 335. The bunker complex, however, remained largely intact and after reunification once again became something of a tourist attraction.
- <sup>37</sup>The Prinz-Albrecht-Palais was destroyed on June 15, 1956. In the following years the site was used by a building materials firm specializing in recycling the Berlin's rubble and an "Autodrom" where one could drive without a licence. The first recognition of the importance of the Prinz-Albrecht-Palais site came at the end of the 1970's through the efforts of Dieter Hoffmann-Axthelm. Thereafter the IBA also voiced opposition to the planned extension of the Kochstrasse towards the west. In 1980 the first voices in favor of erecting a memorial to the victims of fascism were raised. The preparations for the first competition began in 1982 and the competition itself was held in 1983 with 194 participants. The Jury awarded a first prize in April of 1984 to Jürgen Wenzel and Nikolaus Lang. At the end of 1984 the Senate concluded that the project of the competition winner should not be realised. Thereafter the Senator for Cultural Affairs [Senator für kulturelle Angelegenheiten] took over on the short-term responsibility for the site. In 1987 the site was opened as a "provisional" facility. See: Reinhard Rürup, *Topographie des Terrors. Gestapo, SS und Reichssicherheitshauptamt auf dem "Prinz-Albrecht-Gelände" Eine Dokumentation*, (Berlin: Wilmuth Arenhövel, 1987): 206-19. A new competition was subsequently organized, with Peter Zumthor receiving the first prize.
- <sup>38</sup>The first structure of architectural importance on this site was built in 1538 by the architect Caspar Theiss. From 1698-1716 it was greatly expanded as the seat of imperial power by Andreas Schluter, whose designs followed the prevailing baroque fashion. The large dome which figures prominently in photographs of the palace was added in the nineteenth century. Heavily damaged during the second world war, it was nonetheless still serviceable enough to host the significant exhibition entitled "Berlin plant". Opening under the auspices of Berlin's then Baustadtrat Hans Scharoun, this exhibit opened on September 22, 1946 in the Weißen Saal (White Hall) of the Schloß. Despite an intense international outcry, the Palace was destroyed by order of the East German government in 1950-51.
- <sup>39</sup>This proclamation, following the abdication of the Kaiser, set off the Spartacus Revolution which ended the following year with the murders of Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg; to whom Mies van der Rohe built a monument as one of his first architectural commissions.

<sup>40</sup>Thies Schröder, "Haupt- und Nebenstädisches" in: *Stadtforum Journal*, 11, (May, 1993). Quoted in: Francesca Rogier, "Growing Pains: From the Opening of the Wall to the Wrapping of the Reichstag" in: *Assemblage*, 29, (1996): 44-71; esp. 43.

<sup>41</sup>"Doch es gehört zur Geschichte der Stadt, dass sie durch Verdrängung der Geschichte geprägt ist". Helmut Borsch-Supan, "Die Lust am Schnellen Untergang" in: *Berliner Zeitung Magazin*, 57:192, (18./19. August, 2001): 1-2..

<sup>42</sup>Sharon Zukin, *Landscapes of Power*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991): 222.

<sup>43</sup>Quoted in: M. Z. Wise, *op. cit.*: 94.

<sup>44</sup>Among them Walter Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, and Hans Poelzig.

<sup>45</sup>M. Z. Wise, *op. cit.*: 99.

<sup>46</sup>*ibid.*: 101.

<sup>47</sup>"[...] Diese solide, gediegene, zuverlässige Arbeit ist es, die unser deutsche Volk endgültig zur Freiheit und zum Sieg führen kann - sie allein. So wird dieser Bau zu einem Symbol für den Bau unseres Dritten Reiches, den zu vollenden wir alle zusammenstehen". *Bauwelt*, 34, (1937): 1.

<sup>48</sup>From the Jury Report in: Sebastian Redecke and Ralph Stern (eds.), *Foreign Affairs. New Embassy Buildings and the German Foreign Office in Berlin*, (Basel: Birkhäuser, 1997): 65.

<sup>49</sup>Barbara Jakubeit, the former Federal Building Board President. Quoted in: M. Z. Wise, *op. cit.*: 98.

<sup>50</sup>For the entry of Müller and Reimann, as well as the others in this competition, see: S. Redecke and R. Stern, *op. cit.*: 68-102.