GRASS ROOTS URBANISM: AN OVERVIEW OF THE SQUATTERS
MOVEMENT IN WEST BERLIN DURING THE 1970S AND 1980S

Joshua Kramer

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Committee:

Christina Guenther, Committee Co Chair

Edgar Landgraf, Committee Co Chair

ABSTRACT

Christina Guenther, Committee Co-Chair and Edgar Landgraf, Committee Co-Chair

In "Grass Roots Urbanism," I attempt to examine the phenomenon of squatting during the era between the 1970s and 1980s in West Berlin and how this simple, illegal act transformed into an entire movement. I begin with the student movement in West Berlin and the politics and ideals behind that movement, from overcrowding at the Free University to large, student-led protests against various issues, and how that movement inspired the squatters to organize themselves. I divide the squatters movement into two separate waves: I begin the dialogue pertaining to squatting by discussing the first wave, which was rather short and only lasted a few years at the beginning of the 1970s, and how that wave served as the foundation for the second wave, which was more prominent in the West Berlin political and alternative scene and ultimately had more of an impact on the West Berlin public and government. I discuss the political and social effects of the movement as a whole and how the squatters built an alternative lifestyle and culture for themselves during a time of housing shortages and an economic crisis. In my last chapter, I discuss the direct implications of the movement and how it ultimately had an effect on the urban landscape, both physically and politically, and how the movement itself is important in the overall context of German studies. I also bring the movement into a modern context by briefly discussing squatting in Berlin today and how those squats are organized and what they are trying to accomplish.

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INTRODUCTION

Squatting, or the illegal occupation of buildings, played a pivotal role in shaping the urban landscape of West Berlin throughout the 1970s and 1980s. The economic recession of the 1960s caused a housing crisis that would eventually serve as the foundation of the squatters movement in the early 1970s. Before the onset of the economic recession, West Berlin had plans to develop new, inexpensive housing options on the outskirts of the city. These "satellite cities," as Alexander Vasudevan refers to them in "Reassembling the City,"[1] were to serve as a solution for the housing crisis that was forming at the time; however, the economic recession made this project impossible to accomplish and it was immediately abandoned (see 123). When this particular solution failed, the West Berlin government enacted a new policy known as "clear-cut or area renovation" (*Kahlschlag- oder Flächensanierung* in German) that aimed to tear down historically inexpensive districts in favor of constructing more modern and more expensive housing options. This policy forced residents from their homes and in turn, due to a lack of other viable options, created the first instances of squatting in West Berlin.

Those, whose homes and communities were affected by this new, cold, and calculated form of urban renewal, joined together to form a movement that would ultimately have a strong impact on the way that city governments in all of Germany, not just Berlin, developed plans for urban renewal and construction. Studying Berlin's squatters movement effectively demonstrates how grassroots campaigning and organizing can rally citizens to a cause, as well as have an effect on the political climate of the era. Some community projects and alternative ways of living

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[1] In "Reassembling the City," Vasudevan outlines the politics of squatting by beginning with a modern example of squatting in Berlin, then retracing the history of the squatters movement in both East and West Berlin. The author discusses the different government actions and laws that came as a result of the movement, including the Berlin Line of Reason, as well as the political motivations behind the beginning of the movement during the housing crises of the 1960s and 1970s.

survived this era and still exist in Germany today. The Georg von Rauch-Haus, for example,

exists today as one of the most famous and historically important instances of squatting in West

Berlin, as well as an alternative housing project and concert venue ("Georg von Rauch Haus").[2]

This significant modern day example shows how the impact of the squatters movement in West

Berlin is something that can still be felt today in German culture and society. There have even

been a few, modern instances of squatting in the 21st century that have utilized squatter slogans

and practices from the late 1970s and early 1980s to show their dissent with local policies and

practices.

Within this thesis, I argue that the squatters movement served as an important, historic

example of citizen dissent turning into a grassroots movement that had an impact on both the

policies that they were attempting to protest against, as well as on the community at large. The

movement served as a source of inspiration for those affected by the harsh housing policies at the

time and helped organize people into enacting change. I also argue that this movement

demonstrates how citizens are more than willing and able to take matters into their own hands

when the government fails to provide basic necessities, such as housing, for its citizens. Citizens

from various, affected districts organized themselves from the beginning of the 1970s onwards to

squat important buildings in the community that were slated for demolition, and protected homes

and apartments of those who had no viable alternative for housing. When the government wants

to infringe on the rights and livelihood of its citizens, it is the duty of the citizens to organize

themselves to enact change. This thesis demonstrates these points time and time again, as the

history of the squatters, although a little inconsistent in the direct effects of individual squats,

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[2] The official website of the Georg von Rauch-Haus is run by the owners/operators of the building. The page is entirely in German and briefly summarizes the history of the building, and it announces which musical acts will be performing and when, as well as how to get in contact with the owners in regards to renting a room. The building is still in operation today.

serves as an important historical example of citizen dissent turning into a movement that was not going to allow those in power to treat them in an inhumane way.

To demonstrate these points, I provide an overview of the history of the squatters movement. The first chapter follows the history of the West Berlin student movement of the 1960s, because it serves as an important precursor to the squatters movement itself. Without the student movement, the squatters may have not been able to organize themselves as efficiently or they could possibly never have existed in the first place. The student movement developed a Marxist-inspired ideology that would serve as the basis of the beginning of the squatters movement and directly inspire it. The students' use of communes as an alternative living arrangement was the spark that set off the idea that those affected by the housing and economic crises of the 1970s and 1980s could attempt a similar living strategy, while at the same time protesting the lack of viable living situations. Other movements were also inspired by the students' wave of protests in the 1960s, such as the *Autonomen*, the Red Army Faction, and others that will also be addressed in the first chapter.

Following the student movement, I will then begin my discussion on the squatters with an analysis of the first wave of squatters in the early 1970s. This second chapter will serve to narrate an overarching history of the entirety of the West Berlin squatting scene, beginning with the first wave of squatting, then transitioning into the second. It is interesting to note that various sources on the movement describe the waves of the movement as occurring at different times. Some argue that the first wave did not occur until 1979, while others believe it happened much earlier. I argue that the first wave began in 1970 with the first example of squatting being rooted in a cause that was directly protesting the housing policies at the time, which was the lack of social centers for disadvantaged youths in the community. The lack of such spaces propelled the first

wave and was the main reason for squatting at the time. The first wave of the squatters only lasted roughly 4 years between 1970 and 1974, but was important in regards to the movement as a whole because it served as a model for how squatting should operate. It showed what strategies and practices work well for enacting change and inspiring others, as well as what fails to accomplish either. I also argue that the second wave, which was the more impactful and meaningful of the two waves, occurs around 1978 with the Tunix Congress, due to the impact that the congress had on the alternative scene in West Berlin. The congress also had a direct impact on the squatters movement and served to reignite it, after a brief period of little to no development happening in the scene between 1975 and 1977. This second wave was essential to the movement, as it would inspire citizens and politicians to work together towards different forms of urban renewal that did not involve tearing down homes and apartments that people resided in.

In my final chapter, I discuss the impact of the movement on the West Berlin urban policies on construction planning. The ways in which the squatters inspired citizens to join the cause, whether it be participating in the squats themselves or trying to go through legal channels, is important to examine as well as the specific impact these methods had. Throughout the paper, I will discuss the successes and failures of the movement and how these affected the urban landscape of the city. Assigning a brief chapter to describing these changes more directly and in detail is also important. Within this final chapter, I will discuss two different instances of modern squatting in the 21st century. This section will serve as a reminder that the movement still has an effect on the citizens of the city to this day and that these citizens can refer back to the history of the movement for inspiration whenever their livelihoods and communities feel threatened by discriminating housing policies or regulations.

Squatting in West Berlin is an important subject to examine in German studies due to the impact that everyday citizens were able to have to foster support in the community and bring about change in the political discourse surrounding urban planning. The movement's core philosophy that every citizen has a right to housing and that the government should not be allowed or able to strip that away is a cause that many countries throughout the world have supported throughout history. Despite the movement's noble intentions, it was not without its flaws. As this thesis will demonstrate, many members of the movement were quick to resort to violence, such as fighting with the local police. However even with this in mind, many of these altercations were instigated by the police themselves, who resorted to using force, harming protesters and innocent bystanders. In this way, the movement also showed that the police of West Berlin were a part of an inherently flawed system that needed to be addressed. Through the use of various tactics, several of which were inspired by those who took part in the student movement of the 1960s, the squatters were able to leave their mark on the history of the city and serve as an inspiration against government and police oppression to this day.

CHAPTER I. THE STUDENT MOVEMENT IN WEST BERLIN

Historical Overview

In order to gather a more thorough understanding of the squatters movement in West Berlin, it is imperative to first discuss the student movement of the 1960s. The student movement itself laid the foundation for the later political groups of the 1970s. From the ashes of its official dissolution in 1970 rose the squatters movement as well as other groups that will later be addressed and expanded upon (Harrington 164).[3] The ideologies and key figures of the student movement inspired such groups to form and many active members of the movement further carried their ideals into the 1970s by forming new political groups and attracting a new generation of like-minded individuals to join their various causes. It is necessary to first discuss the history of this movement from its formation at the Free University in protest to certain university policies, to the culmination of multiple events in its timeline that led to confrontation and violence, to finally concluding with its official dissolution in 1970, though the movement had been abandoned by most of its members just a few years prior.

The Free University was formed in 1948 in West Berlin in response to the separation of Germany into two different nations, the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic, which left the renowned Humboldt University in the newly formed eastern section of Berlin (Merritt 518-519).[4] The construction of the Free University (henceforth

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[3] Harrington takes a compelling and detailed look at student activism in England, France, and Germany and how these movements had an impact on university reform in their respective countries. This thesis was especially useful, due to its timeline of the student movement in West Germany, which detailed several important events that transpired in West Berlin that pertained to my discussion of the student movement and provided more details on incidents such as the attempted assassination of Rudi Dutschke and the Easter Riots.

[4] Merritt offers another insightful perspective into the West German student movement, by discussing at length the section of the movement situated in West Berlin. The author describes the political climate of the time and how it offered fertile ground for the protest movement to form, while also going into detail about the movement itself and discussing the important motives behind the attempted assassination of Rudi Dutschke, the effect of said assassination on the growth of the movement, and the movements ultimate decline shortly after.

occasionally referred to as FU) came before the construction of the Berlin Wall and was a response to the desire to have a university separate from the communist influenced GDR. Partly funded by both the British and American governments, the Free University was originally designed as a new, more liberal approach to university studies (Harrington 149-150). From the name itself, Free University (or *Freie Universität* in German), it was obvious why the governments of the West decided to fund the university. Simply put, the West wanted a university of their own that would compete with the communist-influenced Humboldt university. The Western, democratic influences of the Free University are evident when one takes a look at its initial mission statement. From the beginning of its formation, the main concerns of the Free University were to create an academic environment in which students would have more of an impact in the way the university was operated. Professors were encouraged to be more approachable than they were in the past, and the atmosphere of the university was to be more liberal in nature, a sharp contrast to the fascist ideals of the country's recent Nazi past.

However, throughout the 1950s, the liberal ideals that the founders of the university had articulated quickly disintegrated. The first issue that the university had was the basic structure of the academic senate and how it allowed little actual influence to the student body. The academic senate at the Free University was designed as a democratic means of deciding upon various issues on how the university should be operated. Although the students had seats on the senate, they were always outnumbered by faculty, who ultimately had the final say in decisions (Merritt 519). Various, older staff members, who lived through the Nazi regime and understood how vital it was to support the new direction that the university was attempting to take, eventually left when they reached retirement age, leaving the other staff members in charge, who did not see the lack of student involvement in decisions as a major problem. The lack of any actual decisive

power at the university level was one important reason as to why the students felt the need to radicalize themselves and form new, politically more left-leaning groups.

Another vital reason as to why the students decided to radicalize themselves during the 1960s was increased discussion of their country's recent Nazi past. Before coming to the university, many students were never exposed to the atrocities committed by Hitler and the Nazi party, as many of their textbooks had completely omitted any history following 1932 (Harrington 150). Due to this lack of historical knowledge, many students went through what Nan K. Harrington refers to as "political shock," as they attempted to comprehend the reality of the fascist regime, the Holocaust, and the atrocities committed during the war. This shock caused many students to become more politically active as they became aware of the hazards of being disengaged from the political sphere.

This political shock, combined with the lack of student influence in the academic senate, contributed to the formation of the first political group of the student movement, the *Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund* (Socialist German Student Association) or SDS for short. The SDS was politically the most left-leaning group in the student movement and it was also the most influential (Merritt 520). Support for the SDS came from various liberal, anti-fascist ideologies prevalent among students who associated conservative and politically right-leaning politics with the Nazi past. Initially, the main interest of the SDS was to bring the country's Nazi's history into the public sphere, most notably by organizing an exhibit that the SDS referred to as "Unexpiated Nazi Justice," which "documented the complicity of many jurists in the Federal Republic with the Hitler regime" (Harrington 150). Their engagement in the political sphere eventually shifted towards a multitude of other political issues, including university reform, the Vietnam War, and protests against various dictators and fascist regimes.

There were also other student-led protests groups that formed in West Berlin during this time period, all of which had various political view points and fell in different sections of the political spectrum, most often either more liberal or moderate. Most of these groups had so-called "parent groups," which were typically political parties that existed in West Germany that would offer guidance and support to the student groups that fell under their umbrella (Merritt 520). For example, SDS's parent group was the Social Democratic Party, however the SPD dropped the student organization when the group became too "radical" for them and were infusing certain communist ideals into their own political ideology. Other noteworthy student protest groups of the 1960s include the Republican Club, which was formed by former members of the SDS who had graduated and went on to become graduate students, thereby giving these students their own political outlet as well. Other groups included the *Ring Christlich-Demokratischer Studenten*, a Christian-Democratic group, whose parent group was the Christian Democratic Union; there was also the *Liberaler Studentenbund Deutschlands* and their parent group, the Free Democratic Party, and the *Sozialdemokratischer Hochschulbund*, whose parent group was also the Social Democratic Party, alongside the SDS, for a brief time. Both the SDS and Republican Club played the most important and impactful roles in the student protest wave of the 1960s.

Harrington argues that the reason German students at the Free University were so radicalized and politically involved was simply because the Free University was built on a very liberal foundation. Such a foundation made an attempt to guarantee certain Western values, such as the freedoms of speech and assembly (see 154). One of the first organized protests of the student movement occurred when the Spanish Consul-General visited West Berlin on July 18, 1961. Students gathered to protest his visit due to the fact that it was meant to "commemorate the

25th anniversary of the Fascist assault on the Loyalist government." The protest of the various student groups, most of which were vocally anti-fascist, came to a halt when their demonstration was broken up by the West Berlin police. Although rather uneventful in the grand timeline of the student protest movement, it is viewed today as the event that set off the waves of other protests and demonstrations that would come out of the decade.

Some of the SDS's earliest notable actions came from its involvement in the discussion of nuclear disarmament. Political discussion at the time centered heavily around the concept of a rapidly approaching "nuclear death," if the Cold War's ongoing arms race were to continue. The nuclear disarmament movement quickly became more about "security" and "order," rather than a generalized, often vague concept of "peace" between nations (Nehring 156).[5] During the nuclear disarmament discussions of the 1950s and early 1960s, the SDS movement was still connected with its parent group, the SPD. Both shared this similar ideological mindset that, in opposition to the idea of launching nuclear weapons, people of the world should see themselves as one collective unit, with the actions of one affecting the group as a whole. Furthermore, it was the general opinion at the time that any weapons buildup by the West German government would further separate them from their GDR counterparts, thus make reunification that much more difficult in the future. This dream for a reunified Germany among West Germans was suddenly shattered when the Berlin Wall was erected in August of 1961, which drove an even larger wedge between the two nations.

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[5] Nehring discusses at length the various political protest movements in both West Germany and Great Britain between the years of 1945 and 1970. The book covers the anti-nuclear armament demonstrations of the 1960s, before going into detail about anti-Vietnam protests in both countries and other protests that occurred during this time. The book was especially useful for its section on the West German student movement and its contributions to protests during the 1960s.

The Easter Marches of 1963 in West Germany, of which the SDS and SPD were involved in, decided on the phrase "Either Coexistence or no Existence" to further highlight their stance on the nuclear arms buildup of the Cold War (Nehring 162). By this time, the idea of reunifying Germany was in the past and the focus was now on the Federal Republic itself. The military of the FRG (Federal Republic of Germany) shortly before the Berlin Wall was erected, had received its first shipment of nuclear-capable weaponry. This change in nuclear capabilities was one of the sparks that set off the Easter Marches, as it became more apparent to protesters and citizens alike, that the nuclear arms race was in full-swing and needed to come to a halt. Protesters argued that the nuclear arms race was not the solution the world needed to the Cold War, but rather change at the socio-economic level was needed and, in order to achieve a more secure world, the number of nuclear-capable weapons had to be reduced, not just in the FRG, but all around the world (Nehring 164). The SDS and general student involvement in the Easter Marches marks an early point in the history of the student movement that would ultimately continue to grow and expand into other issues of the time.

An important figure in the student movement was a student by the name of Rudi Dutschke, who was a prominent member of the section of the student movement that was vocally anti-authoritarian. He was heavily involved in the movement, taking part in various protests throughout the lifespan of the movement, including the demonstration on December 18, 1964, against Moïse Tshombe, a politician from the Congo (Karcher 55).[6] During the demonstration, in which Dutschke was involved alongside the SDS and the African Student League, the peaceful

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[6] In this article, Karcher discusses the concept of "counter-violence" in the West German Student Movement and how it shaped student perspectives about interactions with the police. She discusses the moral implications behind violence against property and violence against people and how this pertains to student protests and, more specifically, to Rudi Dutschke's own ideology. She also discusses the women's movement, Rote Zora, and the Red Army Faction and how they formed from the politically-charged 1960s in West Germany.

protest quickly turned into a violent one, as protesters began throwing tomatoes and fighting with the local police. This physical altercation with the police would later be repeated by other movements, including the squatters movement, in which demonstrations, however peaceful initially, would often turn violent at the first sign of police intervention.

Much like the American student movement of the 1960s, the German movement was also notably anti-Vietnam War. While arguing against the use of nuclear weapons, both by other nations and their own, the members of the German student movement came to the consensus that the napalm used during the Vietnam War was yet another atrocity committed against humanity. At the Free University, students held a regular study group that would meet and discuss both South Vietnam and the issues situated around the war itself. As a result, students became increasingly more educated on the subject and they also attended various sit-ins and engaged in their own independent research, which resulted in several students of the movement becoming more or less experts in the field. All of this preparation culminated on February 26th, 1965, when the Free University hosted a public debate between two officials from the United States military and representatives from the SDS. The debate was entirely one-sided, as it was made obvious to the audience that the US officials did little to prepare for the debate. The students, who had been preparing for several months at this point, arrived to the debate with a wealth of knowledge about the war at their disposal, which caused the US officials constantly to backtrack on what they were discussing and revealed inherent contradictions in their argument. This public debate between the two groups was the last time any US official accepted an invitation from the SDS (Klimke 54).[7]

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[7] Klimke compares the student protest movements in West Germany in the 1960s to those occurring simultaneously in the United States. He details the SDS student group in West Germany, from its foundation to its collapse, and discusses important figures in both country's movements, while at the same time mentioning the influence they had

Another incident involving the student movement and their anti-Vietnam War protests occurred on February 5, 1966. On this day, nearly 2,500 students from various student organizations, including the SDS, Liberal Student Association, and the Humanist Student Union took part in a public demonstration that blocked off a popular shopping district in West Berlin by the name of Kurfürstendamm. The demonstration quickly moved to the US cultural institution known as the *Amerikahaus* (America House) where the students conducted a sit-in (Klimke 53-54). All of this was in response to an event that transpired a few nights prior, during which a group by the name of the "International Liberation Front" put up posters all around West Berlin and all five members involved were promptly detained by the police. The posters displayed the following text:

> MURDER. Murder through napalm bombs! Murder through gas? Murder through atomic bombs? …How long will we allow murder being committed in our name? AMIS GET OUT OF VIETNAM!

Students at the Free University were heavily invested in what occurred during the Vietnam War and felt that it was their duty as West German citizens to take a stand against the war. Many saw the war in Vietnam, and the napalm used against civilians and soldiers alike, as a continuation of the fascist power structure that once had a strong grip over their own nation, nearly 20 years prior. As a result of their education at the Free University and being exposed to the atrocities that transpired during World War II, many students felt that it was their responsibility to assure that their nation not sit idly by while another nation committed similar atrocities in a different war.

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on another. This article was especially important to this thesis for its detail on the West German student movement's history and ideology.

This sort of mindset fueled the protests of the West German students against the war in Vietnam and became a key aspect of the movement and their ideals.

During the emergence of the West German student movement, there were two key incidents of attacks on student protesters that highlighted and solidified the group's anti-authoritarian stance. On June 2, 1967, students and citizens of Iranian descent alike gathered to protest the arrival of the Shah of Iran. The groups' protests centered around the notion that Iran should have both intellectual freedom and democracy (Karcher 55). During this protest, a student by the name of Benno Ohnesorg was murdered by a police officer by the name of Karl-Heinz Kurras, who was dressed in civilian attire. Ohnesorg's murder was felt throughout the student movement, especially after the acquittal of the officer in November of that year (Klimke 152). After his murder, the movement thought that the power structure in place was as dangerous as they had feared. If police officers could murder unarmed and non-violent civilians and be acquitted, then there indeed is an inherit flaw in the system that needed to be exposed and addressed. To make matters worse, the notorious tabloid *Bild Zeitung*, alongside other publications, decided to exacerbate the situation by implying that the killing of Benno Ohnesorg was justified and that the student protesters were the ones to blame for escalating the situation (Karcher 55). As a result, Ohnesorg became a sort of martyr for the movement, and more students took up the cause.

The publications that blamed the students for the murder of Ohnesorg, and not the police officer responsible, had a major impact on the general public at the time and their attitudes towards the movement itself. The media influence on the general "anti-student movement" attitude snowballed into the second important attack against students in the movement, the attempted assassination of Rudi Dutschke on April 11, 1968 (Klimke 143). At this point in the

movement, Dutschke had become a figurehead and leader, who showcased the group's ideals

and led the charge against state violence against civilians. While attempting to leave his home,

Dutschke was assaulted by 23-year-old Josef Bachmann, an avid *Bild* reader, who was fought off

by Dutschke using his bicycle as a weapon, until Bachmann drew his .38 caliber pistol and shot

Dutschke three times before fleeing the scene (Merritt 516). Bachmann was confronted by the

police and engaged in a firefight, before being gunned down. Like Dutschke, he subsequently

survived his injuries.

Following the failed assassination attempt, demonstrators took to the streets for days on

end in his support. Roughly 12,000 people were in attendance and the demonstration quickly

turned violent, when they "…overturned cars and set them afire; they blocked deliveries of the

newspapers from Axel Springer's publishing house, causing an estimated $65,000 damage to the

Springer concern" (Merritt 516). The group's main concern with this blockade, was to stop

delivery of the *Bild Zeitung,* which was the newspaper that, with its blatant anti-student

movement messages, inspired Bachmann to attack Dutschke in the first place. The demonstration

was also catastrophic for the people involved. As many as two hundred demonstrators and

bystanders sustained injuries, alongside fifty-four law enforcement officers. This caused a ripple

effect, as demonstrations broke out in cities and towns all across West Germany, resulting in

thousands of injuries, arrests and even two deaths. These demonstrations became collectively

known as the "Easter Riots" and were quite influential in the development of the student

movement. Nehring argues that Ohnesorg's murder and the assassination attempt on Dustchke's

life were "real manifestations of what activists perceived as state violence" (272). This meant

that the student movement as a whole now had, at least in their views, concrete evidence of state

violence oppressing its citizens in favor of keeping its own power in place. Such a realization is

partly what fueled such protests to break out on a nation-wide scale following the assassination attempt on one of the group's most prominent members.

1968 was a definitive year for the West German student movement. The year in which Rudi Dutschke was shot by a deranged fan of the *Bild Zeitung*, which incited waves of protests, also witnessed the decisive Star March. The Star March, or *Sternmarsch*, was a large demonstration held in the city of Bonn, as nearly 70,000 demonstrators gathered to protest the passing of the Emergency Laws (Harrington 161). The demonstration mostly consisted of students, in particular members of the SDS, as well as other student and youth groups. The initial plan was to organize a public protest in Bonn and capitalize on the support of the trade unions, another group that opposed these laws. However, that portion of the plan fell apart, as union workers decided to host their own, separate protest in the city of Dortmund, thus having no connection with the student protesters. The reasoning behind this was mostly due to the fact that the union workers of Germany could not fathom why university students would oppose the government and place their futures at risk. To union workers, university students were being set up for success in their post-graduate lives. It was incomprehensible to union workers that students, who were going to leave their respective universities with degrees and attain well-paying jobs, would risk everything to protest (Harrington 157). The lack of cooperation with trade unions, alongside the passing of the Emergency Laws, signified the beginning of the end for the West German student movement. Without their support, many students began to lose their drive for the cause, as they quickly realized it was not just the state that did not support their movement, but also the workers, the one group the students believed they could depend on for an ally.

After the Star March and the passing of the Emergency Laws, the reduced student movement put their efforts solely back into university reform. The movement shifted its focus to a few key concerns, including the "expansion and modernization of the universities, revision of the professorial system, and teaching methods, democratization of university admissions, and increased student participation" (Harrington 166). The lack of student influence at the administrative level at universities in West Germany remained an issue, as tenured professors still held the majority of power and students felt as though their ideas and opinions fell by the wayside. By shifting their focus from the political and government level to the universities, the student movement left its former goals behind, paving the way for other groups to form from the ashes of the movement and establish their own set of ideals, goals, and ambitions, while still simultaneously being influenced by their past associations with the movement itself.

<div align="center">Ideology of the West German Student Movement</div>

The ideology of the student movement is also important to the development and subsequent rise of the squatters movement in West Berlin. Several ideals that stemmed from the politically left leanings of the student movement carried over into the 1970s and had a profound effect on how the squatters movement, as well as other political movements and groups, operated. Due to this strong influence, the following section will discuss what those ideologies were, as well as when and how they were formed, in order to gain a more cohesive understanding of the roots of the squatters movement that would follow.

As mentioned previously, when students came to the Free University in the 1950s, they experienced the "political shock" of learning about Hitler's Third Reich for the first time, as they had not been exposed to it in any previous educational institution. Upon this realization of what effect a fascist dictatorship can have on a nation, students began to find themselves leaning more

and more to the left of the political spectrum. If the far right brought Hitler into power and initiated the Holocaust, then being on the opposite end seemed preferable to the youth of the nation. This increasingly strong communist ideology among students ended up causing the separation of the student-led SDS from their parent political organization, the SPD.

Although the SDS had existed in one form or another in the time before the Third Reich, it was in the 1950s and 1960s when the political ideology of the group began to take a shift. The group reformed itself on September 3, 1946 under an obviously socialist banner and was quickly picked up and supported by the SPD, who saw a student-led political group at the university level as a positive addition to their overall political influence (Klimke 23). Initially, the SDS was characterized only by a few key points, all of which had to remain within the confines of the SPD's regulations. First, the group had a general anti-nationalism sentiment, due to the early members of the organization still being able to remember the events of the second World War and the Third Reich. The group also strongly believed in solidarity, as well as keeping an open mind to the cultural influences of the western world. This openness towards the west ultimately led to the foundation of the "New Left," the political ideological movement that separated the SDS from the SPD.

By the late 1950s, the differences in political ideologies came to the forefront, with events, such as the National Convention in Mannheim in 1958, playing an important role in shaping and presenting change (Klimke 24). During this event in particular, the group outlined its new aims and ambitions, which were heavily influenced by the Frankfurt School of thought, as well as what Klimke describes as "democratic-humanist Marxism." This new political agenda included an anti-nuclear weapons sentiment, and instigated negotiations in the near future between East and West Germany to reunify the country. Klimke states that the event that finally

caused the separation between the SDS and the SPD was when the term "New Left" was used by SDS member Gerhard Brandt in 1961. Essentially, Brandt signified that the SDS was going to follow in the ideological footsteps of the English movement of the same name, outlining such important issues such as "a breakaway from the established party system, a criticism of authoritarian tendencies and apathy in society, a demand for social change, a general dissatisfaction with the cold-war situation, and an affinity to the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament" (Klimke 25). This statement highlights the new direction the group was undertaking and makes apparent that it was no longer following the regulations set forth by the SPD. Between this event showcasing the SDS's desire to form a new political movement, as well as the SDS receiving funding from a socialist support society to back their new cause, the party decided to declare its dissociation from the SDS on November 6 of the same year.

Although many ideals of the West German student movement, such as the movement's anti-Vietnam War stance and their "Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament," stayed with the movement throughout its existence in the 1960s, one important ideal was altered in response to government and police actions. In the first few years, the various groups within the movement had a strict anti-violence policy. The students' methods of protest largely consisted of peaceful, non-confrontational means, such as sit-ins, teach-ins, and other forms of non-violent protest. However, as time went on, more and more students became educated about, and empathetic to, the Third World and the struggles that the people of other nations were facing (Karcher 54). Students found themselves inspired by the actions of Ernesto "Che" Guevara, Fidel Castro, and others and began to have an understanding of what systematic oppression was and how they could better fight what they perceived as their own systematic oppression at the hands of the FRG government.

Students quickly began to realize that their peaceful means of protest were generally ineffective, as change at the government and university levels were moving at an excruciatingly slow pace, if at all. Taking aspects from the revolutionist and Marxist ideals that students had been informing themselves about, the students of the movement began to adopt the idea of "counter-violence." Counter-violence was a term that many people in government, law, and news publishing equated with "terrorism," however student protesters believed that counter-violence was a tool that could be used to confront the oppressive nature of state and federal governments. At this point, in the early to mid-1960s, counter-violence was only used in terms of property damage. Students believed that if the government could use violence as a tool of control, by using the police and military, then protesters had no choice but to respond to this oppression in their own way. Even Rudi Dutschke, who was known for being an advocate for peaceful forms of protests for years, changed his opinion on the subject in the wake of Benno Ohnesorg's death at the hands of an out-of-uniform police officer (Karcher 55). It was at this point in 1967 that the entirety of the movement changed its stance on counter-violence from being only acceptable if it is against property to being necessary as a means of self-defense. If Ohnesorg's murderer could be acquitted of all charges, then the forces of systematic oppression under government control could truly get away with murder. This acquittal was hard evidence of this idea, and Dutschke elaborated in an interview with *Der Spiegel* that such forms of violence were only necessary as a last resort and that the form that counter-violence takes "depends on the form of the confrontation" (Karcher 56).

Der Spiegel had been known for years as a liberal newspaper publication. It was because of their leftist leanings that Dutschke felt comfortable being interviewed by them in the first place. However, this interview was not the only connection that the movement had to the

publication. In October of 1962, employees at *Der Spiegel*, including editors and publishers, were arrested and charged with treason (Harrington 154). According to Nehring, the arrests at *Der Spiegel* were due to a published report that "…described, in gruesome detail, the potential consequences of nuclear war on German soil that could result from the NATO combat exercise" (251). These arrests prompted student protesters to gather in West Berlin to demonstrate for freedom of the press. It is important to bear in mind that the ideology of the student movement was not a static one, nor was it unbiased. Although students advocated for freedom of the press in this particular instance regarding *Der Spiegel*, it was almost entirely because the publication agreed with their viewpoints. Later on in the movement's history, when Dutschke was nearly killed by an overly devout *Bild Zeitung* reader, the movement gathered to stop all shipments of the tabloid that they could manage. Although slightly hypocritical in regards to freedom of the press, *Der Spiegel* was a respected publication that conducted fair, yet critical, investigations and journalism, while the *Bild* was notorious for smear campaigns and irresponsible journal practices, including writing sensationalist articles that often exaggerated, or even fabricated, events. The student movement was concerned with the *Bild* swaying public opinion against their movement with such dishonest journalist practices.

Underneath the various, politically-left beliefs of the SDS and the overall student movement of West Berlin lies the very strong and ever present influence of Marxism. As previously mentioned, once students began reading about various revolutionaries of the time and throughout history, the students began to identify more and more with the Marxist ideals that such figures held. Students began to view themselves as oppressed members of society, due to their lack of influence at the university level. To them, the university existed as a means of turning independent, free-minded individuals into cogs in the greater machine of capitalism upon

graduation (Merritt 521). It was this line of reasoning that led students to believe that they could rely on the support of blue collar workers in their efforts to halt the passing of the Emergency Laws at the Star March in Bonn. The students saw themselves on a similar level as the workers of West Germany, however it was made abundantly clear when the workers did not show up to the protest, that they did not view the situation in the same way. Regardless, the Marxist influence on the student movement carried throughout its entire existence. It was this influence that was one of the reasons why the SPD had initially cut ties with the movement and it was this influence that inspired students to take to the streets in protest, believing that the only way to enact true change was to confront one's oppressor directly.

<div align="center">Inspiration for Other Political Movements</div>

The failure of the Star March to stop the passing of the Emergency Laws in 1968 marked the beginning of the end for the West German Student movement. The number of active members began to decline gradually as members began to lose motivation to continue the fight and finally, in 1970, the SDS was officially dissolved (Harrington 164). Even before this dissolution, certain political movements and groups were beginning to take shape and use their time in the student movement as a template and inspiration for how they wanted their own groups to operate. One key group that emerged from the ashes of the West German student movement was the infamous Red Army Faction.

The Red Army Faction, or RAF for short, was a paramilitary political group that emerged in the 1970s in West Germany. The inspiration for forming the group came from one particularly instance that occurred during the student movement's history. In February of 1968, the SDS held an "International Vietnam Conference" in West Berlin to protest the war in Vietnam (Schmidtke

87-88).[8] The SDS in West Berlin contacted the American branch of the SDS, both of which were infamous for their anti-Vietnam protests throughout the 1960s, as well as similar groups from France. These groups gathered in solidarity with the Vietnamese National Liberation Front and discussed revolutionist ideology and history, including that of their own nation, and read many letters of protests. This event led to the final radicalization of the student movement, thus inspiring the nation-wide responses to the attempted assassination on Dutschke's that led to the Easter Riots of that same year. It was this event that also inspired the response to the West Berlin government's attempt to reject Horst Mahler's attorney license. Mahler was an attorney who had helped defend the SDS in numerous court cases throughout the 1960s, so when the government attempted to take away his license to practice law, the response was violent. Students gathered to protest the court case and clashed with police, leading to nearly 130 serious injuries (Schmidtke 88). Some of those who identified with this response of violence to oppression went underground and formed the Red Army Faction.

One such individual that identified with this violent response was Ulrike Meinhof. Meinhof is the most famous founding member of the RAF. Originally, Meinhof was an editor for the magazine *Konkret* who, upon hearing about the student movement and the events of the Easter Riots, openly identified with the message that the students were trying to convey (Karcher 57-58). However, Meinhof believed that the students had been too passive in their revolutionary mission up until this point and that the events of the Easter Riots and other, more violent protests, were the first signs of them heading in the right direction. The actual formation of the

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[8] "Cultural Revolution or Culture Shock" discusses the politics behind the West German student movement of the 1960s, and specifically the SDS. Schmidtke discusses the SDS's views on changing the structure of higher education, their relationship with their parent organization, the SPD, as well as their opposition to the *Bild* tabloid. The title of the article is addressed through the author's discussion on how the student movement was simultaneously a political revolution and a cultural shock, due to students paying more attention to Nazi-era atrocities, as well as what they saw as the era's continued political impact on West Germany.

Red Army Faction took place when Meinhof helped liberate two arsonists, Gudrun Ensslin and Andreas Baader from prison in May of 1970. Essentially, these two individuals, with the help of two others who were not liberated from prison by Meinhof, detonated explosives at two different department stores in Frankfurt. The group claimed they were attacking the properties in protest against the Vietnam War. Their liberation from prison at the hands of Meinhof signified the beginning of the group's history. The group would go on to be quite active in West Germany throughout the 1970s, attempting to inspire a violent revolution in solidarity with the Third World and Vietnam; however, many other political groups at the time disagreed with their violent tendencies and saw them as counter-productive.

Another group that formed from the student movement was known as the "New Women's Movement." The New Women's Movement came into fruition as a result of the rampant sexism within the student movement. Discussions amongst students were almost entirely dominated by men, who rarely gave women a chance to voice their opinions (Karcher 59). The sexual liberation of the 1960s had a negative impact on the women of the movement, as male students viewed them as sexual objects if they consented to sexual intercourse and frigid if they declined. Female students began having their own, separate discussions in order to exchange ideas and have their voices heard. They began to meet more regularly and this eventually grew into a feminist movement, as women from other cities in West Germany joined and formed a network of various members from all across the nation. These groups discussed feminist ideals and problems they faced as women, including sexism in both the student movement and other social spaces, as well as the decriminalization of abortion. The movement held various protests and demonstrations throughout the 1970s, including a response to the West Berlin court ruling against the decriminalization of abortion on February 16, 1975 (Karcher 60).

On this day, protesters gathered to pour red paint on the steps of the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church, due to the church's notorious conservative backings. The members of the New Women's Movement saw rulings against abortion laws as "anti-women," equating conservatism with sexism at the government level. Other groups that formed from this wave of German feminism included "Women of the Revolutionary Cell" and "Rote Zora," both of which were known for taking an RAF-style approach to protesting and using violence, mostly homemade explosives, to demonstrate how serious they were about their convictions.

Other notable groups that formed from the remnants of student movement ideology included the various Marxist-Leninist groups that emerged after the rise of the Red Army Faction, who were inspired by the group's call to arms for a more directly confrontational revolution, as well as "a cluster of tightly organized splinter parties, commonly known as *K-Gruppen*, which aimed to bring down the West German state through revolutionary means in order to achieve Maoist, Leninist, or anarchist ideological goals" (Koenen 18-19).[9] There were also the punks of West Germany, who adopted the English/American "punk" aesthetic of the 1970s and attributed it to their own identity of social rebellion. This group was particularly inspired by the openness of the student movement to Western influences during the 1960s. They established their own leftist political doctrine, as well as their own system of commerce to bring in various clothing and music from the Western world that they learned to identify with so much (Clarkson 77).[10]

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[9] *Das rote Jahrzehnt* is a book written by German historian and former communist politician Gerd Koenen that discusses the "red decade" between 1967 and 1977 in West Germany. The author takes a historical approach to the various, communist-influenced groups at the time and pays special attention to such militant groups as the Red Army Faction, a group that played a dominant role in the political discourse of the decade.

[10] In "Urban Tribes," Clarkson illustrates an overview of political activity and the rise and fall of various subcultures in West Berlin between the immediate post-World War II years up until 1991. He covers youth delinquency and rebellion during the post-war era and eventually arrives to a section on the West Berlin squatters movement, in which he discusses a wide range of topics from the media's opinions and influence on the movement to the Tunix Congress in 1978 and its effect on the movement.

In 1966, a man by the name of Dieter Kunzelmann spearheaded a group of individuals interested in the prospect of forming a commune. Among this group were members of the SDS and Rudi Dutschke himself, who had fundamental disagreements with Kunzelmann about the direction such an endeavor should take. For example, Kunzelmann wanted the commune to work as a group of individuals cohabitating as a means of changing the individual, so that they could then reassert themselves into society and advocate for change. He wanted these individuals to reject the "bourgeois individual" and reject such societal norms as marriage, which he saw as a right to ownership of a human being. Dutschke fundamentally disagreed with this approach to communal living. He believed that Kunzelmann focused too much on individual change and not enough on political activism and intervention. After a while, the varying groups that argued on how the commune should operate separated (Boyle 84-85).[11]

Kunzelmann and his group formed *Kommune I* on New Year's Day of 1967. This commune was the first of its kind in West Germany. Before *Kommune I*'s existence, the citizens of West Berlin had never been exposed to the concept of young, single people living together in such a large group. The inhabitants of *Kommune I* cohabitated in a temporary living space, two apartments, that were owned by the writers Uwe Johnson and Hans-Magnus Enzensberger, neither of which knew their apartments were being used for this purpose. The inhabitants separated themselves from the rest of society, attempting to live independently. According to Alexander Vasudevan's *Metropolitan Preoccupations*,[12] the commune itself was initially divided

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[11] In his dissertation, Boyle discusses the West German "New Left" that formed during the 1960s and how it developed as a result of authoritarian political ideologies that existed in West Germany at the time. Boyle claims in his dissertation that these authoritarian tendencies existed during this time period, due to Hitler's Third Reich still having an influence on the population and how all of this ultimately had an impact on the political climate in West Germany during the 1960s.
[12] Vasudevan decides to take a more general approach to the topic of squatting in Berlin in *Metropolitan Preoccupations* by writing the entirety of this book as an overview of the history of the squatters movement. The author discusses the housing issues that came as a result of the economic crises of the 1960s, as well as the "clear

into two large rooms, one room being a makeshift library, while the other was a multi-purpose

space used primarily for sleeping and the designing of political posters and pamphlets (see 72).

However, the commune was plagued with disagreements and problems. For example, the group

at *Kommune I* boasted about a life free from the patriarchy and gender expectations of society,

where people could express their sexuality freely and without judgement. However, the

commune had a significant problem with sexism, as many women began to join the commune,

they quickly realized that sexism and gender expectations were still very much alive. Women

were expected to deal with the general, daily housework and maintenance, as many men in the

commune saw such actions as a waste of their collective time. Another example of dysfunction at

the commune came with the group therapy sessions. The group would routinely gather for these

group therapy sessions, of which members of *Kommune I* would later describe as a form of

"psycho-terror," claiming that the sessions were trying to break down psychologically the

individual members of the group (Boyle 86). *Kommune I*'s seemingly unbalanced form of

cohabitation reached a tipping point with the SDS when, on May 12, 1967, the SDS decided to

expel every single one of its members from the commune (Boyle 90). Essentially, members of

Kommune I issued satirical fliers across campus at the Free University threatening to burn down

the entire university on behalf of the SDS. The SDS, wanting absolutely nothing to do with

threats that could put their entire organization at risk, came to the decision to expel its members

from *Kommune I* and thus severed the connection between the student movement and the

commune.

Although *Kommune I* ended up hurting the image of the student movement with its

satirical fliers, it was still an important development in the context of the student movement's

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and cut" renovation strategy employed by the city, before moving into communes, squatter occupations, and the
decline of the West Berlin squatting scene.

history because it paved the way for yet another political/social movement to form, the squatters. The squatters of West Berlin were an important group in shaping both the political and social landscape of the city. Their movement officially began in the early 1970s, however they used *Kommune I*, as well as the other communes that formed around the time, as templates of how to form their own shared social spaces. The idea that there was an alternative living solution that involved bringing together different people into a single location to assist one another and cohabitate, inspired many West German citizens in the 1970s. The squatters movement in West Berlin is a significant movement that interacted with the various other groups that formed from the ashes of the student movement of the 1960s. It has its own unique history and ideology that has an important impact on Berlin still today.

CHAPTER II.

THE WEST BERLIN SQUATTERS MOVEMENT OF THE 1970S AND 1980S

The First Wave of the Squatters Movement (1970-1974)

Communes certainly played an important role in the development of alternative living strategies in the second half of the 1960s in West Germany, but it was the act of squatting that dominated this concept throughout the 1970s and 1980s. One of the key differences, aside from legality, between the communes of West Germany and the squats that would follow shortly after, was that communes were formed more so as a social experiment, a way to live outside the realm of societal norms and practices. Communes came into existence as a means to demonstrate an alternative model of living and, although they were plagued with problems, played a significant role in shaping the concept and gave others a clear notion of what does and what does not work well. Squatting, on the other hand, came into existence for a variety of reasons, but one major reason was necessity.

The economic recession of the 1960s caused serious damage to the West Berlin housing market. Before the recession hit, the West Berlin government had made some ambitious plans to renovate the city's housing developments. These plans included the razing of West Berlin's *Mietskasernen*, which were old tenement houses, in favor of more modern, and ultimately more expensive, apartment complexes (Vasudevan, "Reassembling the City" 122). To compensate for this loss of lower-end real estate, additional plans were conceived that would place affordable housing in select "satellite cities" around West Berlin, thus giving lower-income households a viable alternative. However, when the recession hit the city, plans to construct these satellite cities were scrapped, yet plans to demolish older, more affordable districts remained. To deal

with the economic recession, the new, slightly altered plan, was to simply demolish historical

districts such as Kreuzberg, Wedding, Neukölln, and Schöneberg to make room for

"monofunctional modern districts" without giving the tenants of these districts the alternative

that they had originally planned (Vasudevan, "Reassembling the City" 123). This policy became

known as "clear-cut renovations" (*Kahlschlag-* or *Flächensanierung*) and served as the initial

inspiration for the squatters movement that would come into existence shortly thereafter.

There were two major problems that arose from this new policy. For one, the destruction

of these districts would leave its residents with no viable option for housing. These districts were

notoriously affordable for the working class and lower-income households and without these

apartment complexes, the residents would simply have no other alternative. Another major

problem was the difference in opinion between the city and the residents on which buildings

could be considered "renewable." According to a report in Vasudevan's *Metropolitan*

Preoccupations "… over 400,000 tenement units across the city that were in need of repair, the

city's 1963 official plan for urban renewal prioritized 56,000 units in total, 10,000 of which were

deemed renewable, with the remainder slated for demolition" (46). It is worth noting that it was

simply more cost effective for the city to demolish these neighborhoods in favor of modernizing

them. In the end, the landlords would be able to charge more money for these new apartments

and this would, theoretically, bring in more money for the city. However, this plan clearly caused

a major upset in the community that would eventually lead to a movement within the squatting

community that focused on the renovation and upkeep of these older, more run down apartments

that the city and landowners refused to do themselves.

Before discussing the section of the movement that revolved around the renovation of

apartments, it is important to first discuss how other citizens viewed the city's urban renewal

plans. West Berlin's "clear-cut renovation" plan also attracted the attention of various architects, scholars, and students, who all saw the plan as robbing the city of its unique aspects and character. One such individual, a journalist by the name of Wolf Jobst Sielder, published an article in 1965 entitled "The Murdered City" (*Die gemordete Stadt*), which criticized the plan by juxtaposing pictures of the modern-style apartment buildings that were to be built in large quantities alongside pictures of the original, historical buildings that had been in place for a number of years (Vasudevan, *Metropolitan Preoccupations* 47). Every critic of the housing renovation plan at the time could agree that the new buildings that were being implemented were devoid of the character that made certain parts of the city unique. Another such critic, the psychologist Alexander Mitscherlich, stated that the new style of architecture was "weak-spirited" and failed to instill a sense of community and belonging in the same manner as older architectural styles. His protégé was a student by the name of Heide Berndt, who felt passionate about the subject and continued Mitscherlich's work. Though Vasudevan points out that Berndt's work was not popular outside of Germany, his work is still worth including in this thesis, because it serves as a precursor to the architectural styles and changes that would be implemented later on in the 1970s, and also due to the fact that Berndt himself was an active participant in the West German student movement at the time.

A number of student activists who left the student movement as it dissolved in the late 1960s found themselves involved in the "grassroots urban planning" that was taking place in various neighborhoods in West Berlin in response to the housing crisis. Known as *Basisgruppen*, or "rank and file groups," citizens from various occupations, including architects, workers, and city planners, joined together to bring awareness to the issue by staging a play known as *Comfort in an Affordable Location or the Renewal* (*Komfort in Günstiger Lage oder die Sanierung*)

(Vasudevan, "Reassembling the City" 128-129). This play showcased the struggles of everyday citizens under the new urban reform policy in an effort to incite discussion about the issue. Due to the passing of the Emergency Laws, public political protests were banned in West Germany for a number of years. As a result, one of the few legal means remaining to showcase citizen disproval was to perform plays such as *Comfort in an Affordable Location or the Renewal*, a trend that would continue in the next several years.

Eventually, activists began to take more direct control over the situation in West Berlin in the form of squatting. The logic with squatting was multi-faceted and was partly influenced by the communes of the 1960s. According to Pruijt, there are five main configurations of squatting,[13] each with their own line of reasoning. The first form that the author discusses, "deprivation-based squatting," arises from a lack of other viable housing options in the community (22). People who participate in deprivation-based squatting face issues not dissimilar from what the working-class citizens of West Berlin experienced during the housing crisis. The second form of squatting is known as "squatting as an alternative housing strategy." As the name implies, people who participated in this form of squatting were looking for a new way to live their daily lives that did not fit into the societal norms. These people were often in stable financial situations and used squatting as a means of attempting a different way of living, by cohabitating with multiple people simultaneously, often unmarried, to build a home together as a kind of community project. The third form, "entrepreneurial squatting," is a form of squatting that capitalizes on the movement as a whole by providing these illegal occupants of buildings

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[13] Pruijt was especially useful in the research and writing of this thesis, because he examines the history of squatting as a general concept and proclaims that most, not all, of squatting in the world can be boiled down to one of five categories. These five categories appropriately apply to the West Berlin squatting scene in explaining the motivations behind the major squats of the era, although the author makes an important point that not every squat can fall under one of the five categories and certain squats can even be applied to multiple categories simultaneously.

with alternative businesses. Many people during this era of squatting in West Berlin in the 1970s and 1980s offered squatters and members of other counter-cultural movements places to go where they would be welcomed. Such places included bars, alternative schools, cafes, and even repair shops for bicycles (Pruijt 29). The fourth form, "conservational squatting," was utilized as a means of preserving the urban landscape of a given city. These squatters would occupy buildings, usually historically or culturally significant, in an effort to halt demolition or showcase their importance to the city's unique history and style. The final form, political squatting, is a form of squatting that revolves around the concept of enacting real, political change in the system through the act of squatting. As a whole, those who participated in this form of squatting were generally anti-authority and would use the occupation of buildings to send political messages to the state or local governments. Pruijt makes the point during his explanation of political squatting, that squatting is generally considered a political act and that any of the other forms can have political undertones. However, those who participated in what he refers to as "political squatting" are those who typically have other living options, but choose squatting strictly as a means of showcasing their political dissent (see 37). It is a worthwhile point to make that this list is by no means complete, nor does every example of squatting in West Berlin fall under one of these categories. However, these forms serve as a convenient reference for the various reasons why people decide to squat in any city, not just West Berlin, and how such an act can seem attractive to people of various backgrounds and ideals.

The first recorded example of squatting in West Berlin during this time period occurred on the first of May in 1970 in the Märkisches Viertel, a district well-known for activism in the 1960s and 1970s. As mentioned previously, during the early years of activism in the squatting community, as well as other political movements, it was quite common for activists to put on

public performances to gain the attention of pedestrians passing by on the street in order to send various political messages. In this instance, it was the Hoffmann Comic Theater, a trio of brothers known for staging such politically motivated performances, who staged a play about the everyday conditions of working class citizens. In this particular performance, the focus was on the urban developer GESOBAU and their unwillingness to provide social spaces for disadvantaged youth (Vasudevan, "Reassembling the City" 129). The lack of social spaces for disadvantage youth was an ongoing theme during the early days of squatting in West Berlin, and many citizens in the community felt strongly about this issue. During this performance, the trio urged the audience to take direct action against the closing of a local after-school club (*Schülerladen*) by occupying a nearby building in protest. When the police heard about this plan, they immediately headed to the building before the protesters arrived, forcing them to change buildings at the last minute. The occupation ended in a violent eviction by riot police, as citizens were forced out by such intensive means, that three of them were sent to the hospital with severe injuries. Among the participants in this first instance of squatting was none other than Ulrike Meinhof, who, as mentioned in the previous chapter, helped form the Red Army Faction soon after this time period.

Another early instance of squatting in West Berlin occurred on July 4, 1971. In Kreuzberg, the district of West Berlin with the highest concentration of illegal squats during this time period, over 300 activists, mostly students and members of the younger working class, gathered to occupy two floors of an abandoned factory at 13 Mariannenplatz (Vasudevan, "Autonomous Urbanism" 208-209).[14] This squat was instigated by the band "Ton Steine

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[14] Alexander Vasudevan describes the West Berlin squatting scene as an "alternative autonomous urbanism," by which he means a movement of citizens to collectively form an alternative lifestyle through the use of urban squatting. He also describes the movement as "architectural activism" and attributes the movement to changes in urban politics in West Berlin and the urban landscape.

Scherben," whose members were heavily involved in the political scene taking place at the time, and it consisted of some members of the Hoffman Comic Theater group. The band had a concert nearby, where the lead singer, Ralph Möbius, urged the crowds to take direct action by occupying the factory and showcasing their dissent at the local youth services in the community (Vasudevan, "Reassembling the City" 131). This particular squat could be viewed as political squatting, as the only reason these participants gathered to occupy this factory was to protest the lack of such services. The squat at Mariannenplatz was met with success, as municipal authorities came to support the notion and a plan to construct such a space was funded. These plans included the construction of a "metal and wood workshop, a studio, a clinic, and a theater space" and the space was then renamed the "Kreuzberg Youth Center."

What eventually became known as one of the most famous instances of squatting in West Berlin, almost to the degree of urban legend, was the Georg von Rauch-Haus. Very similar to the squat that turned into the Kreuzberg Youth Center, the Georg von Rauch-Haus not only involved a lot of the same participants, including the band "Ton Steine Scherben," but was also located in the same general area. Georg von Rauch himself was a militant activist who was gunned down by police in December of 1971 and became a martyr for the struggle between the militant anti-authoritarian groups and the state. His death became publicized in these communities as a direct attack on their ideals and way of life. Shortly after his death, on December 8, 1971, a teach-in was held at the Technical University to discuss the nearby Bethanien hospital complex, which was shut down in 1970 and had remained completely vacant. The group, passionate about the recent death of Georg von Rauch, made ambitious plans at the teach-in to turn the entire complex

into a *Freie Republik* or "free republic" within West Berlin (Brown 10-13).[15] Their plan

immediately began, and ultimately ended, at the Martha-Maria-Haus, which was a dormitory for

nurses before the building shut down. Somewhere between 300 and 600 young, militant

protesters marched to the Martha-Maria-Haus following another concert by "Ton Steine

Scherben," during which the band read political texts in between songs and inspired the crowd to

take action. The group immediately renamed the building the "Georg von Rauch-Haus" in honor

of their fallen comrade and dropped a banner over the side of the building that simply read

BESETZT or "occupied" (Vasudevan, "Reassembling the City" 131). Aside from initial police

intervention, which was inherently violent, the Georg von Rauch-Haus is arguably one of the

most successful instances of squatting in West Berlin during this era. The city granted the group

a lease on the building to use it as a "socio-pedagogical experiment." As of March 2018, it is still

in existence. Today, the George von Rauch-Haus is partly a concert venue, though the people

who run the establishment still offer rooms and assistance to anyone in need of it. The building

itself is easily recognizable by its eye-catching graffiti that has never been painted over, a

testament to its youthful, rebellious roots.

The majority of squatting in the early years of the movement centered heavily on the lack

of youth services and spaces in the city. It is worth noting that not every squat with this goal in

mind was successful. For every Georg von Rauch-Haus, there was an example such as the

Jugendzentrum Tiergarten on Lützowstraße 3, which lasted only a single day and from which the

occupants were immediately evicted, resulting in no alternative uses for the space (*berlin-*

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[15] Brown discusses how the band "Ton Steine Scherben" used its music to convey political messages during the Cold War in West Berlin. The author uses personal accounts of people during the time period of the 1960s and 1970s who witnessed the growth and subsequent popularity of the group, how members of the band participated in various political protests, and Brown's article includes many personal accounts of the events surrounding the Georg von Rauch-Haus, which were of utmost importance for this thesis.

besetzt.de).[16] However, it was not only the disadvantaged youth of the city that were having issues with the urban renewal programs that the city was so adamant about initiating. Migrant workers and immigrants were also facing challenging times in West Berlin during this time period. After the World War II and subsequent division of Germany into two nations, the West German government decided to enact a guest worker (*Gastarbeiter*) program between the years of 1955 and 1973 that would entice foreign workers to migrate to West Germany to work and boost the economy (Azozomox and Gürsel 106).[17] However, when the housing market worsened and West Berlin began to enact plans for urban redevelopment, certain policies were put into place that put foreign workers in difficult financial and housing situations. One such example was the legislation known as *Zuzugssperre*, which placed limitation on where immigrants could live. This legislature forced foreign workers from other nations to limit themselves to certain districts that were affected the most by the economic and housing crises, as well as the squatters movement itself, which were the districts of Kreuzberg, Wedding, and Tiergarten. Aside from legitimate legislation passed by the West Berlin Senate, there were also instances of blatant xenophobia in the housing market itself. Certain landowners had no desire to lease apartments to Turkish immigrants, that nationality that made up the majority of foreign guest workers and went as far as to hang signs that would say "only for Germans." Such blatant xenophobia in the housing market made it difficult for these foreign workers to find any homes at all, which lured several to the idea of squatting.

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[16] Berlin-Besetzt.de is a German website that chronologically sorts the history of the West-Berlin squatters movement. There are brief descriptions of various squats throughout the city, including East Berlin. There is also an interactive map that shows the locations of the squats throughout the latter half of the 20th century.

[17] This article details the struggles of migrant women living in Kreuzberg during the squatters movement in West Berlin. Azozomox and Gürsel discuss two specific incidents, one on Kottbusser Straße and another on Forster Straße, in which Turkish migrant women squatted homes as a means of survival. The article also claims that migrant squats are typically overlooked when scholars discuss the movement and how important it is not to leave out these incidents, as they are important in shedding light on xenophobic housing policies of the era, as well as the economic struggles of Turkish migrants.

Azozomox and Gürsel argue that the first instance of migrant squatting occurred in September of 1973 in Friesengasse 5 by foreign workers who were angry at the high cost of rent in their area, but it was ultimately evicted by police that same day (see 107). High rent costs were another prevalent reason for squatting during this first initial wave in the early-to-mid-1970s. Many landowners were trying to compensate for the economic hardships of the time by charging unfair rents to their tenants, many of whom could not afford the higher rent costs. Rent strikes became commonplace among immigrant workers, most of whom were Turkish and Kurdish, but many were also from other nations including Italy, Greece, Spain, and Yugoslavia. The central aim of these rent strikes, as stated during the strike on Ulmenstraße 20 in 1971 was quite simple: tenants did not want to have to pay a rent that was any greater than 10% of their income. Unfortunately, this movement for rent control faded away around 1974, due to the fact that these strikers had no legal recourse to fall back on and due to their backlog in overdue rent payments.

The time period between 1970 and 1974 was littered with small, scattered incidents of squatting in various districts in West Berlin, mainly Kreuzberg, however the movement began to lose steam in 1974. For the next few years, squatting would become an idea spoken of in small circles of protesters and activists, but would see little traction until around 1977-78. The movement would cease to be just about youth services and rent control and would become a more complex phenomenon that would involve people from multiple backgrounds and age ranges. Along with this new era in squatting came the assistance, criticism, and attention of other sub-culture groups that would ultimately have a strong impact on the overall movement. During this time period, a second wave of squatting would emerge, which would turn out to be the largest and most influential that the city ever witnessed.

The Tunix Congress and the Beginning of the Second Wave (1978-1980)

The squatting movement did not witness many developments during the years when the first wave ended and the second began. Between 1975 and 1977, squatting was essentially dormant, until the urban renewal programs reappeared in West Berlin and had an immediate impact on the citizens of districts like Kreuzberg. In 1975, a social democratic leader by the name of Harry Ristock was appointed Construction Minister of the city. Ristock, along with the Construction Ministry itself and the construction departments of the various boroughs of the city, were in charge of the urban renewal plans and had the final say in decisions (Karapin 71).[18] At the beginning of his term, Ristock attempted to help the citizens who were directly affected by the clear-cut policies of the time. He came to the realization that placing funds into renovations of the apartment buildings that were scheduled for demolition was more cost-effective than simply demolishing them and constructing entirely new buildings. This new plan, which Ristock referred to as "Urban Repair," also involved him connecting with prominent members of the community in an attempt to establish a dialogue. It was Ristock who ultimately led to the foundation of the urban renewal oppositional group known as the SO36 Association, which was named after the neighborhood of the same name. He awarded them with 250,000 deutschmarks in prize money, when the founders of the group won his "Strategies for Kreuzberg," a competition aimed to have citizens participate in urban renewal discussions by devising their own plans for the future of their districts (Karapin 77).

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[18] In "Protest Politics," Karapin discusses the different protest movements in Germany from the 1960s to the late 1990s. The author makes the claim that the level of violent or physical reaction by protesters is directly linked to police and government reactions to protests in these regions. An early section of the book discusses urban renewal policies in West Berlin during the 1960s, which was valuable in the research for this thesis, as well as protests against nuclear energy in Wyhl and Brokdorf and conflicts over immigration policies in various German cities.

However, all of this good will that Ristock had gathered over the first few years of his term ultimately backfired in 1977, when his "Turnaround in Urban Renewal" plan failed. This plan was aimed to fund renovation in certain districts that were effected the most by the housing crisis by donating 70 million deutschmarks in federal subsidies. Although Ristock laid out his plan with the best of intentions, it was ultimately a colossal failure, as it encouraged real estate speculators to buy out as many buildings as they could, leave them completely vacant, in order to use them as tax shelters (Karapin 78). This plan ultimately led to an alarming increase in abandoned living spaces between the years of 1977 and 1980. If the landowners themselves were not purposely leaving the buildings empty, then they renovated the apartments to a luxurious degree and raised the rent to such a high amount, that few native to the district could ever hope to afford the rent. To make matters worse, the Construction Ministry, in a weak attempt to nullify protesters, established a Renovation Funding Committee in 1978, a committee that aimed to include community participation in decision making of urban renewal plans. However, it was made apparent that the committee was merely a formality, as the citizen vote was consistently outnumbered and outvoted, which led to even more upset in the community. This whole event led to wide-spread protests, demonstrations, and the rise of the second wave of the squatters movement.

When it was apparent to West Berlin citizens that the Construction Ministry did not have their best interests at heart and had ultimately decided to increase the rate of demolition in their neighborhoods, citizens resorted to one of the first examples of squatting in what soon emerged as a second wave. The Stadtteilzentrum Feuerwache on Reichbergerstraße 66, a firehouse located in eastern Kreuzberg, was slated for demolition by the Construction Ministry, despite requests from citizens to halt said demolition (*berlin-besetzt.de)*. Between May and June of 1977, nearly

100 citizens gathered to occupy the abandoned firehouse in an effort to stop the demolition and change the building into a community center. Their efforts ultimately failed and the building was torn down in June (Karapin 78).

Unlike the student movement of the 1960s and the first wave of squatters in the early 1970s, both of which were composed almost entirely of students and the younger working force, the second wave of squatting was rather diverse. The increasing de-urbanization of the city had an impact on a wide-array of citizens from students and young professionals to immigrants facing xenophobic policies, as well as the everyday working class citizen seeking reasonably affordable housing. During this time period, citizen unrest dramatically increased as citizens felt more and more that their government was abandoning them and that they had to resort to taking matters into their own hands. As a result, squatting brought these various groups together into one, mostly-cohesive unit that shared similar ideologies and goals. Later on in the timeline of the movement, such ideals and goals would change and divide it, but in the beginning the movement as a whole supported a few key ideas. One such idea was based solely on the living situation itself. Nearly every participant in the movement believed affordable and decent housing was a basic human right and that no one person should be without a home, nor should they be evicted from their homes. Another shared idea that has been mentioned several times throughout this paper is not only the support for the community in the forms of centers for disadvantaged youth, but also community centers for the general public, clinics, and other operations that would benefit the community as a whole. This idea was important, because it stemmed from the lack of government support for such initiatives and forced citizens to implement their own version of urban renewal. Finally, any and all squats with a noble cause, whether that be for one's own personal housing situation or for the benefit of the community, should be protected by the

movement as a whole. Should the police or government try to force an eviction from any squatted property, many supporters of the movement believed it was completely reasonable to respond with force. The movement also had some Marxist ideology that was no doubt leftover from the student movement of the 1960s. The belief that consumerism and mass consumption is a form of repression, along with the idea of enacting change at the grass-roots level, rather than relying on government intervention, was all inherently Marxist in nature and were ideals that the movement shared as a whole (Clarkson 81). However, as the movement entered further into its second wave, some of these Marxists ideologies began to be replaced by a more anarchy-centered focus. By 1981, dreams of worker rebellions and anti-consumerism were replaced by a desire for direct, physical confrontation and the forming of an alternative society away from the mainstream. Such ideals led to an increase in police intervention in squatting, as well as injuries and arrests.

Reactions to the squatters in West Berlin was mixed throughout the lifespan of the first and second wave. On the one hand, there were various citizens' initiatives (*Bürgerinitiativen*) which supported the movement and its aims. *Bürgerinitiativen* were "spontaneous, loosely organized association[s] of citizens" that were formed to enact change on a specific issue, often issues regarding urban change and renewal (Burns and van der Will 164).[19] There were also various sub-culture groups, such as the punks and some skinheads, who also showed their support for the movement, particularly after the Tunix Congress of 1978. On the other hand, the movement was also met with a lot of scrutiny from various groups, as well as the police and

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[19] Burns and van der Will discuss the political activism of the 1970s and 1980s that centered around environmentalism and citizens banding together to form *Bügeriniativen* to influence political change. This chapter in *Protest and Democracy* discusses ordinary West Berlin citizens taking a grassroots approach to political activism, utilizing public demonstrations and protests, including supporting and participating in the squatters movement. The sections discussing *Instandsbesetzung* and general public opinion on squatters were particularly helpful.

local governments. The Red Army Faction, who saw the student movement as a step in the right direction for political and social change, but also believed the movement fell short due to their unwillingness to engage in pre-planned, violent protests, viewed the squatters movement in a similar fashion. In "Urban Tribes," Alex Clarkson quotes symptomatically on the RAF's reaction to the squatters: "[They are] out of control youths needing discipline and clarity of a centrally organized revolutionary movement" (78). Other terrorist cells had a similar opinion on the movement and could all agree that the movement was sorely lacking a hierarchy of command and a drive to take their movement to the extremes of violence in protest. Although these terrorist networks had at least a small amount of respect for the movement and what it was trying to accomplish, the majority of the media did not share the same sentiment. The mass media in the late 1970s followed a similar pattern of criticism that they had against the student movement in the 1960s. Many newspapers at the time, mostly those politically on the right, shared a similar anti-squatter message. They viewed the squatters as a group of youth delinquents that wanted any excuse at all to engage in violent, anti-authoritarian protests. One such newspaper, the conservative *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, wrote an article which referred to Kreuzberg as a district which was decaying into a ghetto (Clarkson 79). The article did not simply refer to the urban decay that was happening at the time as a direct result of the housing initiatives, but rather the decay into youth delinquency and immaturity. Very few newspapers and government officials ever spoke a positive word about the squatters movement. Although the squatters themselves saw their acts as a legitimate form of protest and attempt to reclaim their livelihood and their urban environments, both the media and the government would consistently view the movement as a breach of morality and legality. This trend would increase as the movement gained speed and the participants in the movement would face more opposition as a result.

The growing tension between the various sub-cultures of the era and government/police intervention eventually culminated into what would be known as the Tunix Congress. The Tunix Congress was a three-day long event held in January of 1978 at the Technical University in West Berlin that encouraged members of all of the various sub-cultures that had come into existence in the 1970s to gather and discuss pressing political and social issues of the time (Von Dirke 111-112).[20] Although called a "congress," the event itself was advertised primarily as a three-day long party. Fliers were passed out among the various sub-cultural groups of the city, and everyone was encouraged to gather to discuss ideas and goals in a more creative setting by using forms of art to express themselves and incite discussion. The congress was conceived for a few key reasons. One important reason for the congress was to discuss the impact of leftist terrorism on their own individual movements and subcultures. In the late 1970s, the RAF was reaching its peak active and violent years. Their acts of terrorism against the state, which included bombings, hijackings, and murder, were having a negative impact on the other leftist movements. The Tunix Congress was a way for these groups to discuss the effects of the RAF and various radical terrorist groups on the public discourse of the time. It was important to the various subcultures that gathered at the Tunix Congress to avoid distancing themselves from the leftist terrorism as that would be viewed as "denying their radical political identity." Another key reason for the groups to gather was to reaffirm their beliefs in establishing their alternative forms of living that existed outside the traditional means. Pessimism about their abilities to enact real social change

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[20] Von Dirke writes about the West German student movement in his second chapter "'All Power to the imagination!' The Student Movement of the 1960s." He discusses the change from the "Old Left" politics of the pre-1960s to the "New Left" that had strong communist influences. In the fourth chapter, entitled "'Objectivity? No, Thank You!' The New Subjectivity from Tunix to taz," the author details the importance of the Tunix Congress for the general subculture scene happening in West Berlin at the time.

was rampant at the time and the congress served as a means of reaffirming these beliefs and instilling a new found confidence in the groups.

The Tunix Congress ultimately led to a more connected and supportive network of subcultures, which the squatters benefitted from immensely. Many squats throughout the existence of the movement were evicted by the strong police presence in the affected districts, like Kreuzberg, and had no effective means of retaliation or resistance. In the aftermath of the Tunix Congress, members from the many different subcultures began to support the squatters movement and would respond to these at-risk squats in the form of organized street violence (Clarkson 77). The general concept of urban renewal at the grassroots level spoke to many of these subcultures, who were also retaliating against the state in their own ways. Defending the squatters from police intervention worked out well for both the squatters and the alternative groups that came to their aid. The squatters were often able to continue living in their selected spaces and those who defended them were able to effectively demonstrate their anti-authoritarian stances.

One particular group, the *Autonomen*, were especially adamant about defending the squatters and became well-known for essentially being the militant wing of the movement. The *Autonomen* were punks by their aesthetics. They wore the same clothing and listened to the same music as punks did, and they lived mostly in the districts of West Berlin affected by the housing and economic crises. They did not have a chain of command like the more extreme groups did, such as the RAF, but they were still effective at defending the squatters during this time period. As a result of this newly formed network of support among sub-culture groups, the second wave of squatting gathered momentum. As the second wave of squatting progressed, it became increasingly more apparent that the state was unwilling or unable to donate the funds that

landowners needed to renovate their properties. As a result, these landowners left their properties in poor conditions until they received government support to renovate them, which would rarely occur. Numerous properties were left in these conditions and various *Bürgerinitiativen* attempted to negotiate with local governments for funding, but were ultimately unsuccessful. In the following year, West Berlin witnessed its first instance of a new form of squatting known as *Instandsbesetzung*. Roughly translating to "renovate and occupy," *Instandsbesetzung* was a form of squatting that consisted of living in a space that was deemed "uninhabitable" by the state or landowners due to its condition and renovating the space to be habitable for the squatters (Burns and van der Will 176). On February 3, 1979 squatters in Kreuzberg distributed a flier stating their reasoning for squatting two separate buildings in the district:

> In our district, hundreds of apartments are empty and falling apart. Cheap
> apartments are demolished because landlords no longer put them up for rent. This
> is against the law. On the 3rd and 4th of February, the citizen's initiative SO36
> wants to restore the lawful condition of rental accommodation. Starting at 10
> o'clock we will occupy and restore one apartment in Luebbener Straße and
> another on Goerlitzer Straße. (Vasudevan, "Reassembling the City" 134)

The squatters in these apartments went immediately to work on renovating the space for occupancy. The occupation itself was meant to be a message to the general public, urging them to take action against the city's unjust renovation policies. Countless other homes and apartments lay vacant in the city, and this new form of squatting encouraged people to take matters into their own hands and build a living space for themselves from the ground up. This development in the

movement was critical because it demonstrated even further how little the city was able to do to provide the most basic of living accommodations. The squatters movement was becoming increasingly more restless, and squatters continued to try to build their own habitable spaces without government assistance. Squatters even received assistance from the local population in regards to their new aim to renovate the apartments and houses themselves. The *Bauhof Handwerkskollektiv* (or "Bauhof Handicraft Collective") was set up during this time with the aim to train squatters in basic construction skills and techniques, as well as provide them with recycled or unused materials, in order to help *Instandsbesetzung* progress. Local apprentices and students of vocational schools would host meetings to train squatters in these techniques, which helped the occupations on Luebbener and Goerlitzer Straße, as well as the movement as whole, in their renovation efforts. The occupation on Luebbener and Goerlitzer Straße resulted in both locations achieving legalization and receiving rent contracts after the occupants had completely renovated the apartments by themselves.

Rob Burns and Wilfried van der Will make the argument *in Protest and Democracy in West Germany* that by 1980, the motivation behind the majority of the squats had also changed (see 177). Throughout the first wave of squatting, as well as the beginning of the second, many protests and occupations were carried out due to the housing crisis. The lack of available housing and community centers was a key reason behind these squats. However, by 1980 the focus had shifted to creating an "alternative culture" within the community. *Instandsbesetzung* arguably started this trend, as it brought squatters closer to their respected occupations, which helped develop a sense of community and culture that was inherently different from the mainstream. This alternative culture grew in the early 1980s and connected the various squats and sub-culture groups into a united underground economy. Squatters began to set up various businesses and

services in their occupied buildings. It is estimated that by 1980, nearly 100,000 people were involved in this underground economy, which consisted of alternative cafes and pubs, as well as bicycle repair shops, and even their own underground newspapers that helped distribute information quickly, such as the Instand-Besetzer-Post, which helped the *Instandsbesetzung* scene with do-it-yourself tips and ideas (Holm and Kuhn 645).[21]

In March of 1980, there was another important development in the squatting community in West Berlin. Due to the wide range of squats in the city from various backgrounds, in the political, social, and economic sense, there needed to be some sort of governing body that would help connect these communities together to assist one another. On one end of the spectrum, there were squatters who were simply fighting for basic housing and survival, including immigrant families, blue-collar workers, and others that squatted homes to fight the unfair practices of the city's urban planning. Urban plans existed at the time that would essentially leave these people homeless, had they not resorted to squatting. On the other end of the spectrum were the militant activists, the *Autonomen* and other more politically active and militant groups that were trying to enact change on a broader scale. This loosely connected community was then brought closer together with the implementation of a "squatter council," or *Besetzerrat* (Vasudevan, "Autonomous Urbanisms" 213). This council consisted of prominent members of every major squat, who would meet periodically to discuss events in the community, as well as plans of action. The squatter council set up many grassroots protests and campaigns, which included many public demonstrations and even the occasional press conference.

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[21] Holm and Kuhn discuss squatting in West Berlin and how incidents of squatting spike whenever leadership in the urban renewal planning of the city changes. The article discusses the early 1980s, more specifically the peak year of 1981, and how the change in government was responsible for the rise in squatting. They also argue that squatting directly instigated change in urban planning whenever it rose drastically among citizens.

Throughout the early 1980s, police intervention in the squatters movement was rather inconsistent. By 1980, many government officials preferred a more relaxed approach to dealing with the various squats in West Berlin. These officials came to the conclusion that they could turn the other cheek when it came to *Instandsbesetzung*, especially because citizens were renewing and rebuilding living spaces that they themselves did not have the power to do so. This formed an open dialogue between the squatter council and the government, which led to several legalizations of squats. The West Berlin government would eventually take a harsher stance in 1982 in regards to the movement, which would have an immediate impact on the movement. However, police intervention was another thing entirely. In the beginning of 1980, police brutality and evictions of squats was a major concern for the movement. On May 29, several squatters attempted to occupy a building on Wrangelstraße, however they were met by a large police force and six of them were arrested on the spot (Vasudevan, *Metropolitan Preoccupations* 105). Another police raid a few days later led to the arrest of 16 people on Chamissoplatz 3. Other raids conducted by the local police were executed during this first half of the year, nearly all demonstrating unnecessary uses of force. Squatters at these locations claimed not to have instigated any physical confrontation between them and the police, but regardless they were met with violence almost immediately. The West Berlin police even enacted an entirely separate commission dubbed "the Berlin Police Commission for Squatting" on August 2, 1980 to deal with the movement *(berlin-besetzt.de)*. However, by the end of the year about 21 buildings were under squatter occupation, a number that rose partly due to police pressure igniting more passion

in the movement, as well as other squats achieving legality through *Instandsbesetzung* inspiring others to follow in their footsteps (Koopmans 174).[22]

By October, 1980 the police had decided to pull back on the number of arrests and raids on squatted homes. Police chief Klaus Hübner of the SPD announced to the public that it was the responsibility of the government, and not the police, to intervene with squats and determine their legality (Karapin 93). It was this mix of police reaction that facilitated the growth of the squatters movement in the 1980s. When the police cracked down on squatting, it united the underground community and made the occupiers more passionate about their protests. When the police acted more relaxed and eased up on their raids and arrests, it gave the movement space to grow and occupy more public spaces. It was not long, however, until the West Berlin police went back to their history of excessive use of force. A few months later on December 12, squatters gathered in an attempt to occupy an apartment building located at Fränkelufer 48. Although almost entirely empty, the building still had at least one remaining tenant, who immediately notified the police of the squatters presence when they entered the building. The group was promptly arrested and escorted to a nearby police station (Vasudevan, *Metropolitan Preoccupations* 105-106). At this point in the day, the police had not used any excessive force and the squatters offered no resistance to their arrests. However, word spread quickly and a large group of protesters descended upon the area to protect the remaining local squats out of fear of eviction. Protesters gathered in the streets and set up blockades in front of the occupied buildings in order to protect their squats and police arrived on the scene soon after in riot control gear. To disperse the crowd,

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[22] "Democracy from Below" discusses various social movements throughout the history of West Germany. The author utilizes newspapers as one of the main resources throughout the book and notes that newspapers are biased in nature and that these biases reflect different political and social viewpoints on the social movements of the time. There is a section that discusses the years between 1975 and 1989 and the rise and fall of the second wave of squatting in West Berlin, as well as important political figures and groups that had an effect on the movement's history.

the police fired tear gas at the protesters, which caused the protesters to flee in the direction of

Kottbusser Tor. Over the course of the night, the police and the crowd of protesters fought in the

streets, and by the end of the conflict, 58 arrests were made, several people were injured, and one

protester was even run over by a police van and sent to the hospital. This one riot was the direct

cause of the dramatic spike in occupied buildings in 1981, which was the absolute peak of the

movement, and was viewed as a direct attack on the movement itself. If this conflict had not

escalated in this manner, it is entirely possible that the movement would have lost steam or

remained where it was, but instead the conflict acted as a precursor to the most eventful year in

the entirety of the movement.

The Peak Year of 1981 and the Dissolution of the West Berlin Squatting Scene

In January of 1981, the West Berlin government was hit with a scandal that would

ultimately change the course of the squatters movement. The "Garski Affair"[23] was named after

Dietrich Garski, a contractor who received a large loan of 112 million deutschmarks from the

city in 1978 (MacDougall 144-145). However, the company that Garski worked for did not have

the means of documenting a loan of that size. The project that the loan funded in Saudi Arabia

ended up failing completely and with no documentation of the loan in existence, the obligation to

pay said loan went directly to the ordinary West Berlin citizen. Dietrich Garski ended up fleeing

the country and escaping the situation, however the damage was done and the SPD-led

government was now under serious scrutiny from the citizens. Mayor Stobbe resigned that same

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[23] Contested Urbanity discusses the urban renewal policies of West Berlin, specifically the district of Kreuzberg, and how these policies gave birth to certain political movements, especially the squatters. MacDougall discusses the housing crises that was occurring throughout the 1960s and 1970s and how the West Berlin government was attempting to construct satellite cities for low-income residents that ultimately failed and led to the "cut and clear" renovation tactics that further agitated residents of West Berlin.

month and an intermediate government, which took a conservative and relaxed approach to dealing with the squatters, was put into place. Between January and May, public support for squatters was at an all-time high. Ministers, journalists, and even some government officials publicly defended the protesters right to squat homes in the face of state oppression. According to a survey conducted in that same year, nearly 51% of West Berlin citizens sympathized with the movement (Burns and van der Will 178). Out of those who sympathized in the 16-29 age range, 70% expressed their approval of what the squatters were attempting to accomplish. This change in government also led to the largest increase in squatted locations in the entire movement. In the first half of the year, squatting increased at a steady rate. By February, the number of squatted buildings had risen to 50 and by May 15th, the peak of squatted homes in West Berlin, the number was 169 (Vasudevan, "The Autonomous City" 135).

Between the end of 1980 and throughout 1981, many demonstrations in the movement centered more on the releasing of incarcerated members, rather than urban restructuring. In the wake of the clash between protesters and police at Fränkelufer, which became known as the "Battle of Fränkelufer," the justice system was handing out harsh sentences to those who participated in the demonstration. Several of those arrested were charged with domestic terrorism, simply for setting up barricades in front of the buildings, and were given jail sentences far more severe than the situation called for (Katz and Mayer 34).[24] As a result, the squatters movement put most of their focus into freeing these individuals, as they viewed the harsh sentences as direct attacks on the movement. This course of action was directed to subdue the

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[24] Katz and Mayer mostly discuss the housing struggles in New York City in this article, detailing the reform movement for tenants during the 1970s and 1980s. A section of the article compares this era to West Berlin's "rehab squatting" scene and how both cities' governments were unable, or unwilling, to assist its citizens in renovating older, run-down apartments. Rehab squatting is discussed at length, while paying special attention to the early 1980s West Berlin squatting scene.

growth of the movement by demonstrating what could happen to those who resorted to such forms of protest, but it instead ignited the movement to push themselves even further. Rehab squatting, or *Instandsbesetzung*, was still very much alive during this time period, however enacting change at the legislative level was placed on the back burner while protesters fought for the release of their comrades.

The housing issue did not fade into the background entirely during this time, however. Although the majority of demonstrations and protests that were organized by the squatters at this time were directed at the notion of released incarcerated members, some positive developments in the fight for appropriate urban renewal policies were beginning to take shape. Since the previous December, members of the squatter community were negotiating with the Berlin Senate, which was still led by the SPD party until May. The intermediate Berlin Senate donated funds in the beginning of 1981 to help support renovation projects (Koopmans 176). 20 million deutschmarks were made available to fund nearly 600 vacant buildings in the city. The Senate also made funds available for alternative housing projects, and in April, 7 million deutschmarks were donated directly to squatters' renovation projects. Another important development at the time was that the Berlin Senate confronted landowners who were keeping properties vacant for the sole purpose of waiting for government assistance by outright rejecting their proposals. These developments were crucial for the movement because it showed that the grassroots campaigning that the squatters had been advocating for years was finally beginning to encourage more government intervention in the housing crises.

In February, 1982, a policy was introduced by the intermediate government as a new, less ambiguous approach to solving the squatting issue in the city. This policy, known as the Berlin Line of Reason (*Berliner Linie der Vernunft*), set out as a means of halting the movement from

growing any further. Any existing squat was to be left alone by the police and the state, unless they otherwise provoked or incited confrontation and violence (Vasudevan, "Autonomous Urbanisms" 212-213). If the landowners of the occupied locations could prove that they had the means to renovate the spaces themselves, then they could take back control of their properties. Otherwise, they were to leave the squatters to their own devices. Many landowners feared violent retaliation if they attempted to reassume control of their properties, so they often left the issue alone. Under this policy, any new squats that formed were to be immediately stopped by the police, but without excessive use of force. Under the intermediate SPD-led government, the policy remained relaxed for the first few months. New squats were being formed every single day and the policy was not being taken seriously by the movement, that continued to find spaces to occupy and renovate. It did not help the government's efforts at the time to know that so many citizens were backing the movement and its aims. It was not until May, when new elections were called for, that the policy began to take a more definitive stance. A CDU-led government was elected into power, which marked the beginning of the end for the squatters movement in West Berlin.

Even though the Berlin Line of Reason called for a less-intense police presence and an emphasis on physical retaliation to squatters only being necessary as a last resort, that did not stop the police force of West Berlin from using excessive force. While the government was trying to assist the movement with subsidies and a general, hands-off approach, the local police force was showing signs of brute force and unfair treatment of protesters. At this time, West Berlin police could act independently from elected officials and their policies; they instead took their orders from the political prosecutor's office (*politische Staatsanwaltschaft*). Judges and prosecutors began using the police force to crack down on protesters with constant evictions and

altercations with protesters. This started an entirely new wave of police intervention that culminated in about 10,000 charges against squatters in total, many of which had insufficient evidence, with roughly only 3% of these charges resulting in convictions (Koopmans 177). Ironically, this strategy backfired completely and ended up strengthening both the movement itself, as well as its connections to various other groups and everyday citizens (Karapin 94-95). The lack of coordination between government and police efforts left room for the movement to thrive.

The prosecutor's office, or SAS for short, that controlled the police presence in West Berlin continued to ignore official moderate policy set forth by the intermediate SPD government throughout the first half of the year. Raids and arrests continued to make headlines and spark outrage amongst protesters and citizens alike, which undermined the Senate's urban reform and squatter policies. This declining trust between representatives in the squatter community and the Berlin Senate was weakened even further when the SAS ordered a police raid on the squatter council. During the raid, all 132 members of the council were placed under arrest, when the police searched the home where the meeting was taking place (Koopmans 176). This act made the squatter community place the notion of urban renewal even further back on the agenda and brought the goal of releasing prisoners to the forefront.

For the first several months of 1982, relations between the squatter community and the Berlin Senate were rather relaxed. Some members of the community were granted legalization by the government and could inhabit their homes legally, while other occupations that did not cause too much trouble were left alone to continue to pursue their alternate forms of living. However, this began to change with the May elections, when the CDU Senate took control of the squatting situation in a more harsh and concrete manner. The Minster for the Interior, Heinrich

Lummer, drew a line in the sand with his new "zero tolerance" policy. With his new policy, the squatting situation was boiled down to a black-and-white matter and occupations were put into one of two categories: susceptible to negotiations and criminals (Holm and Kuhn 648). Evictions were carried out for the remainder of the year and soon both the Senate and the police were on the same page. The mass evictions that were happening at the time, along with the harsh and strict policies set forth by the CDU government, culminated in September of that year, when 18-year-old Klaus-Jürgen Rattay became the first casualty of the movement. Fleeing from a cop wielding a baton during a protest, Rattay was hit by a bus as he ran across the street.

Rather than igniting further passion for the movement, like Ohnesorg's death did for the student movement, Rattay's death was another sign of the looming end of the second wave of the squatters movement. His death demonstrated how serious the CDU government was about dealing with what they saw as the squatter "problem" and it pushed squatters to rethink their stances on negotiating with the government. Before the CDU took over, many members of the movement took a hard stance on the issue of legalization of their occupied homes. They believed that every occupied home deserved an equal chance at achieving legality, so many of these squats were holding out for that opportunity to present itself. However, in the light of the harsh reality of the situation, many squatters found themselves negotiating with the Senate for legalization. On the day that Rattay was killed by a city bus, he and others were protesting against the police raid on eight different squatted buildings, a rather large and effective operation at the time (Katz and Mayer 34). As a sort of last ditch effort in the community, the squatters movement decided to host a demonstration known as the *Tuwat Spektakel* ("Do Something Spectacle") on August 25. By August, the general mood in the squatter community was rather bleak. The CDU government was cracking down on the movement with such ferocity, that it felt

as though the city had declared war on the squatters, making it even more difficult and less likely to achieve legalization. While the government and police continued their constant raids and arrests, the movement had trouble adapting to how quickly they were losing squats. The *Tuwat Spektakel* was essentially advertised as an "extravaganza" and encouraged squatters and members of other alternative movements to gather in West Berlin to show their support for the cause (Holm and Kuhn 123-125). The event included pamphlets with maps that showed visitors all of the important locations in the movement. Important, long-lasting squats were highlighted on the map, so that people could visit and show support, as well as various spots of alternative culture, including cafes, bars, and shops. An estimated 50,000 were to attend the *Tuwat Spektakel*, however, only roughly 3,000-5,000 actually participated in the event. The event itself was viewed as a disappointed and the nail in the coffin for the squatters movement in West Berlin.

Alexander Vasudevan, whose research on the squatters movement and alternative movements in West Germany has been an immensely helpful source for the writing of this thesis, details the end of the squatters movement in West Berlin in his "Autonomous Urbanisms and the Right to the City" article in Green Utopianism, as well as his book *The Autonomous City: A History of Urban Squatting.* In "Autonomous Urbanisms," Vasudevan discusses the division of the movement into two factions: those who wanted to achieve legalization and negotiate with the city and those who wanted to remain autonomous (see 231). The CDU's harsher stance with the "Berlin Line of Reason" initiative throughout 1981 called for this division with its "black and white" take on the situation, as mentioned previously. Either a squat in the community consisted of reasonable, law-abiding citizens (aside from the occupations themselves), who were willing to negotiate to achieve legality or the citizens were part of the *Autonomen* group, or "criminals," as

the CDU referred to them, and were adamant about remaining independent. These two groups fought internally in the movement between 1982 and 1984 and only served to divide the movement further, which was the CDU's plan all along. The CDU managed to separate the movement and divide and conquer the situation by pitting the movement against itself. Anyone who was attempting to negotiate with the state, which were usually the less radical individuals, were seen as traitors by those who insisted the movement stick to its stance on freeing imprisoned individuals and refusing negotiations until all squats could be guaranteed legalization. The squatter council itself was also adamant about not straying away from the plan, but would eventually loosen up on its stance the following year, when they reached the decision to allow individual homes to make the call for themselves. Roughly seventy-seven squats were able to achieve legalization out of the one hundred and sixty-five occupied homes at the peak of the movement, many of which also fell under the government's *Behutsame Stadterneuerung*, or "Cautious urban renewal" program, which was ratified by the Berlin House of Representatives in 1983. This program allowed *Instandsbesetzung* squats to receive government money to assist them in their renovation efforts. The program was also referred to as the *Bauliche Selbsthilfe* policy, or "structural self-help," for obvious reasons (Vasudevan, "Reassembling the City" 140). By the end of the program, over a hundred occupied houses were granted legalization and the squatters sat down with landlords and government officials to negotiate rental agreements. Other "non-negotiating" occupancies were cleared out between 1981 and 1984, any new squats were swiftly dealt with by the police, and the last eviction of a squatted home in West Berlin occurred on the November 8, 1984.

CHAPTER III.

THE IMMEDIATE AND LASTING INFLUENCES OF SQUATTING IN WEST BERLIN

Influences in the 1980s and 1990s in West Berlin

Before the second wave of squatting had even ended in West Berlin in 1984, the effects of the movement had already taken root in the urban and political landscape of West Berlin. Supporters of the movement were already hard at work trying to preserve the squatters' legacy by the time the movement began to fracture due to the CDU's harsh eviction policies that began to take effect in 1981. The movement was becoming increasingly divided during this time between those who wanted to negotiate for lease agreements and legality and those who would rather remain autonomous and resort to more violent means of retaining their independence. As this divide continued to grow, and occupied homes were being cleared out by the police, the citizens that supported the movement's causes, from prominent members of churches to students of local colleges, decided to act on the squatters' behalf. Many of these people had used occupied spaces at one time or another during times of need and, as a result, many of them had a close connection to the movement and wanted to preserve it (Holm and Kuhn 646). These community members began to negotiate with the Kreuzberg district authority, as well as the Berlin Senate, to establish a moratorium on the harsh and swift evictions that were sweeping the district. They were moderately successful, as they were able to establish a moratorium on evictions that lasted until Easter of 1982. This was a small victory for the movement, but it was an important one, because it demonstrated that the movement continued to have a significant impact on the community, even as their own will to continue the movement were fading away.

Squatting began to affect the city's urban redevelopment policies and programs directly around this time as well. For example, the International Building Exhibition, or IBE, that had

been set up in West Berlin in 1979, began implementing the practices of squatters to design a new way to handle urban redevelopment in the city (Vasudevan, *Metropolitan Preoccupations* 128). This new model utilized the core values of the squatters movement into urban planning, including grassroots campaigning, participation from citizens, and self-management of homes in a similar fashion to *Instandsbesetzung*. The older "clear-cut" model of urban renewal, which had placed many people and families at risk of losing their homes for the sake of urban restructuring, was now being phased out in favor of a system that would invite the voices of the citizens in on discussions on how the city should be structured. This new system became known as "cautious urban renewal," and even though it was never signed into law, it still had a strong impact on the government and urban planning at the time and continues to be influential to this day. Cautious urban renewal would take several years to begin to have an impact on urban planning, but its inner-workings were clearly inspired by the squatters of the time.

One major difference between this policy and the "clear-cut" policy of the recent past was that its main focus was on the needs and desire of the tenants of the buildings in question. Before, such concerns were seldom taken into consideration. The economy was in dire straits during the 1960s and the Berlin Senate and Ministry of Construction were attempting to revitalize the housing economy by developing more expensive luxury-style apartments to foster new sources of revenue. However, as I have detailed previously, this policy took a harsh toll on the working class of historically cheaper, rent-controlled neighborhoods. As this policy helped foster the need for a squatters movement in West Berlin, it became clear by the early 1980s that it was time to take a different approach to constructing new housing in the city. Cautious urban renewal was divided up into three separate types of "caution" in urban planning that were to be taken into consideration before any actual construction or demolition was to take place (Holm

and Kuhn 653). The first kind was "construction caution," which emphasized the squatter ideal of mending and rebuilding an existing space before constructing a new one. Essentially, if there were other options that involved renovating a building from the ground up, it was favorable to demolition. Another type was "social caution," which was also essential, because it took into consideration those who already lived in such spaces. They were to be taken into consideration and were to have a voice in the decisions that revolved around their own homes. The final type of caution was "planning policy caution" and emphasized, once again, citizen participation by giving the tenants of proposed buildings a chance to be a part of the developing processes. Ultimately, this policy led to a sharp decline in evictions and demolitions, however the overall value of urban planning at the time was not any more lucrative than before, which was mostly caused by how slowly construction plans progressed due to the constant input from tenants.

In March of 1989, the CDU-led government that had brought an end to squatting as a movement was voted out of office in favor of an SPD-AL coalition. Both the SPD and the AL, or Alternative List, were left-wing parties that supported many ideals that the movement had stood behind for so many years. It was the SPD that led the intermediate government between January and March of 1981 that was tolerant of both extremes of the squatters movement and they were now in a coalition with the Alternative List, the precursor of the Green Party, to establish a government that put a heavy emphasis on social and urban policies (Karapin 100). The Alternative List was a political party that demanded social change on a radical level. Its members tolerated, and often encouraged, the *Autonomen* groups that were still using violent tactics in protests to send their message. The Alternative List was able to appoint one of their own, Werner Orlowsky, to the position of construction department director in the Kreuzberg sector in 1981, and he stayed in that position until 1989. Orlowsky himself was widely appreciated by the

movement and members of other alternative movements for his passion for fair and just urban planning, as well as his ability to connect with ordinary citizens socially and listen to their opinions and ideas. He served as an ally for the movement and mediated between protesters and the government in order to best serve their needs. The S036 Association was another entity that helped support the cause of fair urban planning. The association presented another connection between tenants/protesters and those in charge of urban planning. Between them, Orlowsky, and the Alternative List/SPD coalition, the movement had many allies that kept their cause alive in the 1980s and pushed for more sensible urban planning in the city (Karapin 100-101).

An interesting development in the era of cautious urban renewal, which lasted until shortly after the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, was an incident with a squat earlier that year in March (Karapin 107). Even though cautious urban renewal was never officially law, the SPD/AL coalition operated as though it were and constantly went through various channels to gather citizen feedback on the proposed construction plans of the time. This led to a rather interesting situation between the SPD/AL coalition and a group of *Autonomen* who had decided to squat seven buildings in protest. During the second wave of squatting in West Berlin, the majority of squats in the city were viewed positively by the public. Ordinary citizens who were not involved in the movement often expressed their approval or, at the very least, their understanding of the situation and the need to squat to reclaim property that was unjustly taken away from the citizens. This was not the case with this particular squat. The seven buildings that were occupied by the *Autonomen* in March of 1989 were scheduled for renovation, not demolition, due to the cautious urban renewal policy. As a result, the *Autonomen* were viewed as trespassers by not only the police, but also the SO36 Association, the tenants of the occupied buildings, and other citizens. The space was going to be renovated to better serve the needs of those who lived there,

so the *Autonomen* taking this space over appeared as a selfish act of taking away living spaces from other people, rather than abandoned ones that were ignored by the government and landowners. The group had no support from any outsider and was quickly evicted as a result (Karapin 107). An important outcome of this incident was that it made the *Autonomen* rethink their strategies and take a less impulsive approach to protesting in the future.

The immediate effects of the West Berlin squatting scene on urban planning and policies had a strong impact on the way the city responded to its citizens. The movement allowed the voices of ordinary citizens to be heard in regards to urban planning and construction through the use of representatives who spoke on their behalf. Cautious urban renewal may not have been effective in regards to stimulating the economy or housing industry, but I would argue that its ability to bring the government closer to the needs and voices of its citizens, as well as make it more accountable, had an essential impact on the way urban planning was handled at the time. This impact carried over throughout the next few decades and still has a strong effect today. According to Holm and Kuhn, the remnants of this time period that truly survived into the present era were the "communicative incorporation of modernization projects, the involvement of non-government agencies and the rhetoric of 'cautious urban renewal'" (655). The squatters movement also had a strong impact on the way that citizens protested any new urban renewal policy or construction plan that threatened their community, as many people to this day will still occupy buildings as a form of expressing dissent.

<div align="center">Squatting and Urban Planning in 21st Century Berlin</div>

Finally, it is important to mention two squats that have occurred in the modern context to demonstrate two points. First, urban restructuring and planning is still an issue in Berlin, even if it is not necessarily as wide-spread as it was between the 1960s and 1980s. This issue was not

solved in any sort of concrete manner and can still occasionally resurface and that it is important for citizens to act accordingly to avoid any urban restructuring on a mass scale that could negatively impact the lives of citizens. Even though illegal occupations of buildings are quite rare in Berlin today, the few that do happen are still worthy of note. The second point is that the ideals of the movement have survived the test of time and exist today. The legacy that the squatters have left behind continues to motivate and inspire citizens to act in times of political and social dissent.

Attempts by squatters to occupy buildings in a modern Berlin have almost always been met with quick evictions. Today, it is simply not as tolerated as it was during the first half of the second wave of squatting or during the SPD/AL coalition of the late 1980s. The city of Berlin has since readopted the CDU policy of immediate eviction at the first sign of illegal occupancy. However, this was not the case with the 2005 squat in Kreuzberg. In June, the southern wing of the Bethanien Hospital was occupied by squatters (Vasudevan, *Metropolitan Preoccupations* 186). The Bethanien Hospital was an important site during the squatters movement. As stated earlier in this thesis, part of the abandoned site was once occupied by squatters, who established the location as the Georg von Rauch-Haus, one of the earliest successful attempts at squatting in the city. It was because of this important history in alternative living that prevented the squat from being immediately evicted. Local politicians had no desire to force an immediate eviction out of fear that it would spark political controversy and debate due to its location. As a result, they were more open to communicating with the squatters and attempted to negotiate.

The squat came into existence due to the forced eviction of a "legal house project at Yorkstraße 59" earlier that month. The new owners of the housing project forced its residents out of the house by succumbing to deplorable bullying tactics. These tactics included various means

of inducing psychological and physical trauma on to the residents by subjugating them to abuse and threats from the owners, as well as the abrupt shutting off of the water supply, the theft of the residents' mail, and disconnecting the phone lines. The owners even went so far as to install multiple surveillance cameras in the house to spy on the tenants. When this evidence reached the Berlin Court of Appeals, it became quite clear that the physical and psychological abuse that the residents were going through made the eviction itself illegal and therefore null and void. After four years of negotiations, the residents were granted a 15-year lease and the building was able to remain a social center for the residents of New Yorck (Vasudevan, Metropolitan Preoccupations 186). This occupancy remains as one of the few modern examples of successful squatting in the city.

The second instance of squatting in the modern context relevant to this discussion is a more recent example. If the incident at Bethanien Hospital can be defined as successful based on the confirmed lease agreement that the house was able to obtain, then I would argue that this next example can be defined as successful based on the tenacity and passion of its occupants. The concept of demolition of an older building to make room for luxury, high-rent apartments was a theme that resurfaced in 2012 when a group of seniors, ranging from 63 to 96 years of age, decided to squat a community center and recreational home in Pankow, a district in Berlin (Vasudevan, "Reassembling the City" 118-122). The space was important to the seniors, who were all former residents of East Berlin before the wall collapsed and who had utilized the space for years as a means of acquiring care and as a place of refuge. When it was announced that the space was to be torn down to make room for luxury apartments, the residents decided to occupy the building in protest. For over 111 days, the seniors occupied the space and had gained support from people all across the country. The group even decided to use old squatter slogans and

phrases from the 1970s and 1980s when they unwrapped banners over the front of the building that read "*Dieses Haus ist besetzt*!" (This house is occupied!) and "*Wir bleiben alle*!" (We will stay!). Squatter slogans and practices being used in 2012 is important because it signifies that the message of the movement has survived nearly 30 years and is still a cause that people can support when it becomes necessary to preserving the community.

Due to the growing support from the local community, and the support from people all across Germany, the local district council had no choice but to meet with the squatters for negotiations. The council decided to agree to a lease with the seniors that allowed them to use the space as an "autonomous self-organized collective." However, this lease was a temporary agreement and no finalized, long-lasting lease was ever established for the group. As a result, the threat of eviction is constantly looming over the residents. Although this squat was not a success in the way of achieving a definitive rental agreement, it was still an incident that was worthy of mention in this thesis because it illustrates that squatting slogans and ideas have survived for such a long period of time. This incident also reaffirmed the notion that taking back control of important social spaces in the community is not something that is limited to the younger generations. It was not just students and young professionals who rose to fight the injustices of the urban renewal policies in the 1970s and 1980s, it was also other members of the community from various social, economic, and political backgrounds who fought for social spaces and the right to an affordable living arrangement.

CONCLUSION

Those who lived in the era between the 1960s and 1980s in West Berlin were able to witness the rise and falls of various subcultures and political movements. From the student movement of the 1960s to the end of the second wave of squatting around 1984, various issues were brought into the public light for closer examination. The student movement itself was imperative to the development of the squatters movement a few years later and showcases the changing political ideals and goals in West Germany in the 1960s that embraced Marxist and liberal approach to politics and social issues. If not for the student movement developing their own communes and organizing their own public protests, the squatters may not have ever had the inspiration they needed to make their movement as effective and socially engaging as they did. The students of the 1960s were tired of the leftover fascist ideology that still plagued the university system. Professors and administrators acted as though they were taking into consideration the needs and desires of students, by giving them seats on the decision-making assemblies, but in all reality the students were always outnumbered by the staff. The tenured staff were the ones in true power at the university, and due to issues, such as overcrowding and not having a voice in the decisions that affected the university, the students decided to engage in expressions of protest and dissent. They followed a Marxist-based ideological system that would later serve as an inspiration for the squatters, who adopted this ideology in the beginning to demonstrate the need for social centers in the community.

In the late 1970s, the squatters changed their tactics and planned out their squats to be much more efficient, so that they could last long enough for an alternative scene to grow and to negotiate with the state. The squatters then wanted to defend the citizens' right to adequate and appropriate housing. It was believed that everybody deserves a right to their own space and if

they have to reclaim these spaces from the government in the form of squatting, then that is the

direction they would take. Eventually, the squatter scene turned into a movement that involved

other subcultures, as the movement's growth continued into the late 1970s and early 1980s. At

this point, members from various subcultures across the city were involved. Punks,

Marxist/Lenist groups, and the more directly confrontational *Autonomen* groups were all

subcultures that would gather to defend squatted homes through the use of force whenever the

police tried to intervene. This new network of alternative connections came into existence after

the Tunix Congress of 1978, when members from these groups gathered to discuss the political

climate of the time, as well as encourage one another to continue finding ways to express

themselves in public. This gave birth to a new era of squatting in West Berlin that came to be

known as *Instandsbesetzung.*

     Instandsbesetzung, which is a difficult word to translate to English, essentially means

"rehab squatting" and represented the movement within the squatter community that valued the

self-management of spaces. These spaces that squatters occupied were often run-down and in

need of repair, so the members of the movement took it upon themselves to gather at these

locations to repair them for the purpose of building homes for themselves. To accomplish these

goals, many people in the community offered to teach squatters the basics of various skills like

carpentry and electrical work, so that they could be better equipped to renovate these homes. The

fact that so many members of the community were more than willing to help the squatters in this

cause demonstrates the impact that the movement had on its local population. The people of the

community began to appreciate and support the movement more and more it grew, offering

assistance in the form of these tutorials, as well as donating supplies to help out with

Instandsbesetzung.

Even though the last squat in West Berlin that was a part of the movement was evicted in 1984, the effects of it were still felt throughout the 1980s and into today. Citizens worked hard to keep the squatter ideology alive in the wake of Klaus-Jürgen Rattay's death during a clash between protesters and police in 1981, by operating at the political level to establish a dialogue between concerned citizens and tenants and those in the Berlin Senate and Ministry of Construction, as well as those at the district level. Citizens appointed representatives to act as mediators between their concerns and those who could enact policy and change and eventually led to a more level-headed and peaceful approach to urban planning. "Cautious urban renewal" became an unofficial policy that made construction and demolition efforts more concerned with the needs of the citizens affected by these plans. Throughout the latter half of the decade, this plan served as a remainder of the squatters movement and the consequences of ignoring the concerns of the citizens.

The multiple subcultures of the time in West Berlin, from the student movement to punks and skinheads, all had their individual effects on the cultures and communities of the time; however, it was the squatters movement that had an important impact on the way that urban planning developed. To this day, efforts to demolish buildings without taking into consideration the citizens of the affected structures are quite rare, with the landowners themselves being the main problem when these issues do arise. The remnants of squatter ideology can be felt in modern urban practices, which are much more concerned with citizen well-being than before, as well as modern instances of squatting when living spaces are threatened. The squatters were an important movement in the development of sensible urban planning and were unique in the way that they developed their own cultures and communities at the grassroots level.

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